



SCHOOL DISTRICT PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

**K-12 Education: Efficiency Audit of the
Renwick School District**

**A Report to the Legislative Post Audit Committee
By the Legislative Division of Post Audit
State of Kansas
April 2010**

Legislative Post Audit Committee

Legislative Division of Post Audit

THE LEGISLATIVE POST Audit Committee and its audit agency, the Legislative Division of Post Audit, are the audit arm of Kansas government. The programs and activities of State government now cost about \$13 billion a year. As legislators and administrators try increasingly to allocate tax dollars effectively and make government work more efficiently, they need information to evaluate the work of governmental agencies. The audit work performed by Legislative Post Audit helps provide that information.

We conduct our audit work in accordance with applicable government auditing standards set forth by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. These standards pertain to the auditor's professional qualifications, the quality of the audit work, and the characteristics of professional and meaningful reports. The standards also have been endorsed by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and adopted by the Legislative Post Audit Committee.

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DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR IMPROVED GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY OR COST SAVINGS?

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April 21, 2010

To: Members, Legislative Post Audit Committee

Senator Terry Bruce, Chair
Senator Anthony Hensley
Senator Derek Schmidt
Senator Chris Steineger
Senator Dwayne Umbarger

Representative John Grange, Vice Chair
Representative Tom Burroughs
Representative Ann Mah
Representative Peggy Mast
Representative Virgil Peck Jr.,

This report contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from our completed performance audit, *K-12 Education: Efficiency Audit of the Renwick School District*.

The report also contains appendices showing detailed information for non-instructional operating costs for the Renwick school district and its 17 peer district and best practices for school district efficiencies.

The report includes several recommendations for the Renwick school district. We would be happy to discuss these recommendations or any other items in the report with any legislative committees, individual legislators, or other State officials.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara J. Hinton". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Barbara J. Hinton
Legislative Post Auditor

READER'S GUIDE

| <i>The Big Picture</i> | | <i>The Details</i> | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Audit Highlights | The highlights sheet, inserted in each report, provides an overview of the audit's key findings | "At-a-Glance Box" | Used to describe key aspects of the audited agency; generally appears in the first few pages of the main report |
| Conclusions and Recommendations | Located at the end of the audit questions, or at the end of the report | Side Headings | Point out key issues and findings |
| Agency Response | Included as the last Appendix in the report | Charts, Tables, and Graphs | Visually help tell the story of what we found |
| Table of Contents, and lists of figures and appendices | Lets the reader quickly locate key parts of the report | Narrative Text Boxes | Highlight interesting information or provide detailed examples |

This audit was conducted by Laurel Murdie, Alex Gard, and Lindsay Rousseau. Scott Frank was the audit manager. If you need any additional information about the audit's findings, please contact Laurel Murdie at the Division's offices.

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K-12 Education: Efficiency Audit of the Renwick School District

In July 2009, our office released a school district performance audit examining the efficiency of school districts' operations. As originally directed by the 2010 Commission, that audit would have consisted of two phases. The first phase called for analyzing district staffing and expenditure data to identify areas where spending for districts appeared to be out-of-line compared with their peers. The second phase called for following up on a sample of districts to evaluate their processes in the areas that appeared to be out-of-line to determine if there were ways they could reduce costs without affecting their ability to provide high-quality education to their students.

In April 2009, the Commission directed us to suspend the follow-up part of the audit to alleviate concerns some superintendents had expressed about having an efficiency audit conducted while they were trying to address funding cuts from the State. However, in May 2009 the Commission discussed the fact that some districts may want to take advantage of the external review an efficiency audit could provide in helping them look for opportunities to operate more efficiently. The Commission subsequently directed us to contact school districts to see if any of them would like to volunteer for an external efficiency audit.

Officials from the Renwick school district contacted us and requested an efficiency audit. This school district performance audit answers the following question:

Could the Renwick school district achieve cost savings by improving the management of its non-instructional personnel, facilities, or other resources?

Because district officials asked us to look at all spending areas—including instruction—we modified the original question to include all types of district expenditures.

To help answer this question, we identified peer districts that are demographically similar to the Renwick school district and compared them on various measures of efficiency. That allowed us to identify areas where the spending or resources used by the Renwick school district appeared to be out of line. We also conducted site visits to interview district officials and staff, observe various administrative and operational processes, and tour a number of the district's facilities.

A copy of the scope statement for this audit approved by the 2010 Commission is included in *Appendix A*.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, except that we didn't fully assess the reliability of certain data provided by the Renwick school district, including high school class rosters, property insurance costs, detailed personnel data, and maximum building capacities. As a standard part of our preliminary testing of those data, we reviewed the data for reasonableness, duplication, and inconsistencies. That preliminary testing didn't disclose any systematic problems that would suggest the data were grossly inaccurate.

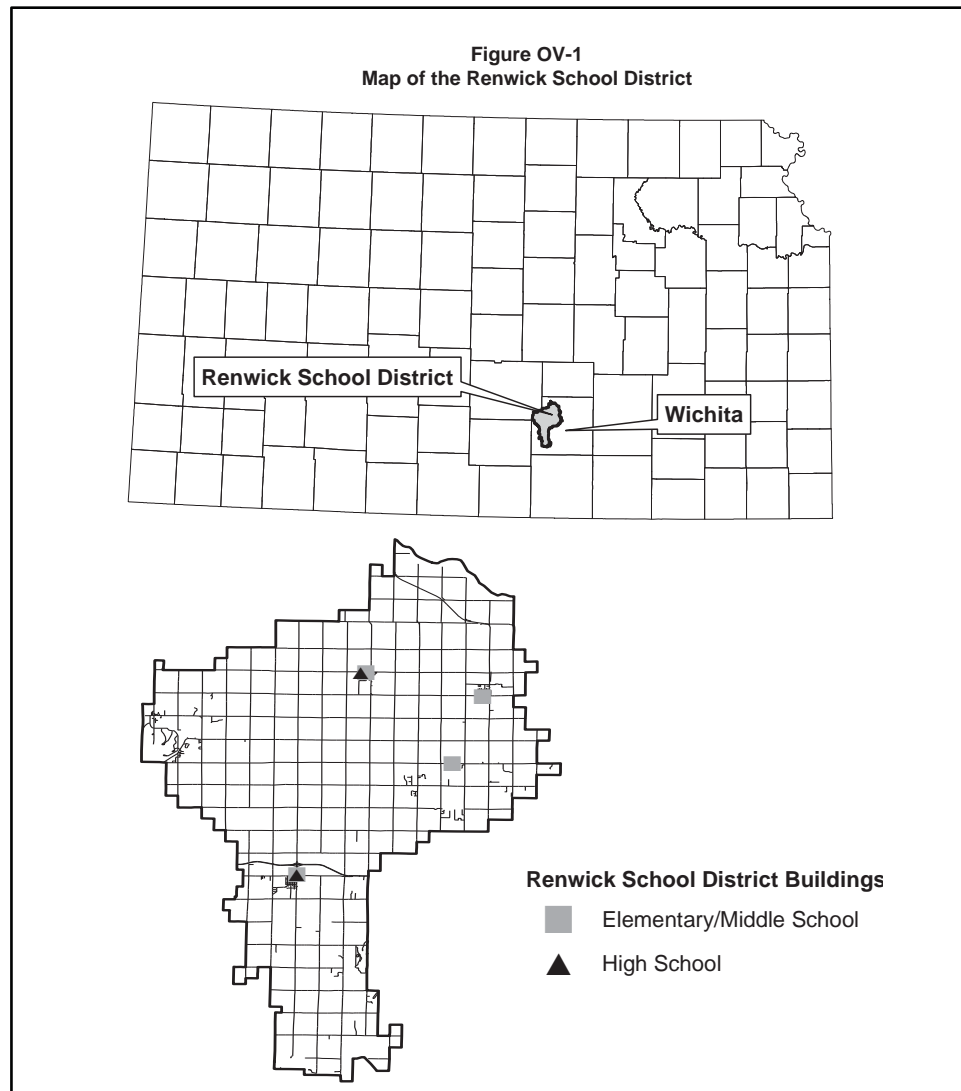
The standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Our findings begin on page 5, following a brief overview of the Renwick school district.

Overview of the Renwick School District

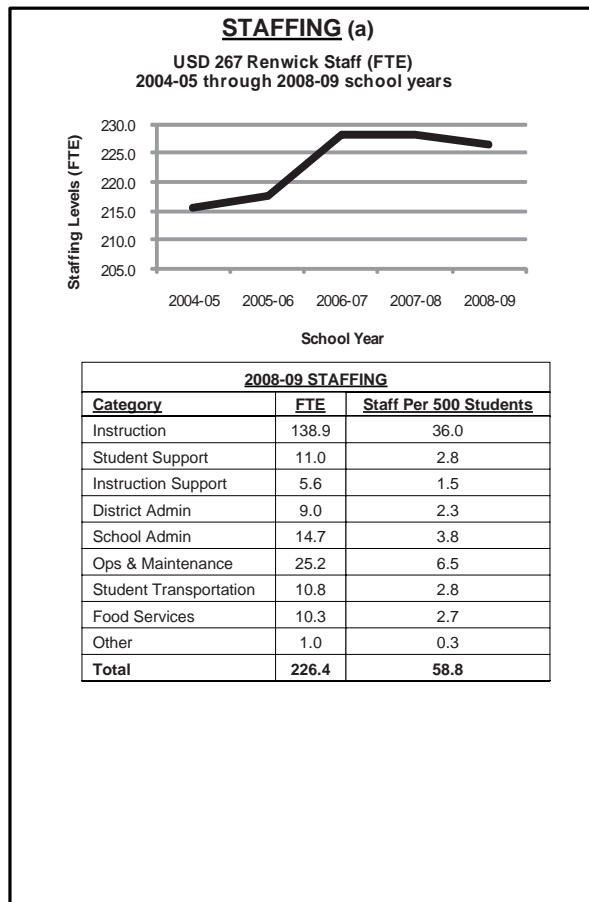
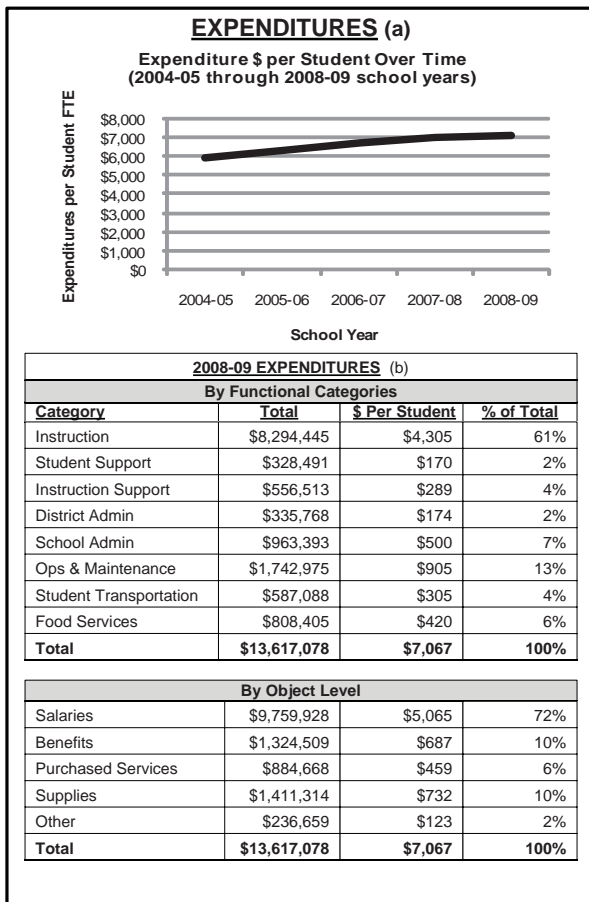
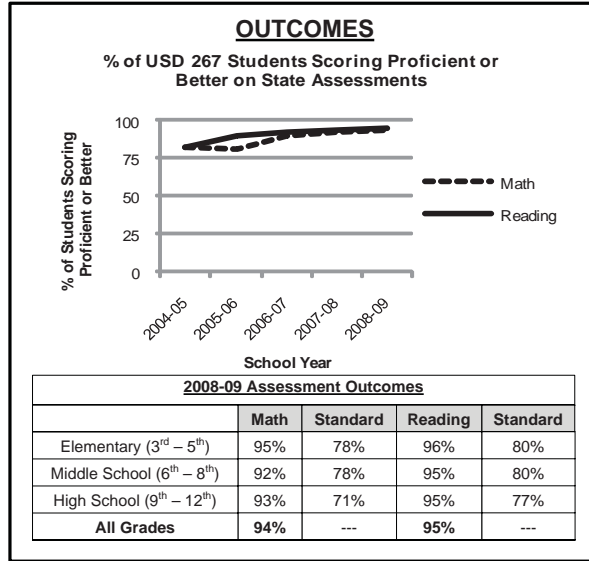
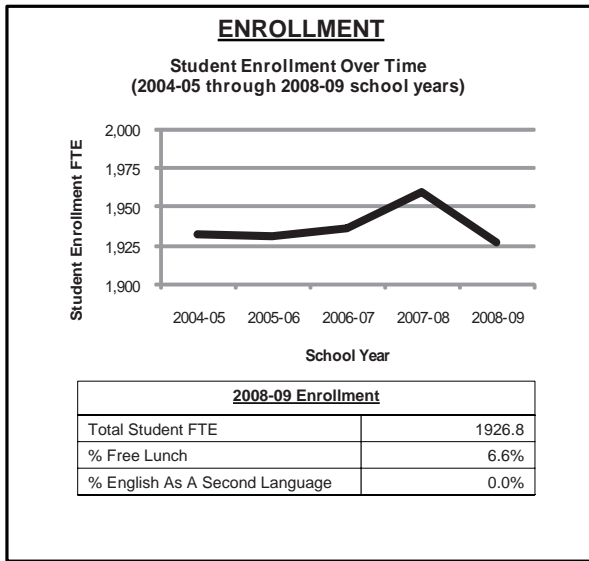
The Renwick school district is located in south central Kansas and includes portions of Reno and Sedgwick Counties. The school district has 1,946 full-time-equivalent students for the 2009-10 school year, and employs about 280 staff, including 138 full-time-equivalent certified teachers.

Figure OV-1 provides a map of the district, and **Figure OV-2** summarizes the district's enrollment, outcomes, expenditures, and staffing levels for the past five years.

Because of the many cooperative arrangements for special education services that exist between some districts, including special education expenditures or staff would create distortions in the efficiency measures used throughout this report. Therefore, we've excluded



**Figure OV-2
Selected Information for the Renwick School District**



(a) Excludes costs and staff associated with special education and transportation.
 (b) Expenditures include the following funds: general fund, federal revenues, supplemental general fund, four-year-old at-risk, K-12 at-risk, bilingual education, virtual education, capital outlay, driver training, food service, professional development, summer school, vocational education, gifts and grants, contingency reserve, textbook rent and student revolving, and the extraordinary school program. Costs associated with transfers or property and equipment expenditures are not included.

