

Clark County Schools ACHIEVE

Empowering families, teachers, principals, support staff, and students to create the best school for their community

An Initial Assessment of the Transition of the Clark County School District to a Decentralized Model

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Executive Summary

In the context of a 2015 legislative session during which Gov. Brian Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature passed bipartisan and historic education funding increases and reform bills, AB394 was passed to fundamentally change education service delivery in the Clark County School District (CCSD or “District”). Creating an Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize Clark County School District (ACRCCSD), the bill gave a committee of legislators the opportunity to create a plan that would reorganize CCSD. Ultimately, the ACRCCSD came up with a plan to allow individual schools to have a greater level of autonomy at the local school level. In doing this, the Advisory Committee drew on its experience with Empowerment Schools, a model that led to substantial gains in academic achievement in its initial roll-out,¹ but was altered significantly by the district over the years.² After the plan was approved by the Advisory Committee, the State Board of Education held a hearing to adopt a set of regulations , and those regulations were ultimately approved by the Legislative Commission on September 9, 2016.³

About a month after the regulations reorganizing CCSD, known as R142-16, were adopted into the Nevada Administrative Code, the ACRCCSD created a Community Implementation Council (CIC), a group of experts from diverse backgrounds in business, education, and community service to help CCSD implement the R142-16. Led by businessman Glenn Christenson, the CIC is assisted in the implementation by the TSC² Group, a management consulting firm based in Las Vegas. On October 26, 2016, the CIC directed the Consultant to perform an initial assessment of CCSD and its organizational capacity to implement R142-16.⁴

¹ Data from the 2010 Legislative Council Bureau brief on Empowerment Schools showed a 5.5% increase in student performance on CRT tests in ELA and a 9.7% increase in student performance on CRT tests in Math in 2008. Reynolds (2010) also acknowledged that Empowerment Schools results were significantly higher than similar schools, but made the case that a linear causal relationship could not be inferred simply by looking at the Empowerment program.

² *2015-16 Interim Advisory Committee to Reorganize the Clark County School District*, January 8, 2016.

³ *Legislative Commission*, September 9, 2016.

⁴ *2015-16 Interim Advisory Committee to Reorganize the Clark County School District*, October 18, 2016.

The analysis was guided by four fundamental questions, paraphrased here:

- What systems does CCSD have in place to get the necessary changes implemented with fidelity and equity?
- What challenges must CCSD overcome to implement the regulations?
- What additional resources are needed?
- What metrics will we need to determine success?⁵

It should be noted that the scope of not only the assessment but the entire work of the CIC is designed to assist the transformative and operational change required by law; the consultant team would like to make clear that academic decisions and recommendations are outside the purview of the consultant team.

To help answer these questions, TSC² enlisted the assistance of Brian Knudsen, a public administration expert from Las Vegas-based BP2 Solutions and Michael Strembitsky, the pioneer of site based school district organizational models who was previously engaged by ACRCCSD to draft the reorganization plan.⁶ Together, the consultant team conducted a multi-faceted analysis of the District, focusing on its centralized financial distribution, operations, and decision-making structures. The analysis included:

- An in-depth review of what the regulation fundamentally does
- A review of efficiency studies conducted about the District and its central administration
- A review of the District's previous reorganization and strategic efforts
- Surveys, interviews, and focus groups with more than 250 district personnel
- Interviews with community stakeholders and former district personnel

The consulting team in collaboration with CCSD administrative leaders used this information to develop an overall vision for the reorganization:

⁵ Questions summarized from the "Framework for the First 45 Days of the Community Implementation Council." October 26, 2016.

⁶ *2015-16 Interim Advisory Committee to Reorganize the Clark County School District*. April 13, 2016.

“Clark County Schools ACHIEVE: Empowering families, teachers, principals, support staff, and students to create the best school for their community.”

The consulting team also developed a framework for the engagement of CIC members in the reorganization process. Finally, the consulting team developed some proposed performance metrics to inform the progress and efficacy of the reorganization. In concluding the analysis, the consulting team is able to answer the questions put forth by the CIC. The team’s answers to the questions are below.

What systems does CCSD have in place to get the necessary changes implemented with fidelity and equity?

Though it delivers education services to more than 320,000 students each day, many functions of CCSD’s central departments are dependent on outdated systems and work-arounds to perform fundamental functions. Sacrificing efficiency and administrative investment for immediacy and avoidance of harm to schools, central administrators work through fundamental problems by becoming entrepreneurial, working around existing systems to get intended products. Indeed, the budgeting system for the Instruction Unit, which includes the flex budgets of all schools, was built by district personnel and resides outside of the existing aging budgeting program.

Such situations might not have ever happened if the District employed a strong cohort of management and policy analysts on its staff; but CCSD currently does not employ management and policy analysts. In comparison, the City of Las Vegas, a public organization one-tenth the size [by employment] of CCSD, “employs fifteen management analysts that focus on policy matters.”⁷

In short, despite the hard work of CCSD administrators, the District is almost totally dependent on antiquated systems and a small group of staff who have developed

⁷ Quoted from Kirchhoff, William. “Clark County’s Need for Policy Analysts.” 2016, pg. 2. This paper is included in the appendix section of this document.

manual workaround systems to comply with mandates — at the expense of efficiency and automation.

What challenges must CCSD overcome to implement the regulations?

As revealed by interviews, surveys, and focus groups, the consultant team identified numerous challenges to implementing the regulation. Those challenges include:

- Developing policy around the Weighted Funding Formula
- Optimizing enterprise technology to create a robust data environment for administrators and local school precinct leaders (i.e., fix the HCMS and other Enterprise systems)
- Determining a process through which the district can decide which services should be decentralized
- Managing the timeline around the implementation
- Managing community perception around the reorganization
- Managing internal communication around the reorganization
- Finding parents to serve on certain school organizational teams
- Educating participants to understand the appropriate role of and utility of a school organizational team
- Developing risk management and accounting protocols around local school precincts' budget and decision-making
- Preparing District financial and organizational services for the roll-out of modified zero-based budgeting
- Addressing the District “culture of work-arounds” for administrative systems

Tackling these challenges will be a herculean effort, especially if community members, School Board Trustees, and district personnel are not united in a shared vision for the reorganization.

What additional resources are needed to implement the regulation with fidelity?

Though each challenge identified in this analysis is difficult to address, many of them could be addressed by adding three fundamental resources:

- A full suite of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tools that can track timesheets for employees of the central administration that perform their work at schools
- Management and policy analysis capacity to assist the CCSD Executive team in making policy recommendations around the administration⁸
- Strategic communications capacity to both internal and external stakeholders around the transition

The consultant team can assist with management and policy analysis and strategic communications in the short term, but the implementation of an ERP suite will require significant time and money.

What metrics will we need to determine success?

The successful implementation of the regulation depends on District administration performing tasks that several departments are fundamentally unprepared to tackle. To meet the timing requirements of the regulation, these departments must attempt to work-around their existing systems, making them far less efficient than they would be if their systems were up to par. Accordingly, CCSD administration must develop new strategies for several central operations departments to operate under the new organizational paradigm.

CCSD already has a set of district-wide performance measures to track overall progress through its Pledge of Achievement strategic plan.⁹ To track the efficacy of the new regulation, the consultant team recommends that CCSD add the following measures to its dashboard:

- **Amount of Discretionary Budgeting Authority Allocated to Schools:** During the first year of the Empowerment School experience, \$150,000 in discretionary resources were awarded to schools selected for the program, but by year five of the program, no additional funding was promised as part of Empowerment. To

⁸ While the consulting team can help fill the need for management analysis in the short term, the team strongly recommends that CCSD hire permanent management and policy analysts as soon as possible.

⁹ Clark County School District. *Pledge of Achievement*. April 21, 2014. Accessed online via: <http://pledgeofachievement.ccsd.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/strategic-plan-rev-050916.pdf>.

reinforce the vision and spirit of the regulation, the consulting team suggests that CCSD start tracking the amount of discretionary budgeting authority going to schools.

- **Rate of Instruction Spending as a Proportion of Overall Spending:** Per the Nevada Report Card, CCSD's instruction spending as a proportion of overall spending was 60% in 2015, slightly below the national average. If CCSD's overall expenditures in instruction rise as a proportion of overall spending, it could be an indicator that more resources are flowing down to local schools, and local schools are investing more resources in instruction.
- **Results and Participation Metrics in Parent, Student, and Employee Surveys:** As was noted¹⁰ by Strembitsky during the plan development process, "the results of surveys provide a powerful tool to achieve better performance. The effectiveness of surveys, in large measure, depends on the rigor of design, the response rate, and the follow-up actions." R142-16 includes provisions for surveys from which quantifiable Key Performance Indicators may be derived, and CCSD must follow-through with this aspect of the reorganization. It should be noted, however, that CCSD's response rate on parent surveys is typically quite low.¹¹ The consultant team suggests CCSD not only track results from these surveys, but take additional steps to proactively boost parental participation in such surveys.

Conclusion of Initial Assessment

R142-16 marks a fundamental shift in the way that CCSD does business. In implementing this regulation, CCSD must face challenges that its administration has been attempting to work-around for years. For CCSD's central administration, implementing this regulation will be exceedingly difficult because they lack the systems to implement the regulation. For principals and school organizational team members, managing expectations and facilitating productive communication will be the biggest

¹⁰ Strembitsky, Michael. "The Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District – Revised" <http://ab394.ccsd.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Plan-8-23-16.pdf>

¹¹ As reported by multiple administrator interviews

challenges. For community members and the legislature, patience and understanding as the District addresses these obstacles will be the biggest challenge. None of these challenges is insurmountable, and none of them should prevent the District from implementing this regulation with fidelity. But working together, we can all ensure that Clark County Schools ACHIEVE! will be an effort of which we can all be proud.

Introduction

The Nevada Legislature passed Assembly Bill 394 (AB394) into law during the 2015 legislative session and in September of 2016, a legislative committee unanimously approved R142-16 to reorganize the Clark County School District (CCSD or “District”).¹²

In the context of a 2015 legislative session during which Gov. Brian Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature passed bipartisan and historic education funding increases and reform bills,¹³ this law should be viewed as the key to fundamentally improving the education delivery system in Clark County, boosting family engagement, and improving student achievement. The new system will shift decision-making authority from the CCSD central office to local schools, where teams of principals, parents, teachers, and staff will have greater authority and responsibility to create budgets, manage school facilities, and tailor schools to community’s individual needs. In this decentralized model, school principals will be empowered to manage schools in a manner that best advances student achievement at their individual school precincts. This will be accomplished through budget transparency, decision-making responsibility, and tracking spending at the classroom level.

This initial 45-day assessment of the implementation of R142-16 can best be viewed as an introductory chapter to a long-term reorganization that will be an iterative process in which successes and progress are measured along a continuum toward a goal. That goal can best be summed up in the following vision statement for the transition:

“Clark County Schools ACHIEVE: Empowering families, teachers, principals, support staff, and students to create the best school for their community.”

¹² Legislative Commission, September 9, 2016.

¹³ The Nevada Legislature passed and the Governor approved \$340M in new investment (in addition to more than \$800M in roll-ups) through grants and categorical programs in the Nevada Legislature.

This vision statement, developed by key members of the District's administrative team, was created in collaboration with the consulting team at a focus group held for this purpose. Clark County Schools ACHIEVE is both an aspirational vision and an acknowledgment of the excellence already present in many schools and classrooms. Though District personnel have taken to calling the reorganization spurred by R142-16 the "AB394 Reorganization," it is a simple statement of fact that the 2017 legislative session will affix the legislative number "AB394" to some other piece of legislation. Therefore, it is necessary to begin to talk about this initiative in a way that reflects and articulates the fundamental intent behind the law, which is student achievement.

It has been clear in this assessment that there is a high degree of awareness and widespread support within the Clark County community and within the Clark County School District itself to improve student achievement through what this law does, namely: Realignment of resources and functions; improved customer service; better managerial systems; a renewed focus on equity, and greater local control of schools. The creation of "School Organizational Teams," for example, allows for an advisory board of democratically chosen parents, teachers, and support staff to work with a school principal on budget, operations, and student achievement plans at their local school. These advisory councils are among the first aspects of the Clark County Schools Achieve framework to be implemented; however, there are many more fundamental realignments of resources that must take place during the coming years to implement the regulations with fidelity.

Administrators face numerous challenges in decentralizing the central administration of the District. Indeed, if one were to look at the central administration strictly through the lens of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the CCSD Central Administration alone would be a \$998M enterprise comprising of 43% of the general fund budget.¹⁴ Looking through that lens, however, ignores huge direct injections of money to schools that are outside of the General Fund budget (i.e. Class Size

¹⁴ This number was arrived at by adding the costs of individual administrative departments together using CCSD's 2016-17 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Reduction funds), or the fact that a sizable proportion of what is called the Central Administrative budget is spent on employees that work at local school sites (licensed professionals in special education, counselors, school nurses, et cetera).

Fortunately, a decade of progress toward empowerment and local school decision-making has created an entrepreneurial culture in pursuit of student achievement within many parts of the District. While the Clark County School District and community partners have made progress in empowering those closest to the work to improve student achievement, various cultural, technical, and political challenges must be overcome to ensure that families, teachers, principals, and students are truly empowered to create the best school for their community.

Key cabinet members and leaders inside CCSD recognize that a cultural and practical shift must occur. These leaders know that District departments can shift their focus, from what individual departments do now, to how departments interact collectively to further the progress of student achievement.

More fundamentally, the real and perceived problems within the Clark County School District will not be solved by hastily applying the wrong solution in this reorganization process. This initial assessment attempts to fundamentally identify problems and, in the following pages of this report, inspect them thoroughly. CCSD's Superintendent has declared a primary principle of the reorganization work to be the doctor's maxim: Do No Harm.¹⁵ Over the coming months, there will be many more opportunities to analyze systems and implement new delivery models to help ensure more resources are flowing into the classroom so that school communities can help close the achievement gap and truly demonstrate that schools are vital engines of economic and community development for this region. Finally, measurements of success will need to be developed based on further evaluation of the problem.

¹⁵ Mentioned numerous times by the Superintendent in meetings with the consultant. Also referenced in the "CCSD Reorganization: Introduction and Summary" presentation (Sept 2016).

In the meantime, the initial analysis has identified several cultural and technical challenges the District faces that will likely occupy the time of the Community Implementation Council during the coming months.¹⁶ Those include:

- Assisting the District in finding time for key personnel to do the work of implementation
- Assisting the District in developing policy around the weighted funding formula
- Employing the assistance of council members to help optimize enterprise technology to create a robust data environment
- Assisting with internal communication around the meaning and parameters of the reorganization
- Assisting in determining a process by which certain central services are decentralized to schools
- Assisting the district in community perception of reorganization
- Assisting in the creation and coordination of training for school based and central personnel
- Assessing a system of risk management and financial controls around local school precincts' budget and decision-making
- Assisting with the roll-out of modified zero based budgeting at the central services level
- Assisting the District in assessing how federal and state mandates affect the reorganization
- Advising District leadership in methods of addressing long-term cultural and systemic challenges, including:
 - Retention of key personnel
 - Addressing the Culture of “Work Around Systems” within CCSD

In the following sections of this report, the authors will explore the context and elements of the reorganization. They will also review previous efficiency and reorganization efforts at CCSD, and they will highlight challenges that the District faces in implementation.

Those challenges were identified after the authors conducted interviews, online surveys, and focus groups with more than 250 individuals both inside and outside CCSD. Finally,

¹⁶ As determined by the consultant's analysis, interviews, surveys, and focus groups.

this report will offer advice on a shared vision for the transition, and make recommendations on how the Community Implementation Council can engage.

