



LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Pilot Review of Charter Schools MeyerPark Elementary

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

EVERGREEN SOLUTIONS, LLC

DECEMBER 2012

Pilot Review of Charter Schools

MeyerPark Elementary

Legislative Budget Board Staff
Evergreen Solutions, LLC

December 2012



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January 18, 2013

Ms. Julia Hutcherson Wright
Superintendent/Principal
MeyerPark Elementary

Dear Ms. Hutcherson Wright:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of MeyerPark Elementary's educational, financial, and operational functions.

The report's recommendations will help MeyerPark Elementary improve its overall performance as it provides services to students, staff, and community members. The report also highlights model practices and programs being provided by MeyerPark Elementary.

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged Evergreen Solutions, LLC to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

The report is available on the LBB website at <http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ursula Parks".

Ursula Parks
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Albert Glover
Mr. Frederick Roberts
Ms. Gloria Whittaker
Mr. Larry Baker

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MeyerPark Elementary School's school performance review notes 9 significant accomplishments and makes 23 recommendations for improvement. This Executive Summary highlights the charter school's significant accomplishments and recommendations. The purpose of a management and performance review is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of various areas of a charter school's operations and provide recommendations that can help improve these processes. Some recommendations in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules, and regulations, while others are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices. A copy of the full report is available at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ MeyerPark's board of directors, school leadership team, and staff are committed to a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. A sense of pride in the school and its mission was evident at MeyerPark. The hallways were filled with student work and represented an example of the personal attention each student received as well as the respect for their community. Based on teacher interviews and teacher and parent surveys, the superintendent/principal takes an active role in serving as both a leader and motivator in the school. Teachers spoke highly of the quality and extent of support they receive from the school's administration, and the administration in turn clearly values the commitment, skills, and hard work of its teachers.
- ◆ MeyerPark effectively and meaningfully incorporates performing and fine arts into classroom instruction across grades and content areas through project-based instruction. Early on, the school's administration determined what special activities and courses would be offered. Now the students make those decisions as they are routinely involved in the planning process, and are surveyed to identify the particular topics they would like to learn about and experience. Options

have included drama club, theatre class, ballet, photojournalism, video editing, and choir, among others. There are monthly cultural performances, a year book club, Spanish class twice per week, and art activities incorporated into all subjects and grades. Student work was displayed throughout the school, and the pride of both students and staff in the quality of the work was evident.

- ◆ MeyerPark established effective methods of using the support of available emergency community services. Law enforcement, fire departments, poison and hotline centers are requested throughout the year to participate in various events conducted on campus to increase awareness among staff, teachers, and students. This includes visits by both fire department and law enforcement personnel for in-class presentations and special assemblies for community members to share information related to fire safety, law enforcement activities, and healthcare. MeyerPark's extended efforts to engage emergency services organizations within its community provide stakeholders with better awareness and help students make connections with support available from various emergency preparedness community members.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

CHARTER ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- ◆ **Reorganize the school's administrative structure to eliminate redundancy; provide additional academic support; and limit direct reports to the board.** The responsibilities of and reporting relationships for MeyerPark administrators are not clearly defined and implemented. In addition, the high number of administrators in the charter school is not consistent with a school the size of MeyerPark. The job descriptions for the principal and administrative services director positions revealed a significant amount of overlap, with no substantive differences between the two positions. Monthly reports to the MeyerPark board were provided by three individuals—superintendent/principal, business manager, and executive director. The MeyerPark

board of directors should reorganize the school's administrative structure to allow administrators to concentrate on increasing student performance. The proposed reorganization should separate the current superintendent/principal position into two positions, a full-time principal and a superintendent; reduce the number of administrative positions; and require MeyerPark administrators to report directly to the new superintendent position.

- ◆ **Develop an annual administrator evaluation system.** MeyerPark has not implemented an evaluation system to assess the extent to which the school's administrative team is operating as expected and meeting the identified goals of the school. In its original charter application, MeyerPark stated that the school would conduct other administrative evaluations, but school administrator evaluations are not currently conducted. The members of the board and each of the board's direct reports should work collaboratively to develop an evaluation system, incorporating the school's long-term strategic goals.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- ◆ **Conduct a fidelity review to determine the extent to which the math curriculum is being implemented as intended, and develop an ongoing system to ensure teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities for ongoing implementation.** MeyerPark does not effectively prepare its students to demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards in the area of mathematics. They established a curriculum management cycle that appears to incorporate all the elements expected of an effective system. Despite these efforts, however, student performance in mathematics has not improved. MeyerPark obtained a rating of Academically Unacceptable (AU) under the state's accountability system for school year 2010–11 based on the mathematics scores for all students and its African American and economically disadvantaged subgroups. MeyerPark's student performance in mathematics has been significantly below the state and campus group averages across grade levels for several years. The review should be conducted by a stakeholder group that includes, at a minimum, the principal and lead teachers as well as content area or curriculum experts. The review should include multiple opportunities for direct observation and guided teacher reflection. By grade level, the review

should focus on the gaps in knowledge and skills identified through item analysis of ongoing progress monitoring of student performance, at the school, classroom, and individual student level, targeted in grade level curriculum plans. If there is strong evidence that the curriculum is being implemented as intended and a significant proportion of students are not successful, MeyerPark should adopt a different core curriculum.

