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AUDITOR GENERAL

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OPERATIONAL AUDIT OF BUDGET AND STAFF ALLOCATION PROCEDURES FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD JULY 1, 2000 THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2002

SUMMARY

This audit report is the third in a series of reports to be issued on audits conducted pursuant to Chapter 2001-253, Laws of Florida, Specific Appropriation 118, and Section 11.45, Florida Statutes. Additional reports will be issued as audit fieldwork is completed in areas selected by the Auditor General for audit.

This operational audit focused on the Miami-Dade County District School Board's Strategic Plan; budgetary control procedures, including adherence to the School Allocation Plan; and a review of class size measures for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 fiscal years. As part of the budget and staff allocation process, the Board adopted School Allocation Plans for each fiscal year. The School Allocation Plan K-12 provides for the allocation of instructional and certain support positions to schools to be funded through the General Fund budget. Instructional and clerical positions are allocated based on the number of students at each school. The District uses a centralized position control system to track authorized, filled, and vacant positions. Also, our audit included providing a survey to 2,500 teachers requesting input on staffing and class size matters.

***Finding No. 1:* District's Strategic Plan**

Strategic planning procedures could be enhanced to provide for timely reporting to the Board, routine monitoring and evaluation of the District's adherence to its Strategic Plan, and enhancing the connection between the strategic planning process and the budget. We noted that the Annual Accountability Report due to the Board in September 2001 had not been presented to the Board as of January 2002.

***Finding No. 2:* Staff Utilization – Teachers on Special Assignment**

The District should continue its efforts to determine the optimum utilization of teachers on special assignment to ensure that the maximum level of resources is directed to the classroom. The District had approximately 370 and 345 Teachers on Special Assignment at the region and District level for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years, respectively.

***Finding No. 3:* Staff Allocation – Teacher Duties**

Additional guidance should be given to principals regarding the establishment of teacher positions that are partially or fully released from teaching duties, and monitoring procedures should be enhanced to provide for maintaining an accurate Districtwide listing of these positions and employees. For example, our analysis disclosed 777 and 789 school-based teacher positions that were partially or fully released from teaching duties, some of which were not provided for in the School Allocation Plan or the United Teachers of Dade (UTD) contract for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years, respectively.

***Finding No. 4:* Budget Administration – Centralized Position Control System**

Procedures for maintaining the District's centralized position control system could be enhanced to ensure the accuracy of the job titles listed in the system for teachers placed in positions with partial or full release from teaching duties. We noted instances in which the position titles in

the position control system did not agree with the position titles assigned to the teachers by the principals.

Finding No. 5: Compliance with School Allocation Plan

Monitoring procedures could be enhanced to ensure that schools comply with the School Allocation Plan in the establishment of administrative and support staff. We noted several schools in which clerical positions were established by the principals exceeding the Standard Allocation Plan by up to five positions.

Finding No. 6: Class Sizes – Low Performing Schools

Continued efforts are needed to ensure that class sizes in low performing schools are reduced toward the statutorily established class size goals. We noted several low performing schools in which class sizes exceeded both the District's and the statutorily established class size goals.

INTRODUCTION

The Miami-Dade County District School Board budgetary process is guided by several Florida Statutes and Board adopted rules and procedures. Section 237.041, Florida Statutes, requires that an annual budget be prepared and adopted by the school board, which should be consistent with, and contribute to, the implementation of a planned long-range school program for the district. Board Rules 6Gx13-8A-1.02 and 6Gx13-8D-1.01 specifically address the adoption of an annual District *Strategic Plan* for the purpose of clarifying goals and objectives and focusing all aspects of the District school system toward the accomplishment of identified goals.

The Board adopted annual budgets for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 fiscal years. As part of the budget and staff allocation process, the Board adopted a *School Allocation Plan* for each fiscal year. The *School Allocation Plan K-12* provides for the allocation of instructional and clerical positions to schools to be funded through the General Fund budget. Instructional and clerical positions are allocated based on the number of students at each school. The District's 2001-2002 fiscal year General Fund budget indicated that total school-level services were approximately $2.3 billion. This amount included approximately $1.8 billion for instruction, instructional support, and school administration services. The District uses a centralized position control system to track authorized, filled, and vacant positions.