Source: LPA analysis of Kansas State Department of Education assessment scores and staffing data, and school district expenditure and staffing data.

Could the Renwick School District Achieve Cost Savings By Improving the Management of Its Personnel, Facilities, or Other Resources?

Answer in Brief:

The Renwick school district has taken some positive steps to become more efficient and control costs, but like the other districts we've reviewed it lacks a systematic approach for evaluating and managing efficiency. Overall, the district's non-instructional spending per student is lower than its peers. However, we identified several significant areas where the district could operate more efficiently and reduce its costs. Although the school board and community would have to work through a significant number of issues if they chose to close one of the district's four K-8 school buildings as well as Garden Plain High School, doing so potentially could save the district about \$1.6 million. These and other findings are described in more detail in the sections that follow.

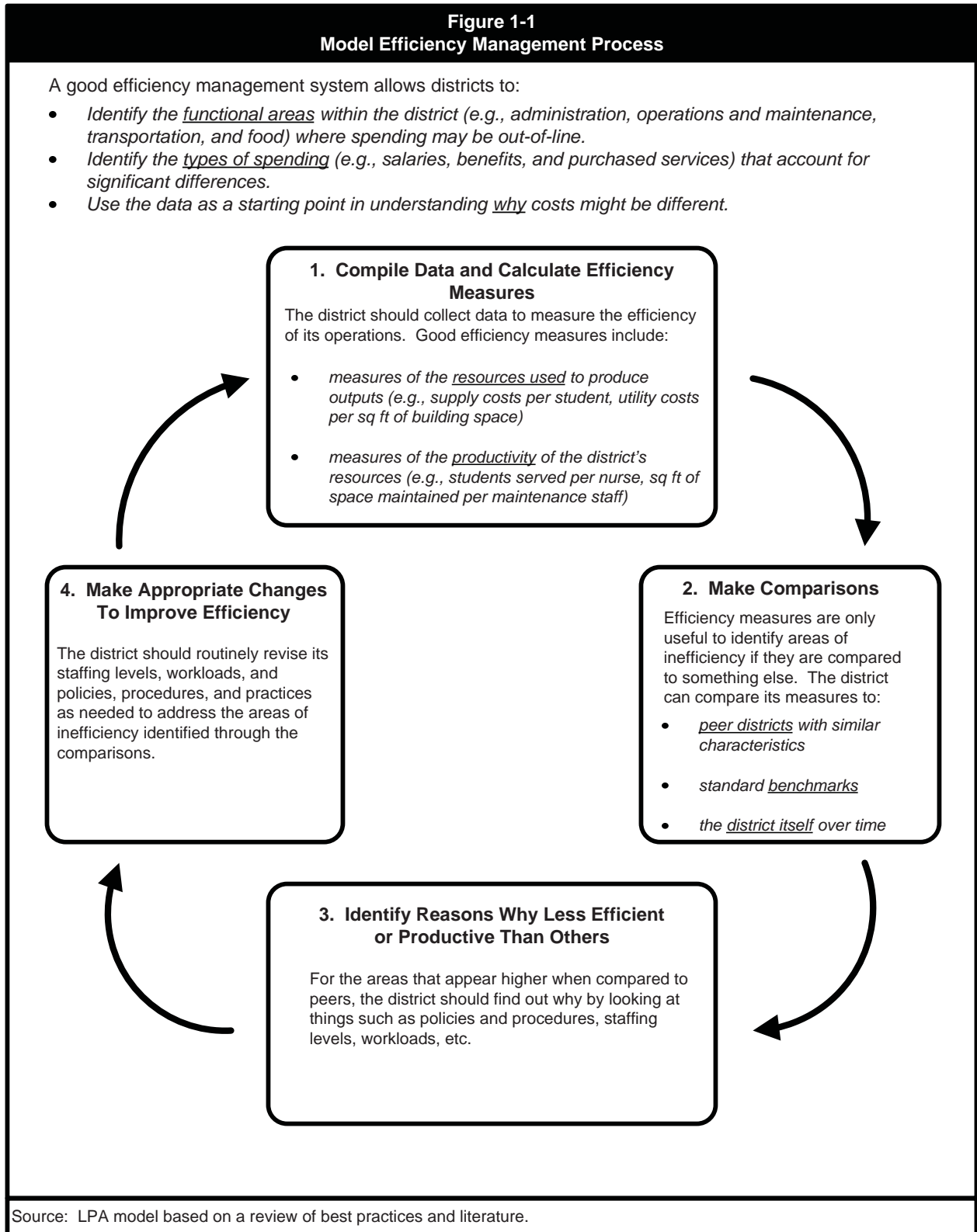
School Districts Should Have a Systematic Process for Managing Efficiency

Although most evaluations of school districts tend to focus on how well the districts educate students, oversight bodies and citizens increasingly are becoming more interested in how efficiently districts are operating—particularly in light of the budget shortfalls that are facing governments at all levels. School efficiency audits focus on ways in which districts can change the way they currently operate to essentially provide the same quality of educational services using fewer resources, or to allow their existing resources to become more productive. If fewer resources are needed, districts can use the savings either to reduce costs or to redirect those resources to other more important activities.

Measures of efficiency are calculated ratios that capture the relationship between inputs (the resources used) and outputs (the things accomplished or produced). For educational entities, the primary measures of efficiency are things like expenditures per student, staff per student, and number of activities per employee (e.g., classes taught per teacher or meals served per food service worker).

One important aspect of assessing efficiency is comparing these measures to those of peers with similar characteristics, to standard benchmarks, and to the district itself over time. This allows a district to see how it compares, and to explore reasons why it may spend more in certain areas. A district also can make adjustments to its policies, procedures, and practices to ensure it not only provides the best education for its students, but also the best value for taxpayers. In addition, as districts move towards greater computerization, it's important for them to look at how streamlined and automated their processes are.

A model for a good efficiency management process is summarized in *Figure 1-1*.



While the Renwick school district has taken a number of positive steps to become more efficient and control costs, it lacks a fully developed system for evaluating and managing efficiency.

According to district officials, the district has taken the following steps over the past several years to improve its efficiency:

- **Improved business processes**—About midway through the 2009-10 school year, district officials implemented an electronic timecard system; they report it has reduced the amount of overtime paid. In addition, it's the district's policy to bid out or at least competitively shop for most items that cost \$5,000 or more.
- **Transportation**—District officials report that they are encouraging staff to use school vehicles instead of paying mileage for personal vehicles.
- **Utilities**—The Renwick school district is a member of the Kansas Joint Utilities Management Program (KJUMP), the natural gas purchasing consortium managed by the Kansas Association of School Boards, which can help lower the district's natural gas costs. In addition, the district has contracted with an entity to help control overall utility costs, and it has a climate control system in place.

In addition to taking steps to improve efficiency, the district also has made other significant cuts to address budget shortfalls. Those cuts include the following:

- **Reduced staffing costs**—For the 2009-10 school year, district officials reported several staff reductions. These included cutting six certified teachers, the transportation director, two secretaries, and two custodians. The district also cut 15 days from the school calendar and lengthened the school day to make up the lost time, which reduced food service and transportation staff costs.

In addition, during the 2008-09 school year the district eliminated three before-school classes, including two sections of weightlifting and one section of advanced biology, and canceled summer school.

- **Reduced extra-curricular activities**—Officials report that coaching staff at the middle schools have been reduced to one coach for each sporting activity, that there have been fewer music performances, and that music programs have been cut.
- **Miscellaneous**—District officials told us they've cut building budgets by 20% from 2007-08 levels, which has saved the district an estimated \$98,000. Among other things, building budgets are used to cover ink for printers and other instructional supplies.

Despite these efforts, we noted that the Renwick school district doesn't have a fully developed process for reviewing and trying to manage the efficiency of its operations. Such a process is illustrated in *Figure 1-1*. Specifically:

- **The district doesn't routinely calculate efficiency measures.** Like other districts, Renwick school district officials told us they look at the district's overall spending trends over time, but don't calculate per-student spending for each area, such as district administration, operations and maintenance, transportation, and food service.
- **Recently, the district started using data from Legislative Post Audit school efficiency audits to help compare itself to peers.** Officials said they used the *K-12 Education: School District Efficiency Audit* from July 2009 as the primary tool to compare itself to other school districts. In addition, officials said they use the Kansas State Department of Education's report builder database to help answer the district's board members' information requests. Questions from board members tend to be about how the district's mill levies—including bond and interest and capital outlay—compare with other districts.
- **The district doesn't have a systematic process for routinely revising policies, procedures, and practices.** Officials said that they don't have a standardized policy or practice for doing this, and that their process of comparison is ongoing. Officials think that their system works fine, and that if the district were larger a more formal process would be necessary.

Some of the staffing data the district reports to the Kansas Department of Education is inaccurate. Each year, districts are required to report the number of staff in various areas, including food services, operations and maintenance, administration, and instruction. We noticed significant anomalies with some of the staffing figures reported by the district. For example, the district reported employing 23 operations and maintenance staff for the 2007-08 school year, but only 2 staff for 2008-09.

District officials acknowledged they hadn't reported accurate data to the Department because they didn't know that anyone used the data. Although there's no funding associated with these data, having accurate data can help districts identify areas where they could become more efficient. Officials told us they would report the numbers correctly in the future.

Renwick School District's Non-Instructional Spending Per Student Is Less Than Its Peers, and Nearly All Staffing Levels Appear To Be Lower

To compare the district's efficiency measures to other districts, we selected 17 peers whose demographics were similar in terms of size, property values, and concentration of poverty and students with limited English proficiency. **Appendix B** provides a list of the peer districts, a demographic comparison of the Renwick school district to its peers, and a more detailed description of how we selected the peers.

Using enrollment, staffing, and expenditure data for the 2008-09 school year (the most recent year for which complete data were available for our audit fieldwork), we calculated a variety of efficiency measures for the Renwick school district and its peers in the following areas: instruction, district- and school-level administration, instruction and student support, operations and maintenance, student transportation, and food service. We excluded expenditures related to special education because cooperative arrangements between some districts can create distortions in the efficiency measures. In addition, we excluded property and equipment purchases because they can be very uneven from year-to-year.

Figure 1-2 on page 10 summarizes our findings for these comparisons. Detailed efficiency measures for each district can be found in **Appendix B**.

As the figure shows, Renwick's total spending per student was lower than the average of its peer districts, and Renwick's non-instructional spending per student was about \$200 lower than the peers' average.

We Identified a Number Of Opportunities for the Renwick School District To Operate More Efficiently and Reduce Costs

Renwick school district officials estimate that about \$615,000 needs to be cut from the district's 2010-11 budget because of the current fiscal crisis. To help the district identify potential savings opportunities, we reviewed the efficiency measures described in the previous section, interviewed district officials and staff, and conducted site visits to observe various processes and tour a number of the district's facilities. We also reviewed audits and research conducted in other states to compile a list of best practices for improving efficiency, which are summarized in **Appendix C**.

Based on this work, we identified a number of opportunities for savings, which are summarized in **Figure 1-3** on page 11. Many of these options would result in cutting teaching positions, which clearly can affect the ways in which instruction is provided. However, given the State's economic condition, many districts are already facing cuts for existing staff. Identifying ways in which they can operate more efficiently may allow them to make more targeted cuts which could lessen the impact on their ability to provide high-quality instruction. Some of the more significant opportunities are described in more detail in the following sections.

**Figure 1-2
Renwick School District Efficiency Measures as Compared to Its Peers for the 2008-09 School Year**

| Spending Area | | Renwick | Peer Average (a) | Compared to Peers |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|---|
| Instructional Spending | | | | |
| Instruction | Spending per Student (b) | \$4,305 | \$4,232 | Overall, the Renwick district's instruction expenditures per student and staffing levels were higher than its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 36.0 | 34.9 | |
| Non-Instructional Spending | | | | |
| Student Support | Spending per Student (b) | \$170 | \$242 | The Renwick district's student support expenditures per student and staffing levels were lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 2.8 | 3.6 | |
| Instructional Support | Spending per Student (b) | \$289 | \$305 | The Renwick district's instructional support expenditures per student and staffing levels were slightly lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 1.4 | 1.9 | |
| District-Level Administration | Spending per Student (b) | \$174 | \$264 | The Renwick district's district-level administration expenditures per student and staffing levels were lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 2.3 | 3.6 | |
| School-Level Administration | Spending per Student (b) | \$500 | \$517 | The Renwick district's school-level administration expenditures per student and staffing levels were slightly lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 3.8 | 4.6 | |
| Operations and Maintenance | Spending per Student (b) | \$905 | \$907 | The Renwick district's operations and maintenance expenditures per student were in line with its peers, while its staffing levels were slightly higher than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 6.5 | 5.7 | |
| Student Transportation (c) | Spending per Student (b) | \$305 | \$274 | The Renwick district's transportation expenditures were higher than its peers, while its staffing levels were lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 2.8 | 3.9 | |
| Food Services | Spending per Student (b) | \$420 | \$448 | The Renwick district's food services expenditures were slightly lower than its peers, while its staffing levels were lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 2.7 | 4.7 | |
| Total Non-Instructional Spending | Spending per Student (b) | \$2,763 | \$2,957 | Overall, the Renwick school district's non-instructional expenditures per student and staffing levels were lower than the average of its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 22.3 | 28.0 | |
| TOTALS | Spending per Student (b) | \$7,068 | \$7,189 | Overall, the Renwick school district's total expenditures per student and staffing levels were lower than its peers. |
| | Staff per 500 Students | 58.3 | 62.9 | |

(a) Peer average does not include Renwick.

(b) Expenditures do not include any costs associated with special education or properties and equipment.

(c) Student transportation is shown here to make the total spending complete. However, the factors we used to identify the peer districts (enrollment, poverty, prevalence of English language learners) aren't relevant for transportation costs. Therefore, the peer comparison isn't valid.

Sources: LPA analysis of data provided by the Kansas Department of Education and the Renwick school district.