- ◆ **Establish a comprehensive professional development plan based on identified student and staff needs that has as its goal increased student performance through the provision of consistently high quality instruction across grades and content areas.** MeyerPark's system of professional development does not rely on teacher and student data to determine areas of need and does not include a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development efforts. MeyerPark is not using systematic data-based decision-making to identify its specific professional development needs at either a school or teacher level, nor have they determined the most effective way to address those needs. In addition, MeyerPark does not effectively evaluate the impact professional development has on targeted student performance areas. A review of student performance from school years 2008–09 to 2010–11 reveals that there has been little or no improvement in mathematics during that period. Although staff at MeyerPark actively participate in a variety of professional development activities, only four of the approximately 180 documented professional development activities involved mathematics instruction, the subject MeyerPark students most consistently struggle with in statewide assessments. A stakeholder team of administrators, teachers, and members of the MeyerPark board of directors should conduct a needs assessment. The assessment should identify specific needs and prioritize them in order of significance and potential for impact.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- ◆ **Develop procedures for critical business and accounting processes and activities such as investments, budget, payroll, and purchasing.** MeyerPark lacks current, documented policies and procedures for critical accounting functions and

processes, and does not consistently update the policies and procedures it does have. MeyerPark business and financial staff have been with the school for many years and many day-to-day functions are performed from experience. Many critical functions lack documented procedures such as processing and recording accounts receivable and cash receipts, processing payroll, and performing general ledger maintenance. School personnel use verbal communication and various forms to provide guidance and documentation for procedures; however these forms are no substitute for a current, documented procedures manual. The business manager should develop written procedures for critical business and accounting processes and activities such as investments, budget, payroll, and purchasing. Employees responsible for these functions should be instructed to document function steps incrementally while they are being performed during the normal work routine. Information gathered from this process would form the basis for development of the written procedures.

- ◆ **Establish a proper segregation of duties for financial transactions.** MeyerPark lacks adequate segregation of duties for certain critical financial transactions. These include payroll processing where the business manager has access to add new employees and to process payroll, and extra duty pay where related employees oversee and approve extra-duty pay for relatives. Weaknesses in internal controls, such as segregation of duties, should be addressed. This includes segregating access within payroll processing and food service collections. For example, the superintendent should assign an employee independent of the payroll function with the responsibility to add employees. Internal controls should be monitored by the business manager as changes are made in staffing and employee duties and responsibilities.
- ◆ **Improve the budget document so that it communicates school financial information in a more detailed manner, and post this information on the MeyerPark website.** MeyerPark does not produce, nor include on its website, a budget document that adequately communicates the financial details of the school's budget. MeyerPark's approved budgets for school years 2009–10 to 2011–12 identify revenues and expenditures and shows budgeted differences,

but does not explain function details nor present the document in a manner that is understandable to users unfamiliar with school accounting or budgeting. In addition, the budget is not included on the school's website. Consequently, MeyerPark is missing an opportunity to provide both school staff and the community-at-large a useful and effective means to understanding the financial allocation details of the school. The superintendent should work with the business manager to determine the most pertinent information for public dissemination to tell the story of the school's priorities and direction. The budget document should be developed to clearly show the planned use of funds and include charts, written analysis, summaries, and other methods that can provide more insight.

OPERATIONAL

- ◆ **Initiate a regularly scheduled formal facilities assessment.** MeyerPark lacks a formal facilities assessment. The operations manager conducts an informal walk-around review of its facilities on a weekly basis. A note pad is used to record items in need of repair that is then merged with a list of concerns noted by teachers. This list becomes an informal work order system for the operations manager, and in combination with personal experience and impact to the classroom, this list used as the basis for establishing priorities. This places the campus in more of a reactionary rather than proactive mode regarding facility maintenance and could potentially cause the school to overlook a major developing flaw or deficiency in its facilities infrastructure. The operations manager and administrative services director should develop and manage a preventive maintenance program that would be integrated into the existing work order system. This would include the development of a viable checklist and process ensuring all critical components of the facility are regularly evaluated.
- ◆ **Develop and implement a formal policy and process for facilities master planning.** MeyerPark lacks policies and procedures for facilities master planning. Staff indicated the only planning document used as part of a facilities master planning discussion is the facility floor plan layout. This is used to review space utilization in preparation for the following school year. MeyerPark does not have a governing

board policy related to facilities master planning for the campus and the educational needs of the school. Without a formal facilities master plan, the school may not be making the best informed data-driven decisions to maximize its limited resources and could be by-passing cost savings or cost avoidance opportunities. The superintendent should designate a lead person as responsible for managing development of a facilities master plan and provide annual updates on MeyerPark's progress towards meeting its facilities goals to school leadership and its board of directors.