As of October 2001, total positions by type were as follows:

	Number of Positions	Percentage
DISTRICT AND REGION BASED:		
Officials, Administrators, Managers	171	
Other Professional & Technical Staff	1,711	
Support Staff (1)	1,273	
Support Staff - Part Time	953	
Total District and Region Based	4,108	8%
SCHOOL BASED AND SCHOOL SUPPORT:		
Principals and Assistant Principals	1,032	
Instructors	19,178	
Instructional Support (2)	2,002	
Other Support Staff (3)	12,179	
Support Staff - Part Time (4)	10,478	
Total School Based and School Support	44,869	92%
TOTAL POSITIONS	48,977	100%

Notes: (1) Includes clerical staff.
(2) Includes guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and librarians.
(3) Includes clerical, food service, costodians, security, maintenance, and transportation.
(4) Includes hourly instructors, vocational education, and after-school

The *School Allocation Plan* generally provides basic classroom teacher ratios as follows for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years:

Basic Classroom Grades	School Allocation Plan Students per Teacher
K - 3	26.9
4 - 6	31.4
6 - 9	28.5
10 - 12	28.5

Section 236.687, Florida Statutes, provides for suggested class sizes for grade kindergarten through grade three of one full-time equivalent teacher per 20 students.

The following tables indicate those instances in which class sizes were at least 10 percent larger

than those contemplated in the District's *School Allocation Plan* (SAP):

Grade	School Year 2000-2001: Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more (1)	School Year 2000-2001: Percentage of Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more	School Year 2001-2002: Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more (2)	School Year 2001-2002: Percentage of Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more
K	39	19	45	22
1	34	17	36	18
2	40	20	58	28
3	68	34	52	26
4	10	5	6	3
5	21	10	25	12

Notes: (1) Source: District & School Profiles 2000-2001.
(2) Source: District "Average Class Size Reports" - Preliminary Data (November 2001).

	School Year 2000-2001: Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more (1)	School Year 2000-2001: Percentage of Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more	School Year 2001-2002: Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more (2)	School Year 2001-2002: Percentage of Schools Exceeding SAP by Ten Percent or more
Middle				
Math	18	34	16	30
Lang Arts	2	4	1	2
Science	29	55	31	59
Social Studies	32	60	31	59
Senior HS				
Math	1	3	1	3
Lang Arts	0	0	0	0
Science	4	12	1	3
Social Studies	8	24	6	18

Notes: (1) Source: District & School Profiles 2000-2001.
(2) Source: District "Average Class Size Reports" - Preliminary Data (December 2001).

One of the factors that contributed to class sizes exceeding those contemplated in the *School Allocation Plan* was the full or partial release of teacher positions as noted in Finding No. 3. In addition, some principals cited lack of classroom space, master schedule constraints, student mobility, and the infusion of intensive reading and writing courses into the curriculum as other contributing factors that increased class sizes.

AUDIT SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY

This operational audit focused on the Miami-Dade County District School Board's S*trategic Plan*, budgetary control procedures, including adherence to the *School Allocation Plan*, and a review of class size measures for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 fiscal years. Our audit focused primarily on grades kindergarten through 12. Our objectives were as follows:

- To determine if the District's *Strategic Plan* was periodically updated by District staff and reviewed by the Board.
- To determine that management's controls promoted and encouraged compliance with Board rules and Board-adopted planning documents to ensure successful achievement of the District's budgetary goals, including class size measures.
- To determine if the District's class size computation and reporting were accurate.
- To determine if the District accurately tracked total authorized, filled, and vacant positions.
- To determine if school principals and District personnel followed guidelines established by the Board's *School Allocation Plan*, including assignment of duties outside the classroom. This included tabulating the results of responses received from a survey sent to 2,500 teachers and other related anonymous response forms received directly by our Office.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 - District's Strategic Plan

The District's S*trategic Plan* for 2000 – 2005 was dated October 2000 and was based on public input received from February 1999 through October 1999. On December 8, 1999, the Board approved the following S*trategic Plan* goals: 1) preparing students

from school to career; 2) effective learning environment; and 3) efficient management practices. The *Strategic Plan* includes numerous objectives and specific action steps needed to meet the objectives. The status of completion of each action step in the *Strategic Plan* is to be reported in an *Annual Accountability Report* that was to be submitted to the Board in September 2001. Our review of the District's strategic plan procedures disclosed the following:

- ***The Annual Accountability Report, due for release in September 2001, had not been presented to the Board as of January 2002.*** We noted that there are 31 S*trategic Plan* action steps that have planned completion dates prior to September 2001. Also, since the adoption of the S*trategic Plan*, several new Board members have been elected. Periodic updates would provide the Board and the public timely information as to the progress the District is making toward accomplishing the *Strategic Plan* goals and objectives.
- ***The Strategic Plan follow-up process does not include a standing committee to monitor and evaluate the District's adherence to the Plan.*** A standing committee, composed of Board members, business partners, teachers, and the general public at large, would provide community stakeholders greater visibility of the District's accomplishments and adherence to the S*trategic Plan*.
- ***Although the Strategic Plan provides for a "money needed" measurement to meet each specific action step, there is no clear connection between the Strategic Plan and the budgeting process.*** The District should identify the funding sources that will be used to complete each action step during the budget process. This would enhance the coordination of the budget preparation and the strategic planning processes.