The Assignment

After a legislative session that saw landmark education reforms and record-breaking new investment in public K-12 education, the Nevada Legislature made the reorganization of the Clark County School District (CCSD) one of its top priorities during the 2015-16 Interim. Spurred by the passage of AB394, regulations were promulgated that require the following reforms at CCSD:

1. The decentralization of budgeting and decision-making autonomy at all CCSD schools, including a requirement that monies follow students and their needs through the implementation of a weighted funding formula and that 80% of “the total amount of money from all sources received by the School District that is unrestricted for the 2017-2018 school year and 85% of that total amount for each school year thereafter” goes to the local school precinct.
2. The establishment of local school organizational teams to develop budgets and educational strategic plans for individual schools paired with a greater emphasis on parent and family engagement
3. The reorganization of the central administration into a “Central Services” department, which would be charged with certain non-educational service related duties
4. The collection of a large amount of financial and operational data to inform decision-making in local schools and in future legislative sessions.¹⁷

As CCSD moves forward to implement these reforms, it faces numerous organizational, management, and resource challenges that make its transition more difficult. To

¹⁷ For instance, Section 30 of R142-16 requires annual surveys to be administered to all persons involved with the local school precincts to measure their satisfaction with the local school precinct and to employees of Central Services and employees who interact with Central Services to determine how satisfied they are with the services provided. A summary of the results of the surveys must be made public. Section 31 requires an annual report concerning the local school precincts to be compiled and forwarded to the Governor, the Department of Education and the Nevada Legislature.

address these challenges, TSC² Group was contracted by the Advisory Committee to Reorganize the Clark County School District (ACRCCSD) to assist CCSD's administration as it relates to the implementation of R142-16. Fundamentally, TSC² Group's work revolves around organizational and management consulting. During this analysis period, TSC² zeroed in on a more specific mission for this project:

Leveraging the experience and expertise of its members and community partners, the Consultant Team provides advice and assistance to the Clark County School District in restructuring its financial distribution, operations, and decision-making structures so that principals and school organizational teams can create the best school for their community.

To assist in this effort, TSC² Group partnered with Brian Knudsen, Partner at BP2 Solutions, and Michael Strembitsky, the pioneer of site based school district organizational models. As challenges are identified that are outside the scope of expertise of these individuals, TSC² Group will contract with additional outside experts in pursuit of the mission.

TSC² Group is overseen in its efforts by the AB394 Community Implementation Council (CIC), an appointed board of the ACRCCSD. On October 26, 2016, the CIC directed TSC² Group to conduct an initial assessment of the reorganization.¹⁸ The CIC asked that this analysis address the following questions:

- What systems does CCSD have in place to get the necessary changes implemented with fidelity and equity?
- What challenges must CCSD overcome to implement the regulations?
- What additional resources are needed – human capital, expertise, technology, etc.?

¹⁸ Summarized from the "Framework for the First 45 Days of the Community Implementation Council." October 26, 2016.

- What metrics will we need to determine success?

Over the course of the analysis period, TSC² Group also inspected the policy and cultural environment that informs the reorganization, the history of reorganizing efforts at CCSD, and the efforts that CCSD has already made to realize the goals of the policy.

The Method of Investigation

The following is a brief overview of the method of analysis employed to produce this 45-day initial assessment. Much of the scope of this initial assessment was publicly disclosed during the Oct. 18 meeting in documents presented to the legislative committee. The relevant portion of this scope is presented below.

Over the course of Phase One, TSC² will:

- Assist with designing, seating, and providing management support to the AB394 Community Implementation Council and design opportunities for the committee's engagement with the broader community
- Conduct research and interviews with CCSD leaders and administration to understand the fundamental organizational and human dynamics at play within the District and perform a robust analysis of the human and management dynamics in play at CCSD
- Conduct focus groups with CCSD employees to assess the environment and receive feedback on the implementation of the regulations
- Work cooperatively with CCSD to identify obstacles to the full implementation of R142-16
- Develop and implement policy recommendations for the CCSD Executive Administration and the Nevada Legislature around the implementation of R142-16 and the realization of the benchmarks set forth in regulation.

The full scope for this 45-day initial assessment was later clarified at the direction of the CIC at the first meeting of the CIC held on Oct. 26, 2016. This was a public meeting

held at the State of Nevada's Grant Sawyer Building. At this meeting, the CIC asked that the consultant team for a 45-day assessment and report addressing several key concerns, as delineated in the above section.

TSC² Group initiated the work with a thorough review of recent past studies pertaining to the organization and administration of education within Clark County. Concurrently, TSC² Group worked with the Clark County School District to identify the administrators most involved in the implementation of R142-16.

Following a several-week delay during which it was unclear as to whether the Clark County School District Board of Trustees would allow the consultant team to interact with district administrators in group settings, TSC² Group scheduled and conducted a series of initial one-hour, one-on-one interviews with 29 CCSD administrators. For consistency, these interviews contained the same series of questions for each interviewee and all questions related to the implementation of R142-16.

To augment data from interview responses, a survey was designed to be administered online and distributed among all division-level directors and supervisory employees at CCSD. These questions mirrored the questions asked during in-person interviews. The online survey was distributed through the CCSD email system, and invitations to participate in the survey were sent twice by the District. A separate survey was developed and sent to principals, and questions in that survey were tailored to a principal's perspective. Participation in the surveys was voluntary and anonymous.

- 70 complete survey responses were returned to the team from division-level directors and supervisory employees, representing approximately 27% of all CCSD employees at this level.
- 160 complete survey responses were returned to the team from principals, representing approximately 46% of all CCSD employees at this level.

In addition to interviews and surveys, TSC² Group conducted two focus groups of District employees. These focus groups included licensed professionals delivering services at CCSD schools and a group of 12 key directors and cabinet members

internally tasked with implementation of the reorganization law. This last focus group was an all-day session that was very helpful in understanding the systems CCSD has, the challenges it faces in implementing the regulation, and the current state of implementation within the District. TSC² also sought the input from dozens of community members, educators, parents, and others who have been involved in the plan development process and in implementation of the regulation. Each of these sources informed this assessment.

It is worthwhile also to note that there will be ongoing outreach to numerous groups not included in the scope of this assessment due to the 45-day timeframe under which this report was produced. Chief among these groups are the School Associate Superintendents whose hiring has only just recently taken place and School Organizational Team members, including parents and leading parent groups.

ANALYSIS – PART ONE

Part One of this analysis provides background information on the context and the elements of the regulation, as well as a review of some of the history and literature relevant to the implementation of R142-16.

The Context and Elements of the Reorganization

The Clark County School District and several districts in Florida, including Miami-Dade Public Schools (Miami), Broward County Public Schools (Ft. Lauderdale), Hillsborough County Public Schools (Tampa) and Orange County Public Schools (Orlando) are in a class all by themselves when it comes to large school districts:

- They have very high student populations
- They are geographically large (the Clark County School District is physically larger than the combined areas of Delaware and Connecticut)
- The communities they serve have grown rapidly because of an expanding economic base in the service and tourism industry
- They are among the top 10 largest local school districts in the country by enrollment, but they represent metropolitan areas that are much smaller than the size of their school districts might suggest
- They exist in states with a history of comparatively low investment in public education when indexed against other states.

Because of these factors, each of these large school districts have experienced challenges in delivering education over the decades. Each has struggled with population growth and high poverty, an expanded need for programs to educate children with special needs and English Language Learners, and a constant pressure to demonstrate results in a difficult budgetary environment.¹⁹

¹⁹ Over the years, many comparisons have been drawn between county school districts in Florida and the Clark County School District. As has been reported by numerous news outlets, Governor Sandoval drew on Florida Governor Jeb Bush's experiences around education policy to shape his education agenda.

Over several decades, efforts to break up the Clark County School District have periodically surfaced and receded in Nevada’s policy environment. The most significant of those efforts happened from 1995-1997, after Nevada Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 30, requiring the Legislative Commission to hire a consultant to study the possibility of reconfiguring school districts in Nevada. The study, conducted by Dr. James Guthrie, found that changing school district boundaries would be extremely difficult.²⁰

In 2015, the Nevada Legislature again considered breaking up the Clark County School District. AB394, as originally drafted, generally prescribed a process to establish “local school precincts” that aligned with municipal boundaries, but at its first hearing, the bill was amended by its sponsor to establish a process by which to study the implementation of local school precincts. Over the course of the legislative session, the bill saw two more amendments before winning final passage with bipartisan support.²¹

Unlike the effort in 1995, AB394 put in law a method, not only to study the reorganization of the District, but to come up with a plan to reorganize the District and work with the Nevada Department of Education to pass regulations based on that plan. After a 14-month long process, the State Board of Education and the Legislative Commission adopted regulations that prescribed the following:²²

- Each public school in the Clark County School District is a local school precinct which is operated under site-based decision making which provides the school with authority to carry out certain responsibilities that have been traditionally carried out by the District.

²⁰ This is just one of many findings of Dr. James Guthrie and his consulting team. After researching multiple options for school district deconsolidation, the legislature ultimately decided not to go through with the breakup.

²¹ Amendment 480 to AB394 (78th Session of the Nevada Legislature) amended the bill the first time, and Amendment 1062 amended it a second. Information related to the passage of AB394 is accessible through the Nevada Legislative Information System (NELIS).

²² Provisions adapted for this paper from the Legislative Counsel’s Digest on R142-16.

- CCSD's Superintendent must transfer to each local school precinct the authority to: (1) select and directly supervise the staff for the local school precinct; (2) procure from the School District or elsewhere necessary equipment, services and supplies to carry out the plan of operation for the local school precinct in accordance with applicable policies of the School District; and (3) develop a balanced budget for the local school precinct.
- All other responsibilities necessary for the operation of the local school precincts and the School District remain with the School District
- By January 15th of each year, the Superintendent is to make certain estimates regarding funding and to estimate the amount that will be allocated to the local school precincts for the next school year. That amount must not be less than 80% of total unrestricted (non-Federal, grant, or otherwise encumbered) funds in the 2017/18 school year, and not less than 85% of total unrestricted funds in the years thereafter. The Superintendent will also decide the extent of the authority to be given to local school precincts and the responsibilities of Central Services
- Money is allocated to local school precincts on a per-pupil basis using a weighted funding formula established by the Nevada Department of Education
- CCSD's Superintendent must establish the role of School Associate Superintendent, a position that will report to the Superintendent and oversee not more than 25 local school precincts.
- Principals of local school precincts must (1) establish an organizational team for the local school precinct; (2) develop a plan of operation for the local school precinct for the next school year; (3) submit the plan of operation for the local school precinct to the school associate superintendent for approval; and (4) select the staff necessary to carry out the plan of operation for the local school precinct
- Organizational teams for local school precincts must (1) provide assistance and advice to the principal regarding the plan of operation for the local school precinct; (2) assist in carrying out the plan of operation; and (3) assist with the selection of the principal of the local school precinct. They may also provide input

regarding the principal to the School Associate Superintendent up to two times each year.

- Employee associations and local parent organizations play an active role in the selection of members for organizational teams for local school precincts, and one or more non-voting members of the community at large may be selected for the school organizational team.

In passing the regulation, the Legislature committed the District to three fundamental actions:

- Changing the way dollars and authority are allocated at CCSD
- Creating an operational shared governance model at local school precincts
- Changing the method in which centrally-administered services are delivered to local school precincts.

The context for each of these actions is reviewed in the next three sections of this report.

Changing the Way Dollars and Authority are Allocated at CCSD

CCSD traditionally allocates dollars to schools through a “staffing model,” where enrollment at local schools is measured, and staffing is allocated based on those enrollment numbers.²³ Staffing costs are averaged by class of employee, and those resources are transferred to schools and departments based upon a staffing formula. Therefore, allocating staff effectively allocates the vast majority of CCSD’s budget because staffing costs (payroll, retirement, health care, etc.) are such a large part of the overall budget.

There is a great potential to inequitably allocate resources to local schools because expenditures related to staffing are averaged across employee category. Per testimony of former CCSD CFO Jim McIntosh during the AB394 plan development process,

²³ CCSD’s current staffing allocation model is part of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

“[CCSD doesn’t] budget revenues to a school per se, and in some cases, what occurs, is inequitable.”²⁴ Experienced teacher salaries are more than double starting teacher salaries, and if a school happens to have a higher preponderance of early career teachers, the District, by default, will be spending less money at that school than one with a higher rate of veteran teachers. This issue has been exacerbated by a long-term teacher shortage, particularly in Title 1 schools. Per McIntosh, after reviewing a study of actual expenditures at local schools, “average Title 1 school teacher salaries tend to be lower, and if you factor in long-term substitutes, much lower than average salaries at non-Title 1 schools.” This inequity of resources has been identified many times in public meetings prior to the advent of R142-16.

In drafting a plan, the Advisory Committee opted to pursue a framework in which individual schools could operate as local school precincts. To pursue this model, the Advisory Committee initially drew upon the District and the State’s previous experience with Empowerment Schools. Beginning as a pilot program under former Superintendent Walt Rulfes’ administration, Empowerment Schools were selected by competitive application to receive significant budgetary and decision making authority at the local school level. Empowerment schools also received additional funding per student and a boost in their discretionary budgets. In 2007, the Nevada Legislature approved laws governing Empowerment Schools (NRS 386.700–386.780). These schools controlled up to 90 percent of their budgets, instituted shared decision making structures at the school level, and created pay incentives for school personnel. Though Empowerment Schools were popular among principals and teachers and showed promising gains in student achievement, former Superintendent Dwight Jones’ administration changed the program’s overall direction, and the use of the term “Empowerment” was eventually discontinued by the District.²⁵

²⁴ From recorded testimony at the *2015-16 Interim Advisory Committee to Reorganize the Clark County School District*, January 8, 2016.

²⁵ Superintendent Jones created a Blue-Ribbon Task Force that studied the program and ultimately concluded that Empowerment should be used to “trade increased flexibility in return for improved student performance.” After Jones’ departure, per ACRCCSD testimony on January 28, 2016, Superintendent Skorkowsky continued the Empowerment program under a new name – autonomous schools.

Though the Empowerment Program provided greater autonomy and budgeting authority to local schools, the program was still rather prescriptive. Schools gained more resources, but they also had restrictions on those resources. Extra money, to the degree there was extra money, was used for specific purposes like class size reduction or school year extension.

Under Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky's administration, a program of Flex Budgeting was implemented in the district, building on the old Empowerment model. Under Flex Budgeting, schools "purposely allocate and strategically expend allocated resources in all worksites to carry out the Pledge of Achievement," CCSD's strategic plan. To do this, the divisions of Instruction, Finance, and Human Resources collaborate and convert staffing formulas at local schools to dollars. They then allocate those dollars using a partial per-pupil funding model. In 2016-17, these amounts were

- \$3,655 for fourth and fifth grade
- \$3,607 for middle school, and
- \$3,622 for high school.²⁶

Additional program allocations are made for magnet schools, and Career and Technical Academies. Resources for K-3 are allocated per laws that govern class size reduction. R142-16 prescribes a further change to the method of budget allocation at CCSD. Rather than a staffing model or a flex budget model, CCSD is now required to allocate the budget on a per-pupil manner via a weighted funding formula. That weighted funding formula must take into account differential funding by students classified as:

- Special Education
- English Language Learners
- Eligible for free or reduced price lunches
- Gifted and Talented²⁷

While the State of Nevada has approved a formula weight for Special Education, neither CCSD nor the State of Nevada have approved or ever used weights in the funding

²⁶ At the time of the writing of this paper, allocations are not available for the 2017-18 school year.

²⁷ R142-16, Section 17

model for English language learners, children in poverty, or gifted children, and there is some disagreement among the parties on the responsibility to perform such actions. This is a fundamental obstacle to the implementation of the regulations with fidelity.²⁸

Creating operational shared governance at local school precincts

Though laws for school site governance have been on the books since the mid-1990s, CCSD and the State of Nevada have taken several steps to promote a shared governance model at the local school level since 2005.