**Figure 1-3
Summary of Areas Identified for Improved Efficiencies
and Estimate of Savings**

| Potential Area for Improving Efficiency or Achieving Cost Savings | Estimated Annual Savings |
|---|--------------------------|
| Student Instruction | |
| Changing to a Traditional Schedule at Both High Schools Potentially Could Save About \$95,000 - If the district changed to a traditional schedule, it would need 1.5 fewer teachers at Andale High School. The remaining teachers would each teach an additional class (seven instead of six). The classes offered, number of class sections, and students per class wouldn't have to change. See pages 12-16 for more details. | \$95,000 |
| Switching to Traditional Class Schedules and Reducing the Number of Class Sections Offered Potentially Could Save an Additional \$288,000 - If, in addition to moving to a traditional schedule, the district also filled its classes closer to the capacities it sets for the classes and eliminated some classes with very low enrollments at both high schools, the district could potentially realize these savings. See pages 16-17 for more details. | \$288,000 |
| Facilities | |
| Closing an Elementary School Potentially Could Save At Least an Estimated \$755,000 - The district appears to have enough physical space in its elementary buildings to close one elementary school and relocate those students to the other three elementary schools. Closing a school building is one of the most difficult and divisive decisions a school board and community can make. The impact on students and the community must be taken into account. See pages 17-22 for more details. | \$755,000 |
| Closing Garden Plain High School Potentially Could Save an Estimated \$800,000 - The district appears to have enough physical space in its Andale High School building and adjacent outbuildings to close Garden Plain High School. See pages 22-24 for more details. | \$800,000 |
| Personnel | |
| Offering Fewer Supplemental Contracts Potentially Could Save \$12,000 - The district paid out \$390,000 in supplemental contracts during 2009-10. Although this is not an efficiency issue and is instead a policy issue, the district potentially could save money by cutting five assistant coaching positions for activities with the highest net costs per student. These activities include yearbook, wrestling, boys and girls basketball, and cross country. | \$12,000 |
| Reevaluating the District's Policy of Buying Back Unused Leave From Staff Potentially Could Save Money - At the end of each school year, the district buys back unused personal and sick leave from all staff. Rates vary from \$22.50 per day for classified staff to \$50 per day for administrators. Over the past two years, the district has spent an average of \$39,000 per year to buy back unused leave from current and retiring staff. Renwick could potentially save money if it changed its policy on purchasing unused leave. See pages 24-25 for more details. | (a) |
| Business Processes | |
| Automating Paper-Driven Processes Potentially Could Save Money - The district relies heavily on paper for many of its administrative functions, including purchasing and printing payroll registers. If it relied less on paper and used electronic processes such as scanning and e-mail, it could save staff time, paper, postage, and storage space. See page 25 for more details. | (a) |
| Competitively Purchasing Property and Liability Insurance Potentially Could Save Money - The district spent an average of \$264,000 per year on property, liability, and workers' compensation insurance over the past two years, but it hasn't shopped around for an insurance agent or bid out insurance in the past few years. The district might be able to get a better price for its insurance by soliciting bids or competitively shopping for another insurance agent. | (a) |
| Maximizing the Use of Business Procurement Cards Potentially Could Save \$1,000 - The district uses procurement cards but currently doesn't receive cash-back rebates on its purchases. We estimated the district could have received at least \$1,000 in cash-back rebates in 2008-09 if it had a cash-back provision, and then used its procurement cards for purchases from vendors that accept them. | \$1,000 |
| Transportation Services | |
| Purchasing Vehicle Fuel Competitively Potentially Could Save Money - Renwick has spent an average of \$100,000 per year on vehicle fuel over the past two years. The district has no central fueling location, and it is paying pump price for its fuel. District transportation staff used to call around to find the lowest fuel costs, but stopped doing so. Officials should resume that practice. The district could also potentially save money by negotiating a lower fuel price, and it should conduct additional research into purchasing a fuel tank for its vehicles to see if it would be more cost-effective. | (a) |
| Reducing the Number of Activity Routes Potentially Could Save \$7,200 - The district spent about \$72,000 on activity routes in 2008-09. If the district could find a way to reduce expenditures in this area by even 10%--by filling buses to capacity on activity trips or by reducing the number of activity trips--we estimated it could save \$7,200 per year. | \$7,200 |
| Miscellaneous | |
| Enforcing the District's Policy on Personal Appliances Potentially Could Save Money - The district recently put a policy in place to ban personal appliances in classrooms, such as small refrigerators which can consume a lot of electricity. However, we saw some during our site visit. | (a) |
| Expanding the Use of Virtualized Computers Potentially Could Save Money - Virtualized computers allow a single computer to be configured to simulate multiple computers, cutting down on hardware costs. The district currently uses two virtualized computers, but stopped adding more because of concerns over using virtual machines to administer State assessments. Officials from the Department of Education told us they could fix districts' issues with using virtualized computers, so the district should resume its plans to use more of them. | (a) |
| (a) We were unable to quantify the potential savings for these areas. | |
| Source: LPA's review of the Renwick school district's budget data, staffing levels, enrollment, and physical characteristics of buildings, along with a review of best practices. | |

Changing Its High School Class Schedule Could Save the District At Least \$380,000 a Year

Under a traditional high school schedule, students typically go to the same 7 or 8 classes every day, with each class lasting about 40-60 minutes. Beginning in the mid-1990s, many high schools switched over to a block schedule, where students take fewer classes each day, but for longer blocks of time. Although this method of scheduling is popular, in our work from a previous audit we saw that education research has found no positive effect (and perhaps even a negative effect) on student performance under a block schedule (see *K-12 Education: Alternative Models for Organizing Middle Schools and High Schools*, available at http://www.kslegislature.org/postaudit/audits_perform/07pa02a.pdf).

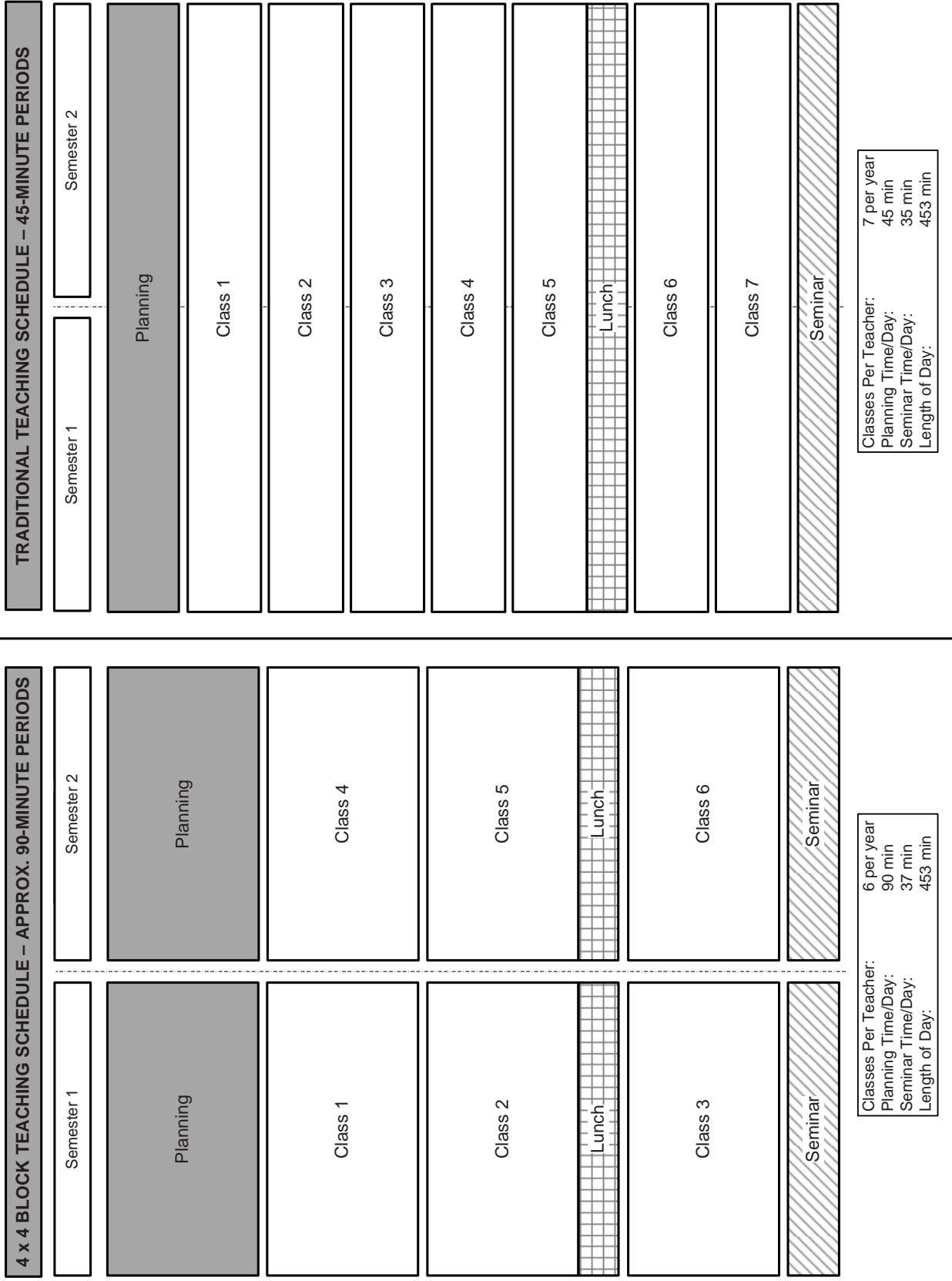
The Renwick school district currently uses a “4 x 4 block” schedule at its high schools, which is illustrated on the left side of **Figure 1-4**. As the figure shows, the block schedule is made up of the following components:

- Each day is divided into four approximately 90-minute class periods (or “blocks”), and one 37-minute seminar period, where students receive extra assistance from teachers.
- Students take four classes in the first semester, and four in the second semester. That’s a total of eight class blocks a year.
- Teachers teach three classes in the first semester and three different classes in the second semester. That’s a total of six classes taught a year. They also get a 90-minute planning period every day.

We identified two problems with using 90-minute blocks that make this arrangement inefficient:

- **By using 90-minute blocks, the district provides significantly more planning time to its high school teachers than is required under its contract.** The district is contractually obligated to provide only 40 minutes of planning time each day, which means the high school teachers receive 50 more minutes each day than they are entitled to. As a result, the district has to cover that time with additional teachers—the equivalent of 5 additional full-time teachers. District officials told us they think this additional planning time helps their teachers be better prepared and that teachers use class time more efficiently than if they had only the 40 minutes of plan time allowed by contract.
- **In 2009-10, the district will spend almost \$23,000 to “buy back” planning time from three teachers at Andale High School.** The district needed some teachers to pick up additional classes, and had to buy back those teachers’ planning time—even the 50 extra minutes of planning time that’s above and beyond what’s required in the contract. That means the district pays for some of those minutes twice—once as part of the teachers’ regular salary, and again to have them teach the extra classes. District officials told us they already planned to quit buying back planning time for the next school year.

**Figure 1-4
Comparing a 4 x 4 Block Teaching Schedule to a Traditional Teaching Schedule for a Sample High School Teacher**



Source: Information for the block schedule on the left side of the table provided by the Renwick school district. The traditional schedule on the right side created by LPA.

We looked at the effect of converting the block schedule at each high school to a “traditional” schedule. For our analysis, we looked at both the Andale and Garden Plain High School schedules. To determine how a traditional schedule at the high schools might look, we spoke with district and high school officials and reviewed documents such as class schedules, class rosters, and teacher contracts. Among the things we had to consider were the length of class periods, passing periods between classes, planning periods, and seminar periods.

Figure 1-4 shows an example of what a traditional schedule for Andale High School could look like, compared to the current block schedule. As the figure shows, there are four main differences between our example of a traditional schedule and the district’s current block schedule:

- Full-time teachers would teach the equivalent of seven, 45-minute classes per year, instead of six, 90-minute classes.
- Teachers would have 45 minutes of planning time each day, instead of about 90 minutes each day.
- The seminar period would be 35 minutes each day, instead of 37.
- Overall the school day would be 453 total minutes a day, the same as it is now.

Switching to a traditional schedule could reduce the number of teachers needed and potentially save at least \$95,000 each year at Andale High School—but it wouldn’t result in any savings at Garden Plain High School. Because each teacher would teach an additional class during the year (seven instead of six), fewer teachers would be needed to teach the same number of class sections. Teachers would have less planning time than they do under the current block schedule, and would have to prepare for an additional class during that time.

To estimate the potential savings if the district switched to a traditional schedule, we analyzed a selection of classes in core subject areas like algebra, English, and science. Overall, these classes represent almost 55% of the district’s regular classes—which means there’s likely to be more savings in this area. The results of our analyses are shown in *Figure 1-5* on page 15.

Figure 1-5
ANDALE HIGH SCHOOL
Estimated Potential Savings from Switching to a Traditional Schedule
and Keeping the Same Number of Class Sections

| Subject Area (a) | Block Schedule (Teach <u>6</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Traditional Schedule (Teach <u>7</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Potential Annual Savings | |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Actual</u> (b) | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Needed</u> (b) | FTE Teachers (c) | \$\$ (d) |
| English (all levels) | 25 | 66% | 4.2 | 25 | 66% | 3.6 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Science (all levels) | 24 | 89% | 4.0 | 24 | 89% | 3.4 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Social Science (all levels) | 20 | 82% | 3.3 | 20 | 82% | 2.9 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Spanish (all levels) | 12 | 60% | 2.0 | 12 | 60% | 1.7 | 0.0 | \$0 |
| Math (Algebra + Geometry) | 15 | 69% | 2.5 | 15 | 69% | 2.1 | 0.0 | \$0 |
| Subtotals | 96 | 75% | 16.0 | 96 | 75% | 13.7 | 1.5 | \$71,897 |
| Additional savings if the district doesn't have to buy back any planning time | | | | | | | | \$22,725 |
| ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM SWITCHING TO A TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE AND KEEPING THE SAME NUMBER OF CORE CLASS SECTIONS AT ANDALE HIGH SCHOOL | | | | | | | | \$94,622 |

GARDEN PLAIN HIGH SCHOOL
Estimated Potential Savings from Switching to a Traditional Schedule
and Keeping the Same Number of Class Sections

| Subject Area (a) | Block Schedule (Teach <u>6</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Traditional Schedule (Teach <u>7</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Potential Annual Savings | |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Actual</u> (b) | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Needed</u> (b) | FTE Teachers (c) | \$\$ (d) |
| English (all levels) | 14 | 65% | 2.3 | 14 | 65% | 2.0 | 0 | \$0 |
| Science (all levels) | 12 | 81% | 2.0 | 12 | 81% | 1.7 | 0 | \$0 |
| Social Science (all levels) | 10 | 66% | 1.7 | 10 | 66% | 1.4 | 0 | \$0 |
| Spanish (all levels) | 6.5 | 46% | 1.1 | 6.5 | 46% | 0.9 | 0 | \$0 |
| Math (Algebra + Geometry) | 11 | 75% | 1.8 | 11 | 75% | 1.6 | 0 | \$0 |
| Subtotals | 53.5 | 68% | 8.9 | 53.5 | 68% | 7.6 | 0.0 | \$0 |
| Additional savings if the district doesn't have to buy back any planning time | | | | | | | | \$0 |
| ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM SWITCHING TO A TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE AND KEEPING THE SAME NUMBER OF CORE CLASS SECTIONS AT GARDEN PLAIN HIGH SCHOOL | | | | | | | | \$0 |

TOTALS FOR BOTH HIGH SCHOOLS

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM SWITCHING TO A TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE AND KEEPING THE SAME NUMBER OF CORE CLASS SECTIONS OFFERED AT BOTH HIGH SCHOOLS | \$94,622 |
|--|-----------------|

(a) We excluded the following types of classes: online, independent study, special education, seminar, teacher aide, and office aide sections.
(b) For this analysis, we put all teachers on an FTE basis. For example, a teacher who teaches three class sections would be a .5 FTE teacher for that subject.
(c) We used the following rounding rules to calculate the difference in FTE teachers needed under the current schedule v. the traditional schedule: if the difference was less than .4, the number was rounded down to the lowest whole number. If the number was equal to or between .4 and .799, the number was rounded to the nearest .5. If the number was equal to or greater than .8, the number was rounded up to the nearest whole number.
(d) Savings based on 2009-10 average contractual teacher salary and benefits of \$47,931, as provided by the Renwick school district.