We were informed that the District is in the process of preparing an *Accountability Report*. We recommend that the District provide the Board with timely annual *Accountability Reports* updating the status of completion of each action step in the *Strategic Plan*. We also recommend that the Board consider establishing a standing committee to follow-up on the progress of the *Strategic Plan*. Furthermore, the *Strategic Plan* should include a clear connection between the budget and strategic planning processes.

District Superintendent's Response

The *Annual Accountability Report* was released on March 5, 2002. Currently, limited district resources are devoted to the coordination and implementation of the *Strategic Plan*. Staffing limitations in the Evaluation and Research department will impact the availability of the *Annual Accountability Report*. Because some critical data are not available until the end of the school year, a September date for publishing the *Accountability Report* may not be feasible. Evaluation and Accountability will submit a budget adjustment form to identify additional budget or redirected resources required to publish the report by a more reasonable deadline (probably October).

The 2001-2002 fiscal year was not typical. Several unanticipated events occurred which also contributed to delaying the report. Staff responsible for providing data for the *Accountability Report* was unable to meet deadlines because of its involvement with the OPPAGA's Best Practices Review, the financial crisis confronting the district as a result of the budget shortfall, and the administrative reorganization.

Periodic updates are not feasible since the plan is evaluated on an annual basis with data that often are only available at the end of the school year.

In reference to having a standing committee to monitor and evaluate the District's adherence to the plan, an additional committee is not necessary. The

Superintendent and his executive staff are responsible for implementing the action steps identified in the *Strategic Plan*. The School Board is responsible for evaluating the progress towards its goals/objectives. Furthermore, any community stakeholders may address the School Board regarding their reactions and opinions about the *Strategic Plan* or the *Annual Accountability Report*.

Office of Budget Management (BM) staff will work with Evaluation and Research (ER) staff to improve coordination between the *Strategic Plan* and the budget for the FY 2002-03 budget development process.

In future years, ER will provide the opportunity for staff to update their objectives/action steps in the *Strategic Plan* during the period from mid-January to the end of February. This is approximately the same time that non-school locations are receiving budget development materials for the next fiscal year. If a department is modifying its objectives/action steps contingent upon a budget increase, it will be required to complete a more extensive budget request form to be submitted for consideration by the Superintendent's budget committee. If the necessary funding is neither provided nor redirected in the new year's budget, the affected action steps will be deleted in an update of the *Strategic Plan* to be issued in late September or early October, after final budget adoption.

Finding No. 2 - Staff Utilization – Teachers on Special Assignment

Teachers on Special Assignment (TSA) are certified teachers that are released from classroom teaching duties. District and region based TSA positions include educational specialists, placement specialists, and teacher testers/trainers. The District is organized into six regions for school management purposes. The job duties assigned to these positions generally include the following:

- Educational specialists are assigned to a specific region to facilitate workshops, coordinate the development of course outlines and modules, and act as a liaison between District and region.
- Placement specialists hold meetings with school staff and parents to facilitate the program placement of students.
- Teacher testers/trainers provide staff development in best educational practices and mentoring of new teachers.

We requested from the Office of Wage and Salary Administration a listing of teachers on special assignments (TSA). Our analysis disclosed that non-Federally funded teachers on special assignment at the District and region level totaled approximately 370 and 345 for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years, respectively. In addition to the non-Federally funded positions noted above, there were approximately 120 and 140 Federally funded TSA positions for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years, respectively.

On December 12, 2001, the Board approved the Superintendent's plan to study the TSA positions to determine if District resources are being utilized in the most efficient and effective manner. On January 11, 2002, the District informed us that they have reduced approximately 60 TSA positions. While 21 of these TSA positions were placed in open teaching positions at the schools, most of the remaining positions were vacant and were subsequently deleted from the budget. We recommend that the District continue its efforts to determine the optimum utilization of teachers on special assignment to ensure that the maximum level of resources is directed to the classrooms.

District Superintendent's Response

On December 12, 2001, the Board approved Resolution No. 1, 2001-02 General Fund, reducing non-school site budgets. Included in the resolution

was a reduction of 49 teachers on special assignment. Furthermore, the resolution stated that additional education specialists would be eliminated, and individuals would be placed in open school-site teaching positions by July 1, 2002.

To meet that deadline, a committee with representatives from Financial Affairs, Personnel Management and Services, Operations, Education, and Federal Grants Administration will meet to review the aforementioned non-school based positions on a position-by-position basis and present a final report to the Superintendent by May 1, 2002. Interim reports will be issued on a weekly basis commencing with the second week in April 2002.