In the 2005-2007 Interim, the Nevada Legislature heard a presentation from Dr. William Ouchi, a UCLA Business Administration professor, on a program of school autonomy and decentralized school district governance. During the same meeting, Superintendent Walt Rulffes, made a presentation on the pilot program of Empowerment schools.²⁹

As part of the empowerment program, school Empowerment Teams were created by each of the schools selected for the program. These Empowerment Teams worked cooperatively with school principals to create the school empowerment plan, assist with the preparation of the school budget and provide advice to the principal on the expenditure of school resources. Provisions governing Empowerment Schools are contained in NRS 388G.010-220. The contents of the Empowerment Plan are spelled out in statute, NRS 388G.120. Though state law prescribes the existence of Empowerment Schools at a rate of not less than 5% of all schools in Clark County, it is

²⁸ In a letter to CCSD dated November 16, 2016, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) clarified that the organization has not established weights for ELL, At-Risk, and Gifted learners pursuant to AB394 and SB508. NDE has established a weight of \$2,968 for all Special Education students for the 2016-17 school year. NDE advised CCSD that, if it were to use different weights for ELL, At-Risk, and Gifted learners, it would need to submit a variance to the NDE for approval. In response, CCSD sent a letter to NDE on November 30, 2016 asking for clarity on the Special Education funding weight for the 2017-18 school year. CCSD also contends that R142-16 does not authorize the District to establish a weighted funding formula, nor does it require it to establish a weighted funding formula.

²⁹ Legislative Council Bureau "Research Brief on the History of Empowerment Schools in Nevada." February 2010.

unclear if any schools are still formally operating under the empowerment model.³⁰ Before the formal Empowerment program was discontinued, 30 CCSD schools had the designation.

Under R142-16, a similar process is set up for shared governance, where teachers, parents, and support staff contribute to school plan development and decision-making through a School Organizational Team (SOT), but R142-16 goes further than Empowerment.

While contributing to the operation of the school, the SOT develops a plan of operation for the school. Plans of operation are submitted to School Associate Superintendents on a yearly basis, and the SOT is given some recourse if a School Associate Superintendent disapproves of the plan of operation for the school. If the School Associate Superintendent disapproves of the plan, the SOT may appeal up to the Superintendent of Schools, and he or she has five days to review and ultimately render a binding judgment on a Plan of Operation.³¹

In addition, the SOT has some input on the hiring of a school's principal. When there is a vacancy at the position of principal, the SOT can contribute advice to the Superintendent for the hire of a new principal at that local school precinct. In turn, the Superintendent must advise the SOT of its finalist to fill the vacancy in the principalship, and a single SOT member can participate in the hiring process.³² Fundamentally, the establishment of shared governance systems provides greater input on school operational decisions, and it changes the dynamic of the administration of schools.

³⁰ At the January 8, 2016 meeting of ACRCSD, State Superintendent Steve Cavanero remarked that he was unsure if the District had submitted a waiver in the past three years for the 5% Empowerment School requirement.

³¹ R142-16 Sec 28

³² R142-16 Sec 27(c)

Changing the method in which centrally-administered services are delivered to local school precincts

The regulation states that budgeting responsibilities must in large part devolve to the local school level. Specifically, the regulation says that local school precincts must control “not less than 80 percent of the total amount of money from all sources received by the School District that is unrestricted for the 2017-2018 school year and 85 percent of that total”³³ amount for each school year thereafter. Meeting this threshold will be a great organizational challenge requiring significant cultural and technical changes, the latter of which may require funding presently lacking at CCSD.

The regulations also recognize that specific centralized services are necessary for the successful delivery of education at the local school precinct level. These services are enumerated in the regulation, and, pursuant to Section 14.3 of the regulation, “the School District must remain responsible for paying for” them unless the Superintendent expressly says otherwise, pursuant to Section 14.7 of the regulation.³⁴

As stated in the previous section, CCSD has traditionally operated using a “staff allocation” model. Though schools have, in recent years, gone to a Flex Budgeting model, the staffing allocation model is the primary way that centrally administered specialty and special education services are delivered to schools. For example, school psychologists are delivered to schools at a rate of one psychologist per 1,825 students, or a major fraction thereof. This ratio allows the District’s 180 school psychologists, to serve more than 350 schools and 320,000 children.³⁵ While these services are, technically, part of the central administration, the employees of this central

³³ Section 16.1(b) of R142-16

³⁴ Per Section 14.7 of R142-16, “the Superintendent shall determine, in consultation with the principals, school associate superintendents and organizational teams of each local school precinct, any additional authority not listed in subsection 2 to recommend transferring to one or more local school precincts. Such authority may include the authority to carry out any of the responsibilities listed in subsection 3 not prohibited by law, other than the responsibility for capital projects, if it is determined that transferring the authority will serve the best interests of the pupils.”

³⁵ This is an exemplar staffing ratio outlined in the 2016 CCSD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)

administration office serve within schools. The same is the case for school nurses, counselors, audiologists, speech pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and social workers. The rationale for the location of these services at the central administration level is sound within the current system – there are not enough of these professionals, nor is there the budget, to keep one of each at every local school precinct. Furthermore, most of these professionals have occupational certifications, and it would be inappropriate for a local school instructional leader to make complete performance evaluations of, say, a speech pathologist.

Central services provided to students (through the centrally located Student Services Division) accounted for \$313.6M in 2016-17, and many of these services are required to be provided to children under federal law. Taken together with the Transportation budget (\$122.7M) and the Facilities Division (\$136.7M), all services that are provided at the local school site, these services already account for 25% of the overall budget of the school district.³⁶

Under Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky, efforts have already been made to decentralize some programs and services and dedicate those monies to schools. The Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) department, for example, was recently reorganized into the Instructional Design & Professional Learning (IDPL) Department. While CPD was a body that offered regular off-site professional development to school district employees, IDPL is a smaller body that provides curriculum information and resources for CCSD personnel. According to interviews with District personnel, about \$10M in resources from the old CPD was delivered to schools as a result of the administrative change, and schools across the district are using the funding to help provide job-embedded professional development.³⁷

³⁶ Again, this information comes from the 2016 CCSD CAFR.

³⁷ The 2016 CCSD CAFR would seem to corroborate statements given in interviews. From 2014-2016 CPD/IDPL's budget has shrank from \$32.3M to \$12.7. In the 2016-17 school year, CCSD cut \$10.08M from this department's budget.

Previous Efficiency, Reorganization, and Strategic Efforts

CCSD routinely works with outside consultants and agencies to demonstrate and implement continuous improvement processes. In the past several years, CCSD has independently requested several audits, efficiency, and effectiveness reviews. Concurrently and in addition to, CCSD has been required to submit formal reports to the State of Nevada via the State Board of Education, Legislative Counsel Bureau, and a variety of local stakeholders, including federal and granting authorities with contractual requirements.³⁸

A cursory review of two efficiency studies supports a greater understanding of how CCSD can approach the work of implementing R142-16. The recommendations made in The Gibson Report and the MGT of America Report reflect an intent of both District personnel and outside stakeholders to inject efficiency measures into the fabric of CCSD's culture. A review of these documents may provide a first step in thinking about how to support the implementation of R142-16. What follows is a brief synopsis of both documents:

MGT of America Inc. Report

In January 2006, the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau contracted with MGT of America, Inc., to conduct a Financial Management Review of the Clark County School District (CCSD). The review focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of CCSD.

During the week of April 24, 2006, a team of 15 consultants conducted the formal on-site review of the CCSD. MGT examined:

- District Organization and Management

³⁸ More than a dozen formal reports have been submitted to the Legislative Council Bureau from CCSD since 2014, according to a request made by the consultant team to the Legislative Council Bureau.

- Personnel Management and Employee Health Benefits
- Financial Management
- Purchasing, Warehousing, and Fixed Assets
- Educational Service Delivery
- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Computers and Technology
- Food Service

CCSD received numerous accolades from MGT of America, but it also received advice on how the District follow best practices, as well as several recommendations for investments. Key recommendations in the report that directly align with investing in systems were either delayed or scrapped because of funding. Those recommendations, which were made 10 years ago, may directly impact the successful implementation of R142-16. They include:

12.3 Analyze the total technology related budget in order to make benchmark comparisons.

12.7 Review each stand-alone application along with current business processes to ensure that the new ERP system can automate the majority, if not all, of those stand-alone systems while verifying that ongoing processes are streamlined for optimum efficiencies and staff productivity.

Additional recommendations included in the report outlined strategies for cost savings, many of which included changing current service delivery models. Savings associated with MGT of America recommendations exceed \$450 million (after one-time costs). Further analysis would require detailed interviews and documentation from project managers to establish the status of enactment of each of the recommendations. And, because the report is 10 years old, the data may be subject to criticism and may not be available.

CCSD Reorganization under Jones Administration

After a national search in 2010, CCSD appointed Dwight D. Jones to the role of Superintendent, and he immediately set about a major reform and reorganization effort at the District. In 2011, Jones released “A Look Ahead,” which profiled his strategic imperatives. The strategy included several reorganization reforms focused in the Instruction Division. Those reforms included:

- A different view on Empowerment Schools, studying them through a Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Empowerment, with the aim of providing Empowerment to schools who were performing well rather than an intervention to assist struggling schools.
- The realignment of the Area Service Center structure to a Performance Zone structure, where feeder pattern aligned schools would have a single supervisor
- An Autonomous Zone, where schools that were already academically successful could enjoy minimal oversight.

Jones’ efforts at a reorganization came in the face of a dire budgetary situation and a tumultuous political situation. In 2009, Nevada’s budget deficit was \$887M, 22% of the overall state budget. To remedy the situation, legislators cobbled together, over the Governor Jim Gibbons’ veto, a \$782M temporary tax package. That, combined with federal aid from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), left Nevada with a \$6.8B general fund over the next two years.³⁹ Due to the reductions, CCSD cut its full-day Kindergarten program, halved its textbook funds, shrank its administrative unit, and cut more than 1,000 positions over two years.⁴⁰ In 2011, under Governor Sandoval, the budgetary situation had gotten worse. The state’s budget was facing

³⁹ “Veto override record broken as Legislature approves budget.” Las Vegas Review-Journal: May 31, 2009.

⁴⁰ Per a presentation by former CFO Jim McIntosh in 2013, CCSD cut more than \$500M from its budget from 2009-2013.

another deficit, in part because of the depletion of ARRA subsidies,⁴¹ and institutions that had already endured two years of steep budget cuts were bracing for even more. In that context, the Gibson Report was created.

The Gibson Report

The Gibson Report was a \$900,000 academic and operational efficiency study conducted by Gibson Consulting, LLC. The study was commissioned and conducted over a period of three months on behalf of the school district and with the cooperation of Superintendent Jones. The intent of the study was to examine CCSD structures and processes and recommend operational and educational efficiencies, with a core focus on increasing student achievement. The study was not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of CCSD's efficiency, but rather to identify major areas that the district should focus on to increase efficiency and effectiveness in its educational programs and operational services. The study focused on the following areas:

- A student performance analysis was conducted through two separate research efforts by American Institutes for Research (AIR), a subcontractor to Gibson for the study.
- Academic programs and services were analyzed in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness in supporting the academic needs and priorities of CCSD in a cost-effective manner. The review included curriculum development and implementation, teacher professional development, student assessment, school operations, and specific academic programs.
- A budget process review evaluated the effectiveness of the budget process in allocating district resources to meet CCSD needs and priorities. The transparency of the budget document – the ability to justify and effectively communicate district spending levels – was also evaluated.
- The operational review analyzed areas including district organization and management, financial management, human resources, technology, facilities

⁴¹ More than \$900M in state stabilization and other ARRA subsidies were used over the 2009 biennium. By the 2011 biennium, Nevada had \$400M in ARRA funds left, creating a large budget gap in 2011, according to the Nevada News Bureau.

management, transportation and food services to identify opportunities to reduce costs and/or improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these units. The operational review also evaluated global organizational and management elements of CCSD, including how decisions are made.

Summary of Gibson Recommendations Relevant to R142-16

Operational Efficiency

Gibson found that “while CCSD has very lean staffing levels in several major operational areas due to efficient operations, other factors contribute to cost levels above industry standards and benchmarks.”

Gibson Report Evaluations of Operational Efficiency of Departments

- Custodial Services – High Productivity, High Cost.
- Building Maintenance – Low Productivity, Low Cost.
- Energy Management – More Opportunities to Reduce Costs
- Food Services – High Productivity, Costs Under-represented.
- Transportation – Moderate Productivity, More Opportunities to Reduce Costs.
- Finance and Purchasing – Improved Productivity, More Opportunities Exist.

Human Resources and Student Information Systems

About the district’s human resources and student information systems, Gibson wrote “they are decades old, functionally obsolete, and are not integrated with the district’s finance systems. These outdated mainframe systems (and the lack of integration) require significant resources to maintain, and contribute to extensive manual and paper-intensive procedures.” Gibson went on to explain that, due to financial constraints, CCSD halted the implementation of a complete Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) suite of software. CCSD is in a similar or worse position today as it operates off these same systems that have only grown more outdated. This reality fundamentally limits its ability to measure return on investment (ROI) for programs and departments and extensive manual entry functionally inhibits the district from allocating time to higher-level tasks like analysis.

Efficiencies, Repurposing, Cost Reductions, and Investments

Because the Gibson Report was written in the context of a dire financial situation, much of the report was devoted to finding near-term cost reductions and efficiencies.

However, several of the recommendations in the report directly relate to the implementation of R142-16.

They include:

- Investing in an “enterprise data management framework to support data integrity, consistency, and data-driven decision making throughout the district”
- “Follow through with the decision to implement the district’s human resources/payroll system and integrate it with the finance system to improve operating efficiency and data quality.”
- “Increase the capacity of the district’s program evaluation unit to support the collection and analysis of program and intervention data so that the district can measure its academic ROI in specific programs at the student-, class-, grade-, school-, performance zone-, and district-levels.”

Gibson Report Recommendations Related to R142-16

Each of these recommendations was made but not implemented by the district. The Consulting Team does not endorse these recommendations; merely, this list serves to note that these recommendations existed in 2011:

- 4.5. Enhance transparency and usefulness of the budget document by presenting budgets at functional and school levels, and by providing explanations of major budget and staffing variances
- 5-5.3. Outsource selected landscaping tasks to perform additional needed services at the same cost.
- 5-5.16. Outsource of custodial services operation to a private service firm.
- 5-6.3. Develop guidelines to facilitate the least restrictive mode of transportation for special needs students.
- 5-6.4. Consider outsourcing transportation service to reduce total cost
- 4.6. Consider the purchase of budgeting module after upgrade of Human Resources legacy systems.
- 5-2.3. Create a position of Technology Buyer to assist with technology purchasing in the district.
- 5-4.3. Fully implement the Human Resource and Payroll modules of SAP.
- 5-6.3. Develop guidelines to facilitate the least restrictive mode of transportation for special needs students.
- 5-6.4. Consider outsourcing transportation service to reduce total cost

Status of Gibson Report Recommendations

‘Over the course of the Jones Administration, many of the recommendations in the Gibson Report were acted upon. TSC² requested of CCSD a status of implementation of recommendations made within the Gibson Report as part of our analysis. A two-page document was provided with the following statement:

“The following items from the Educational and Operational Efficiency Study by the Gibson Consulting Group, LLC are in process or have been implemented by the Clark County School District. This list represents over 75% of the report’s recommendations.”

Though the document was vague, it did inform the consulting team’s progress with the efficiency recommendations, and informed the list on the previous page.⁴² Due to limitations put on the consulting team in the initial phases of this analysis, the reasons the other Gibson recommendations were not implemented are unknown at this time.