- ◆ **Develop and implement a formal disaster recovery plan to address key actions necessary after an emergency event.** MeyerPark has not developed and implemented a formal disaster recovery plan. The school has Emergency Procedure Guidelines that identify activities related to post-crisis intervention and lists crisis team members and emergency contact numbers. While these guidelines include alternative sites for relocation in the event of an emergency, recovery sites were not identified that would allow the school to continue to function for an undefined amount of time. The MeyerPark recovery plan must consider an alternative location to establish the continuation of the educational process and the necessary support functions to conduct business. This should include a process for establishing communications; the ability to provide the proper information systems or technology support to the operations; a method for document retrieval from the dislocated facility; and the ability to continue with all financial services and human resource support in order to conduct business.
- ◆ **Prioritize the playground area as a risk to the safety and security of children and move forward with improvement plans.** MeyerPark playground safety and security standards and practices are inadequate, increasing the risk of injury on the playground. Onsite interviews and observation of the playground by the review team noted several potential safety concerns. This includes a lock on the entrance gate that could be easily broken, one side of the climbing area did not appear to have been cleaned in some time, and weed-control mesh protruding in numerous places creating the potential for someone to easily trip. A playground assessment should be part of the annual

facility assessment process of the safety and security programs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ◆ MeyerPark is located in Harris County and serves students in two campuses in the city of Houston.
- ◆ The school year 2010–11 district profile as listed in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Student Enrollment reports reflects the following student demographics:
 - an enrollment of 236 students;
 - 85.1 percent African American;
 - 14.9 percent Hispanic;
- ◆ In school year 2010–11, approximately 83 percent of students were economically disadvantaged and 23 percent were at-risk.
- ◆ Under the state accountability system, the charter school received an *Academically Unacceptable* rating for school year 2010–11 from TEA. In the past six years, the district was rated *Academically Acceptable* in school years 2009–10, 2008–09, 2007–08, and 2004–05. However, they received an *Academically Unacceptable* rating in school years 2006–07 and 2005–06. School districts and charter schools were not assigned state accountability ratings in 2011–12 due to the development of a new accountability system.
- ◆ Under the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act, all public school campuses, school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Preliminary 2012 AYP results indicated that MeyerPark “meets” AYP. The charter “missed” AYP in school year 2010–11 due to reading and mathematics performance for African American and economically disadvantaged students.
- ◆ Julia Wright serves in the dual capacities of superintendent and principal. She has been with MeyerPark since it became an open-enrollment charter school in school year 2004–05. MeyerPark started as a private girls and boys prep school and Ms. Wright ran that program until the charter was approved.
- ◆ The charter school is served by the Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4) in Houston.

- ◆ The district is represented by State Senator Rodney Ellis and State Representative Borris L. Miles.

SCHOOLS

In school year 2011–12, the charter school had two campuses, including the following:

- ◆ Main Campus Building (Grades 1–7); and
- ◆ Second Campus (Pre-K to K).

FINANCIAL DATA

- ◆ Total actual fiscal year 2010–11 expenditures: \$1,849,862.
- ◆ Net assets were \$525,149 in 2010–11; Net assets as a percent of total revenue was 27.4 percent (fiscal year 2010–11) compared to the state (charter schools only) at 38.0 percent.
- ◆ In fiscal year 2010–11, 54 percent of total actual operating expenditures were spent on instruction compared to the state at 58.1 percent.
- ◆ 2011–12 School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas Rating (FIRST): Standard Achievement.

- ◆ 2012 FAST (Financial Allocation Study for Texas) Rating: 3.5 Stars (34 percent composite progress percentile + very low spending index).

The chapters that follow contain a summary of the charter school's accomplishments, findings, and numbered recommendations. Detailed explanations for accomplishments and recommendations follow the summary and include fiscal impacts.

Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter's recommendations and associated savings or costs for 2013–14 through 2017–18.

Following the chapters are the appendices that contain the results from the charter surveys conducted by the review team.

The following table summarizes the fiscal impact of all 23 recommendations in the performance review.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

| | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS)/ SAVINGS | ONE TIME (COSTS)/ SAVINGS |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gross Savings | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 |
| Gross Costs | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 |

CHAPTER 1

CHARTER LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT

MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY

CHAPTER 1. CHARTER LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT

Charter schools were established in Texas in 1995 with the intent of ensuring fiscal and academic accountability without undue regulation of instructional methods or pedagogical innovation. The Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 12, provides for the following classes of charter schools:

- home-rule school district charters established and operated in accordance with subchapter B;
- campus or campus program charters authorized by school districts in accordance with subchapter C, including schools or programs administered and staffed by district employees as well as schools or programs operated through contract with outside providers; and
- open-enrollment charters authorized by the Texas State Board of Education in accordance with subchapter D or, if operated by a public college, university, or junior college, authorized by the State Board of Education in accordance with subchapter E.