Finding No. 3 - Staff Allocation – Teacher Duties

The Board's agreement with the United Teachers of Dade (UTD), the bargaining agent for the teachers, provides that a normal workday for an elementary teacher is 7 hours, 5 minutes, and for secondary teachers, 7 hours, 20 minutes. The workday includes lunch and a planning period. A complete listing of teachers who do not have direct instructional classroom duties (full release), or are not teaching full loads (partial release/less than 5 teaching periods or hours), was not available at the District's offices. We requested and obtained this information from the school principals through the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of School Operations. We determined the reasonableness of this information through comparisons, on a sample basis, to the results of the teacher surveys and through additional inquiries with selected school principals. We noted that some of these teachers, who were not teaching full loads, were not included in the listings provided to us by the principals. According to the principals responsible for these teachers, the names were not provided to us during our initial request because of oversight and misunderstanding of our audit request. Some of the duties performed by these teachers included monitoring discipline in the hallways, supervising on-campus suspensions, and involvement in the work experience programs.

The following table reflects the results of our audit procedures.

Job Title	Number of Teachers Teaching With Non-Teaching Duties (1) 2000-2001	2001-2002
School Based		
Activities Director	25	26
Administrative Assistant	21	23
Athletic Director/Bus Mgr	41	45
Dean of Discipline	15	9
Department Head/Chair	220	228
Test Chairperson	16	20
Reading Leader	112	111
Technology Facilitator	58	57
Other Positions	269	270
Total	777	789

Note (1): Includes numbers of teachers partially or fully released from teaching duties.

We noted that the District's *School Allocation Plan* allowed each senior high school to be allocated an additional 3.5 teacher units (release-time) in order to meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements. However, the *School Allocation Plan* did not specify the positions to be utilized for meeting these requirements.

Our review of District records and inquiries of principals and teachers disclosed the following additional information relative to the positions noted in the above table.

Activities Director. There is no provision for release time in the *School Allocation Plan* or UTD contract for this specific position. The UTD contract does provide for the activities directors to be paid supplements (an amount in addition to base wage) ranging from $2,760 to $3,380 depending on the years of service as an activities director. We noted that the majority of the activities directors were released from classroom teaching duties at the principal's discretion. Generally, these are high school-based teachers; however, we noted three middle schools with

activities directors. Job duties include coordinating the school's extra-curricular and fund-raising activities.

Administrative Assistant. There is no provision for this position in the *School Allocation Plan* or UTD contract. We were informed by the District that the principals may establish these positions under the recommendation of the Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils. These certified teachers were released from teaching duties at the discretion of the principal. In some instances, a supplement is paid for these positions. Generally, these are high school and middle school-based teachers. Job duties include assisting with the master schedule, coordinating the school improvement plans and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), involvement in the Southern Association of Schools and College's Advisory Committee, and grant writing.

Athletic Director (AD)/Business Manager (BM). The *School Allocation Plan* provides for these certified teachers to be released from teaching duties for two periods a day. As allowed by the UTD contract, these positions are paid a supplement ranging from $3,040 to $4,890 for the AD, and from $2,230 to $3,600 for the BM. We noted that, in some instances, athletic directors did not have classroom duties. Generally, these are high school-based teachers. Job duties include assisting in various school administration functions and enforcing discipline of student athletes.

Dean of Discipline. There is no provision for this position in the *School Allocation Plan* or UTD contract. We were informed by the District that the principals may establish these positions under the recommendation of the Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils. In some instances, a supplement is paid for these positions. Release time was at the discretion of the principal. Generally, these are high school-based teachers. Job duties include involvement in the discipline of students and attendance-related matters.

Department Head/Chair (DH/C). The *School Allocation Plan* and UTD contract provide for this position, but release time from classroom teaching duties is not addressed. These certified teachers were usually released, at the discretion of the principal, from teaching duties for one or two periods a day. However, we noted instances at three schools where DH/Cs were not released from teaching duties. The UTD contract allows for a supplement for these positions ranging from $1,720 to $2,100, depending on the number of years of service as a DH/C. Generally, these are middle and high school-based teachers. Job duties include acting as liaison between administration and teachers, assisting in the preparation of the master schedule, and assisting in curriculum issues for specific subject areas such as math, science, business, foreign languages, or social studies departments.

Test Chairperson (TC). The *School Allocation Plan* and UTD contract provide for this position. The *School Allocation Plan* allows each high school a .50 TC position; however, there is no provision for this position at middle schools. For high schools, these certified teachers were usually released from teaching duties for one or two periods a day but, in some instances, these positions have no classroom teaching duties. We also noted four middle schools with TCs released from classroom teaching duties. Job duties include coordinating school testing programs and acting as liaison with the District's Educational Accountability Department.

Reading Leader (RL). There is no provision for this position in the *School Allocation Plan* or UTD contract. We noted that these certified teachers (non-Federally funded) were either released or partially released from teaching duties at the discretion of the principal. RLs are elementary and middle school-based teachers. Job duties include coordinating the school-wide reading plan and student testing, assisting classroom teachers, and conducting reading workshops with the parents.