“Ensuring Every Dollar Counts” Initiative

In 2014, CCSD embarked on an effort to measure return on investment for school district operations. Under the direction of Superintendent Skorkowsky, the district formed a committee of business people, community members and school district personnel called the Superintendent’s Executive Advisory Group. The group, co-chaired by Skorkowsky and LVGEA Chair Emeritus Glenn Christenson, now the chair of the Community Implementation Council, looked at ways the District could determine a return on investment measure for departments and academic programs. The district also took a deep dive into a method of comparing investments and outcomes at local schools. The effort enlisted business leaders and district administrators to lead each one of the efforts:

⁴² The list of implemented Gibson Report recommendations is included in the Appendix

- A departmental evaluation committee which looked at District purchasing practices led by Deputy Superintendent Kim Wooden and Hugh Anderson from Hightower Investments
- A program evaluation committee led by Deputy Chief Financial Officer Nikki Thorn and Glenn Christenson from Velstand Investments
- A school comparison report committee, led by Dr. Mike Barton and Brent Husson, a businessman who is also the Executive Director of the nonprofit group Nevada Succeeds

At the end of the first stage of the effort, three technical reports were released that informed school district policy around efficiency, and they were released under the Superintendent's "Ensuring Every Dollar Counts" initiative.⁴³ The Departmental Evaluation report laid out a framework for assessing departmental efficiency in the central administration and was included as part of the District's Audit procedures. The Program Evaluation report laid out a process through which programs, such as curriculum packages, could be evaluated in terms of their return on investment. Finally, the School Evaluation report sought to describe the link of investment on school performance. The effort, assisted by Professor Jonathan Katz from CalTech and spearheaded by Lincy Institute Consultant Ken Turner, ultimately resulted in an analysis that revealed which schools in the district yielded "better results than expected, given their expenditures and school demography." To achieve this, the District went through a painstaking process, given the limitations of its accounting systems, to compile actual expenditures in schools and compare them to the average performance of schools, based upon the Nevada School Performance Framework. While the work did identify the schools that had "high [relative to what would be expected given demography] performance schools that operate at low cost," the study raised "more questions than answers." It also highlighted the limitations of the approach, given the district's method of allocation of resources and its accounting systems.⁴⁴

⁴³ These reports are still on the front page of ccscd.net at the time of the writing of this report.

⁴⁴ Quotes taken from "School Comparison Subcommittee Report." Clark County School District: January 8, 2015.

PART ONE CONCLUSION: Previous Recommendations and Experiences Inform the Implementation of R142-16

The MGT and Gibson studies make several recommendations that are relevant to the implementation of the R142-16, while a review of the Jones Reorganization and the Ensuring Every Dollar Counts Initiative inform the long history of self-initiated efficiency and empowerment efforts within the district. These reports, along with the interviews and surveys, help inform the consulting team of the environment in which the regulations are being implemented. From the previous experiences, the Consulting Team can glean three major challenges to the implementation of R142-16:

- Antiquated financial and human capital management systems
- The presence of organizational silos contributing to disjointed communication and decision-making
- Difficulty in the implementation of general initiatives due to a poor data environment.

Each one of these challenges is summarized in the next section.

Quotes from interviews about CCSD's current enterprise technology systems

- “There are a lot of systems – HR, Payroll, EMR – that should talk to each other and none of them do. So it takes a long time for things to get through the process.”
- “Trying to figure out where we are with the dollars – because it is all manual work. The financial system is split between Finance and HR. We need to get a new system. We pulled the plug on new systems because funding wasn't there. Now it requires more time and more people to get it done.”
- “[ERP system] has multiple different products, many of which are not compatible and don't communicate between each other. There's multiple databases on different systems. It is a collection of some old, some new, and almost all bad systems.”
- “The lack of an integrated system ... seriously affects turnaround time with decision-making and implementation time.”

Financial and Human Capital Management Systems

To support the successful implementation of AB 394 the appropriate financial and human capital management systems (HCMS) need to be in place to adequately track funding and staffing and teacher evaluation. During the 2006 MGT study, the District was amid implementing a new SAP Enterprise Resource Planning system, which included an HCMS. Several modules within the HCMS portion of SAP were never implemented. Five years later, the 2011 Gibson Study made an explicit recommendation that the District fully implement the human resource and payroll modules of SAP, however that recommendation was not implemented.

Over the course of the reorganization effort, the Superintendent has repeatedly asserted that the district needs a new HCMS and has alluded to the fact that the current HCMS, the same one that was slated to be replaced in 2006, is based off COBOL architecture. COBOL is a programming language popular in the 1970s that is difficult and expensive to maintain.⁴⁵ Administrators interviewed echoed the Superintendent's assessment. One employee interviewed said, "A new HCMS system is desperately needed." Additional comments from TSC² interviews support this thinking. Here, the Administrators and efficiency consultants agree: The lack of funding and organizational support for critical Human Capital and Technology systems have created numerous obstacles to organizational efficiency.

Organizational Silos Contributing to Disjointed Communication and Decision Making

Previous consultants have identified challenges that lead the consultant team to believe organizational silos are a consistent challenge for CCSD. The Gibson Report highlights one impact of organizational silos, which we believe provide insight into challenges with successfully implementing R142-16. Gibson writes:

⁴⁵ Per the consulting team's research, this recommendation has been made at every Advisory Committee hearing that CCSD participated in.

“The existence of organizational silos, driven primarily by different funding sources, has contributed to an excessive number of academic programs, interventions, assessments, and staff professional development programs in CCSD. It appears that decisions have been made without coordination under a single district philosophy, and departments and schools have had the freedom to purchase or select programs on their own.”

Siloed communication and decision making are common in large organizations, and the scale of the siloed communication has been on display during the AB394 Reorganization effort. According to interviews with district personnel, a large internal team of administrators at CCSD has been fervently working towards ensuring the school site administrators are prepared to develop organizational teams and strategic budgets as dictated by the regulation. Their communication accomplishments are clear in the online environment. Their focus to this point has been on schools. While these administrators’ efforts have been commendable, there has not been a focus on resources needed to prepare the department leaders. One administrator commented, “at some point, there needs to be more communication with the central support.” Another commented on the challenge of “working in silos” and a “lack of communication” while principals are gearing up for the new roles. “I feel the operations side of the house is under represented when decisions are made,” was a sentiment that appeared to be consistent with those administrators who represent a function not directly impacting student achievement.

Difficulty in General Implementation because of a Poor Data Environment

The poor data environment is a general theme in many reports about the efficiency of the district. Both the MGT Report and the Gibson Report refer to the difficulty in gleaning information from the district. Generally, the Gibson and MGT of America Reports highlight a culture that supports student achievement but struggles to prioritize operational support systems – which leads directly to a poor data environment. This continues to be the case today.

Because multiple systems, many of them made from constituent parts of other systems, support administrative functions and do not talk with each other, the District has trouble with even the simplest of data requests. This reality has also complicated previous efforts to implement efficiency recommendations.

ANALYSIS – PART TWO

Part Two of this analysis provides an analysis of the status of the implementation, as well as an analysis of the technical, cultural, and policy challenges to the implementation of R142-16.

Status of R142-16 Implementation

The Clark County School District began to implement the new law once regulations were finalized at the state level in September 2016, following more than a year of public meetings in which concepts embedded in the regulations were discussed. It should be noted here that, under normal circumstances, CCSD would likely have prepared to implement this law once it became clear that policymakers were going in a certain direction, but due to political issues, CCSD was delayed in starting the work of the implementation. One source of those political issues were the negative feelings of the CCSD trustees toward the regulation, as manifested by an order that the CCSD Superintendent not participate in certain meetings about the regulation until the Board of School Trustees had officially taken a policy position on the approved regulations.⁴⁶ At publication of this report, the trustees have still made no official endorsement of the reorganization, although several individual trustees spoke positively about aspects of the reorganization during a recent school board meeting on December 8, 2016. Meanwhile, the trustees have continued to also raise numerous concerns about the law and regulation implementing AB394. On November 9, 2016, the trustees sent to the State Board of Education a “Petition of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees to Amend Regulation R142-16, and for a Ruling on the Validity of the Regulation”⁴⁷ written by CCSD legal counsel Carlos McDade. They ask for several

⁴⁶ “Tensions flare during town hall meeting on Clark County School District reorganization.” Las Vegas Review-Journal: July 28, 2016.

⁴⁷ “Roberson accuses Board of Trustees of violating law for CCSD overhaul” Las Vegas Review Journal: Dec. 6, 2016. (attachment)

clarifications from the State Board that could invalidate the regulation. At the time of the writing of this report, the District had not received a response from the State Board.

Since it began its implementation process, the district has been diligent in attempting to raise awareness of the provisions of these regulations to relevant audiences while simultaneously directing training efforts to show employees how to implement the law.

The district established a website, <http://ab394.ccsd.net/>, as a landing page for information and training materials related to the law. The website currently hosts all training materials made available to staff and the public, according to interviews with district administrators.

According to documents CCSD provided, trainings thus far have been broken down into audience categories as follows: Assistant Chiefs/ School Associate Superintendents; Principals; Teachers, Support Staff, Parents, and Community; School Organizational Teams.

District communications about the new law have been included on the website mentioned above, social media, trustee meetings and newsletters, newsletters to parents, Infinite Campus updates, employee newsletters, Vegas PBS productions, earned media stories, and various other communications channels at the district's disposal, according to district communications tracking documents provided to the consultant team.

Based on surveys, interviews, and conversations with district personnel and principals, that there is a high degree of awareness about the basic parameters of the reorganization. More targeted communications, however, have focused on School Organizational Teams (SOTs). Due to impending deadlines for the formation of SOTs, much of the scope of the communications, trainings, and operational shifts at the district have been in response to these deadlines.

To effectuate a successful roll-out of the SOTs, the district has followed the letter of the regulation and worked with labor unions representing teachers and support staff to conduct elections for SOTs. The teacher election had the participation of more than 10,000 licensed professionals, and successfully identified more than 800 individuals to serve on their local SOTs, per testimony from Clark County Education Association director John Vellardita during a Dec. 2 CCSD school board work session.⁴⁸ Similar elections were held among members of the support staff association. In addition, the district worked with parent groups and principals to help ensure school-level elections were held to elect parent representatives to the school teams. At the time of the writing of this report, over 85% of schools have elected support staff SOT members, and 100% of schools have elected teacher SOT members. The percentage of schools that have elected parent SOT members will be reported in mid-December, 2016, according to an interview with CCSD.

In support of the SOTs, the district has produced training videos and written materials for principals, staff, and parents about shared decision-making, SOT roles and responsibilities. The district has also incorporated SOTs into its thinking for annual staff, parent, and student surveys that are being administered now and will be available for SOTs to reference as they begin to meet in January, 2017.⁴⁹ Additional trainings will be needed as the SOTs begin to meet in early 2017.

Over the course of October and November, CCSD created the School Associate Superintendent (SAS) position and conducted a complete hiring process for sixteen individuals. The hiring process included participation from the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and Henderson. Nine of the sixteen individuals came from similar roles in the CCSD central administration, while five were CCSD principals promoted to new positions.⁵⁰ In establishing the SAS role, Superintendent Skorkowsky closely followed the framework given to the state by Michael Strembitsky, a contributor to this project.

⁴⁸ A member of the consulting team was present for this interaction; however, the minutes of the meeting have not been released at the time of the writing of this report.

⁴⁹ Per a District news release, SOTs will use survey data to inform School Performance Plans.

⁵⁰ Per district personnel, through interviews.

The SASs participated in a two-day retreat and training with the Superintendent and his executive staff in mid-November, and each of the SASs have been enrolled in an ongoing training at the Public Education Foundation, thanks in part to a grant provided by the philanthropic arm of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation.⁵¹

While a great deal of information has been distributed related to the Instruction side of CCSD, little activity has been undertaken as it relates to the Operations and Central Services side of the district. In the consultant team's opinion, this has occurred for two primary reasons:

- Key district personnel detailed to the implementation of R142-16 have prioritized the instruction side because regulatory implementation timelines involved early deadlines for the formation of SOTs. Furthermore, this work is more straight-forward, affects more people, and is work that is familiar to many administrators.
- Key district personnel who need to engage in the tough decisions around the Central Services reorganization have either been engaged in assisting the Board of School Trustees in its effort to raise awareness of aspects of the regulation they find troubling; or appear to have been constrained by internal organizational dynamics from moving forward in earnest.

Internal organizational dynamics were briefly on display at the December 7, 2016 Board of School Trustees Work Session. At the session, Superintendent Skorkowsky reminded the Board of School Trustees that he had advised them of his intention to appoint a Chief Operating Officer and expand the role of the Deputy Superintendent. He originally intended to appoint these key personnel in late October, but he reported that several members of the board independently expressed opposition to the move in private. To date, these positions have not been appointed.⁵² In addition, in emails to the Superintendent, individual Board of School Trustee members discussed at the

⁵¹ "Sands Cares Donates \$160k for Training in New CCSD Positions." Las Vegas Review-Journal: November 30, 2016.

⁵² Minutes for this meeting were not available at the time of this report's writing; however, members of the consulting team were in the audience at this public meeting.

December 7th meeting appear to have attempted to direct the Superintendent to cease working with the consultant team assisting with the implementation.⁵³

Aside from personnel appointments, CCSD has begun to identify challenges in devolving service delivery responsibilities to the school precinct level, but there is not yet a clear schedule or plan detailing how district operations will change under the law.

Challenges in Implementing R142-16

The Clark County School District is the county's largest employer and a service provider to approximately 320,000 students. It has continued to operate without large, systemic failures through years of successive rounds of budget cuts. The following section addresses challenges to implementing the regulations implementing R142-16. This fundamental problem identification exercise is very important for the future work of the consultant team and the CIC. It should not, however, be read as a negative view of either the school district or the law. In fact, as noted below, one pervasive challenge is a corrosive negative perception of the school district.

This should be dispelled up front before delving into the specific challenges standing before the implementation of R142-16. Communitywide, there are many untold success stories at CCSD. The district is ranked as one of the fastest improving in relation to other large school districts.⁵⁴ Its magnet and career and technical academies consistently receive high marks on national achievement rankings, and graduation rates have been on the rise.

One key asset in this vision is the leadership of Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky, who is a strong instructional leader who has earned the respect of both the education and

⁵³ "Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky confronts CCSD trustees on role in district overhaul." Las Vegas Review-Journal: December 7, 2016.

⁵⁴ "Superintendent: CCSD is making progress implementing action plan." Clark County School District: Jan. 26, 2015

business communities. In addition to the above successes, he has demonstrated business savvy by knowing when to ask for help and asking for the right kind of help, as evidenced by the formation of groups like the Superintendent's Executive Advisory Group. Stability in the Superintendent's office throughout discussion, approval, and implementation of R142-16 has been and will be critical in implementing the decentralization process.

During the past two years, the Superintendent and his leadership team have implemented a historic number of new programs funded by the Legislature's largescale funding and reform laws passed last legislative sessions. This follows reforms in 2013 and past legislative sessions and several years of budget cuts prior to the 2013 session. Through all this change, district personnel have worked overtime to comply with legislative mandates, budget cuts, and additional district-level initiatives. It must be noted in this section that CCSD deserves accolades for addressing the complex problems presented by these various actions. Although it is later pointed out as a challenge to implementation, the consultant team also believes that the district's innovative efforts to address challenges deserve to be mentioned as a success, especially in the context of compliance with past mandates.

The following section relies on surveys of administrators and principals and a focus group involving key department leaders heavily involved in the implementation of R142-16. Given their differing roles, these challenges are broken out among these three groups. Although many challenges are identified, the consultant team firmly believes that the right team is in place and that implementation should continue along the current timeline.

To identify some of the current challenges in implementing R142-16, the consulting team conducted interviews, surveys, and focus groups with key administrators and school principals. In all, the team personally interviewed 36 individuals and received online survey responses back from 260 individuals. Based on these interviews, the challenges and barriers to successfully implementing R142-16 are not yet clear, but as

time passes and as CCSD becomes more engrained in the work, challenges are emerging.

As challenges emerge, CCSD Administrators are considering changing the way they do business – while still performing day-to-day functions of managing CCSD. While solutions to concerns expressed by CCSD Administrators are being developed, the intent of this section is to articulate what are perceived to be the greatest challenges so that as the process moves forward, solutions can embrace the reality of a significant cultural change.