The purposes of charter schools, as stated in TEC, are to:

- improve student learning;
- increase the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system;
- create professional opportunities that will attract new teachers to the public school system;
- establish a new form of accountability for public schools; and
- encourage different and innovative learning methods.

MeyerPark Elementary School (MeyerPark) was established as a private elementary school in 1993. In 2001, ECAP Enterprises, Inc. (ECAP), doing business as MeyerPark Elementary, was granted status by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a nonprofit corporation. The IRS letter stated that the designation was based on MeyerPark's status as a private school, and included instructions for notifying the IRS of a change in the event it was approved as a charter school by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The purposes of ECAP, as stated in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, included the following:

- to perform charitable activities pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) and Texas Tax Code 11.18(c)(1);
- to provide educational services for children and foster their academic and social development;
- to provide after school care and daycare for children of working or student parents in order to foster academic and social advancement and development; and
- to serve as a source of support for educational efforts throughout the community.

In 2003, ECAP applied for and was granted authorization from TEA to operate MeyerPark as an open-enrollment charter. As described in the original charter application, the initial incorporators resolved to gather their expertise in education and business management and devote their time to establishing a charter school. The organizing group of initial incorporators had a history of working together, and had originally served as the governing board for MeyerPark when it was a private school. When the charter was approved, the private school was transferred to the charter, allowing all enrolled students to attend.

MeyerPark began operating as an open-enrollment charter school in school year 2004–05 with a single campus of 81 students in Kindergarten through grade 5. The term for open-enrollment charters is not set out in statute. MeyerPark's original grant covered a four-year period through July 31, 2008. In April 2008 MeyerPark submitted its renewal application. On May 5, 2010, TEA awarded MeyerPark a renewal contract with an ending date of July 31, 2018. By school year 2011–12, MeyerPark added an early childhood site and grade 6. As of the time of this review, its total enrollment increased to 236 students.

Open-enrollment charters are operated in accordance with a contract between the Texas State Board of Education and the charter holder. When considering what an individual open-enrollment charter school is required to implement, the contents of the application and the contract document itself apply. As stated in the contract, the terms of an open-enrollment charter include: (a) the contract; (b) applicable law; (c) the application submitted by the sponsoring entity;

(d) any amendment or changes adopted or ratified by the State Board of Education or the Commissioner of Education; and (e) all statements, assurances, commitments, and representations made by the charter holder in the application. Actions inconsistent with the terms of the charter constitute a material violation of the charter.

Governance is the set of processes, customs, policies, laws and institutions by which an organization is controlled. It establishes the roles of stakeholders involved in and responsible for the organization's activities and outcomes, and defines relationships within the organization. Although similar to independent school districts in many ways, charter school governance systems must adhere to state laws related to, and meet the unique needs of, charter schools.

The laws and rules authorizing and controlling open-enrollment charter schools in Texas are found in Chapter 12, Subchapter D of the TEC and Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). Pursuant to TEC, Section 12.121, open-enrollment charter schools are operated under the control of a governing body that is "responsible for the management, operation, and accountability of the school, regardless of whether the governing body delegates the governing body's powers and duties to another person." Each open-enrollment charter must include in its application a description of the governing structure of the program, including: the officer positions designated; the manner in which officers and other members are selected and removed from office; the manner in which vacancies are filled; the term for which members of the governing body serve; and whether the terms are to be staggered (TEC Section 12.111).

MeyerPark is governed by a four-member Board of Directors (board) who serve indefinite terms (i.e., until they elect to step down or are removed). As described in its application, board positions are filled through well-defined screening tools that allow only those who are dedicated to the mission and vision of the charter to fill vacancies. The board is structured so that stakeholders are involved in determining policies that decide the direction of the school. Continuous board training is conducted to ensure that board members understand their role is to protect the vision and the mission as described in the charter. Board members who consistently fail to meet their duties or attempt to subvert the school's mission and vision will be expelled from the board as described within the bylaws as well as the board policies and procedures.

As described in the original charter application, the chairman is the executive officer of the corporation; presides over all meetings of the board and executive committees; has the authority to enter into agreements on behalf of the corporation, in conjunction with the secretary's signature and the approval of the board; and has the power to appoint board committees and employ personnel. The secretary maintains minutes of meetings and is the custodian of the corporate records. The treasurer is responsible for all funds and securities of the corporation. **Exhibit 1–1** identifies MeyerPark's board for school year 2011–12, with member titles, years of service, and occupations.