Technology Facilitator. There is no provision for this position in the *School Allocation Plan* or UTD contract. We were informed by the District that the principals may establish these positions under the recommendation of the Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils. In some instances, a supplement is paid for these positions. Also, we noted that many of the technology facilitators are partially released from teaching duties at the discretion of the principal. Job duties include in-class demonstration of instructional technology, assisting teachers with technical issues, and conducting parent and teacher workshops.

Other Positions. For the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years, these positions included lead teachers; head coaches; school coordinators; FCAT liaisons; teacher/DATA residents; curriculum coordinators; resource teachers; yearbook sponsors; UTD representatives; and others. Depending on the position, the certified teachers for the above positions are partially or fully released from classroom teaching duties at the discretion of the principal.

Placing teachers in duties outside the classroom increases class size and the related teacher to student ratio. From our review of responses received from the teacher surveys, it was evident that the assignment of teachers outside the classroom, and the related increase in class sizes, is of concern to teachers and is a significant factor on employee morale. According to survey respondents, in some instances, the time and effort spent on non-teaching duties did not justify the release time. Some survey respondents also stated that favoritism could have been a factor when the principals made these assignments. We recommend that the District provide for a formal study and analysis of the various partially and fully released teacher positions with a view toward providing additional guidance to principals regarding the establishment of these positions. Also, monitoring procedures should be implemented to include, at a minimum, maintaining an accurate Districtwide listing of these positions and employees. Positions and duties that are not currently addressed in the *School Allocation Plan* or the UTD contract should be appropriately addressed by management.

District Superintendent's Response

The *School Allocation Plan* is approved annually by the Board and is a plan for distributing revenue to schools and not a plan for each school's budget. The manual includes formulas to determine allocations to schools, based upon FTE students. Based upon the number of positions generated, a revenue amount is calculated and entered into the School-Based Budget System. The *School Allocation Plan* does not address job codes of teachers to hire. In most cases, it does not address supplements, unless it addresses allocations of supplements. School principals are responsible for purchasing teachers and other support staff to the extent revenue permits. The District has a long history of allowing school principals to determine what positions to purchase based upon the individual needs of the school.

Upon request from staff, reports are available which reflect teachers' class loads in secondary schools. To ensure that the released time policy is not being abused, a task force consisting of staff from Financial Affairs, Operations, and region offices will meet in the fall of 2002 to review the number of non-teaching periods in secondary schools and to provide a recommendation to the Superintendent on the matter.

In reference to addressing positions and duties of staff, the *School Allocation Plan* would not be appropriate. Personnel Management and Services maintains files on all job codes, including the duties of each position. All bargaining units list the job codes that fall under their contract.

Finding No. 4 - Budget Administration - Centralized Position Control System

The District uses an automated centralized position control system called Position Authorization Control (PAC) to track the number of Board-authorized, filled, and vacant positions. District, region, and school-based personnel use the PAC system listings for monitoring and controlling staffing requirements as part of the budgetary process. Personnel at the region offices approve the school principals' request for changes to the PAC. The approved changes are then forwarded to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) personnel for updating of the PAC. Other District automated systems, such as personnel and payroll, are automatically updated to reflect the same job position and number as the PAC.

As noted above, we requested and obtained listings of all school-based positions fully and partially released (other than teachers on special assignment) from the school principals through the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of School Operations. Our audit test of 18 schools disclosed instances where the job title described by the principal was different than the job title listed on the PAC. Also, we noted that these individuals were performing tasks other than those listed in the PAC. Our test results are reflected in the following table.

School	Job Title per PAC	Job Title per School Principal
Palm Springs N Elem	4th Grade Teacher	Technology Coordinator
Palm Springs N Elem	ESOL Teacher	Reading Leader
Cuttler Ridge Elem	Fifth Grade Teacher	Technology Specialist
Lake Stevens Middle	Math Teacher	Curriculm Resource Teacher
Allapattah Middle	Science Teacher	Technology Coordinator
Allapattah Middle	Math Teacher	Alternative Ed Liaison
Glades Middle	Social Studies Teacher	Administrative Assistant
Glades Middle	Math Teacher	Activities Director
American HS	Computer Ed Teacher	Test Chairperson
American HS	Drivers Ed Teacher	Business Mgr/Dept Head
Miami Beach HS	Social Studies Teacher	Athletic Director
Miami Beach HS	Lang Arts Teacher	Administrative Assistant
Miami Central HS	Social Studies Teacher	Athletic Director/Discipline
Miami Central HS	Teacher Ctr Special Inst.	Head Coach/Dean Discipline
Miami Palmetto HS	Social Studies Teacher	Business Manager
Miami Palmetto HS	Social Studies Teacher	Assistant Athletic Director
Miami Palmetto HS	Vocational DCT Teacher	Administrative Support
South Dade HS	Social Studies Teacher	Athletic Director

Note: Above information is for the 2001-2002 school year.