Source: LPA analysis of class enrollment data and teacher salary data, as provided by the Renwick school district.

Our analysis showed that Andale High School would need 1.5 fewer full-time-equivalent teachers, which would be a savings of \$72,000, as shown in *Figure 1-5*. The remaining \$23,000 would come from no longer needing to buy back time to have teachers take on additional classes.

The figure also shows there would be no savings from switching to a traditional schedule at Garden Plain High School. That's because the school has fewer students and needs fewer class sections. Adding one class to each teacher's schedule wouldn't make enough of a difference in any subject area to result in the need for fewer teachers. However, if it were to switch to a traditional schedule at Andale High School, the district may want to do the same at Garden Plain High School to give it maximum flexibility if teachers or other staff were shared between buildings.

As always, the district could use any savings to reduce its overall expenses, increase teacher salaries, pay for needed programs, or fund other priorities it might identify.

By filling its classes closer to the district's set enrollment capacities and eliminating its lowest-enrollment classes, the district potentially could save an additional \$288,000 per year in salary costs. While the district's contract with the teachers doesn't set a mandatory or preferred student number per class section, district officials told us their preferred capacity per class section was 28. For classes where safety is a concern—like for science classes—officials gave us a maximum of 25. The capacity for some classes the district offered had even lower capacities. For example:

- At Garden Plain High School, an introductory Family and Consumer Sciences class had a capacity of 16 students.
- At Garden Plain High School, college-level English classes had capacities of 20 students.
- At Andale High School, some technology classes had capacities of 10 or 13 students.

In comparing actual enrollment levels for these classes with the capacities set by the district, we noted that many of the class sections weren't full. As illustrated in *Figure 1-6* certain categories of classes, like English and Spanish, had a lower percent of the available seats filled than other categories, like science. For our estimates, when we "filled" classes closer to the capacity set by the district, most classes still weren't filled completely. For example, on average, classes at

Andale High School went from about 75% filled to 91% filled and classes at Garden Plain went from about 68% filled to 87% filled.

We analyzed the potential cost savings if the district could fill its classes closer to their enrollment capacities for the classes we examined in the current school year. Here's what we found:

- **If the district switched to a traditional class schedule at both high schools and was able to reduce the number of sections it offers, we estimated it could save an additional \$288,000 a year because it would need fewer class sections.** That would bring the total estimated annual savings to at least \$382,000 per year for the classes we analyzed because Andale High School would need 5 fewer teachers and Garden Plain High School would need 2.5 fewer teachers. This analysis is shown in *Figure 1-6* on page 18.
- **If the district kept a block schedule at its high schools, but was able to fill its classes closer to capacity and eliminate the lowest-enrollment sections, we estimated it would need 4.5 fewer teaching positions and could save \$238,000 per year.**

There may be even more potential for savings from making changes to how classes are scheduled at the high school. Our analysis focused only on the core classes at each school. We did some additional analysis on the impact of filling all classes closer to capacity, and found the district may be able to save \$512,000 a year between the two schools. That's \$120,000 more than the district would save by reducing sections only for core classes.

District officials told us that one reason for offering more than the minimum number of sections is to help students avoid scheduling conflicts that would cut down on students' options. For example, even if there are only enough students interested in a high-level Spanish class to support one section, the district might offer a second section in case the first section conflicted with another class. The desire for this kind of flexibility should be weighed against the cost of offering the additional sections.

Closing an Elementary School and High School Potentially Could Save \$1.6 Million a Year

Closing a school building is one of the most difficult and divisive decisions a school board and community can make. District patrons are very likely to be strongly against such a move because of the negative impact on the community and the areas served by the school. However, because of the current economic recession, districts are looking at this option to help them operate more efficiently and reduce costs. Obviously, such decisions can't be made in a vacuum, and the impact on the students and communities must be taken into account.

Figure 1-6

ANDALE HIGH SCHOOL

**Estimated Potential Savings from Switching to a Traditional Schedule
and Reducing the Number of Class Sections Offered**

| Subject Area (a) | Block Schedule (Teach <u>6</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Traditional Schedule (Teach <u>7</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Potential Annual Savings | |
|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Actual</u> (b) | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Needed</u> (b) | FTE Teachers (c) | \$\$ (d) |
| English (all levels) | 25 | 66% | 4.2 | 19 | 87% | 2.7 | 1.5 | \$71,897 |
| Science (all levels) | 24 | 89% | 4.0 | 22 | 97% | 3.1 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| Social Science (all levels) | 20 | 82% | 3.3 | 17 | 94% | 2.4 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| Spanish (all levels) | 12 | 60% | 2.0 | 8 | 88% | 1.1 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| Math (Algebra + Geometry) | 15 | 69% | 2.5 | 12 | 86% | 1.7 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Subtotals | 96 | 75% | 16.0 | 78 | 91% | 11.1 | 5.0 | \$239,655 |
| Additional savings if the district doesn't have to buy back any planning time | | | | | | | | \$22,725 |

ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM SWITCHING TO A TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE AND REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SECTIONS FOR CORE CLASSES AT ANDALE HIGH SCHOOL **\$262,380**

GARDEN PLAIN HIGH SCHOOL

**Estimated Potential Savings from Switching to a Traditional Schedule
and Reducing the Number of Class Sections Offered**

| Subject Area (a) | Block Schedule (Teach <u>6</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Traditional Schedule (Teach <u>7</u> Classes Per School Year) | | | Potential Annual Savings | |
|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Actual</u> (b) | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Needed</u> (b) | FTE Teachers (c) | \$\$ (d) |
| English (all levels) | 14 | 65% | 2.3 | 11 | 83% | 1.6 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Science (all levels) | 12 | 81% | 2.0 | 11 | 89% | 1.6 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Social Science (all levels) | 10 | 66% | 1.7 | 8 | 82% | 1.1 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Spanish (all levels) | 6.5 | 46% | 1.1 | 3 | 93% | 0.4 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Math (Algebra + Geometry) | 11 | 75% | 1.8 | 9 | 92% | 1.3 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Subtotals | 53.5 | 68% | 8.9 | 42 | 87% | 6.0 | 2.5 | \$119,828 |
| Additional savings if the district doesn't have to buy back any planning time | | | | | | | | \$0 |

ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM SWITCHING TO A TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE AND REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SECTIONS FOR CORE CLASSES AT GARDEN PLAIN HIGH SCHOOL **\$119,828**

TOTALS FOR BOTH HIGH SCHOOLS

TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM SWITCHING TO A TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE AND REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SECTIONS FOR CORE CLASSES AT BOTH HIGH SCHOOLS **\$382,208**

(a) We excluded the following types of classes: online, independent study, special education, seminar, teacher aide, and office aide sections.
 (b) For this analysis, we put all teachers on an FTE basis. For example, a teacher who teaches three class sections would be a .5 FTE teacher for that subject.
 (c) We used the following rounding rules to calculate the difference in FTE teachers needed under the current schedule v. the traditional schedule: if the difference was less than .4, the number was rounded down to the lowest whole number. If the number was equal to or between .4 and .799, the number was rounded to the nearest .5. If the number was equal to or greater than .8, the number was rounded up to the nearest whole number.
 (d) Savings based on 2009-10 average contractual teacher salary and benefits of \$47,931, as provided by the Renwick school district.

Source: LPA analysis of class enrollment data and teacher salary data, as provided by the Renwick school district.

The Renwick school district currently has six school buildings located in four communities, including a K-8 building and high school building in Andale, a K-8 building in Colwich, a K-8 building in St. Mark, and a K-8 building and high school building in Garden Plain. The closest buildings are located within about 10 minutes drive of each other and the farthest—Andale High School and Garden Plain High School—are about 25 minutes apart. The buildings and current enrollments are listed in *Figure 1-7*.

Based on our analysis of building space at the elementary schools, it appears the district could close a school and distribute those students among the three other elementary schools.

| School | Grades | FTE Enrollment 2008-09 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Andale High School | 9 to 12 | 459 |
| Garden Plain High School | 9 to 12 | 227 |
| Andale Elementary | K to 8 | 329 |
| Colwich Elementary | K to 8 | 295 |
| Garden Plain Elementary | K to 8 | 325 |
| St. Mark's Elementary | K to 8 | 292 |
| Total | | 1,927 |

Source: Kansas Department of Education.

We compared the classroom space currently used in these buildings to the student capacities the district already established for its classrooms. (In general, the district sets classroom capacities at 25 students for elementary grades, 27 students for middle schools, and 25-28 for high schools.) We also walked through all four elementary school buildings to see how the classrooms are used. In addition, during our visit we reviewed building floor plans and

spoke with the district's business manager about how the buildings and classrooms are used.

Based on our analyses and observations, we noted that each of the four elementary schools has at least one vacant classroom and five under-used classrooms. For our purposes, an underused classroom is one that either has classes with very low enrollments—for example, a few had 4 or 6 students—or it's a classroom that's used for something other than classes—such as a teacher workroom.

As shown in *Figure 1-8* on page 20, with the exception of fourth and seventh grades, if the district chose to close one elementary school, it could redistribute students to the other three elementary buildings without having to renovate existing classrooms and without having to carry over instructional staff from the closed elementary school. Third, fourth and seventh grade students (next year's fourth, fifth and eighth grades) from the closed elementary could also fit into the remaining three elementary buildings, but these grades would use

**Figure 1-8
Comparing Renwick School District's Current Use of Physical Space
at Its Elementary School Buildings (a)**

| Andale Elementary | | | | | | Colwich Elementary | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Grade | Current Avail. Capacity | Current Enrollment | Space Available | | Fit w/o Adjust? (Y/N) (b) | Grade | Current Avail. Capacity | Current Enrollment | Space Available | | Fit w/o Adjust? (Y/N) (b) |
| | | | This School | Other Schools | | | | | This School | Other Schools | |
| K | 50 | 34 | 16 | 50 | Y | K | 50 | 30 | 20 | 46 | Y |
| 1 | 50 | 39 | 11 | 52 | Y | 1 | 50 | 33 | 17 | 46 | Y |
| 2 | 50 | 32 | 18 | 56 | Y | 2 | 50 | 30 | 20 | 54 | Y |
| 3 | 50 | 38 | 12 | 32 | N | 3 | 50 | 32 | 18 | 26 | N |
| 4 | 50 | 48 | 2 | 38 | N | 4 | 50 | 32 | 18 | 22 | N |
| 5 | 50 | 38 | 12 | 53 | Y | 5 | 50 | 29 | 21 | 44 | Y |
| 6-8 | 162 | 123 | 39 | 219 | Y | 6-8 | 162 | 128 | 34 | 224 | Y |

| Garden Plain Elementary | | | | | | St. Mark's Elementary | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Grade | Current Avail. Capacity | Current Enrollment | Space Available | | Fit w/o Adjust? (Y/N) (b) | Grade | Current Avail. Capacity | Current Enrollment | Space Available | | Fit w/o Adjust? (Y/N) (b) |
| | | | This School | Other Schools | | | | | This School | Other Schools | |
| K | 50 | 33 | 17 | 49 | Y | K | 50 | 37 | 13 | 53 | Y |
| 1 | 50 | 39 | 11 | 52 | Y | 1 | 50 | 26 | 24 | 39 | Y |
| 2 | 50 | 35 | 15 | 59 | Y | 2 | 50 | 29 | 21 | 53 | Y |
| 3 | 27 | 27 | 0 | 44 | Y | 3 | 50 | 36 | 14 | 30 | N |
| 4 | 50 | 40 | 10 | 30 | N | 4 | 50 | 40 | 10 | 30 | N |
| 5 | 50 | 32 | 18 | 47 | Y | 5 | 50 | 36 | 14 | 51 | Y |
| 6-8 | 243 | 139 | 104 | 154 | Y | 6-8 | 189 | 108 | 81 | 177 | Y |

(a) Counts only those rooms currently used as classrooms.

(b) If the district chose to close one elementary school, it could redistribute students in these grades to the other three elementary schools without having to renovate existing classrooms and without having to carry over instructional staff from the closed elementary building. Grades three, four, and seven from the closed elementary could also fit into the remaining three elementary buildings, but these grades would use classrooms that are currently either vacant or underused.

Source: LPA analysis of physical space during site visit, district enrollment data, district-provided classroom capacities, and building floor plans.

classrooms that are currently either vacant or underused. In estimating the saving that would result, we took into consideration the additional teaching positions needed for these grades.

If the district were able to close one of the four elementary schools it potentially could save about \$755,000 a year. This information is summarized in *Figure 1-9* on page 21.

Most of the savings would come from not needing as many teaching positions (15 to 17 teachers, depending on the school). That's because students from the closed elementary school would be distributed among the three remaining elementary schools, and our

Figure 1-9
Estimated Costs and Savings Associated with
Closing An Elementary School

| | Andale Elementary | | Colwich Elementary | | Garden Plain Elementary | | St. Mark's Elementary | |
|---|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Estimated Annual Operating Savings</u> | Staff | \$ | Staff | \$ | Staff | \$ | Staff | \$ |
| Custodial Staff | 2.0 | \$49,000 | 2.0 | \$49,000 | 2.0 | \$49,000 | 0 | \$0 |
| Food Service Staff | 1.0 | \$25,000 | 0 | \$0 | 1.0 | \$25,000 | 0.5 | \$13,000 |
| Clerical Staff | 0.75 | \$17,000 | 1.5 | \$35,000 | 0.75 | \$17,000 | 0.75 | \$17,000 |
| Utilities - Electricity | | \$18,000 | | \$14,000 | | \$38,000 | | \$39,000 |
| Utilities - Natural Gas | | \$16,000 | | \$9,000 | | \$14,000 | | \$8,000 |
| Utilities - Water and Sewer | | \$9,000 | | \$8,000 | | \$8,000 | | \$3,000 |
| Utilities - Trash | | \$2,000 | | \$3,000 | | \$5,000 | | \$3,000 |
| Utilities - Phone | | \$600 | | \$600 | | \$600 | | \$600 |
| Property Insurance | | (a) | | (a) | | (a) | | (a) |
| One-Time Costs | | | | | | | | |
| Moving Expenses | | (a) | | (a) | | (a) | | (a) |
| Remodeling Costs (b) | | (\$95,000) | | (\$75,000) | | (\$170,000) | | (\$170,000) |
| FIRST-YEAR TOTAL | | \$41,600 | | \$43,600 | | (\$13,400) | | (\$86,400) |
| SUBSEQUENT-YEAR TOTAL | | \$136,600 | | \$118,600 | | \$156,600 | | \$83,600 |
| Estimated Annual Staff Savings | | | | | | | | |
| Teachers | 14.6 | \$732,000 | 15.5 | \$774,000 | 16.3 | \$814,000 | 15.3 | \$764,000 |
| Principal | 1.0 | \$77,000 | 1.0 | \$77,000 | 1.0 | \$77,000 | 1.0 | \$77,000 |
| TOTAL | | \$809,000 | | \$851,000 | | \$891,000 | | \$841,000 |
| Estimated Total Annual Savings - Operating and Staff Savings | | | | | | | | |
| FIRST-YEAR TOTAL | | \$850,600 | | \$894,600 | | \$877,600 | | \$754,600 |
| SUBSEQUENT-YEAR TOTAL | | \$945,600 | | \$969,600 | | \$1,047,600 | | \$924,600 |

(a) We were unable to estimate one-time costs, such as moving expenses or savings such as property insurance.