EXHIBIT 1–1
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL YEAR 2011–12

| NAME | TITLE | TENURE | OCCUPATION |
|-------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Albert Glover | President | 8 years | Self-employed |
| Frederick Roberts | Secretary | 8 years | Retired |
| Gloria Whittaker | Treasurer | 6 years | Human Resources |
| Larry Baker | Board Member | 3 years | Transportation Supervisor |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary School.

With few exceptions, charter school governing boards are considered to be governmental bodies or entities similar to school districts or the board of trustees of a school district. Laws related to open meetings, public information, records, purchasing and contracting, and conflict of interest. The MeyerPark board meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 PM in the school conference room. The board is responsible for the management, operation, and accountability of the open-enrollment charter school.

In establishing MeyerPark, the board members sought to draw on their prior experience to fulfill the following roles:

- **Visionary Role**, including the duty to:
 - promote the educational welfare of all children;
 - ensure creation and maintenance of a shared vision that promotes enhanced student achievement;
 - adopt a shared vision based on community beliefs to guide local education; and
 - ensure that the vision reflects the present and future needs of the children and communities served by these schools.

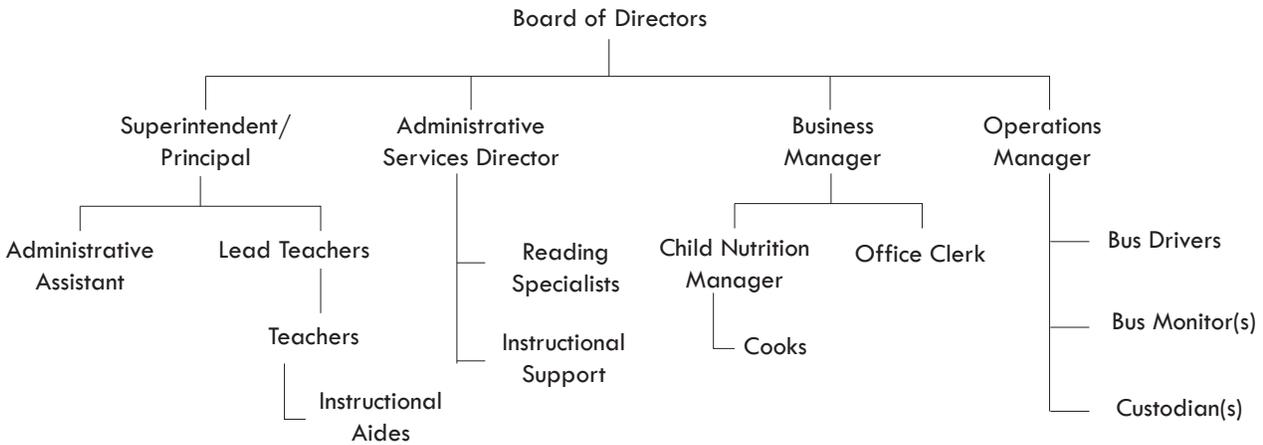
- **Guidance and Direction Role**, including the duty to:
 - provide guidance and direction to the school in accomplishing its organizational vision;
 - recognize and understand the respective roles of the legislature, the state board of education, the Texas Education Agency, and the local boards in the governance of the school;
 - adopt a planning and decision-making process consistent with state statute that used participation, information, research, and evaluation to help achieve the vision of the proposed school; and
 - ensure the planning and decision-making process engaged in by MeyerPark enables all segments of the community, parents, and professional staff to contribute meaningfully to achieving the mission of the proposed school.
- **Advocacy Role**, including the duty to:
 - generally promote the MeyerPark organizational mission within communities served by school campuses operated by the school;
 - help build partnerships with community, business, and governmental leaders to influence and expand educational opportunities and meet the needs of students;
 - support children by establishing partnerships between the school, parents, business leaders, and other community members as an integral part of the school's educational program; and
 - promote school board service as a meaningful way to make long-term contributions to the local community and society.

As the educational leader of the school, the MeyerPark superintendent is responsible for implementing the policies set by the board; assuming administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the education programs, services, and facilities of the school; and annually evaluating staff. The superintendent is expected to collaborate with families and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources. In addition to the superintendent, the MeyerPark charter application provides for a principal to be hired once the student population is sufficient to support additional staff. Until that time, the superintendent will

assume the duties of a principal. Ms. Julia Wright was appointed as the original Chief Operating Officer (CEO)/superintendent of the school. As of school year 2011–12, Ms. Wright continued to serve in the dual capacities of superintendent and principal.