Challenges Identified through the Principal Survey

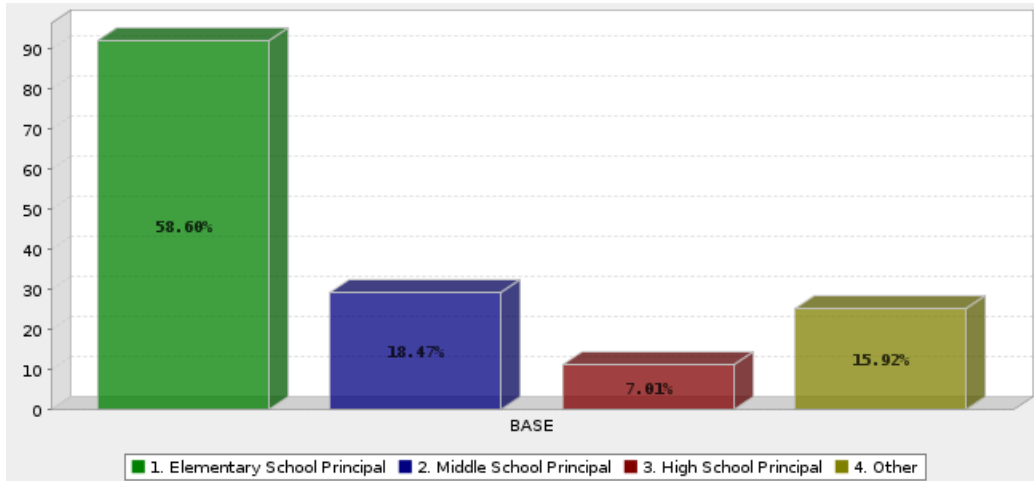
The Consultant Team administered a 20-question survey to principals and school-level administrators to gauge direct sentiment of the building-level administrators who will be integral to the success of AB394. The results indicate that significant work remains for the CCSD administration and trustees to build confidence in principals around this implementation process. Most respondents to this survey feel discouraged and unprepared for implementation of AB394, and most feel unconfident in their ability to correctly implement the law. Nonetheless, most respondents said that CCSD could be more efficient in the delivery of services to schools. Greater clarity will be necessary in the coming months to demonstrate exactly what and how services may be devolved to local school precincts to align with the decentralized model put forward in AB394.

Methodology

The consultant team conducted an online survey from December 6-8. The survey was delivered for distribution from CCSD to administrators in November but was held for review of the Clark County School Board of Trustees. The Consultant Team was notified December 6 that the survey had been distributed. It was closed December 8 to allow for sufficient time to review, analyze, and write this section. The consultant team would have preferred to leave the survey open to collect more than the 160 responses

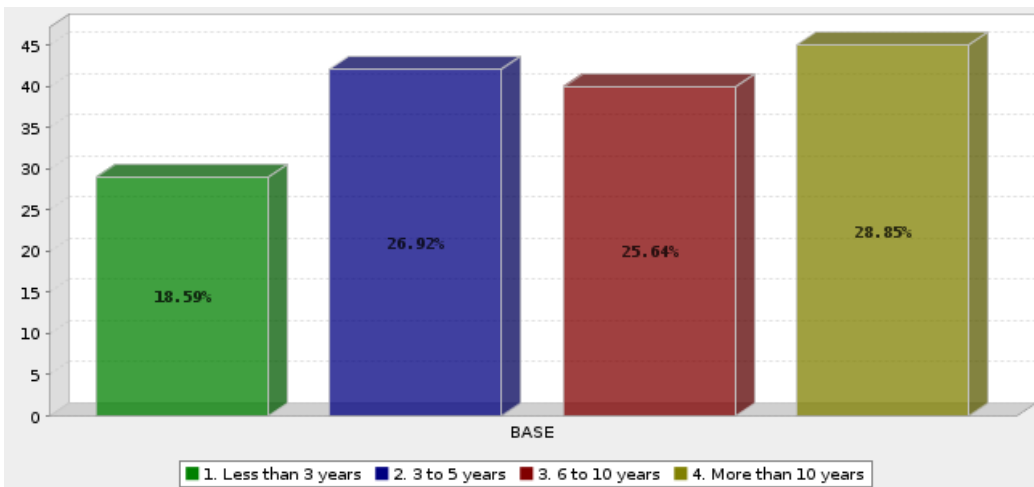
received, but the political dynamics with the trustees served to shorten the analysis phase. Responses to this survey were voluntary and anonymous.

Responses



The survey population reflected a mix of principals at different school levels. More than 95 percent of the respondents stated that they have worked at CCSD for at least 10 years, although time spent as a principal varied, as shown in the figure below.

How long have you been a principal in the Clark County School District?



Do you believe CCSD is prepared to implement AB394?

When asked if they “believe CCSD is prepared to implement AB394,” 69 percent replied “no” while 31 percent replied “yes.”

Many of those who reported that they did feel prepared to implement the law said that they already had some ad-hoc form of SOTs in place prior to the advent of AB394 or feel confident in the work they have done to-date to prepare for AB394 implementation. They also feel that trainings have been adequate. Many report feeling excited about leadership opportunities through AB394 implementation.

Among those who did not report feeling prepared to implement the law, there is a predominant sentiment that the implementation is moving at a pace that is “just too much, too fast.” Most of the principal training CCSD has delivered has pertained to SOT *formation*; yet many principals report feeling unprepared for the oncoming *operation* of SOTs and fear misaligned expectations will lead to poorly functioning teams. For instance, a consistent theme among principals is that many “believe not all stakeholders realize (SOT) is ADVISORY to the principal.”

Principals on CCSD Preparedness to Implement the Regulation

“About 70% sure the district is prepared to implement AB394. At the school site, we are doing the work to implement the law. It seems we are getting adequate information from the district. We have held elections and positions have been filled with much enthusiasm and anticipation. The concern comes in at the district level, specifically the school board. The concern is with their lack of support of AB394 and the politics behind it. It seems it is going to either cause us to unite or splinter into different directions with only private and charter schools picking up the frustrated students and win over the angry parents.”

“I feel like we have taken on too many projects in a short time with little training. To be fully ready to implement this huge undertaking, I believe we need to have 'real' training, as well as the time to train our staff members. This hasn't been done in a thorough manner yet.”

Do you feel encouraged by the work of AB394?

About 56 percent of principals reported feeling that they were not “encouraged by the work of AB394” while 44 percent reported that the work did encourage them.

Those who do not feel encouraged by the new law report several themes of discouragement. Some who are already operating ad-hoc site-based governance teams feel that the AB394 efforts are duplicative of what already exists at their school site. Others are concerned about compressed deadlines for implementation and misaligned expectations of what serving on a SOT will and will not be like. Additionally, some who feel discouraged by the

implementation of the law report that they are concerned about additional state mandates and the politics of both the Board of School Trustees and the Legislature regarding the implementation of AB394. They would like sufficient time to fully implement the regulations before more major mandates or changes are made.

Those who are encouraged by the work report excitement about empowerment at their school sites. Themes of greater transparency and collaborative decision-making emerged among these respondents. Many reported that greater responsibility and

Principals: Are you encouraged by the work of AB394?

“Yes. It is the work that I have been doing since I became a leader in the building. Good leaders do what AB394 has outlined for the most part. It lets me know that my work has always been what is best for my team of stakeholders.”

“No. I feel encouraged by the original idea of AB394, that more resources and autonomy would be given to schools. When we are told that the resources we currently have are about the same as what we will get with the new system, that is disheartening.”

“No. It is discouraging to have so many unanswered questions. It makes me, as a leader, feel unqualified to lead my staff, students and community.”

“Yes. I think making more decisions at the school level is appropriate. I believe strongly in local control. Most decisions should be made at the school level. Not at the state level.”

accountability at the school level can create an improved culture and climate that brings the overall school community closer to the reality of what happens at the school-site level. Many saw direct ties between local control and greater student achievement.

How do you feel AB394 will encourage greater student achievement?

Principals said that team decision-making and the flexibility to address individual student and community needs will help drive student achievement at their schools. Typical responses included principals who said that “with more local control at the school, the possibility of meeting the individual needs of students increases” and that “more flexibility and autonomy over budget will allow schools to implement plans and utilize funds to meet the needs of students and move achievement forward.” Several principal responses also aligned with department administrator sentiments that AB394 “will bring the community together to get a better sense of how schools work and that will create a deeper appreciation of teaching and learning.”

A significant number of principals reported that they are either not sure that AB394 will encourage student achievement or outright deny that AB394 will have any positive effect and may incidentally have a negative effect on student achievement.

What challenges do you foresee in implementing AB394 at the school level?

Principals forecast a variety of challenges in implementing AB394, although some central themes emerged in the survey. Many report a general sentiment that more time and more training would be nice to have. Others report concerns about SOT formation and operations. There are logistical concerns about finding members to serve on SOTs and scheduling time for meetings, and there are operating concerns regarding management of expectations by “making sure parents and students understand the role of the School Organizational Team as an advisory board,” not a body that has broad decision-making powers. Although most principal-level trainings have been dedicated to SOT formation, there are emerging concerns over site-level management and the upcoming Jan. 15 deadline for CCSD to report out central service responsibilities and budgetary information.

Are there Central services currently being provided at your school that you think could be provided more efficiently?

A 57-percent majority of school precinct leaders reported that they did believe there are Central services that can be provided more effectively. As AB394 institutes mechanisms for the devolution of certain services from the central office to the school level, it appears clear among this sample of building leaders that there is a desire for greater efficiency in service delivery.

What services do you think could be provided more efficiently?

Responses to the question revealed a high level of variation. Principals generally tended to list departments and divisions that have direct connections to school-site operations and instruction. These include Operations Support Unit divisions and departments, including Facilities, Maintenance and Operations, Grounds and Landscaping, and Food Service. On the instructional side, several reported concerns about the Student Services Division.

Are there Central services provided at your school that are critical to your success and should NOT be altered?

An overwhelming majority of respondents, 78 percent, said that there are certain central services that should not be altered. This appears to comport with the regulations implementing AB394. The District has not yet released detailed information about which services will remain centralized, but Regulation R142-16 lists certain functions that must remain centralized unless the Superintendent determines that it will serve the best interests of pupils to transfer additional authority to local school precincts.

Given that we have not reached the Jan. 15 deadline by which the District must inform site-level administrators about potential devolution of services, there is a high degree of uncertainty around the process. For instance, despite complaints about inefficiencies within the Operations Support Unit, there is not a consensus or complete understanding as to what devolution would entail. As such, concerns emerge: “I cannot get a definitive

Principals: What central services would you like to control at the school level?

“Specific and creative use of staff units, not just the minimal allowed and afforded because of my allocated budget. Also, I’d like ANY situation where I can get a better price on materials or physical maintenance, improvements, and repairs.”

“Landscaping is something I believe we could control, as well as making basic repairs to the facility.”

“None. I am the instructional leader, not a maintenance person. I don't have time to deal with this.”

answer if maintenance must be fund(ed) from the school site with this new plan. If so, older buildings are at a severe disadvantage.”

What Central services would you personally like to control as the principal at a local school precinct level? Please be specific in describing your priorities.

Many principals stated that they would like more control of operational and instructional responsibilities such as curriculum, budgeting, staffing, custodial, grounds and maintenance, and professional development.

Responses range from “none” to “I'd like it all except for anything related to food service.” The most consistent theme,

however, is uncertainty. Principals stated that they would like to better understand what CCSD is offering by way to devolved services and what options exist for them and at what cost vis-à-vis budget allocations. Principals consistently note that they do not want to become building managers. But they also note that "I need to know what options would exist for electrical work, plumbing, landscaping, other special projects, before offering an opinion.”

This is a question that could be asked of principals again following further development of options, proposals, and budget numbers.

Do you have adequate staff with sufficient training at your school to feel confident in your ability to correctly implement AB394?

Approximately 54 percent of respondents reported that they do not feel like they have adequate staff with sufficient training to feel confident in implementing AB394.

Conversely, about 46 percent did feel confident in their school's abilities to implement AB394.

Many who responded positively to this question drew on experience with similar initiatives or ad-hoc organizational teams they had already created. For instance, one

principal wrote that “(for more than a decade) we have used consensus and shared decision making for decisions that affect the staff. As a result, the staff is stable and we have a base of teacher leaders who know how to use these strategies.” Another reported: “I have many years of empowerment experience.”

Others felt like there has not been enough time and training to develop confidence in their abilities to correctly implement AB394. “I can't keep up with the current expectations and responsibilities,” said one. Another reported that more basic training is necessary: “The office manager, admin team, and I need strategic budget workbook training. We have had none or minimal. I usually phone a colleague for assistance.”

Administrator comments on Timeline:

“We are short staffed already and working on our daily work and the AB394 timeline is fast-moving. We are missing money and people.”

“Too fast, little information, schools are NOT ready or trained for upcoming responsibilities AND will the schools even be held accountable AND HOW?”

“...It seemed to be talked about for a great length of time, then, suddenly, it was thrust upon us with a deadline that was too quick for it to be effective.”

“I am encouraged, but cautious. There is the potential for schools to do big things with student achievement and parent involvement, but there are still a lot of unknowns. This is being pushed through very quickly.”

“Unsure of what Central Office role will be or look like -Movement has been too quick and unorganized -Concerned about site administrators actually knowing the values of services they have in their buildings.”

“My concern is that it (AB394) was so fast. Anytime you do things fast, you miss things. But you have to weigh that against if we don't do it now, somebody is going to muck this up and ... and we're never going to get to it.”

Challenges Identified through Administrator Data Collection

Consistent over multiple interviews and online surveys, several themes emerged which provide some context about how key players are feeling about R142-16.

Timeline of Implementation

In many of the interviews and throughout data collected by surveys, CCSD Administrators commented on the hurried nature of the legislation and the implementation process. Almost uniformly, the timeline was perceived by administrators to be their top personal challenge. When surveyed, a majority of Administrators indicated support for the intentions of R142-16, but were not yet clear as to how it could impact their departments. It should be noted that CCSD administrators have faithfully met implementation deadlines to-date. There is, however, much concern about having enough time to fully implement systems by the beginning of the next school year.

Purchasing Laws and Regulations

There may be direct conflict between the intention of AB 394 and Nevada Revised Statutes and CCSD regulations related to purchasing. While R142-16 requires “accordance with applicable policies,” the legislation is broad and provides greater flexibility and autonomy to principals than has previously been considered in the CCSD empowerment model. The conflict exists in providing the principals authority to manage up to 80% of their budgets, including purchasing authority. Laws and regulations restrict purchasing authority by setting spending limits, limitations related to scale of purchases, and the requirement to provide opportunities for multiple and diverse vendors in transparent, competitive processes.

R142-16 Sec. 14 (c) provides:

2. “The Superintendent shall transfer to each local school precinct the authority to carry out the following responsibilities: Procurement of such equipment, services and supplies as the local school precinct deems necessary or advisable to carry out the plan of operation for the local school precinct. Equipment, services and supplies may be

procured from the School District or elsewhere, but must be carried out in accordance with the applicable policies of the School District.”

The intention of R142-16 provides greater autonomy to school principals in making decisions, which includes allocating funds for programs or services the principal believes will improve student achievement or realize greater efficiencies at the school level. However, Nevada Revised Statutes and CCSD policies don't necessarily support site-based funding decisions. The shift in culture may necessitate a change to CCSD regulations and additional resources to support a centralized purchasing function responsive to school principals.

Human Capital Management System (HCMS)

The lack of adequate technology has hindered efficient operations at CCSD for what appears to be more than a decade. This poses serious barriers to implementing R142-16.