(b) Remodeling estimates based on minimum estimates from district officials. Actual costs could vary from costs shown.

Source: LPA analysis of Renwick school district data.

analysis showed they could be placed in existing classrooms without going over the capacities set by the district. Other savings from closing an elementary school would come from reducing operations and maintenance costs.

As shown in *Figure OV-1* on page 3, three of the district's elementary schools—Andale, St. Mark's, and Colwich—are fairly close to each other. Closing one of the elementary schools would mean that transportation routes would need to be re-configured, but if one of the three schools was closed, the transportation costs are unlikely to be greatly affected because of the buildings' close proximity.

In addition to the ongoing annual savings, the district potentially could realize some one-time revenues if it could sell the closed elementary school. However, selling a building may be difficult because of the recession and current real estate market conditions. In addition, district officials told us they are hesitant to consider selling any buildings because they think their district will grow as

soon as development from Wichita reaches the district's boundaries. While visiting the district, we observed that the northwest fringe of Wichita—the portion closest to the district—did appear to have some newer business and housing development.

Another option would be to temporarily close one of the elementary schools (i.e., “mothball” it) until it is needed. The Manhattan school district did this in 2002 when it closed its Bluemont Elementary School because of budget issues and low enrollment. The district reopened the building in August 2007 after student populations increased with the expansion at nearby Ft. Riley.

District officials also said that adding students to any of the existing elementary schools would require some renovation. Here's a summary of what they told us:

- Andale Elementary would need more middle school rooms.
- Colwich Elementary would need significant remodeling to the kitchen and cafeteria, which could mean converting the old gym to a space where lunches could be handled.
- Garden Plain Elementary would need additional library space and possibly additional kindergarten rooms.
- Saint Mark's Elementary would need additional classrooms and gym space.

Although we couldn't estimate the one-time moving costs, we asked the district to estimate the potential cost of each renovation. These are shown in *Figure 1-9*. Those one-time costs would reduce any up-front savings the district may achieve.

Based on our analysis of building space at the high schools, it appears the district could close a high school and relocate those students to the other high school. In coming to this conclusion, we compared the classroom space currently used in these buildings to the student capacities the district already established for its classrooms. In general, the district sets classroom capacities at 25-28 for its high schools.

We determined that Andale High School has enough space to physically handle students from Garden Plain High, with only some slight remodeling. As shown in *Figure 1-10* on page 23, Andale High School has additional capacity for more than 300 additional students—easily enough room to accommodate Garden Plain High School's 225 students. Such a move could be done without filling all the classrooms at Andale High School beyond the district's established capacity level.

However, if the district keeps its current block schedule, all classrooms would need to be used for teaching—even during plan periods.

Figure 1-10
Analysis of Whether Renwick's Two High Schools Could Be Combined

| School | # of Rooms | Max Room Capacity | Total Capacity | Current Enrollment | Available Space | Can Other HS Enrollment Fit In This Building? |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|
| Andale High School | 31 | 25 | 775 | 461 | 314 | Yes |
| Garden Plain High School | 26 | 20 | 520 | 227 | 293 | No |

Source: LPA analysis of enrollment data and physical space available.

We also looked at whether the reverse was possible—closing Andale High School and moving the students to Garden Plain High School—and found it wasn't possible because Garden Plain High School isn't large enough to accommodate students from both schools.

Figure 1-11
Estimated Costs and Savings Associated with Closing Garden Plain High School

| Estimated Annual Operating Savings | Staff | \$ |
|---|-------|------------------|
| Custodial Staff | 2.0 | \$99,000 |
| Food Service Staff | 1.0 | \$25,000 |
| Clerical Staff | 0.75 | \$17,000 |
| Utilities - Electricity | | \$39,000 |
| Utilities - Natural Gas | | \$34,000 |
| Utilities - Water and Sewer | | \$13,000 |
| Utilities - Trash | | \$7,000 |
| Utilities - Phone | | \$600 |
| Property Insurance | | (a) |
| One-Time Costs | | |
| Moving Expenses | | (a) |
| Remodeling Costs | | (a) |
| TOTAL | | \$234,600 |
| Estimated Annual Staff Savings | | |
| Teachers | 10.5 | \$526,000 |
| Principal | 0.5 | \$39,000 |
| TOTAL | | \$565,000 |
| Estimated Total Annual Savings - Operating and Staff Savings | | |
| TOTAL | | \$799,600 |

(a) We were unable to estimate one-time costs, such as moving expenses or remodeling. We were unable to estimate savings from property insurance.

Source: LPA analysis of Renwick school district data.

Figure 1-11 summarizes the estimated costs and savings from closing Garden Plain High School. About one-third of the estimated savings would come from eliminating operating costs, including food service, custodial, clerical, and utility costs. The other two-thirds mostly would come from reducing the need for 10.5 teaching positions. Even with this reduction in teaching positions, the classrooms at Andale High School wouldn't be filled beyond the district's established capacity levels. As shown in *Figure 1-12* on page 24, classes on average would go from about 72% filled to 91% filled. Closing Garden Plain High School would mean that transportation routes would need to be re-configured. District officials said that for each bus route added, it would cost about \$7,000 per route.

The district potentially could realize some one-time revenues if it were able to sell the closed high school, but, as we noted earlier, selling a school building may be difficult in the current economic climate, and the district may want to hold on to the building in case the district grows significantly in the future.

Figure 1-12
Estimated Potential Savings from Combining Both High Schools,
Keeping a Block Schedule, and Reducing the Number of Class Sections Offered

| Subject Area (a) | Current Block Schedule for Both High Schools | | | Block Schedule if Classes Filled Near Capacity and Lowest-Enrollment Class Sections Eliminated | | | Potential Annual Savings | |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Actual</u> (b) | Sections Offered | % of Seats Filled | # of FTE Teachers <u>Needed</u> (b) | FTE Teachers (c) | \$\$ (d) |
| Art | 12.5 | 72% | 2.1 | 10.5 | 90% | 1.8 | 0.0 | \$0 |
| Business/Computers | 18 | 67% | 3.0 | 13 | 88% | 2.2 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| FACS | 13.5 | 76% | 2.3 | 11.5 | 83% | 1.9 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Foreign Language | 19 | 49% | 3.2 | 10 | 91% | 1.7 | 1.5 | \$71,897 |
| Industrial Arts | 17 | 69% | 2.8 | 12 | 98% | 2.0 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| Language Arts | 46 | 61% | 7.7 | 31 | 96% | 5.2 | 2.5 | \$119,828 |
| Math | 34 | 68% | 5.7 | 26 | 89% | 4.3 | 1.5 | \$71,897 |
| Music | 6 | 68% | 1.0 | 6 | 68% | 1.0 | 0.0 | \$0 |
| Physical Education | 19 | 89% | 3.2 | 19 | 89% | 3.2 | 0.0 | \$0 |
| Science | 36 | 86% | 6.0 | 31 | 100% | 5.2 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| Social Science | 30 | 77% | 5.0 | 24 | 94% | 4.0 | 1.0 | \$47,931 |
| Technology | 20 | 98% | 3.3 | 17.5 | 96% | 2.9 | 0.5 | \$23,966 |
| Subtotals | 271.0 | 72% | 45.3 | 211.5 | 91% | 35.3 | 10.5 | \$503,276 |

Additional savings if the district doesn't have to buy back any planning time **\$22,725**

ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM COMBINING BOTH HIGH SCHOOLS, KEEPING A BLOCK SCHEDULE, AND REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SECTIONS OFFERED FOR ALL CLASSES **\$526,001**

(a) We excluded the following types of classes: online, independent study, special education, seminar, teacher aide, and office aide sections.
 (b) For this analysis, we put all teachers on an FTE basis. For example, a teacher who teaches three class sections would be a .5 FTE teacher for that subject.
 (c) We used the following rounding rules to calculate the difference in FTE teachers needed under the current schedule v. the traditional schedule: if the difference was less than .4, the number was rounded down to the lowest whole number. If the number was equal to or between .4 and .799, the number was rounded to the nearest .5. If the number was equal to or greater than .8, the number was rounded up to the nearest whole number.
 (d) Savings based on 2009-10 average contractual teacher salary and benefits of \$47,931, as provided by the Renwick school district.

Source: LPA analysis of class enrollment data and teacher salary data, as provided by the Renwick school district.

Changing Its Policy For Purchasing Employees' Unused Leave May Help the District Realize Potential Savings

The district's current policy allows employees to accumulate unused sick and personal leave days up to a certain amount—90 days for teachers, and 80 days for hourly staff. At the end of each school year, the district pays employees for any days accumulated in excess of those limits. The buy-back rate is based on the employee's job classification.

Between 2007-08 and 2008-09, the district spent an average of \$39,000 each year to purchase unused sick and personal leave from all current and retiring employees. District officials told us that they provide this benefit to district employees because it competes with other Wichita-area employers for all types of employees, and those employers can afford to pay higher salaries. District officials told us that, because it can't afford to raise salaries across the board to a competitive level, offering this benefit keeps it competitive in

the marketplace. Nonetheless, the district could save almost \$40,000 a year without having to reduce its teaching staff. When the economy improves, the district could reinstate this practice.

***The District Can
Reduce Its Reliance On
Outdated Paper-Based
Processes Through
Greater Automation***

Automated processes can save time because they allow staff to process many more records than they could manually. They also can save money because, in general, much less paper, postage and space are used when records are processed and stored electronically.

At the Renwick school district, many administrative functions are handled electronically. For example, the district keeps electronic payroll and expenditure records, it uses an electronic grade-reporting system, maintains a website, and recently implemented an electronic timekeeping system for classified staff.

However, the district has some processes that are still paper-based, and it continues to print paper records for some of its electronic processes. For example:

- **Purchasing**—School staff wanting to purchase an item for school use must fill out a paper purchase order and get approval from his or her supervisor—which, depending on the employee, could be the district business manager, the superintendent, or one of the building principals. Once the Board approves the expenditure, the item is purchased. When an invoice arrives in the district office, an original purchase order copy is attached to it. Old paper purchase orders are kept for five years before being purged.
- **Payroll**—In January 2010, the district implemented an electronic time card system for most employees across the district. However, bus drivers still use paper time cards, and the district still prints out a thick payroll register every month.

Conclusion:

Although the Renwick school district has taken positive steps to become more efficient and reduce its costs, we found a number of additional opportunities for the district to become even more efficient. Unfortunately, most of the opportunities for significant cost savings would require the school board to make very tough decisions involving the type of schedule and number of class sections offered at the high school level, and the number of schools the district operates at both the elementary and high school level—all of which would affect the number of teachers the district needs. Any of these decisions could have an impact on students and neighborhoods and that would have to be taken into consideration. Taking actions in the other areas we identified should allow the district to reduce its costs without affecting the educational services it provides. Savings from any of these areas can be used to reduce costs or to fund other, more important needs.

**Recommendations for the
Renwick School District:**

Related to Efficiency Management:

1. To help ensure that the district is able to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of its operations on an ongoing basis, the Renwick school district should develop a systematic efficiency management process. Such a process should include:
 - a. regularly compiling efficiency measures, such as various spending and staffing measures per student.
 - b. periodically comparing the district's performance to peer districts with similar characteristics, standard benchmarks (where available), and the district's own measures over time.
 - c. making changes to the district's staffing, workloads, policies, procedures, and practices as necessary to address the areas identified through the comparisons.
2. To help ensure that the district and others are able to use and rely on staffing data reported to the Department of Education, the district should report complete and accurate staffing data to the Department of Education when submitting yearly staffing forms.

Related to Student Instruction:

3. Because of the potential for operating more efficiently and achieving significant cost savings, the Renwick school

board and school district officials should consider the following options for changing how high school classes are offered:

- a. adopting a more “traditional” class schedule that makes teachers responsible for teaching seven classes each school year, rather than six.
- b. limiting the number of sections of each class it offers to fill classes closer to the district’s capacity standards.
- c. regularly evaluating course loads and consider eliminating courses which have consistently low enrollments.

Related to Facilities:

4. Because of the potential for operating more efficiently and achieving significant cost savings, the Renwick school board and school district officials should consider the following options related to the number of school facilities the district operates:
 - a. closing one of its elementary school buildings, and relocating those students among the remaining three elementary buildings.
 - b. closing Garden Plain High School and relocating those students to Andale High School.

Related to Personnel:

5. Because of the potential for reducing personnel costs without affecting the educational services it provides to students, the Renwick school board and school district officials should do the following:
 - a. regularly evaluate how many coaches it needs for extra-curricular activities, and consider eliminating any excess positions.
 - b. re-evaluate its policy on purchasing back unused leave to determine whether it continues to accomplish the district’s intended goals.

Related to Other Processes and Operations:

6. Because of the potential for operating more efficiently and reducing costs without affecting the educational services it

provides to students, the Renwick school district should do the following:

- a. develop and use electronic processes for administrative functions, such as purchasing and payroll
- b. competitively shop for an insurance agent on a regular basis
- c. use a business procurement card with a cash-back rebate. In doing so, the district should negotiate for the maximum cash-back rebate rate and monthly credit limits it can obtain, and explore ways for making as many purchases as possible with its procurement cards to generate cash rebates.
- d. continue to competitively shop for fuel, regularly negotiate for the best fuel price it can, and conduct additional research into purchasing a fuel tank for its vehicles to evaluate whether it would be more cost-effective.
- e. explore ways to fill district vehicles when taking multiple athletic teams to the same site for an event, and consider reducing the number of activity routes it runs.
- f. enforce its existing policy banning personal appliances in classrooms
- g. explore ways of expanding its use of virtualized computers throughout the district.

APPENDIX A

Scope Statement

At its meeting on May 28, 2009, the 2010 Commission directed the Legislative Division of Post Audit to contact school districts to solicit volunteers for an external efficiency audit to help them identify opportunities to operate more efficiently. Officials from the Renwick school district contacted us to arrange for such an audit. This appendix contains the scope statement that outlines our work.

SCOPE STATEMENT

K-12 Education: Efficiency Audit of the Renwick School District

In July 2009, our office released a school district performance audit examining the efficiency of school districts' operations. As originally directed by the 2010 Commission, that audit would have consisted of two phases. The first phase called for analyzing district staffing and expenditure data to identify areas where spending for districts appeared to be out-of-line compared with their peers. The second phase called for following up on a sample of districts to evaluate their processes in the areas that appeared to be out-of-line to determine if there were ways they could reduce costs without affecting their ability to educate students.