The organizational structure provided by MeyerPark in its charter application and approved by the State Board of Education provided for three administrative positions: CEO/superintendent, principal, and business manager/financial officer. The superintendent reported to the board, supervised all professionals and paraprofessionals, and was responsible for the administration of the school. The current organizational structure is different, in that it includes four administrative/management positions, each reporting directly to the board. In interviews with the review team, board members and administrators explained that the superintendent/principal, administrative services director, business manager, and operations manager are related by consanguinity or affinity, and these familial relationships necessitated a change in the organizational structure. **Exhibit 1–2** shows the current MeyerPark organizational chart.

**EXHIBIT 1–2
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary School, 2012.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ The MeyerPark board of directors, school leadership team, and staff are committed to a culture consistent with the school’s purpose and direction that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students.
- ◆ The MeyerPark board of directors and the school’s leadership team benefit from a good working relationship based on mutual respect and consistent communication.

FINDINGS

- ◆ The written policies of the MeyerPark board of directors do not provide sufficient detail or substance to indicate the true intentions, goals, and objectives of the board and do not provide a standard by which the board’s operations can be evaluated.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks a comprehensive strategic planning document to effectively guide and manage the affairs of the school and assist in implementing the board’s long-term vision.
- ◆ The responsibilities of and reporting relationships for MeyerPark administrators are not clearly defined and implemented.
- ◆ MeyerPark has not implemented an evaluation system to assess the extent to which the school’s

administrative team is operating as expected and meeting the identified goals of the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 1: Develop fully articulated policies and procedures that will provide for effective stewardship, operation, and evaluation of the school.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 2: Develop a strategic plan to serve as a management tool to support effective governance and ensure successful implementation of the school’s mission, vision, and values.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 3: Reorganize the school’s administrative structure to eliminate redundancy; provide additional academic support; and limit direct reports to the board.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 4: Develop an annual administrator evaluation system.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SCHOOL CULTURE

The MeyerPark Board of Directors (board), school leadership team, and staff are committed to a culture consistent with the school’s purpose and direction that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. A sense of pride in the school and its mission was evident at MeyerPark. The hallways were

filled with student work and represented an example of the personal attention each student received as well as the respect for their community.

A message of support for challenging and equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students—focused on development of learning, thinking, and life skills—was clearly communicated in all interactions with the review team. Strong collegial relationships among teachers as well as between teachers and the school’s leadership team were evident from all interactions and survey results. Teachers spoke highly of each others’ skills and a commitment to the students and families of MeyerPark.

Based on teacher interviews and teacher and parent surveys, the superintendent/principal takes an active role in serving as both a leader and motivator in the school. She serves as the chair for the curriculum committee and works as a colleague with the reading specialist, lead teacher, and other staff. Teachers spoke highly of the quality and extent of support they receive from the school’s administration, and the administration in turn clearly values the commitment, skills, and hard work of its teachers.

GOVERNING BOARD

The MeyerPark board and the school’s leadership team benefit from a good working relationship based on mutual respect and consistent communication.

The governing board is composed of a diverse group of members who understand their role as board members and are committed to serving in that capacity. All board members have received at least 20 hours of training in the areas of school law, health and safety, school finance/accountability of public funds, public accountability, campus improvement planning, program evaluations, and test security. Recognizing that the school is at a critical point in its development, both with regard to its plans for a new facility and its increased focus on student performance and accountability, the board held a working retreat for Summer 2012.

During interviews, the chairman of the board expressed a high level of satisfaction with the superintendent/principal’s communication. He characterized the communication between them as open, two-way, and honest. He also complimented both the superintendent/principal and the business manager on the materials and reports they provide to the board so that it can function and make decisions effectively.

Effective and open communication between the board and administrative staff has created a high-level of cooperation and mutual support. This type of relationship is fundamental to ensuring that the school’s leadership team has the autonomy needed to meet its goals for achievement and instruction, and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD POLICIES (REC. 1)

The written policies of the MeyerPark board do not provide sufficient detail or substance to indicate the true intentions, goals, and objectives of the board and do not provide a standard by which the board’s operations can be evaluated.

It is common for the function of a board to evolve over time, transitioning from a founding board during the original planning and application period to a working board devoted to getting the school open and operating, and then to a true governing board. A fully functioning governing board establishes goals and objectives for the school in both instructional and operational areas, determines the policies and assists in developing procedures to achieve the goals, and ensures adequate funding is available to implement the primary mission of the school. The board hires the superintendent, who is responsible for carrying out the procedures necessary to accomplish policies set by the board. Interviews with the chairman of the MeyerPark board indicated that the board is still in a “working phase.”

As stated in its original charter application, the MeyerPark board is responsible for the management, operation, and accountability for MeyerPark. Aspirational board goals in the original charter included such things as developing and maintaining policies that ensure involvement of parents in the school’s decision-making process. As a school, MeyerPark has done an admirable job of developing, disseminating, and implementing standardized procedures related to school operations, such as are provided in the *MeyerPark PK–6 Parent Information Guide*; *Employee Handbook, 2011*; *MeyerPark Elementary Texas Positive Behavior Support Initiative Handbook*; and *Teacher Evaluation Procedures*.