Since District, region, and school administrative personnel use the PAC to provide centralized tracking of authorized, vacant, and filled positions, to enhance budgetary controls, we recommend that the District review the accuracy of the job titles listed in the PAC system. Procedures should include a periodic comparison of school-based job titles to those listed in the PAC, and the timely resolution of noted differences.

District Superintendent's Response

This finding was based upon the principals' description of unofficial working titles of staff members, as compared to the official job titles in the Position Authorization Control (PAC) system.

In many situations, for example, a teacher may be teaching three periods a day and coordinating technology two periods a day. The personnel system allows for only one job code; therefore, the job code reflects the majority assignment of a teacher.

A task force consisting of staff from Financial Affairs, Operations, Personnel Management and Services and region offices will convene in the fall of 2002 and by February 1, 2003 will recommend new job codes, if necessary, to be used by schools to properly reflect the duties.

Finding No. 5 - Compliance with School Allocation Plan

In addition to allocating resources for instructional staff, the Board-approved *School Allocation Plan* also allocates other positions to schools, such as administrative and clerical staff, based on the student population. Custodial positions are provided for in the *School Allocation Plan* based on studies conducted by the maintenance department.

For 30 schools, we compared the positions provided for in the *School Allocation Plan* to the filled positions listed on the PAC for counselors, media specialists, assistant principals, clerical, and custodial positions. We noted several schools in which the filled clerical positions exceeded those provided for in the *School Allocation Plan*, with the excesses ranging up to five positions. We were informed by the District that clerical positions are discretionary in nature and that principals may add positions as determined by conditions such as physical layout of the facility and community, parental, and student demands.

While we recognize the District's intent to allow individual schools some flexibility in implementing the *School Allocation Plan*, significant deviations should be closely monitored to ensure that they do not result in staffing inefficiencies. We recommend that the District enhance its procedures for monitoring compliance with the *School Allocation Plan*. The District should consider the feasibility of establishing limits on excess positions to ensure that the number of filled positions comply with those established in the *School Allocation Plan*.

District Superintendent's Response

The *School Allocation Plan* is a document that provides the formulas for allocation of staff and materials/supplies. It is essentially a plan for distributing revenue to schools on an equitable basis and not a prescription for school-level budgeting. The District has a long history of allowing school principals to determine what positions to purchase, based upon the individual needs of the schools. To strictly limit the discretion of principals would be contrary to the often-stated desire of the Legislature, as well as the School Board, regarding school-based decision-making and budgetary decentralization.

Finding No. 6 - Class Sizes - Low Performing Schools

Section 236.687, Florida Statutes, Maximum Class Size Goals, provides for suggested class sizes for grade kindergarten through grade three. The Section states, in part, "It shall be the goal of the Legislature and each school district that each elementary school in the school district beginning with kindergarten through grade three class sizes not exceed 20 students, with a ratio of one full-time equivalent teacher per 20 students; except that only in the case of critically low performing schools as identified by the Commissioner of Education, the goal in kindergarten through grade three shall be a ratio of one full-time equivalent teacher per 15 students."

According to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), critically low performing schools are classified as "F" schools. Once designated an "F" school, the school is monitored for four years to determine if improvement can be accomplished and sustained, otherwise opportunity scholarships would become available. Based on 1999 test results,

the District had 24 "F" schools. Based on 2000 test results, the 24 "F" schools were improved to the grade of "D"; however, 2 additional schools dropped to an "F" grade. Based on 2001 test results, the December 2001 FDOE Accountability Report, which reflects low performing schools in overall Reading, Math, and Writing, did not indicate any "F" schools for the District. Grades of individual schools can be found in the FDOE Accountability Report, which is posted to its Web site in December of each year.

The District's *Strategic Plan* includes an action step to reduce class sizes and thus improve performance of "D" and "F" schools. The Plan further requires that "F"schools maintain a student to teacher ratio of 18:1 for grades one through three. Section 236.687, Florida Statutes, Maximum Class Size Goals, provides for suggested class sizes for grade kindergarten through grade three for "F" schools at a student to teacher ratio of 15:1. The following table reflects schools that were designated as critically low performing schools in 1999 and 2000 (which are now designated as "D" schools) and which had or have average class sizes greater than the District's goal of student to teacher ratio of 18:1 for grades one through three for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years:

	Average Class Size							
Year	2001	2001	2001	2001	2002	2002	2002	2002
Grade	K	1	2	3	K	1	2	3
Elementary School								
Frederick Douglas	19.3	28.8	24.8	26	25.7	25.6	23.5	28.4
Carol City	28	17.9	16.9	18	22	18.7	19	20.7
W. A. Chapman	20.5	14.8	13.3	17.1	17.7	17.5	15.9	23.5
Earlington Heights	27.3	15.6	13.4	18.8	27.7	17.8	20.8	16.3
Parkway	21	17.2	16.7	18.9	22.7	16	15.6	21
Eneida M. Hartner	30.4	17	20	22.9	25.7	17.3	19.3	15.2
Little River	29.5	19.2	16.3	17.1	30	14.9	15.7	18.4
Irving & Beatrice Peskoe	26.5	16	17.1	17.5	23.3	16.5	19.3	17.4
Phillis Wheatley	35	12.8	18.3	15.8	18.5	16	17	18.8

Source: District & School Profiles 2000-2001 and District's "Average Class Size Reports" - Preliminary Data (November 2001).

The FDOE Accountability Report reflects 68 elementary schools with a "D" grade. The following table reflects the number of "D" schools with an average class size greater than the State Statute goal of student to pupil ratio of 20:1:

	School Year 2001-2002	
Grade	Schools Exceeding State Statute (1)	Percentage of Schools Exceeding State Statute
K	59	87
1	46	68
2	51	75
3	51	75

Note (1): Source - District "Average Class Size Reports" - Preliminary Data (November 2001).

We recommend that the District continue efforts to reduce class sizes in low performing schools.

District Superintendent's Response

Although the goal in Florida Statutes suggests class sizes in low-performing schools to be one full-time teacher per 15 students, categorical funding is not provided from State sources to accomplish this goal. The District allocates $30 million in the FCAT Enhancement Program to assist low-achieving students to improve FCAT scores. Schools have the option to purchase primarily teachers or paraprofessionals. In many cases, class sizes are larger due to overcrowded conditions; therefore, full-time or part-time paraprofessionals are utilized due to the lack of classroom space.

In addition, federal funds are distributed to districts under the Class Size Reduction Program. These funds are provided to low-achieving schools to reduce class size. In many cases, due to the lack

of classroom space, two teachers must be housed in the same classroom, using funds from this program. Until additional resources are available, this goal will not be fully met.

AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, I have directed that this report be prepared and submitted to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Legislative Auditing Committee.

William O. Monroe, CPA
Auditor General

To promote accountability in government and improvement in government operations, the Auditor General makes operational audits of selected programs, activities, and functions of district school boards. This operational audit was made in accordance with applicable Governmental Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. This audit was conducted by Ramon A. Gonzalez, CPA. Please address inquiries regarding this report to David W. Martin, CPA, Audit Manager, via e-mail at davidmartin@aud.state.fl.us or by telephone at (850) 487-9039.

This audit report, as well as other reports prepared by the Auditor General, can be obtained on our Web site at www.state.fl.us/audgen; by telephone at (850) 487-9024; or by mail at G74 Claude Pepper Building, 111 West Madison Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1450.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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Superintendent
of Schools
Merrett R. Stierheim

March 13, 2002

Mr. William O. Monroe, CPA
Auditor General of the State of Florida
G74 Claude Pepper Building
111 West Madison Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1450

Dear Mr. Monroe:

Attached is the response to the preliminary and tentative audit findings and recommendations associated with the audit of the budget and staff allocation procedures for Miami-Dade District School Board, July 1, 2000 through January 31, 2002.

I appreciate the professional manner in which your staff conducted this audit.

Sincerely,

Merrett R. Stierheim
Superintendent of Schools

MRS/GB:wvd
L-1200 (R1409)
Attachment

cc: School Board Members
Audit Committee Members
School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Executive Staff
Office of Management and Compliance Audits
KPMG LLP

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***Finding No. 1* – District's Strategic Plan**

The *Annual Accountability Report* was released on March 5, 2002. Currently, limited district resources are devoted to the coordination and implementation of the *Strategic Plan*. Staffing limitations in the Evaluation and Research department will impact the availability of the *Annual Accountability Report*. Because some critical data are not available until the end of the school year, a September date for publishing the *Accountability Report* may not be feasible. Evaluation and Accountability will submit a budget adjustment form to identify additional budget or redirected resources required to publish the report by a more reasonable deadline (probably October).

The 2001-2002 fiscal year was not typical. Several unanticipated events occurred which also contributed to delaying the report. Staff responsible for providing data for the *Accountability Report* was unable to meet deadlines because of its involvement with the OPPAGA's Best Practices Review, the financial crisis confronting the district as a result of the budget shortfall, and the administrative reorganization.

Periodic updates are not feasible since the plan is evaluated on an annual basis with data that often are only available at the end of the school year.