In April 2009, the Commission directed us to suspend the follow-up part of the audit to alleviate concerns some superintendents had expressed about having an efficiency audit conducted while they were trying to address funding cuts from the State. However, in May 2009, the Commission discussed the fact that some districts may want to take advantage of the external review an efficiency audit could provide in helping them look for opportunities to operate more efficiently, and subsequently directed us to contact school districts to see if any of them would like to volunteer for an external efficiency audit.

Officials from the Renwick school district contacted us and requested an efficiency audit to help them identify ways they could reduce costs without affecting the education they provide students. This school district performance audit answers the following question:

- 1. Could the Renwick school district achieve cost savings by improving the management of its non-instructional personnel, facilities, or other resources?** To answer this question, we would review efficiency audits from other states, talk with district officials, and compare the district's non-instructional staffing and expenditures to its peers to identify areas where the district could potentially save money. We would evaluate the district's practices in each of the areas we've identified to see if there are ways the district could use fewer resources without affecting its ability to educate students.

Estimated Resources: 2 staff (6-8 weeks)

APPENDIX B

Detailed Information for Operating Costs For the Renwick School District and Its Peers

This appendix contains a description of the methodology we used to select the 17 peer districts against which we compared the Renwick school district, along with the demographic information for each of the districts.

To select peers for the Renwick school district, we did three things:

- We calculated the following demographic measures for all Kansas school districts.
 - *total enrollment*
 - *percent of students who are eligible for free lunches*
 - *percent of students who have limited English proficiency*
 - *total assessed property value per student*
- We developed a statistical model to identify the districts that were most similar to the Renwick school district based on those measures.

The list of peers is included in this appendix on page 31.

To compare the district against its 17 peers, we calculated a variety of efficiency measures for each district. Our methodology is described here:

- **When compiling efficiency measures for the districts, we focused on six functional areas: district-level administration, school-level administration, instructional support, student support, operations and maintenance, and instruction.** We looked at 2008-09 expenditure, enrollment, and staffing data for each of the areas. We used the data to calculate our primary unit of measurement, which was cost per student. We looked at total expenditures per student, but also at object level expenditures, like salaries, benefits, purchased services, and supplies. We also looked at total staff in each area, and staff per 500 students. Our calculations for the Renwick school district and its peers are included in this appendix.
- **We didn't analyze student transportation.** We didn't analyze the student transportation program because the factors driving transportation spending are so different from those driving other cost areas, that a different methodology would be required to identify transportation-specific peers. We could not complete that analysis within the time allotted for this audit.

Guidance on Using the Detailed Information For Operating Costs To Compare School Districts on Various Measures of Efficiency

We envision that school districts included in our review can use the comparative data in this appendix to at least preliminarily identify cost areas where spending may be out-of-line. We also anticipate that districts that were not included can use our methods to calculate their own efficiency measures.

Here is some guidance on how to use the comparative efficiency measures in this appendix (or the measures done by individual districts on their own):

- **Identify the functional areas of the district where costs may be out-of-line**—Functional areas represent the major activities of a district, and include such areas as administration, operations and maintenance, transportation, and food service. A simple set of efficiency measures can be calculated by dividing total spending in each area by the enrollment of the district. Districts can then compare their per-student expenditures to their peers to identify where their costs appear to be low or high.
- **Identify the types of spending that account for significant differences**—This can be done by comparing costs on a per-student basis at a more detailed level, such as looking at spending for specific object codes such as salaries, benefits, purchased services, and supplies.
- **Use the data to help them understand why costs might be different**—For example, more spending per student for salaries could mean that a district has more employees on average, or that it pays its employees more on average, or that it contracts out for some services that other districts have in-house staff provide. More spending per student on benefits may mean the district offers a more lucrative benefits package than other districts. In order to really understand these differences, a district would want to follow up with its peers to find out what they actually do differently.

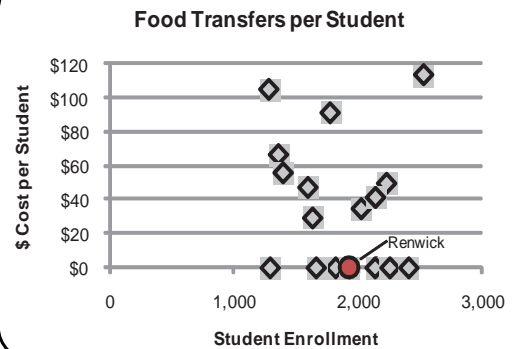
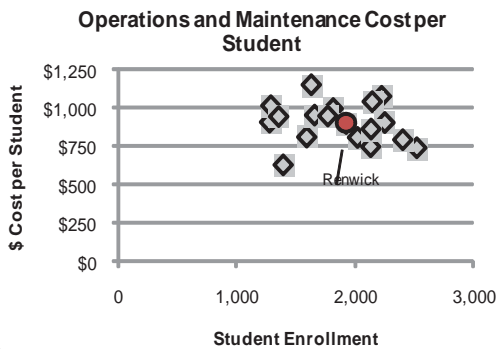
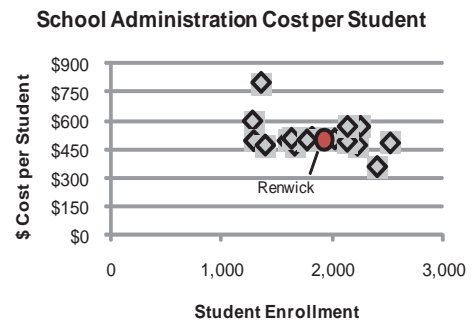
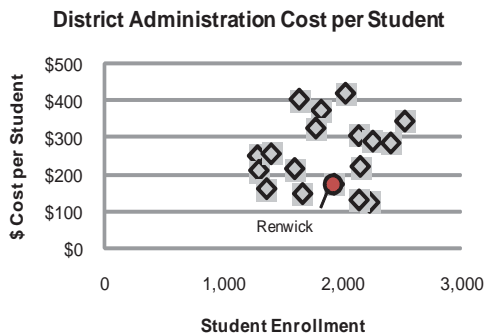
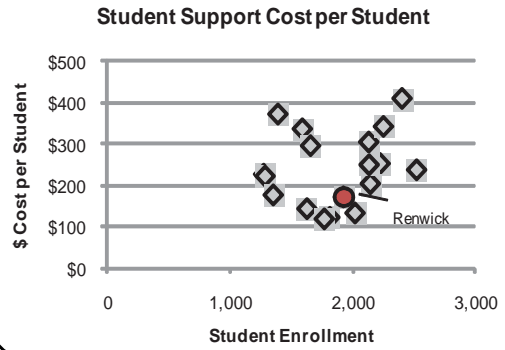
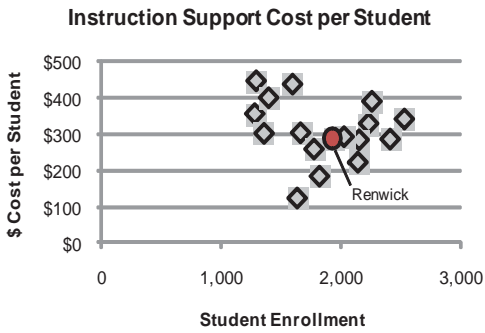
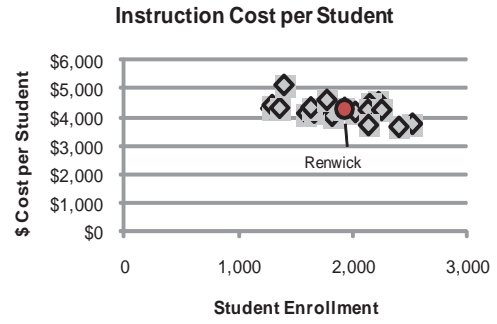
In general, costs per student should decrease as enrollments increase. As districts review the various efficiency measures for their non-instructional operating costs, they should keep in mind that economies of scale should apply—larger districts may spend more in total, but they should spend less on a per-student basis than smaller districts. While there is a fair amount of variation in costs, the general trend is for costs to decrease as enrollments increase.

**Demographic Information for the Renwick School District and Its Peers
2008-09 School Year**

| USD # and Name | Student Enrollment (FTE) | % Free Lunch Students | % Bilingual Students | Assessed Property per Student |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 230 - SPRING HILL | 2,224.7 | 11.7% | 0.8% | \$57,901 |
| 262 - VALLEY CENTER | 2,520.8 | 19.1% | 1.4% | \$41,739 |
| 263 - MULVANE | 1,817.0 | 16.8% | 0.7% | \$32,865 |
| 264 - CLEARWATER | 1,280.5 | 12.3% | 0.0% | \$45,299 |
| 267 - RENWICK | 1,926.8 | 6.6% | 0.0% | \$48,224 |
| 313 - BUHLER | 2,145.5 | 22.5% | 1.3% | \$56,005 |
| 320 - WAMEGO | 1,291.9 | 17.8% | 0.2% | \$53,477 |
| 348 - BALDWIN CITY | 1,357.8 | 12.1% | 0.2% | \$54,816 |
| 368 - PAOLA | 2,021.3 | 19.8% | 0.2% | \$65,794 |
| 375 - CIRCLE | 1,593.8 | 16.1% | 0.0% | \$98,491 |
| 394 - ROSE HILL | 1,660.4 | 14.4% | 1.1% | \$33,744 |
| 402 - AUGUSTA | 2,132.8 | 21.7% | 0.8% | \$36,826 |
| 416 - LOUISBURG | 1,631.9 | 11.7% | 0.9% | \$73,572 |
| 418 - MCPHERSON | 2,251.7 | 20.7% | 2.2% | \$73,973 |
| 458 - BASEHOR-LINWOOD | 2,135.7 | 9.3% | 0.9% | \$58,874 |
| 464 - TONGANOXIE | 1,771.7 | 16.8% | 0.7% | \$50,799 |
| 469 - LANSING | 2,402.8 | 12.2% | 0.5% | \$45,997 |
| 491 - EUDORA | 1,395.8 | 19.2% | 1.8% | \$41,008 |

Source: LPA analysis of district information provided by the Department of Education.

**APPENDIX B
The Renwick School District
And Its Peers'
2008-09 Graphed Cost Information**



Source: LPA analysis of school district expenditure, enrollment, and revenue data from the Kansas Department of Education

2008-09 OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT FOR RENWICK AND ITS PEERS

| MEASURES (a) | SCHOOL DISTRICTS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| | Spring Hill (230) | Valley Center (262) | Mulvane (263) | Clearwater (264) | Renwick (267) | Buhler (313) | Wamego (320) | Baldwin City (348) | Paola (368) | Circle (375) | Rose Hill (394) | Augusta (402) | Louisburg (416) | McPherson (418) | Basehor-Linwood (458) | Tonganoxie (464) | Lansing (469) | Eudora (491) | |
| Sorted by: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Enrollment (FTE) | 2,224.7 | 2,520.8 | 1,817.0 | 1,280.5 | 1,926.8 | 2,145.5 | 1,291.9 | 1,357.8 | 2,021.3 | 1,593.8 | 1,660.4 | 2,132.8 | 1,631.9 | 2,251.7 | 2,135.7 | 1,771.7 | 2,402.8 | 1,395.8 | |
| Primary Efficiency Measure: Expenditures per FTE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Instruction | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | \$2,899 | \$3,022 | \$3,371 | \$2,966 | \$3,575 | \$3,442 | \$3,692 | \$3,515 | \$3,350 | \$3,241 | \$3,368 | \$3,494 | \$3,286 | \$3,237 | \$2,824 | \$3,540 | \$2,947 | \$4,133 | |
| Salaries | \$484 | \$448 | \$313 | \$599 | \$474 | \$619 | \$520 | \$563 | \$539 | \$494 | \$469 | \$508 | \$520 | \$566 | \$438 | \$530 | \$404 | \$585 | |
| Employee Benefits | \$924 | \$70 | \$99 | \$438 | \$18 | \$148 | \$2 | \$40 | \$23 | \$91 | \$167 | \$42 | \$251 | \$160 | \$72 | \$80 | \$28 | \$129 | |
| Purchased Services | \$192 | \$153 | \$243 | \$206 | \$173 | \$224 | \$137 | \$181 | \$188 | \$290 | \$146 | \$187 | \$260 | \$262 | \$337 | \$432 | \$202 | \$264 | |
| Supplies | \$8 | \$50 | \$0 | \$75 | \$65 | \$1 | \$49 | \$9 | \$62 | \$1 | \$0 | \$3 | \$0 | \$7 | \$29 | \$12 | \$2 | \$1 | |
| Other | \$4,507 | \$3,743 | \$4,026 | \$4,284 | \$4,305 | \$4,434 | \$4,400 | \$4,308 | \$4,162 | \$4,116 | \$4,140 | \$4,233 | \$4,318 | \$4,232 | \$3,700 | \$4,586 | \$3,634 | \$5,113 | |
| Avg Expend per Student | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staffing Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Instruction Staff | 120.2 | 151.7 | 132.3 | 84.9 | 138.9 | 169.4 | 109.2 | 95.8 | 142.3 | 118.2 | 105.0 | 156.0 | 111.7 | 187.9 | 111.8 | 122.2 | 146.5 | 118.9 | |
| # staff/500 students | 27.0 | 30.1 | 36.4 | 33.2 | 36.0 | 39.5 | 42.3 | 35.3 | 35.2 | 37.1 | 31.6 | 36.6 | 34.2 | 41.7 | 26.2 | 34.5 | 30.5 | 42.6 | |
| Student Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | \$211 | \$195 | \$118 | \$182 | \$148 | \$173 | \$172 | \$133 | \$108 | \$307 | \$230 | \$226 | \$99 | \$278 | \$213 | \$93 | \$184 | \$302 | |
| Salaries | \$38 | \$36 | \$2 | \$39 | \$20 | \$22 | \$31 | \$10 | \$16 | \$21 | \$28 | \$35 | \$12 | \$43 | \$32 | \$18 | \$30 | \$35 | |
| Employee Benefits | \$0 | \$0 | \$1 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2 | \$0 | \$28 | \$2 | \$3 | \$3 | \$32 | \$28 | \$12 | \$0 | \$25 | \$191 | \$24 | |
| Purchased Services | \$2 | \$4 | \$0 | \$4 | \$3 | \$3 | \$18 | \$4 | \$3 | \$3 | \$3 | \$5 | \$3 | \$7 | \$2 | \$6 | \$3 | \$6 | |
| Supplies | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$3 | \$0 | \$0 | \$4 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2 | |
| Other | \$251 | \$236 | \$121 | \$225 | \$170 | \$202 | \$220 | \$175 | \$132 | \$334 | \$284 | \$303 | \$142 | \$340 | \$248 | \$117 | \$407 | \$370 | |
| Avg Expend per Student | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staffing Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Student Support Staff | 16.9 | 15.9 | 19.5 | 8.1 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 11.8 | 8.0 | 41.0 | 9.0 | 9.8 | 17.0 | 5.0 | 21.8 | 11.8 | 6.0 | 13.3 | 5.8 | |
| # staff/500 students | 3.8 | 3.2 | 5.4 | 3.2 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 4.6 | 2.9 | 10.1 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 1.5 | 4.8 | 2.8 | 1.7 | 2.8 | 2.1 | |
| Instruction Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | \$258 | \$224 | \$153 | \$252 | \$171 | \$181 | \$313 | \$237 | \$244 | \$306 | \$195 | \$157 | \$88 | \$287 | \$169 | \$145 | \$194 | \$317 | |
| Salaries | \$36 | \$29 | \$12 | \$50 | \$17 | \$34 | \$37 | \$19 | \$20 | \$23 | \$18 | \$21 | \$11 | \$44 | \$22 | \$28 | \$26 | \$40 | |
| Employee Benefits | \$18 | \$25 | \$11 | \$38 | \$49 | \$30 | \$64 | \$39 | \$18 | \$43 | \$38 | \$14 | \$3 | \$39 | \$2 | \$25 | \$28 | \$20 | |
| Purchased Services | \$17 | \$62 | \$8 | \$15 | \$37 | \$32 | \$33 | \$8 | \$11 | \$66 | \$53 | \$26 | \$20 | \$16 | \$13 | \$44 | \$37 | \$2 | |
| Supplies | \$0 | \$1 | \$0 | \$2 | \$15 | \$7 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$3 | \$0 | \$5 | \$15 | \$17 | \$0 | \$22 | |
| Other | \$330 | \$342 | \$184 | \$357 | \$289 | \$284 | \$448 | \$302 | \$293 | \$438 | \$304 | \$221 | \$123 | \$391 | \$222 | \$259 | \$286 | \$401 | |
| Avg Expend per Student | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staffing Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Inst. Support Staff | 7.8 | 10.5 | 9.5 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 7.2 | 6.4 | 4.0 | 6.0 | 8.9 | 3.6 | 6.0 | 4.5 | 15.7 | 6.4 | 6.0 | 5.7 | 5.3 | |
| # staff/500 students | 1.8 | 2.1 | 2.6 | 2.0 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2.8 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 3.5 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.9 | |
| District-Level Administration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | \$88 | \$148 | \$182 | \$187 | \$119 | \$176 | \$90 | \$119 | \$167 | \$166 | \$95 | \$161 | \$178 | \$172 | \$78 | \$257 | \$104 | \$149 | |
| Salaries | \$17 | \$117 | \$13 | \$37 | \$17 | \$21 | \$15 | \$9 | \$44 | \$15 | \$15 | \$39 | \$30 | \$23 | \$10 | \$27 | \$9 | \$67 | |
| Employee Benefits | \$7 | \$70 | \$130 | \$25 | \$18 | \$25 | \$99 | \$26 | \$185 | \$33 | \$33 | \$83 | \$163 | \$33 | \$22 | \$25 | \$147 | \$33 | |
| Purchased Services | \$0 | \$6 | \$54 | \$0 | \$4 | \$0 | \$1 | \$1 | \$0 | \$2 | \$6 | \$17 | \$3 | \$42 | \$12 | \$4 | \$7 | \$3 | |
| Supplies | \$13 | \$5 | \$16 | \$2 | \$16 | \$0 | \$6 | \$7 | \$25 | \$11 | \$0 | \$5 | \$30 | \$20 | \$9 | \$20 | \$19 | \$5 | |
| Other | \$125 | \$345 | \$375 | \$251 | \$174 | \$222 | \$212 | \$162 | \$421 | \$216 | \$149 | \$306 | \$405 | \$291 | \$131 | \$326 | \$286 | \$257 | |
| Avg Expend per Student | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staffing Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total District Admin Staff | 17.1 | 16.0 | 18.0 | 10.4 | 9.0 | 18.5 | 8.2 | 9.0 | 16.0 | 12.0 | 12.4 | 15.7 | 8.0 | 17.2 | 15.6 | 15.0 | 8.5 | 10.0 | |
| # staff/500 students | 3.8 | 3.2 | 5.0 | 4.1 | 2.3 | 4.3 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 2.5 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 4.2 | 1.8 | 3.6 | |