In contrast, the board’s own policies were established during the initial application process in 2003, but have not been updated since that time. Many policies consist of restatements of regulatory requirements, reflecting “assurances” rather than statements of policy that set this organization apart from any other. The policies as stated relate to opening and operating a charter school, which is appropriate during the

initial phase of operations, but they have not evolved to reflect the board's responsibility to operate and evaluate the school to ensure future success. A notable example is the statement of duties and responsibilities of the board. The statement indicates that the board will "perform roles and duties related to visionary leadership, guidance, direction, and advocacy for the success of the charter school." It does not, however, provide any explanation of what those roles and duties will be or what they will look like. The MeyerPark board policy states that it has "a duty to adopt a planning and decision-making process consistent with state statute that uses participation, information, research, and evaluation to help achieve the vision of the school," yet the board policy does not provide any discussion or description of such a process.

Comprehensive policies that delineate the way the board will function and conduct its business are critical for effective oversight and leadership of a school.

The governing board of MeyerPark should develop fully articulated policies and procedures that will provide for effective stewardship, operation, and evaluation of the school. Suggested topics to be addressed through more detailed policies include, but are not limited to, administrator evaluations; program evaluation, development, and accountability; and community engagement/involvement. The board should begin with revising its statement of duties and responsibilities to include a more explicit description of its obligations. Suggested resources to assist in this process include:

- *A Guide for State Policymakers Creating and Sustaining High-Quality Charter School Governing Boards*, 2008, The National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance.
- Shoemaker, Nancy. *The Critical Challenge of Governance for Charter School Boards*. Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, Third Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA, October 15, 2010.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

STRATEGIC PLAN (REC. 2)

MeyerPark lacks a comprehensive strategic planning document to effectively guide and manage the affairs of the school and assist in implementing the board's long-term vision.

With regard to upgrading or expanding the school's facilities, the board has been working to set a vision, mission, goals and priorities for the school. Board members have worked with leadership to identify barriers that might impede progress. They have also identified resources or potential resources for moving forward with the vision. Board meeting agendas from 2009 and 2010 illustrate some of the effort that has gone into planning with banks and architects as MeyerPark maps a course for the future. During interviews with the review team, the school's leadership and board members reported that ECAP, the corporation which holds the charter, owns property and is in the process of developing plans for a new building that it hopes to occupy by 2013.

In addition, as a result of being rated by TEA as Academically Unacceptable for school year 2010–11, MeyerPark was required to establish a campus intervention team with at least one external member who is a qualified member of the Professional Service Provider network. While not implemented as part of a comprehensive strategic plan for the overall development and enhancement of the school, in September 2011, MeyerPark entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with a consultant hired through the Regional Education Service Center XIII (Region 13) to assist the school in its intervention activities. The consultant assisted MeyerPark in collecting and interpreting the data required to complete the focused data analysis, student-level review, and onsite needs assessment and recommendations; as well as develop a school improvement plan to be submitted to TEA for review and approval. During interviews with the board chairman and the superintendent, it was reported that this process was very helpful in assisting the district in developing a long-term plan.

While these actions reflect the school's plans for the future with regard to facilities and its efforts to attain a rating of Academically Acceptable, Recognized, or Exemplary, they do not address the full range of operational and performance goals that would be addressed through a comprehensive strategic plan.

Strategic planning is a process through which individuals knowledgeable about and intimately involved with an organization conduct an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, position within the external environment, and opportunities for improvement in order to develop a long-range plan for continual improvement. Without a long-range plan, there is no assurance that long-term priorities will be identified and addressed. It is critical

that the school engage in immediate and extensive planning for the improvement of student achievement.

A strategic plan should be a living document that is linked to the school's budget so the superintendent and board can appropriately prioritize and allocate financial resources to ensure the plan is successfully implemented. The expected results must include performance measures that will allow the board to continuously monitor the status of implementation of specific strategies during the long-term planning period. Those performance measures can also be used as a management tool to effectively govern the school. A comprehensive strategic plan will encompass all aspects of MeyerPark operations—including academic, operational, and financial—in addition to strategic objectives. For each goal, the plan should include the resources necessary (and allocated), clear staff responsibilities and timelines, performance indicators, and fund requirements. At present, the work completed to expand the school's facilities and to develop the school improvement plan represents an important and significant start to a comprehensive strategic plan, but does not include all of the critical elements essential for accountability, including prioritization of budget

resources and performance measures for ongoing monitoring by the board.

MeyerPark should develop a strategic plan to serve as a management tool to support effective governance and ensure successful implementation of the school's mission, vision, and values. The board and superintendent should establish a strategic planning committee, including representatives from all stakeholder groups, to review the focused data analysis, student-level review, and school improvement plan developed during school year 2011–12. The committee should use these tools as the foundation for a comprehensive plan that addresses the school's highest priority strategies for the next three to five years.