In previous efficiency studies, recommendations have been made to update HCMS systems to support greater operational efficiency and a major cost savings. CCSD has failed to do this, and thus Administrators work in a data-poor environment. Data is a key factor in a successful organization, and it is vital in CCSD's transition to provide greater autonomy and accountability at the school level. This has a direct relationship to student achievement:

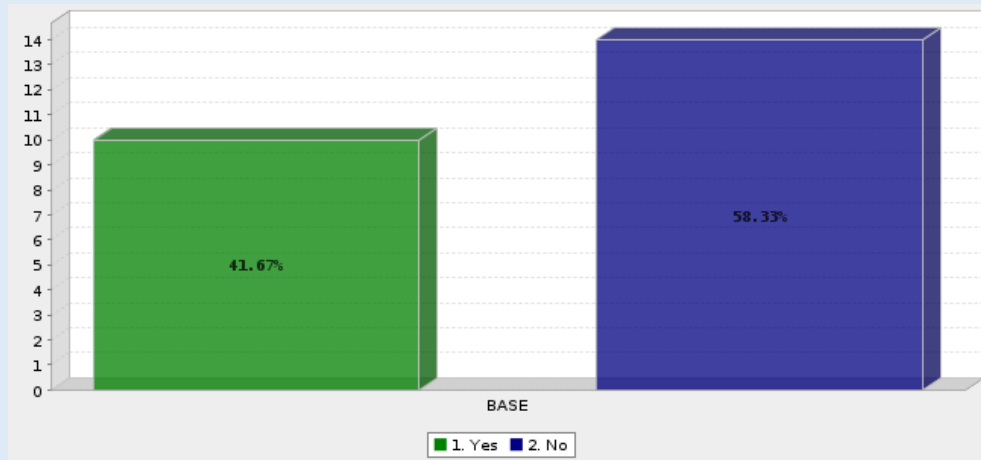
In her book, School Turnarounds: The Essential Role of School Districts, Heather Zavadsky (2013) notes that education and reform organizations have recently identified school district central offices to be the logical “catalyst and hub” for activating and managing the essential elements that are needed to raise student achievement. Zavadsky further notes that one of these essential elements is a “comprehensive performance management and accountability system” provided that the users have trust of and access to the data.

In interviews, it became apparent that a lack of data systems hinders effective decision-making. Complex budgetary decisions are being made from manually crafted Excel spreadsheets. And, the budgeting process, as described by CCSD Administrators, lacks sufficient analysis to support proactive decision-making. Funding and budgeting decisions appear to be made on the spot without consideration of future implications. For example, according to interviews and surveys with administrators, the failure to plan and budget for an HCMS system over the past decade has negatively impacted operational efficiencies without a clear understanding of impacts because of a lack of data.

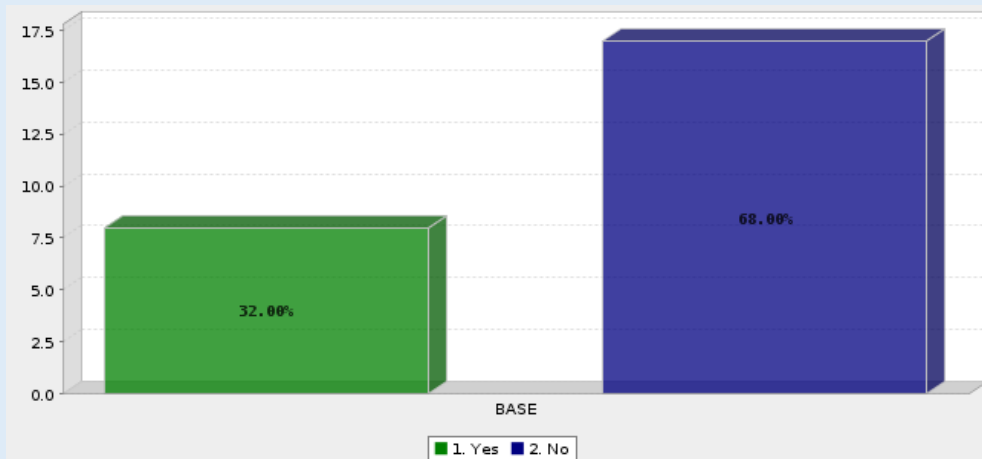
In addition, interviews with administrators also suggest that CCSD is using several different outdated databases that together lack basic interoperability. This creates additional inefficiencies because staff must manually do what well-functioning systems would do automatically. These inefficiencies are especially troubling because they affect both the day-to-day and strategic operations of key central offices such as budget/finance, human resources, and information technology. Administrators also articulated their concerns with implementation in an online survey conducted by TSC².

Responses from online surveys

Do you have the resources necessary to successfully implement AB 394?



Do you believe the district has the resources to implement AB 394?



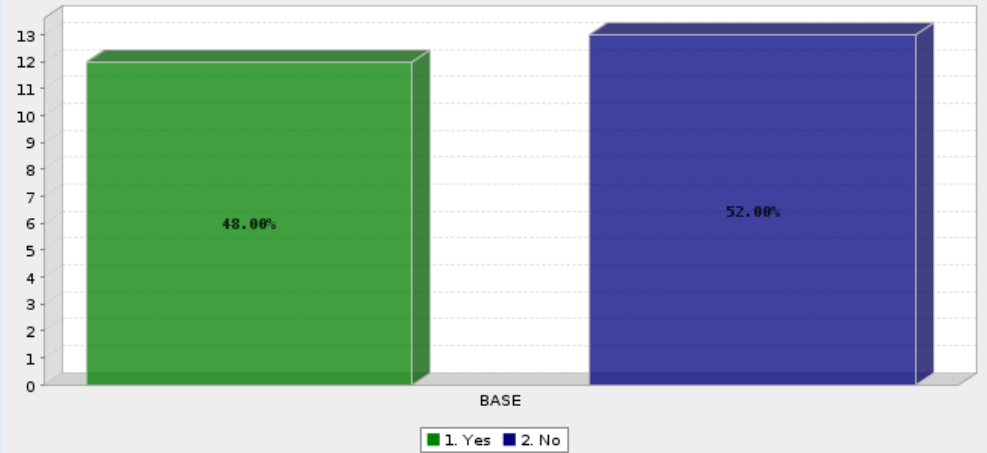
Decision Making and Authority

The capacity for CCSD leaders to make informed decisions in their business units is and will continue to be critical to the success of the central functions of CCSD. In interviews and validated by survey data, a high percentage of CCSD Administrators feel bogged down by the decision-making process. Comments about decision-making at the department level ranged from a lack of flexibility when dealing with employees — e.g. collective bargaining restraints on managing in a timely manner — to a lack of understanding of how to help their “boss” prioritize a budget request.

Related to decision-making at the administrative level is decision-making at the local school precinct level – and the fear that many administrators have that greater local school autonomy will adversely affect their departments in a variety of ways. If service providers in the Central Office are going to be successful, they will need the flexibility, autonomy, and data-driven analytical tools necessary to meet the needs of principals.

Our initial review demonstrates that many Administrators don't feel they have the resources they need to be successful or the capacity to make effective decisions in a timely manner.

Responses from online surveys
Does the current decision-making process in the Clark County School District allow for effective decisions to be made in a timely manner?



Challenges Identified through the Administrator Focus Group

During the 45-day analysis period, the Consultant Team conducted an all-day focus group with a cohort of key administrators responsible for various aspects of the reorganization. This group had an opportunity to not only help develop a vision for the work but also explore in-depth about the challenges around the Implementation.

Top Challenges to Implementation

Developing Policy around the Weighted Funding Formula

One of the central tenets of the Reorganization is the transformation of funding allocation methods within the District. Currently based upon formulas allocating by distribution of District personnel, the regulation prescribes a transition to a funding mechanism based upon the unique characteristics of individual students. This approach is known as a Weighted Funding Formula (WFF)

In the 2015 Nevada Legislature, two bills were passed that sought to imbue the WFF into school financing. R142-16 called for the Clark County School District to institute a WFF in the process of its reorganization. Parallel to this, SB508 called for the development of a WFF.

Regulations from SB508 prescribe that the Nevada Department of Education create a funding formula to be phased in over a period of years, whereas the AB394 regulations prescribe that the Nevada Department of Education and the Clark County School District agree to a funding formula and implement it in a period of one year. After reading the applicable regulations, the Nevada Department of Education concluded that they did not have a responsibility to create a WFF for CCSD, and instead, they advised CCSD to create their own funding formula and apply for a waiver from the Department to do so.

To meet the deadlines associated with R142-16, CCSD has been advised by NDE to create the WFF independently and seek a variance from the Department. To comply with the regulations, the entire process must be completed by January 15, 2017, when

the Superintendent is required to advise local school precincts of their expected funding allocations for the following year.

Optimizing Enterprise Technology to Create a Robust Data Environment

Robust accounting practices are required for CCSD to implement the AB394 regulation with fidelity; however, CCSD does not currently have the systems in place to monitor and track expenditures in a decentralized system.

CCSD currently operates from an incomplete Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system developed by SAP. Purchased in 2003, the complete SAP system was never fully implemented, though all components of the system are currently owned by CCSD. The SAP system was purchased to upgrade the existing mainframe systems, components of which are dependent on a cohort of specially trained COBOL programmers to function.⁵⁵

The use of these systems presents a major obstacle to the implementation of the reorganization. For example, per district personnel, in pursuit of the flex budgeting program, the District processes approximately 18,000 human resource forms for licensed teaching personnel by hand for manual entry into outdated databases each year to reconcile their accounts. With the appropriate resources and priorities for spending these resources, the district could obtain technology automating these processes, thereby freeing administrators to reallocate time to analysis and decision-making more directly related to student achievement. Many more such opportunities to improve the education delivery system have been identified. These are detailed later in the report.

As mentioned previously in this report, in 2011, the Gibson Report recommended the full implementation of the SAP system; at the time, the payroll, human resource management, and operations management component were owned but not

⁵⁵ These comments were made by multiple administrators in interviews with the consulting team.

implemented by CCSD. The Gibson Report estimated the cost of implementing these systems at \$10M. To date, those systems have not been implemented, and at the time of this report's writing, a cost estimate to implement the SAP HCMS has not been updated.⁵⁶

In developing a budgeting system for Empowerment Schools in 2006, staff created an alternate system that tracked human resources and financial management. It should be noted that senior management successfully directed these innovative efforts to develop solutions for the specific pilot-program of Empowerment Schools. Over the years, that system has been expanded and upgraded, and now operates separately from the SAP ERP, according to staff interviews. In essence, staff developed low-cost solutions to work-around to the existing incomplete system in a resource-constrained environment. This alternate system now provides information that informs approximately \$1B in expenditures. Information from this alternate system is manually entered at considerable expense of staff time, into the SAP ERP to ensure accounting controls, and resources are ultimately expended through controls of the SAP ERP.

Although CCSD must be commended for its successes in implementing creative systems in a budget-constrained environment, the current parallel system compromises the health of the data environment, and the data provided in this environment makes it exceptionally difficult for administrators and local school principals to make informed operational decisions about departments and schools. Though CCSD is now moving forward with implementation with the alternate system and continuing to reconcile it with the SAP ERP, this practice is not advised nor sustainable.

Internal Communication around the Meaning and Parameters of the Reorganization

Interviews and surveys with administrators and principals revealed a wide variety of views on the parameters of the reorganization. Some principals are expecting a large

⁵⁶ In mid-2016, CCSD put out a request for proposal for an all new Human Capital Management System. Potential finalists ranged in price from \$19.8M to \$47.3M, according to district personnel.

amount of new resources dedicated to local school precincts, while many others are unsure of the basic parameters of the reorganization.

In creating and distributing training resources around the reorganization, CCSD administration has done an admirable job under current circumstances; however, many of the principals and administrators interviewed had differing perspectives on the meaning and overall scope of the reorganization.

It is imperative that CCSD create a general vision for the reorganization, one that will inform the work of local school precincts and the administration as well as manage expectations for the broader community. It is also imperative that the Trustees must stop sending conflicting messages to key staff and district personnel around the implementation of AB394. A negative sentiment is setting in, which only damages morale of teachers, principals and administrators which in turn has an impact on the students.

Determining a Process of Decentralization of Services to Schools

Decentralization of services to schools is one of the central tenets of the reorganization. To date, however, the District has made little progress on the identification of a process of how exactly to decentralize services to schools, especially considering a requirement that 80% of unrestricted dollars be allocated to schools in 2017 and 85% of unrestricted dollars be devolved to schools in 2018.

CCSD Administration believes that it is close to accommodating the 80% requirement for 2017, but it recognizes the need for changes if it is to meet the 85% requirement for the 2018/19 school year.

Large Challenges to Implementation

Community Perception of Reorganization

CCSD Administration recognizes that the Reorganization is not well understood in the community at large. According to interviews and surveys, principals and administrators believe community members, elected officials, and parents are ill-informed about the parameters of the reorganization. Some conflate the reorganization with the advent of the Achievement School District, while others believe that the reorganization will devolve broad budgeting and decision-making authority at local school precincts to parents and community members.

Creation and Coordination of Training for School Based and Central Personnel

CCSD Administrators have been working hard to provide the first tier of training related to the reorganization, but they recognize the need for a deeper level of training for both administrators, SOT members, and local school precinct personnel.

Principals and administrators have a high level of knowledge of initial training materials provided by the District, but they have additional questions and concerns, ones that often cannot be addressed by universal training materials. To date, training materials have been created to meet the needs of local school precinct leaders, but no training materials have been created for central services personnel. The distribution of this material has been coordinated by the Central Administration, but additional training resources are necessary for the implementation of the regulations.

Risk Management around Local School Precincts' Budget and Decision-Making

The allocation of budget and decision-making authority to local school precincts presents challenges around risk management, especially around cost controls. To date, CCSD administration has not taken a deep dive into these issues. Risk management issues may exist around purchasing and legal matters, and other issues.

Roll-out of Modified Zero Based Budgeting

The initial plan that informed the regulations advised the transition of the Central Services Department to a modified zero-based budgeting system. In modified zero-based budgeting systems, a floor and a ceiling based on previous expenditures exists in the budget planning process. The transition from a line-item budget to a modified zero-based budget presents numerous challenges, many of which are not yet fully understood by CCSD Administration.

Additional Challenges to Implementation

Initiative Fatigue

Over the course of the last few years, CCSD has been subject to numerous initiatives and new programs that have affected the way that it does business. In its interviews, focus groups, and surveys, the consultant found a pervasive feeling of “initiative fatigue,” where individuals responsible for the implementation of multiple programs had doubts about the importance, priority, and relevance of various reforms they were directed to implement. Indeed, the reorganization itself comes in the context of more than a dozen directives from the Legislature and the State Board of Education designed to improve student achievement.

Human Resource Recruitment and Retention

An ongoing challenge for the District is the recruitment and retention of personnel that are qualified and appropriate for the work. For example, the District has trouble retaining school bus drivers because they are paid on a partial-year hourly basis; many of these school bus drivers find more consistent work in other places – sometimes even within the District itself. In another example, special education services administrators have had consistent problems in recruiting and retaining health services professionals because District salaries are not competitive with the private sector. This will be an ongoing challenge for the District, one that will not necessarily be affected by the Reorganization.

Addressing the Culture of “Work Arounds”

Because of a perception and a reality of lack of administrative resources, the District, at all levels, has adopted a culture of “work arounds.” In many ways, district personnel deserve credit for adapting to an environment of shifting mandates by designing short-term solutions to address immediate, complex problems. District personnel, however, recognize that this adaptive culture is not well-suited to large-scale systemic change. Indeed, the entire system of “flex budgets” is based on a work-around of the existing SAP ERP system. Despite laudable district efforts to address past challenges, these interventions are fundamentally hurting the ability of the District to implement organizational change.

NEXT STEPS – PART THREE

Although the various groups the consultant group interviewed and surveyed identified many challenges, this is by design. This problem identification will help inform future work of the CIC and consultant team. In Part Three, the questions guiding the analysis are answered, a proposed shared vision is developed, and possible roles for Community Implementation Council members are suggested.

Challenges to Address

This analysis has identified numerous challenges to the implementation of R142-16. Those challenges include:

- Developing policy around the Weighted Funding Formula
- Optimizing enterprise technology to create a robust data environment for administrators and local school precinct leaders (i.e., fix the HCMS and other Enterprise systems)
- Determining a process through which the district can decide which services should be decentralized
- Managing the timeline around the implementation
- Managing community perception around the reorganization
- Managing internal communication around the reorganization
- Finding parents to serve on certain school organizational teams
- Educating participants to understand the appropriate role of and utility of a school organizational team
- Developing risk management and accounting protocols around local school precincts' budget and decision-making
- Preparing District financial and organizational services for the roll-out of modified zero-based budgeting
- Addressing the District “culture of work-arounds” for administrative systems

Tackling these challenges will be a herculean effort, especially if community members and district personnel are not united in the effort

Additional Resources Needed

Though each challenge identified in this analysis is difficult to address, many of them could be addressed by adding three fundamental resources:

- A full suite of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tools that can track time-sheets for employees of the central administration that perform their work at schools and allows for analytics to inform decision-making;
- Management and policy analysis capacity to assist the CCSD Executive team in making policy recommendations around the administration;
- Strategic communications capacity to both internal and external stakeholders around the transition.