| 2008-09 OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT FOR RENWICK AND ITS PEERS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| SCHOOL DISTRICTS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MEASURES (a) | Spring Hill (230) | Valley Center (262) | Milvane (263) | Cleanwater (264) | Renwick (267) | Buhler (313) | Wamego (320) | Baldwin City (348) | Paola (368) | Circle (375) | Rose Hill (394) | Augusta (402) | Louisburg (416) | McPherson (418) | Basehor-Linwood (458) | Tonganoxie (464) | Lansing (469) | Eudora (491) |
| | Sorted by: | 2,224.7 | 2,520.8 | 1,817.0 | 1,280.5 | 1,926.8 | 2,145.5 | 1,291.9 | 1,357.8 | 2,021.3 | 1,593.8 | 1,660.4 | 2,132.8 | 1,631.9 | 2,251.7 | 2,135.7 | 1,771.7 | 2,402.8 |
| Enrollment (FTE) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Primary Efficiency Measure: Expenditures per FTE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| School-Level Administration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Salaries | \$391 | \$370 | \$455 | \$515 | \$405 | \$447 | \$388 | \$720 | \$434 | \$437 | \$378 | \$414 | \$411 | \$463 | \$486 | \$419 | \$293 | \$397 |
| Employee Benefits | \$66 | \$51 | \$47 | \$72 | \$52 | \$86 | \$52 | \$53 | \$68 | \$33 | \$52 | \$62 | \$61 | \$79 | \$64 | \$46 | \$41 | \$49 |
| Purchased Services | \$9 | \$36 | \$5 | \$4 | \$9 | \$6 | \$51 | \$24 | \$0 | \$20 | \$25 | \$0 | \$9 | \$16 | \$3 | \$18 | \$12 | \$15 |
| Supplies | \$0 | \$17 | \$1 | \$3 | \$15 | \$11 | \$1 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1 | \$12 | \$5 | \$22 | \$3 | \$0 | \$9 | \$7 | \$5 |
| Other | \$1 | \$5 | \$1 | \$0 | \$19 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$7 | \$0 | \$4 | \$14 | \$3 | \$1 | \$3 |
| Avg Expend per Student | \$467 | \$480 | \$509 | \$595 | \$500 | \$551 | \$492 | \$796 | \$502 | \$491 | \$468 | \$488 | \$503 | \$566 | \$566 | \$495 | \$356 | \$469 |
| Staffing Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total School Admin Staff | 16.6 | 11.0 | 20.0 | 14.0 | 14.7 | 20.5 | 10.6 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 17.4 | 18.4 | 13.0 | 15.0 | 31.1 | 15.8 | 14.5 | 13.2 | 13.4 |
| # staff/500 students | 3.7 | 2.2 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 3.8 | 4.8 | 4.1 | 7.4 | 4.9 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 3.0 | 4.6 | 6.9 | 3.7 | 4.1 | 2.7 | 4.8 |
| Operations and Maintenance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure Breakdown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Salaries | \$415 | \$259 | \$394 | \$333 | \$343 | \$420 | \$455 | \$365 | \$354 | \$373 | \$360 | \$342 | \$510 | \$465 | \$434 | \$397 | \$271 | \$341 |
| Employee Benefits | \$80 | \$52 | \$30 | \$70 | \$58 | \$104 | \$119 | \$28 | \$80 | \$27 | \$63 | \$102 | \$65 | \$142 | \$68 | \$71 | \$47 | \$50 |
| Purchased Services | \$232 | \$192 | \$157 | \$217 | \$279 | \$170 | \$55 | \$249 | \$137 | \$131 | \$187 | \$71 | \$171 | \$155 | \$161 | \$188 | \$135 | \$130 |
| Supplies | \$354 | \$242 | \$420 | \$291 | \$224 | \$349 | \$351 | \$306 | \$243 | \$286 | \$349 | \$239 | \$391 | \$148 | \$185 | \$297 | \$347 | \$113 |
| Other | \$0 | \$2 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$3 | \$39 | \$1 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1 | \$1 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1 |
| Avg Expend per Student | \$1,081 | \$746 | \$1,002 | \$914 | \$905 | \$1,047 | \$1,020 | \$950 | \$814 | \$816 | \$959 | \$754 | \$1,157 | \$910 | \$868 | \$954 | \$799 | \$635 |
| Utility Costs per Student | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Water | \$35 | \$16 | \$24 | \$28 | \$19 | \$19 | \$4 | \$27 | \$19 | \$28 | \$17 | \$25 | \$22 | \$13 | \$23 | \$17 | \$25 | \$23 |
| Heating | \$43 | \$35 | \$63 | \$55 | \$60 | \$58 | \$45 | \$74 | \$15 | \$52 | \$55 | \$26 | \$99 | \$79 | \$34 | \$65 | \$49 | \$13 |
| Electricity | \$254 | \$129 | \$255 | \$170 | \$119 | \$47 | \$187 | \$191 | \$218 | \$155 | \$183 | \$167 | \$233 | \$0 | \$90 | \$199 | \$154 | \$15 |
| Staffing Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Ops & Maint Staff | 26.9 | 23.4 | 33.5 | 13.0 | 25.2 | 5.8 | 3.0 | 16.5 | 5.0 | 28.6 | 25.1 | 23.0 | 25.0 | 42.8 | 27.0 | 25.0 | 21.9 | 14.0 |
| # staff/500 students | 6.0 | 4.6 | 9.2 | 5.1 | 6.5 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 6.1 | 1.2 | 9.0 | 7.6 | 5.4 | 7.7 | 9.5 | 6.3 | 7.1 | 4.6 | 5.0 |
| Food Expend per FTE (b) | \$425 | \$479 | \$423 | \$478 | \$420 | \$538 | \$413 | \$493 | \$501 | \$464 | \$324 | \$361 | \$497 | \$443 | \$359 | \$497 | \$385 | \$533 |
| Total Non-Instructional Costs (c) | \$2,679 | \$2,628 | \$2,614 | \$2,819 | \$2,458 | \$2,844 | \$2,805 | \$2,878 | \$2,662 | \$2,761 | \$2,497 | \$2,432 | \$2,827 | \$2,941 | \$2,395 | \$2,648 | \$2,519 | \$2,664 |
| Total Instructional Costs | \$4,507 | \$3,743 | \$4,026 | \$4,284 | \$4,305 | \$4,434 | \$4,400 | \$4,308 | \$4,162 | \$4,116 | \$4,140 | \$4,233 | \$4,318 | \$4,232 | \$3,700 | \$4,586 | \$3,634 | \$5,113 |
| Total Costs per FTE (c) (d) | \$7,186 | \$6,371 | \$6,640 | \$7,103 | \$6,763 | \$7,279 | \$7,205 | \$7,186 | \$6,823 | \$6,877 | \$6,637 | \$6,666 | \$7,144 | \$7,173 | \$6,095 | \$7,234 | \$6,154 | \$7,777 |

(a) Expenditures for property and equipment are excluded.
 (b) Detailed expenditure information is shown on page 37.
 (c) Due to rounding, adding the individual measures may not equal the total shown.
 (d) Excluding transportation.

Source: LPA analysis of data provided by the Kansas Department of Education and individual school districts.

APPENDIX C

List of Operational Best Practices for School Districts

This appendix contains a detailed list of best practices to help school districts identify ways they can operate more efficiently. We gathered these ideas from our office's previous audits, other states' audits, and other resources, like the Centers for Disease Control and the Association of School Business Officials.

The best practices are arranged in tables by functional area, including administration, support services, operations and maintenance, food services, and student transportation. This isn't an exhaustive list of ideas for cost savings, and it will continue to evolve as we conduct more efficiency audits and identify additional ways districts can save money.

Appendix C
Best Practices for School District Efficiency

Administration

| | |
|--|---|
| The district should manage efficiency at the district level. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile data and calculate efficiency measures, like expenditures per student or staff per 500 students • Compare the measures against peers, standard benchmarks, or the same measures for the district over time • Routinely revise staff needs, policies, and workloads based on the comparison |
| The district should maintain reasonable administrative staffing levels. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely compare staffing levels on a per-student basis over time and make changes as needed • Routinely compare staffing levels to peer districts and available benchmarks and make changes as needed <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a staffing formula for administrative positions |
| The district should pay reasonable salaries. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare salary levels for all levels of staff to peer districts and available benchmarks and realign salaries to stay in line • Share staff across buildings when possible <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting out for some work, if it would be less expensive than having in-house staff do the tasks |
| The district should keep the cost of benefits at a reasonable level. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely collect bids for health insurance • Routinely compare health plans and premiums to peer districts and available benchmarks • Take steps to make the employee pool is healthy to improve the risk pool to keep insurance premiums down <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting the number of part-time staff who are eligible for benefits • Limiting the amount of sick and vacation leave staff can accrue |
| The district should avoid excessive overtime costs. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and enforce district-level overtime pay controls, like placing limits on the overtime pay each department can have and requiring supervisor approval before paying the overtime <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using temporary, substitute, or contracted staff for busy times of year • Changing hourly staff who have a lot of overtime to a set salary, if possible according to the district's human resources department • Developing expected workloads for each staff person and implementing controls to be sure those targets are generally being met • Contracting with outside vendors to provide labor for some work that would otherwise cause overtime in the district • Adjusting work schedules around the workloads |
| The district should minimize supply costs. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take bids on items the district buys in bulk • Use the State purchasing contract when possible • Buy items in bulk if a discounted rate is offered • Print items like business cards, letterhead, and stationary in house • Maintain and continually update a district-wide inventory of supplies that is accessible to all staff |

Administration (Continued)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>The district should establish and maintain efficient processes for administrative tasks.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a business procurement card with a cash-back rate to make purchases • Maximize the cash-back rate it can get from its procurement card issuer • Maximize use of business procurement card to maximize the cash back • Reduce processing and record storage costs by automating administrative tasks, like using financial management and student data software • Go “paperless” by using electronic ways of communication with staff, parents, and local board of education members when possible • Use a centralized system to collect school building data to collect it more quickly, improve accuracy, and save time on entering it • Develop policies and guidelines for processes within the district and consistently enforce them • Encourage payroll through electronic depositing. For those employees who don’t want their pay deposited electronically, issue a payroll debit card. <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourcing administrative tasks like payroll or purchasing to a local government office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>For example, Clarke County in Virginia partnered with its local school division to combine some central office functions, like finance, purchasing, and budget development, to increase efficiency.</i> • Partnering with other school districts for administrative tasks, like payroll or purchasing • Entering joint-purchasing agreements with other organizations for bulk items, like fuel, or more expensive items, like computers or audio-visual equipment |
| <p>The district should establish and maintain efficient technology practices.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only assign multiple computers to staff for whom there is a demonstrated need. • Have most staff use shared network printers. For staff who need their own printer, the district should provide a high-quality, ink-efficient printer if they will print large volumes, and a less expensive printer if they don’t print very much. • Use refillable ink cartridges for printers whenever possible. <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Voice-Over-Internet Protocol (VOIP) for phone service, where a district can use its Internet connection to place phone calls. • Purchasing ink cartridges from third party vendors, if the products are less expensive |