In reference to having a standing committee to monitor and evaluate the District's adherence to the plan, an additional committee is not necessary. The Superintendent and his executive staff are responsible for implementing the action steps identified in the *Strategic Plan*. The School Board is responsible for evaluating the progress towards its goals/objectives. Furthermore, any community stakeholders may address the School Board regarding their reactions and opinions about the *Strategic Plan* or the *Annual Accountability Report*.

Office of Budget Management (BM) staff will work with Evaluation and Research (ER) staff to improve coordination between the *Strategic Plan* and the budget for the FY 2002-03 budget development process.

In future years, ER will provide the opportunity for staff to update their objectives/action steps in the *Strategic Plan* during the period from mid-January to the end of February. This is approximately the same time that non-school locations are receiving budget development materials for the next fiscal year. If a department is modifying its objectives/action steps contingent upon a budget increase, it will be required to complete a more extensive budget request form to be submitted for consideration by the Superintendent's budget committee. If the necessary funding is neither provided nor redirected in the new year's budget, the affected action steps will be deleted in an update of the *Strategic Plan* to be issued in late September or early October, after final budget adoption.

***Finding No. 2* - Staff Utilization – Teachers on Special Assignment**

On December 12, 2001, the Board approved Resolution No. 1, 2001-02 General Fund, reducing non-school site budgets. Included in the resolution was a reduction of 49 teachers on special assignment. Furthermore, the resolution stated that additional education specialists would be eliminated, and individuals would be placed in open school-site teaching positions by July 1, 2002.

To meet that deadline, a committee with representatives from Financial Affairs, Personnel Management and Services, Operations, Education, and Federal Grants Administration will meet to review the aforementioned non-school based positions on a position-by-position basis and present a final report to the Superintendent by May 1, 2002. Interim reports will be issued on a weekly basis commencing with the second week in April 2002.

***Finding No. 3* - Staff Allocation – Teacher Duties**

The *School Allocation Plan* is approved annually by the Board and is a plan for distributing revenue to schools and not a plan for each school's budget. The manual includes formulas to determine allocations to schools, based upon FTE students. Based upon the number of positions generated, a revenue amount is calculated and entered into the School-Based Budget System. The *School Allocation Plan* does not address job codes of teachers to hire. In most cases, it does not address supplements, unless it addresses allocations of supplements. School principals are responsible for purchasing teachers and other support staff to the extent revenue permits. The District has a long history of allowing school principals to determine what positions to purchase based upon the individual needs of the school.

Upon request from staff, reports are available which reflect teachers' class loads in secondary schools. To ensure that the released time policy is not being abused, a task force consisting of staff from Financial Affairs, Operations, and region offices will meet in the fall of 2002 to review the number of non-teaching periods in secondary schools and to provide a recommendation to the Superintendent on the matter.

In reference to addressing positions and duties of staff, the *School Allocation Plan* would not be appropriate. Personnel Management and Services maintains files on all job codes, including the duties of each position. All bargaining units list the job codes that fall under their contract.

***Finding No. 4* - Budget Administration – Centralized Position Control System**

This finding was based upon the principals' description of unofficial working titles of staff members, as compared to the official job titles in the Position Authorization Control (PAC) system. In many situations, for example, a teacher may be teaching three periods a day and coordinating technology two periods a day. The personnel system allows for only one job code; therefore, the job code reflects the majority assignment of a teacher.

A task force consisting of staff from Financial Affairs, Operations, Personnel Management and Services and region offices will convene in the fall of 2002 and by February 1, 2003 will recommend new job codes, if necessary, to be used by schools to properly reflect the duties.

***Finding No. 5* - Compliance with School Allocation Plan**

The *School Allocation Plan* is a document that provides the formulas for allocation of staff and materials/supplies. It is essentially a plan for distributing revenue to schools on an equitable basis and not a prescription for school-level budgeting. The District has a long history of allowing school principals to determine what positions to purchase, based upon the individual needs of the schools. To strictly limit the discretion of principals would be contrary to the often-stated desire of the Legislature, as well as the School Board, regarding school-based decision-making and budgetary decentralization.

***Finding No. 6* – Class Sizes – Low Performing Schools**

Although the goal in Florida Statutes suggests class sizes in low-performing schools to be one full-time teacher per 15 students, categorical funding is not provided from State sources to accomplish this goal. The District allocates $30 million in the FCAT Enhancement Program to assist low-achieving students to improve FCAT scores. Schools have the option to purchase primarily teachers or paraprofessionals. In many cases, class sizes are larger due to overcrowded conditions; therefore, full-time or part-time paraprofessionals are utilized due to the lack of classroom space.

In addition, federal funds are distributed to districts under the Class Size Reduction Program. These funds are provided to low-achieving schools to reduce class size. In many cases, due to the lack of classroom space, two teachers must be housed in the same classroom, using funds from this program. Until additional resources are available, this goal will not be fully met.