The consultant team can assist with management and policy analysis and strategic communications, but the implementation of an ERP suite will require significant time and money.

For purposes of analysis, CCSD's administration was also asked to provide a "wish list" of products and services that it felt were necessary to implement the regulation with fidelity. At the time of the writing of this paper, that list has not been produced.

In addition to products and services necessary for the implementation of the regulation, CCSD needs to bring constituents, employees, stakeholders, and elected officials around a shared vision for the reorganization. This shared vision is outlined in the next section.

A Shared Vision for Moving Forward

What is the purpose of a school district? Is it simply a means by which local schools can be paid for and overseen? Or is it something more? CCSD is one of the largest districts in the country, and large districts face a multitude of challenges every day. For large districts like CCSD to be successful, they must be guided by a shared vision of success.

What is a shared vision?

A shared vision is something that every stakeholder in the community can support and understand – from the activist who goes to every school board meeting – to the parent who only has time to ensure she gets her kids safely to school. In a shared vision, the elected representative making decisions around funding mechanisms for schools shares the same vision as a teacher delivering education services to a kid and as a businessperson looking to hire local talent for their company.

A shared vision also sets the expectations for the community. For a vision to be shared, it requires collaboration and public input. The vision must be viewed as attainable by every stakeholder; it cannot set the bar too low, but neither can it be set so high as to put it out of reach given available resources.

In Nevada, shared visions have a track record of being successful.

- Governor Sandoval's vision for a New Nevada led to landmark education reforms and record-breaking new investment in public K-12 education, higher education, and economic development. These investments have accelerated Nevada's economic recovery and have put the state on a trajectory to fundamentally change outcomes for children.
- The City of Las Vegas's vision for a vibrant and revitalized downtown has been a long time coming. After decades of hard work, investment, and persistence, the economy of Downtown Las Vegas has shifted, from a neighborhood economy based upon gaming and the legal profession, to a vibrant, diverse, and regionally significant economic center, complete with tech companies, medical institutions, retail investment, residential investment, and cultural offerings.

Currently, the Clark County School District is guided by the Pledge of Achievement, a strategic action plan released in 2014. The Pledge of Achievement identifies tasks that are key to improving District-wide student achievement and ties those tasks to District-wide key performance indicators. In doing so, the Pledge of Achievement provides

mission direction for the District and its administrators. The Pledge of Achievement is accompanied by a vision statement, ratified by the CCSD Board of Trustees in 2014:

“All students progress in school and graduate prepared to succeed and contribute in a diverse global society.”

CCSD’s vision is appropriate for the work it does across the entire community, but it is too broad to guide the District’s transition from a centralized model to a decentralized model. Thus, CCSD needs a shared vision for the transition’s success. That’s where “Clark County Schools ACHIEVE” comes in.

Clark County Schools ACHIEVE

The law relevant to the work of the Community Implementation Council has been variously referred to the “break-up bill,” the “reorganization,” and, very plainly, the “implementation of AB394 and R142-16.” This lack of clarity creates confusion. Beyond factual misunderstandings, confusion creates the potential for the misalignment of initiatives based on this law as administrators act on varied understandings of the law’s fundamental underpinnings.

Plainly, there exists today no simple way to talk about the law in a way that is either explanatory or visionary. A shorthand of “AB394” is not tenable for the long-term course of this work because it will soon become clear that a new bill will be assigned the title “AB394” during the 2017 legislative session. Instead, the District should create a shared vision for the long-term improvement of this county’s education delivery system. This must be more than a branding exercise. Practically speaking, this will allow stakeholders and community members to begin to talk about this initiative in a way that reflects and articulates the fundamental intent behind the law, which is student achievement. The shared vision becomes the universal answer to the question: What is this initiative?

In joint meetings with CCSD staff, senior CCSD leaders answered this question and developed a vision. The Consulting Team recommends the Community Implementation Council and the Clark County School District adopt this shared vision for the implementation of R142-16:

Clark County Schools ACHIEVE: *Empowering families, teachers, principals, support staff, and students to create the best school for their community.*

Clark County Schools ACHIEVE is both an aspirational vision and an acknowledgment of the excellence already present in many schools and classrooms. It is also an acknowledgement of the gains CCSD has experienced under the Pledge of Achievement Strategy. Indeed, Clark County Schools ACHIEVE should be thought of as a subset of the existing framework of the Pledge of Achievement and its strategic imperatives, and the Pledge of Achievement should continue to serve as the District's general strategy document.

By adding Clark County Schools ACHIEVE to the District's vernacular, stakeholders can move beyond the staid "implementation" of a law. Clark County Schools ACHIEVE can help the approximately 40,000 District employees maintain clarity and fidelity to the vision for the reorganization while also helping hundreds of thousands of parents, students, and community members understand the nature and intent of this initiative. At the very least, the purpose line — "empowering families, teachers, principals, and students to create the best school for their community" — can reduce the confusion and anxiety that is created when a plan for large scale institutional change within a public agency is undertaken.

For this shared vision to be successful, Clark County Schools ACHIEVE must be used within the District in communication materials and the organization's cultural vernacular. Furthermore, the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision must be shared among those are involved with and affected by this reorganization initiative. If the District and the broader education community can successfully adopt the shared vision, it will create a

tangible idea over which stakeholders can claim ownership and through which stakeholders can articulate common goals.

Beyond the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision and purpose line, a strategic framework for the effort must be developed. This strategic framework should be guided by statements of belief that serve to reinforce the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision. A strategic framework should also include logical measures of success that serve to reinforce the vision. Suggested measures of success are covered in the next section.

Suggested Performance Measures & Strategic Actions

If the statement of purpose for the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE initiative is “Empowering families, teachers, principals, support staff, and students to create the best school for their community,” then what should be the measures of success? Should we simply ask parents if their principal and their school organizational team have created “the best school for their community?” What measures should central administrators use to show they are performing the work of the reorganization?

In the course of performing this assessment, the consultant team has begun to identify potential measurements of success that the district and community stakeholders alike may be able to use to evaluate the efficacy of the reorganization. These suggested measures should be seen as additive to the existing performance measures in the Pledge of Achievement. Given the identification thrust of this assessment, further analysis of success measurements will be inspected at a later date. A few suggested measures are outlined below.

Tracking the Amount of Discretionary Budgeting Authority Allocated to Schools

During the first year of the Empowerment School experience, \$150,000 in discretionary resources were awarded to schools selected for the program, but by year five of the

program, no additional funding was promised as part of Empowerment. Interviews and surveys conducted for this analysis revealed a high level of skepticism that the reorganization process would yield much in the way of additional funding for schools. Some principals even veered into the cynical, remarking things like “Why do I have to go through all this trouble [i.e., setting up a school organizational team, exposing parents and teachers on strategic budgeting] to budget \$60,000?”⁵⁷

In order to reinforce the vision and spirit of the effort, the consulting team suggests that CCSD start tracking the amount of discretionary budgeting authority going to schools.

Tracking the Rate of Instruction Spending District-Wide

The Superintendent’s Executive Advisory Committee attempted to compare by indexing school academic performance to school-level expenditures. It proved difficult to extract data for school-based spending. In interviews and focus groups, district staff have noted that the district has challenges with generating this data on a regular basis. For instance, the district cannot systemically track licensed personnel such as counselors who spend time at different schools. The district has no timecard system to do so, according to interviews with district personnel. Ideally, the district would have an existing system by which it could track actual spending at a school-based level in order to drive efficiencies and comply with the intent and spirit of the decentralization process. Absent such a system, one measurement of success could be tracking the district’s overall instruction spending.

According to the Nevada Report Card, CCSD’s instruction spending as a proportion of overall spending was 60% in 2015. This proportion is slightly below the national average, though it should also be noted that overall instructional spending in Nevada is far below the national average. A recent study by the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities found that a significant correlation existed between instruction as a percent of total

⁵⁷ According to this principal, \$60,000 was the amount they were able to budget after fixed costs were allocated.

expenditures and NAEP reading scores.⁵⁸ If CCSD's overall expenditures in instruction rise as a proportion of overall spending, it could be an indicator that more resources are flowing down to local schools, and local schools are investing more resources in instruction.

A Measure of Competitiveness of Local School Precincts to Charter and Private Schools

The reorganization, if implemented correctly, will significantly shift authority and responsibility to local school precincts. This flexibility may provide local school communities the choice to make decisions that were not previously within their purview. This flexibility mirrors in some ways the intent behind many charter schools, to provide a greater degree of academic and operational flexibility than traditional public schools. The Clark County Schools ACHIEVE process could allow for local school precincts to effectively compete with private and charter school operators for students. Additional work by the consultant team will be necessary to define metrics within this section, but the idea of public school competitiveness may be worth exploring further.

Results of and Participation in Parent, Student, and Employee Surveys

As was noted⁵⁹ by Strembitsky during the plan development process, "the results of surveys provide a powerful tool for achieve better performance. The effectiveness of surveys, in large measure, depends on the rigor of design, the response rate, and the follow-up actions." R142-16 includes provisions for surveys from which quantifiable Key Performance Indicators may be derived.

Specifically, on or before May 1 of each year, a survey will be distributed to measure satisfaction with local school precincts. Employees at local school precincts, students, and parents or legal guardians will be the target populations for surveys. Additionally, on the same timeline, the district will also survey employees of central service departments to measure the satisfaction of each employee concerning their ability to serve local

⁵⁸ *Instructional Costs in Nevada's K-12 Education System*. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities: May 2016.

⁵⁹ <http://ab394.ccsd.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Plan-8-23-16.pdf>

school precincts, provide services in a timely manner, and provide quality services to the local school precincts. This survey will also be distributed to school associate superintendents, principals, and teachers to determine their satisfaction with central services.

These mandated surveys could provide tracking of quantitative performance metrics over time but only if survey design and administration are consistent. The district must also ensure that response rates are robust and remain so year-to-year. Otherwise the validity of these survey-driven metrics may reasonably be called into question due to a small sample size.

It also should be noted here that CCSD's response rate on parent surveys is typically quite low. While unfortunate, this reality is not uncommon in local government. Additional work by the consultant team will be necessary to understand if the current surveys can even be used to measure effectiveness. If not, the District may want to pursue an alternate route to gather survey research from the community.

Development of Strategies for Central Operations Departments to Realize Greater Efficiencies

Over the course of several efficiency studies, central services departments have called for the use of departmental evaluation measures for various operational departments. According to administrator interviews, some departments already measure their performance against their peers using performance metrics developed by the Council of Great City Schools.⁶⁰ While these performance metrics are valuable, the reality is that some departments within CCSD operate using such antiquated systems that a measurement of their operational efficiency would not be a valuable exercise. In lieu of performance measures, the consulting team recommends that CCSD's leadership develop strategies to address efficiency in these departments and include in the new system ways to track the GCS metrics so that the comparison is meaningful.

⁶⁰ Metrics from the Council of Great City Schools were mentioned in several administrator interviews.

Roles for CIC Members in the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE Framework

In an early December board meeting, CCSD Trustees expressed concern about Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky's workload vis-à-vis implementing R142-16. Several trustees said that it would be beneficial if skilled volunteers in the community were available to assist and contribute to the overall Clark County Schools ACHIEVE reorganization effort. Community Implementation Council (CIC) chairman Glenn Christenson addressed the board during the board meeting and noted that such talent could be found among the members of the CIC.

The consultant team has spent approximately 45 days evaluating the reorganization effort and has identified numerous challenges as detailed in other sections of this document. Considering the events at the trustees' board meeting, Chair Christenson directed the consultant team to propose potential roles for CIC members to assist in the implementation of the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE reorganization.

As a function of the state, the CIC must comply with the Nevada Open Meeting Law, and it was not deemed possible to brief CIC members in advance about proposed roles. Therefore, the following section is best viewed as a proposal for further discussion at the next public meeting of the CIC on December 14. Further consideration and action on this proposal can be taken up as an action item at a subsequent meeting of the CIC. The consultant team takes direction from the CIC and stands ready to assist CIC members in carrying out work related to roles they may adopt.

The following roles are proposed for CIC members:

Glenn Christenson, CIC Chairman:

The district faces challenges articulated in other sections of this document in decentralizing its budget such that 80 percent of unrestricted funds are meaningfully controlled at the local school precinct level during the upcoming school year. Further, the district faces challenges creating and adopting a “weighted funding formula” that apportions budgets to schools based on certain identified student needs.

It is proposed that Mr. Christenson work with the consultant team, CCSD, and other stakeholders to advance conversations, methodologies, and adoption of financial practices and procedures related to budgeting and apportionment of funds.

Brent Husson, CIC Vice Chairman:

The district has been diligent in delivering training resources to principals, families, teachers, staff, and other constituencies via the web-based portal website ab394.ccsd.net. In addition, Sands Cares, the philanthropic arm of the Las Vegas Sands Corp., has pledged \$160,000 to the Public Education Foundation, a Las Vegas-based nonprofit, for purposes of providing training to principals and school associate superintendents.⁶¹ As noted in various sections of this document, many constituencies directly involved in the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE process state that they would like more training.

It is proposed that Mr. Husson work with the consultant team, CCSD, and other relevant stakeholders to identify training gaps, resources for additional training, and content of trainings.

Felicia Ortiz, CIC Vice Chairwoman:

Challenges with the Human Capital Management System (HCMS) and related information technology challenges represent perhaps the most significant technical

⁶¹ <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/sands-cares-donates-160k-training-new-ccsd-positions>

barriers to full implementation of the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision. Even without this state law, the district would still face the problem of aging and inefficient systems that stymie administrators' abilities to make informed decisions in a timely manner. Although district staff told the consultant team that the district had recently priced a replacement HCMS in a RFP process, this was done prior to the reorganization effort and should be updated, especially given the identified need for a timecard system.

It is proposed that Ms. Ortiz assist CCSD in developing strategies to price and obtain updated systems that can better help the district implement the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision.

Vikki Courtney, CIC member:

In the consultant team's survey of principals, principals noted numerous concerns with the formation and operation of the School Organizational Teams. Additionally, legislators and community groups have expressed an interest in the CIC liaising with parent communities about the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision. Now that teams are forming, there is a need for additional training and coordination as the inaugural teams begin their work.

During the initial formation of Empowerment Schools in 2006, Courtney was part of a team that brought together administrators and labor leaders together to work through issues related to shared decision-making and Empowerment Schools. It is proposed that Ms. Courtney work with stakeholder groups involved in the operation of SOTs to help develop best practices and exemplar team models; address parent questions and concerns; and assist CCSD in ensuring surveys mandated by R142-16 address SOTs and have high response rates.

Erin Cranor, CIC member:

It has been a priority since the creation of the CIC to have a strong, productive relationship with the CCSD Board of School Trustees. As the elected leaders of the district, there is no body more important than the trustees when it comes to

communitywide leadership related to the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision. As would be expected as a reaction to any large-scale institutional change initiative, the consultant team has noted considerable anxiety among various constituencies within school communities, including staff, parents, and concerned residents. The trustees can play a key leadership role in championing a positive vision for the reorganization, which the consultant team believes will be effective in helping assuage community concerns.

It is proposed that Ms. Cranor assist in developing and propagating the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision, and continue to play a role as board liaison and community leader in conjunction with her trustee colleagues.