Support Services

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>The district should provide instruction support services efficiently.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share instructional support staff, like librarians, curriculum specialists, and instructional coaches, across buildings when possible • Keep staffing levels in line with district peers and available benchmarks. • <i>See best practices for staffing levels, salaries, benefits, and supplies in the “Administration” section.</i> <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing staff between districts when possible, like staff whose responsibilities include developing curriculum • Contracting with a local education service center for some support services |
| <p>The district should provide student support services efficiently.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share student support staff, like social workers, nurses, and counselors, across buildings when possible • Keep staffing levels in line with district peers and available benchmarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>For example, the Center for Disease Control recommends one school nurse per 750 students.</i> • <i>See best practices for staffing levels, salaries, benefits, and supplies in the “Administration” section.</i> <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using licensed practical nurses (LPN’s) or health aides under the supervision of a registered nurse instead of staffing full-time registered nurses at each school building |

Operations and Maintenance

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The district should provide custodial services for district facilities and grounds efficiently.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close off any building space it doesn't use and limit custodial services for that space • Identify ways to reduce supplies costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>For example, the district could set up mixing stations for cleaning supplies to control the amounts being use, or buy custodial supplies in bulk</i> • Keep staffing levels in line with standard benchmarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>For example, the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) recommends basing staffing about one full-time custodian per 20,000 square feet, though the type of flooring, size of storage areas, age of buildings, and other variables could change the standard. The ASBO also sets out work time standards for offices, floors, bathrooms, stairs, walls, blinds, windows, and light fixtures in its Custodial Methods and Procedure Manual.</i> • <i>See best practices for salaries, benefits, overtime, and supplies in the "Administration" section.</i> <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting out for some deeper cleaning projects, if it would be less expensive than having in-house staff do them • Outsourcing custodial work, if it would be less expensive than having in-house staff do the work |
| <p>The district should maintain facilities and grounds efficiently.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a long-term preventive maintenance plan and follow it • Develop an automated system for receiving and responding to maintenance requests • <i>See best practices for salaries, overtime, benefits, and supplies in the "Administration" section.</i> <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting out for some work, like mowing or plumbing work, if it would be less expensive than having in-house staff do the tasks • Outsourcing maintenance work, if it would be less expensive than having in-house staff do the work |
| <p>The district should provide specialized maintenance services efficiently.</p> | <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting out for some specialized projects, if it would be less expensive than having in-house staff do them |
| <p>The district should minimize energy costs.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do an energy audit of the district facilities, or contract out for one • Regularly monitor facility energy usage and act quickly to reduce consumption when energy use is excessive • Develop a long-term energy plan to address facilities that aren't energy efficient • Develop and maintain a long-term energy conservation plan to address energy inefficiencies • Work with its energy providers to identify energy efficient benchmarks, and implement actions to reach those benchmarks • Develop energy conservation policies for staff in the district and enforce them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>For example, restrict what personal appliances staff can have in their classrooms or offices, use centrally located thermostats to control temperatures across a building, and initiate a campaign to turn off lights and computers when rooms in district facilities are not in use.</i> • Routinely check, clean, and repair heating and cooling systems, and update when necessary • Close off areas of buildings that aren't used so the district doesn't pay to heat and cool those spaces |
| <p>The district should ensure that it is receiving the best energy rates possible.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask its energy providers about discounts or rebates, and take advantage of any that are offered • Get an education rate from its electricity provider for each of its buildings, when available <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining a natural gas purchasing consortium, like the Kansas Association of School Board's Kansas Joint Utility Management Program (KJUMP), if using the consortium would be less costly |

Operations and Maintenance (Continued)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>The district should avoid using excessive administrative space.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely evaluate workspace per staff person and provide adequate space, and close off or sell unneeded space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>For example, the Kansas Department of Administration provides both high-level and detailed workspace standards based on functions performed by staff. The Department's high-level office space standard is an average of 210-250 square feet of useable space per person. That standard includes not only actual office space, but also hallways, break rooms, conference rooms, and the like. Detailed workspace standards by positions are available on the Departments website, at http://www.da.ks.gov/fm/dm/forms/OfficeSpaceStandards.htm.</i> • Store records electronically whenever possible, or store them as cheaply as is reasonable, depending on the type of records being stored |
| <p>The district should avoid using excessive school building space.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely evaluate student occupancies at school buildings against maximum capacities, and consolidate buildings where practical <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting the number of class sections offered or consolidating those sections when only a few students enroll • Entering into an inter-district contract with another district to establish shared schools to save on transportation, insurance, staff costs, and purchased services |

Food Services

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The district should have a self-sustaining food program.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge enough to cover the costs of the food program • Take advantage of federal commodities when possible • Reduce food costs (<i>see next section</i>) • Limit its meal allowances for staff <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering <u>nutritious</u> a la carte options to increase sales • Improving marketing of food to increase sales • Operating its own vending machines rather than contracting with an outside vendor |
| <p>The district should minimize its food costs.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a running inventory of all food products • Use a first-in, first-out system for stocking inventory • Use portion control to reduce waste |
| <p>The district should take steps to manage its program efficiently.</p> | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that food program management staff receive appropriate training in areas like food safety, production control, inventory, meal count procedures, receiving and storing food and supplies, and customer service • Ensure that all food program staff receive proper food service training • <i>See best practices for salaries, overtime, benefits, and supplies in the "Administration" section.</i> <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a central kitchen to store goods and make meals • Sharing a food services director with another district, if feasible • Sharing a cafeteria manager between schools |

| Student Transportation | |
|---|--|
| The district should take steps to manage its program efficiently. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an appropriately-sized vehicle to transport students, like using a van instead of a bus to transport smaller groups • Arrange school start and end times to minimize the number of buses needed to transport students • Do a cost-benefit analysis to find out if would be more efficient over time for the district to contract out its program or operate its own busing program • <i>See best practices for staffing levels, salaries, benefits, overtime, and supplies in the "Administration" section.</i> <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transporting only those students who live more than 2.5 miles from their schools, unless safety is an issue • Increasing vehicle insurance deductibles, if premiums costs decrease |
| The district should run the most efficient bus routes possible. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan the most direct routes to transport students to and from school • Use computerized software to plan routes, if time it takes for staff to plan the route by hand would cost more than the software • Pick up students from central locations, instead of going from door to door, unless safety is an issue • Fill buses as much as possible to reduce the number of buses running at any one time, including activity trips <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursing parents for driving students more than two and a half miles to or from school rather than providing a transportation program |
| The district should minimize its fuel costs. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy fuel in bulk • Partner with local government entities to jointly purchase fuel • Have a no-idling policy for its buses |
| The districts should take actions to prolong district vehicles' "lives." | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require staff to log miles traveled per trip for <u>all</u> district vehicles, and have supervisors monitor the mileage to be sure the trips are reasonable • Do routine maintenance on district vehicles as often as called for by the manufacturer, and not more often • Do a cost analysis on parking district vehicles in a secure compound overnight or on weekends <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing quality used vehicles to replace older vehicles, weighing the short-term convenience versus the reduced life span of used buses |
| The district should minimize its maintenance costs. | <p>The district should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and monitor data on oil changes, routine servicing and all repairs and warranty work to help it make informed decisions on whether it is cost-effective to make expensive repairs on older vehicles <p>The district could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting out for specialized maintenance costs, like glass repair, rebuilding transmissions or engines, radiator work, among others. |

APPENDIX D

Agency Response

On April 6, 2010, we provided copies of the draft audit report to the Renwick school district. Its response is included as this Appendix. In its response, the school district disagreed with the way we presented research from an earlier performance audit, *K-12 Education: Alternative Models for Organizing Middle Schools and High Schools*. The district's response states that the seven studies we relied upon from the prior audit "did not differentiate between 'A/B' and '4x4' block scheduling'." We reviewed the underlying research from that previous audit, and provided the research to the district. In that review, we found that five of the seven studies did look at both 'A/B' and '4x4' block scheduling. After careful review of the response and our audit working papers, we think our representation of that research is appropriate.

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April 12, 2010

Barbara J. Hinton
Legislative Post Audit
800 Southwest Jackson St., Suite 1200
Topeka, KS 66612-2212

Dear Ms. Hinton,

The administration and Board of Education of Renwick USD 267 would like to thank you for allowing our district to participate in the second phase of the school district performance audit. We appreciate the time and efforts of your staff in reviewing the processes in place and identifying potential cost savings.

The Renwick District is in the 3rd five year segment of a strategic planning process that began in 1997. One of the goals of the strategic plan was to unify the district behind common standards and expectations for students, facilities and staff in order to achieve the best possible student outcomes. A consistent theme among the three strategic plans was that Renwick would continue to maintain Kindergarten through 8th grade attendance centers in each of our four communities and two high schools. Smaller class sizes are one of the results, as is the need to carry more staff, support staff, administration, etc. While less efficient in strictly economic terms than the combinations described in the Post Audit report we believe the current structure of our district is highly efficient in providing outstanding educational outcomes for our kids at a reasonable cost. Our state assessment test scores compare very favorably to any district in the state while our costs are generally lower than the peer districts identified in your report.

One of the challenges our Board and administration face with the current economic recession and budget crisis relates to the following question: are school funding cuts a one-time issue that will be resolved once the economy improves, or does today's lower school funding level represent a 'new normal' that our district must address for the foreseeable future? During our budget cutting process the Renwick Board and administration has been reluctant to make permanent (or difficult to reverse) structural changes to the district should increased funding appear in the near future. While we have reviewed the options presented in this report as well as numerous other combinations of buildings, classes and schedules, these are decisions not easily unwound. As noted in the report they are also decisions which would understandably not be well received in our communities.

As a result the Board and administration have made cuts in a strategic and disciplined way that can be reversed. The Post Audit report describes some of the cuts Renwick has made; additional steps are

ANDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – ANDALE HIGH SCHOOL – COLWICH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
GARDEN PLAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – GARDEN PLAIN HIGH SCHOOL – ST. MARK'S CHARTER SCHOOL

underway as the 2010-11 budget evolves. The larger and more difficult proposals described in the report have been identified and discussed by the Board and Administration; but would be difficult to reverse and lacks community support. Therefore those recommendations have not been implemented at this time.

We have reviewed the audit report and the recommendations contained therein and have provided our initial responses below for your review.

Recommendations Related to Efficiency Management

1. Develop a systematic efficiency management process.

Response: The district will consider developing such a process. Given Renwick's size the administrative team has utilized an on-going process in the past. While not as formal as what is suggested in the report we do review staffing needs regularly and have (and continue to) reduce staff due to enrollment changes, schedule needs, etc. In most areas Renwick's staffing levels per 500 students is below peer. Finally, as a part of the strategic planning process every five years the Board, administration and patrons perform a comprehensive review of the district including curriculum, teacher-student ratios, budget needs, facility updates, enrollment projections, etc.

2. Report complete and accurate staffing data to the Department of Education

Response: The district will strive to report accurate data going forward regarding classified staff. Accurate data has always been provided regarding certified staff.

Related to Student Instruction

3. Adopt a "traditional" schedule, limit number of course offered and eliminate low enrollment courses.

Response: As a part of the 2010-11 budget planning process we have cut 1.0 certified FTE from Garden Plain High School and 1.75 certified FTE from Andale High School. This was done after a thorough review was completed of both school's master schedules and estimate enrollments for the next school year. We will continue to review the recommendation but believe it would be difficult to create a schedule that works for most students if more courses were cut. Additionally, many of the recommendations involve cutting current full time teaching positions to 0.5 positions. Attracting or retaining highly qualified half-time positions has been difficult.

The statement in study that says "research has found no positive effect" in the use of block scheduling is based on a former post-audit review which used 7 other studies that did not differentiate between 'A/B' and '4x4' block scheduling. There is enough of a difference between these two types of block scheduling, that such a detail can be very significant. I question whether it is the place of the post-audit committee to provide an opinion based on such research. I do not disagree that moving back to a "traditional" would save the district dollars through cutting staff, but I do disagree with Post Audit's opinion that a 4x4 block schedule is not a more effective way of teaching high school students, particularly when Renwick's utilization of the 4x4 block was not studied during the efficiency audit.

Related to Facilities

4. Close one elementary facility and Garden Plain High School.

Response: As noted above closing an entire facility is an extremely difficult decision to make and would find little support in our communities. Consolidating the high schools would be a particularly painful move and was emphatically rejected by our patrons when proposed more than 15 years ago. Additionally with the anticipated enrollment increases that will come from suburban west Wichita growth into our district it is our belief that any attendance center closed now would need to be reopened soon, limiting the overall savings. The Board and Administration will continue to review all areas for savings and would consider the recommended changes if supported by the community.

Related to Personnel

5. Regularly evaluate the number of coaches needed for extra-curricular activities and reconsider sick leave buy-back policy.

Response: The administrative team reviews coaching and sponsor needs on an ongoing basis. As a part of the 2009-10 and 2010-11 budget cutting process we have increased our participant to coach ratios in the middle schools and have not hired additional coaches for track or football even as numbers increase. The district will continue to review our extra-curricular offerings and propose additional specific program reductions or cuts soon.

With regards to sick leave buy-back for certified staff this is a negotiated item that would need the approval of our teachers association. We will review this recommendation further.

Related to Other Processes and Operations

6. Additional efficiency recommendations include:
 - a. Develop electronic processes for administrative functions.

Response: Administrative team will implement procedures to printer fewer reports.

- b. Competitively shop for an insurance agent on a regular basis.

Response: Administration is researching the workers compensation portion of the policy and plans to shop this over the summer. Shopping the property and liability is more difficult as there are issues both with past loss history and few choices for school property coverage. We will review and consider shopping in the future.

- c. Use a business procurement card with a cash-back rebate.

Response: The district will review this recommendation.

- d. Continue to competitively shop for fuel.

Response: The district will review this recommendation. As the Renwick District encompasses 210 square miles and does not have a central bus location we would need at

least two sets of fuel tanks (based on our current configuration) that would have to be purchased, installed, secured and maintained.

- e. Explore ways to fill district vehicles when taking multiple athletic teams to the same site for an event, reduce number of activity routes run.

Response: The district has already implemented this as a part of our 2009-10 budget cutting process. Every activity route request is scrutinized by the bus scheduler and transportation director to see if trips can be combined, or if a SUV can be substituted for a second bus. Additionally we have started combining teams or activities where two or more attendance centers are traveling to the same event. It is doubtful that significant additional savings can be achieved without either reducing the frequency of activities or eliminating all together the underlying activities.

- f. Enforce the existing policy banning personal appliances.

Response: The district will require all non-essential appliances be removed from classrooms and offices.

- g. Explore ways of expanding its use of virtualized computers throughout the district.

Response: The district will investigate the recommendation. In the mean time the district has started purchasing lower cost 'net books' instead of laptop computers where possible, reducing the cost per computer from almost \$1,000 to between \$300 and \$400.

Dan Peters, Renwick Superintendent and Doug Maxwell, Renwick Business Manager, will be in attendance at the committee meeting in Topeka. We do not request the opportunity to speak to the committee but will be available to answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,



Dan Peters,
Superintendent of Schools