Ken Evans, CIC member:

The work of decentralization is no simple task. Although the district's centralized model has been criticized during reorganization meetings, the consultant team acknowledges that the district has practices, procedures, and safeguards built into its centralized service delivery model. Devolution of services requires major changes in purchasing practices. Processes and procedures need to be established so that devolution is properly structured to avoid serious negative externalities.

It is proposed that Mr. Evans work with CCSD and other experts to identify challenges and develop solutions for changes related to the purchasing function in the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision.

Verenice Flores, CIC member:

A fundamental concept behind the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision is the shift from a centralized budgeting system to a budget system that encourages transparent, site-based budgeting. Notwithstanding technical challenges already identified, new practices need to be developed for site-based budgeting, and risk management procedures and accounting practices should be developed for new spending that may occur at the local school precinct level.

It is proposed that Ms. Flores work with CCSD's budget office and other departments as identified by CCSD to help identify challenges and work toward solutions for budgeting and accounting at a site-based level.

Nora Luna, CIC member:

Legislators, trustees, and other community members have raised concerns about parental engagement within the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision. Principals have reported varying levels of success in filling parent seats on School Organizational Teams, and there are significant concerns about parental engagement among specific parent demographics, especially those potentially facing logistical challenges with school engagement based on language proficiency, work schedules, disability, and other such barriers.

It is proposed that Ms. Luna engage with parent groups, CCSD Family and Community Engagement Services (FACES) office, other CCSD departments, and other stakeholders to identify barriers and recommend solutions to overcome those barriers.

Ryan Woodward, CIC Member:

Members of the business and nonprofit communities have been generous with their time and resources in helping the school district by serving on the Superintendent's Executive Advisory Committee and, as noted above, in providing training resources to CCSD. Some CCSD administrators have expressed interest in developing further relationships with the business community, particularly when it comes to peer-to-peer mentoring for CCSD departmental staff who oversee district operational departments (finance, budget, human resources, etc.) for which there are direct analogs in the private sector.

It is proposed that Mr. Woodward work with private sector groups, entities, and individuals to identify mentors who could provide in-kind mentoring services to CCSD personnel engaged in the work of the Clark County Schools ACHIEVE vision.

Concluding Thoughts

R142-16 marks a fundamental shift in the way that CCSD does business. By instituting structures for shared decision-making in local schools, CCSD is interacting with its community like it never has before. By giving more budgeting authority and local control to its schools, CCSD is attempting to realize a goal that has been pursued in fits and starts for more than a decade. By instituting the regulation, lawmakers and the community are insisting on fundamental reform at the school district.

In implementing this regulation, CCSD must face challenges that its administration has been attempting to work-around for years. For CCSD's central administration, implementing this regulation will be difficult because they lack the systems to efficiently implement the regulation. For principals and school organizational team members, managing expectations and facilitating productive communication will be large challenges. For community members and the Legislature, patience and understanding as the District addresses these obstacles will be a big challenge. The talent and interest is within the district to fully implement education delivery changes. Teachers, principals and administrators are excited about the opportunity to work on something new, challenging and transformational. While there is some fear, excitement and opportunity outweighs the fear.

To make this successful, the community must support our district and our schools with one common vision—Clark County Schools ACHIEVES -- and set aside personal agendas and politics. It must stop the back-biting and the adult politics and make the necessary changes to financial administration, organization, and communications to empower families, principals, teachers, support staff, and students to create the best school for their community. If we all work together, we can ensure that Clark County Schools ACHIEVE!

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APPENDIX – PART FOUR

Per CCSD, recommendations from the Gibson Report that CCSD has indicated are “in process or have been implemented” include:

3-1.1 Develop cross-functional teams to better coordinate programs and services.

3-1.2 Use outside assistance for curriculum development essential for implementation of Common Core State Standards.

3-1.3 Limit the number of core and supplementary instructional programs.

3-2.1 Reduce the number of assessments and agree on common district wide interim and early diagnostic assessments.

3-2.2 Develop and implement short-cycle formative assessments.

23-2.3 Fully utilize the capabilities of INFORM and require district-wide use.

3-3.1 Coordinate professional development services to improve focus at the school level, reduce duplication of effort, and more effectively integrate funding streams to address district priorities.

3-3.2 Adopt practices to increase the effectiveness of professional development in improving teacher skills and practices.

3-4.1 Manage implementation of the district’s Response to Instruction (Response to Intervention; RTI) system in all schools.

3-5.1 Convert low enrollment Advanced Placement courses to CCSD’s virtual learning model.

3-5.3 Evaluate CCSD’s behavior and continuation schools, the referral and exit procedures, and the impact on student performance and other outcomes.

3-6.1 Enhance program evaluation capacity to support calculation of Return on Investment in academic programs and interventions.

4.2 Assign account codes to specific programs, interventions, and district priorities to demonstrate the alignment to spending and to support a Return on Investment (ROI) calculation for district initiatives.

- 4.3 Modify and expand the Empowerment School budget approach to all schools, allowing schools flexibility to allocate resources to best meet student needs.
- 4.4 Incorporate efficiency measurement into the budget process, so that the justification for spending levels will be more transparent.
- 5-1.1 Improve the monitoring of customer service and satisfaction.
- 5-1.2 Re-assign the fiscal component of the Grants Department to report to the Deputy Chief Financial Officer and improve control over grant fund spending.
- 5-2.2 Reduce the amount of non-standard purchases in the district and implement spending controls.
- 5-2.5 Periodically conduct audits to verify eligibility of health benefits plan dependents.
- 5-3.1 Implement integrated systems and streamline processes in HR.
- 5-3.2 Improve the ability of HR to support an efficient process for attracting and retaining highly-talented staff.
- 5-3.3 Reduce the amount of paper produced, routed and stored in and on behalf of HR.
- 5-3.4 Give preference to organization configurations that promote collaboration, ease the burden of applicants, reduce duplication of effort by HR employees and provide exceptional customer service to employees.
- 5-4.1 Create and implement an enterprise data management framework.
- 5-4.2 Procure and implement a robust and integrated SIS.
- 5-4.4 Develop criteria to identify and select instructional and operational software programs.
- 5-4.5 Phase out Educational Computer Strategist positions and re-purpose through separate functions for technical and instructional support.
- 5-5.1 Increase wrench time for technicians.
- 5-5.2 Increase productivity of facilities technicians and re-purpose cost reductions to support preventative maintenance.
- 5-5.4 through 5-5.15, implement additional energy conservation measures.
- 5-6.1 Reorganize the Transportation Department to reduce supervisory staff.
- 5-6.2 revise work rules for bus drivers and revise bell times to improve scheduling efficiency.
- 5-7.1 Allocate allowable General Fund costs to the Food Service Fund

Clark County School District's Need for Policy Analysts

by
William Kirchhoff

The purpose of this paper is to explain the Clark County School District's (CCSD) need for high-grade policy analysis; and, what a professional policy analyst is. Although similar in many ways to systems analysis, policy analysis is different. Typically, policy analysis is defined as the task of determining which of the various alternative policies will best achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals. Policy analysis is usually divided into two categories - analysis for the formulation of policy, and analysis of the policy that has been implemented. In either case, the policy analyst has an ethical imperative to present well-researched, balanced, unbiased and accurate information.

In a fast moving and complex government such as the CCSD, the policy analyst often occupies the vital center of action because it is *the position that lays out the options on which decisions with far-reaching ramifications are made*. A large and multi-faceted government such as the CCSD will always have the need for high-quality analysis that can be used to assist in the policy-making process. This work is best done through an analytical process that combines excellence in the use of technical abilities, and sophistication with respect to people and communication skills.

Policy analysis requires the right mix of technical, communications and interpersonal assets. The job of the analyst is that of producing the policy reports, beginning with research, design, data collection, quasi-experimental methodology, and analysis. It requires team building, interpersonal conflict management, meeting facilitation, community involvement, effective presentations, clear report writing, practical recommendations and political sensibility. Excellence in policy analysis requires more than just validated technical research. It requires collaboration, and mutual learning, with the ultimate goal to understand better and hopefully improve the lives of citizens.

Logic dictates that policy analysts are a critical cog in the government process. The gigantic educational service delivery apparatus of the CCSD is driven by the policies its elected School Board establishes. With over thirty thousand employees serving a student population of more than three hundred thousand students, the need for the highest quality of analysis preceding policy determination and implementation cannot be

overstated. Nor can the value of policy analyst positions requiring rigorous analysis training and expertise be minimized. Large public organizations, including school districts, often make the mistake of utilizing members of their core staff (educators, administrative personnel, etc.) who do not have the credentials of a professional policy analyst. This has the same consequences as filling engineering and accounting positions with people who are not registered professional engineers or certified public accounts. Without the appropriate education, training, and experience, those assigned to policy analyst positions will almost always produce an inferior product.

For a comparative perspective, while the CCSD does not have any designated policy analyst positions to assist in managing its workforce of more than thirty thousand employees, the City of Las Vegas employs fifteen analyst positions that focus on policy matters among its workforce of less than three thousand employees.

The role of the public sector analyst is to research, evaluate and recommend choices so that managers and policymakers have the information required to make operational decisions and policy choices. The public policy analyst is defined as being a highly educated individual with well-developed technical skills, profound substantive knowledge, and superb people skills who can produce quality analytical reports. The policy analyst generates and synthesizes knowledge that often has the potential to change the mind of people holding a variety of positions in the policymaking community.

Busy elected School Board members should be most concerned if there are no true policy analysts. Experience tells us that when a policy analyst presents the results of his/her analysis to elected and appointed school officials, they will almost always want answers to some version of the following questions:

- What is the decision that has to be made and how much time do we have?
- What problems or issues will be addressed by the decision?
- What are the alternative solutions?
- What will the cost or benefit be?

The importance of the right education and experience cannot be overstated as a prerequisite for quality analytical work. *Attachment A – Policy Analyst Position Description* is an example of the work a typical policy analyst does, and the education and skills necessary to do substantial policy analysis. Absent these attributes, it is too likely that the analyst's work will just produce a marginalized "study" rather than the rigorous application of tested analytical principles.

One authority on the subject describes policy analysts as "Those who have toiled long and hard to develop their craft. They are highly creative individuals who use both their technical and people skills to help government officials redefine policy problems, who explore new ways to undertake their investigative and analytical work, and who develop new realizations of the policy alternatives that are available." Policy analysis is a collaborative process, with the analyst needing to use every asset available. This is not the turf of the bean counter hovering over data in an isolated cubical. It requires the ability to use every tool available simultaneously in the search for truth.

The policy analyst should exhibit strong critical-thinking skills and be always alert to the ways half-truths and perceived ideas enter into the policy discourse. Searching for feasible solutions to pressing policy problems is another key aspect of the job. The policy analyst must have both the technical skills and the ability to listen to stakeholders while developing his/her analysis. For example, without the correct application of these assets when undertaking a benefit-cost analysis, the analyst can quite easily end up producing work that appears technically sound when it isn't, or judged to be flawed because relevant information has not been incorporated into the modeling work.

Experience tells us that the more complete understanding the analyst has of the issue, the more likely he/she is to produce the best outcomes. Building the necessary expert knowledge, which is central to what policy analysts bring to the policy-making community, is a combination of the appropriate academic experience. When an organization does not set high academic, experience and ongoing development standards for its policy analysts, then it simply won't have the quality of analysis that its policymakers need.

Regardless of orientation there are certain basic steps an analyst must take to complete his/her assignment. If one's work assignments predominately involve taking the following steps, then that employee is doing analytical work:

1. Verifying and defining the problem in detail;
2. Setting the criteria that will be used for the evaluation;
3. Identification of alternative actions;
4. Evaluation of the alternatives;
5. Distinguishing the alternatives; and,
6. Monitoring the changes, whether systems or policy, when implemented.

Put another way, if one's job requires that he/she routinely uses the process described above, then that person is doing analytical work. In addition to the required analytical skills and professional working knowledge, the policy analyst position requires the ability to

get along with a broad range of people, have strong oral and written communication skills, possess good judgment, time-management skills, and creativity. Importantly, policy analysts often work with minimal supervision, thus needing to be self-motivated and disciplined.

As is the case with many government problems or challenges, the analytical work may involve the analysis of both operating systems and policy. Considering all of the relevant factors that might be needed to convert a fleet to more fuel-efficient vehicles, or graduation requirement policies require the appropriate blending of knowledge, ideas, culture values and back-and-forth communication skills.

In conclusion, to make good policy decisions large governmental organizations need to employ well-credentialed policy analysts. The difference between good and bad public policy is often determined by policy analysts capable of an unbiased and objective approach to the search for, and explanation of, alternative solutions to complex governmental problems.

William Kirchhoff has over thirty years experience supervising policy analysts as the city manager of five communities. As an adjunct faculty member with four universities, he helped develop educational programs dedicated to training public policy analysts.

Attachment A

Policy Analyst Position Description

The fundamental reason this classification exists is to perform responsible research and analytical work in the Clark County Schools District's (CCSD) Office of the Superintendent or operating departments. Policy Analysts are responsible for conducting independent research studies and making recommendations on complex administrative projects and problems. Work involves directing or participating in gathering information, statistical analyses, studying special administrative problems, and developing improved systems, procedures, and forms which lower operating costs or increase efficiency. Contact with the public is an important element of some assignments. Work is performed under general direction and requires initiative and independent judgment.

Examples of Duties

- Develops and conducts surveys, collects information on operational and administrative problems, analyzes research findings, and recommends practical solutions.
- Assists with the preparation and administration of the CCSD's annual budget.
- Compiles and analyzes data in order to write monthly, annual, and special reports.
- Writes operational procedures to improve methods and systems;
- Staffs a variety of citizen committees and/or CCSD committees.
- Prepares and distributes agendas and meeting minutes;
- Evaluates recommended changes in organization, policy, and procedures and reports on the merits of the recommendations.
- Writes and revises general administrative regulations and operational manuals.
- Demonstrates continuous effort to improve operations, decrease turnaround times, streamline work processes, and work cooperatively and jointly to provide quality seamless customer service.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of:

- The principles and practices of public administration and management analysis.
- Research methods and techniques of report preparation.
- The principles of customer service and public relations.
- Electronic spread sheet, graphics, database, and word processing computer applications.
- The principles, methods, and practices of municipal budgeting and finance.
- Cost accounting procedures and practices.
- Program budgeting.
- The principles and techniques of systems and procedures analysis.

Ability to:

- Gather pertinent facts, conduct thorough analyses, and arrive at sound conclusions.
- Make significant decisions and exercise resourcefulness in resolving new problems.
- Produce written documents with clearly organized thoughts using proper English sentence construction, punctuation, and grammar.
- Analyze, interpret, and report research findings.
- Making decisions in accordance with laws, regulations and policies.
- Organize data gathered in clear, understandable format including graphs, charts, and memos.
- Review or check the work products of others for conformance with standards.
- Comprehend and make inferences from written materials in the English language.
- Explain technical budgetary problems in simple, non-technical language.

Educational Requirements

- Preferably an M.A. in public administration, statistics, quantitative analysis or related fields; or a B.A. in appropriate fields, and three years of professional experience.

Meeting Material from Wednesday, October 26, 2016 Meeting of the Community Implementation Council:

Framework for the first 45-days of the Community Implementation Council

At the organizational meeting, the Chairman will instruct the management consultant, TSC2 Group, to work cooperatively with Clark County School District's (CCSD) Executive Administration to conduct an analysis around the new organizational paradigm, made possible by Public Regulation R142-16.

The following questions should guide TSC2 Group's analysis:

- What systems does CCSD have at their disposal to get the necessary changes implemented?
- What challenges must CCSD overcome to get the necessary changes implemented?
- What additional resources – human expertise, technology, time, or other organizational resources – are needed to implement these regulations with fidelity?
- What metrics should the CIC and the Advisory Committee look at to ensure that the regulations are being implemented with fidelity and equity?

The TSC2 Group will provide a final draft of this analysis in the next 45 days, and come before the CIC to explain the findings. At that time, the Community Implementation Council will offer feedback on the report and draft recommendations to the Legislative Advisory Committee to Reorganize the Clark County School District on the implementation.