Proposed steps for developing a comprehensive strategic plan are provided in **Exhibit 1–3**.

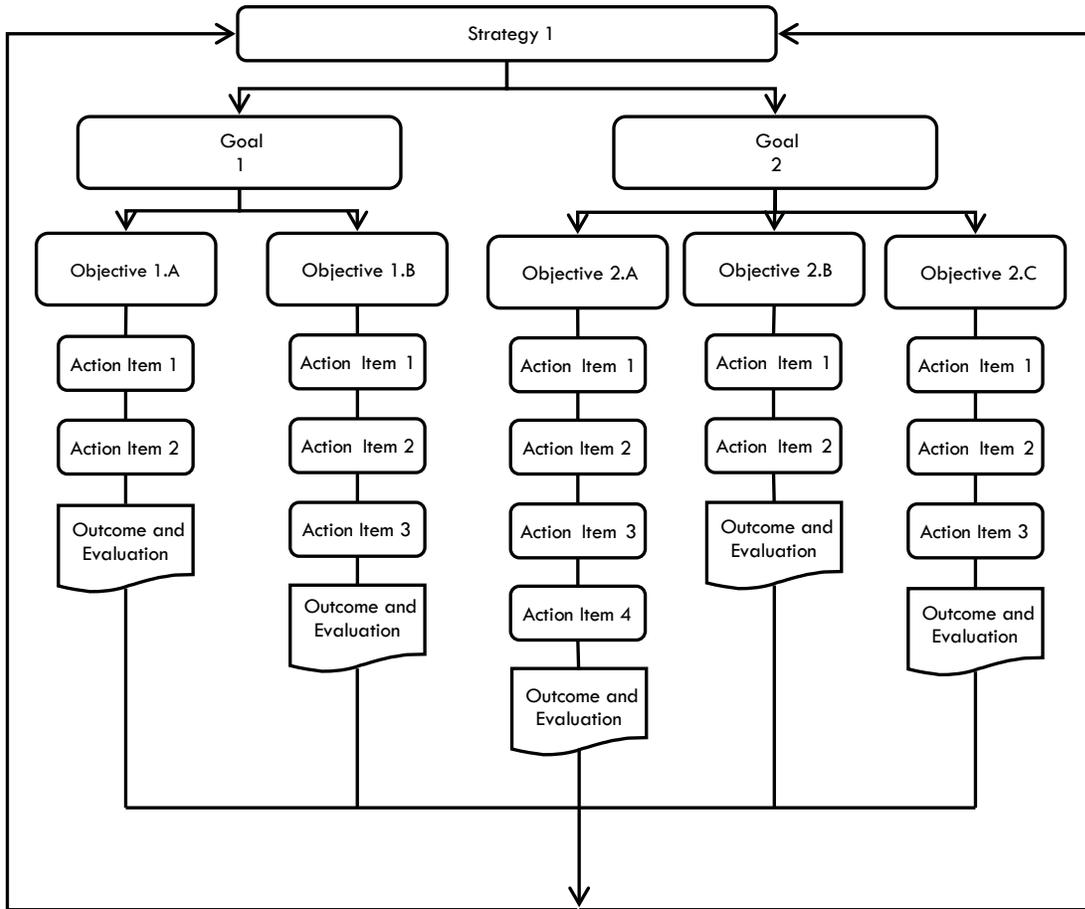
The plan should include goals for each strategy, objectives for each goal, and explicit action items and outcome measures for each objective. Periodically, and not less than annually, the plan should be revisited to assess progress, identify barriers, and revise goals, objectives, or action items as needed. A visual representation of a strategic plan outline is provided in **Exhibit 1–4**.

EXHIBIT 1–3 STEPS IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

| STEP | PURPOSE |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Vision | Reflect on MeyerPark's vision statement. Does it echo the current overarching expectation of what the school should be? Revise if needed. |
| 2. Mission | Reflect on MeyerPark's current mission statement. Does it echo the intended purpose for the school? Revise if needed. |
| 3. Values | Reflect on MeyerPark's core values. Do they reflect the principles that guide the school's internal operations and relationships with external entities? Revise if needed. |
| 4. Strategies | Identify and prioritize the most important strategies or areas of focus for the school (e.g., fund development; student achievement; expansion; climate; professional learning). |
| 5. SWOT Analysis | Identify strengths and weaknesses (internal factors) and opportunities and threats (external factors) to explore possibilities for new efforts and solutions to problems. |
| 6. Goals | Identify specific goals designed to assist the school in accomplishing its mission. Goals should reflect a desired outcome three to five years out, depending on the content (e.g., three years for student achievement; five years for expansion). One to three goals per strategy/priority are recommended to avoid overextending capacity. |
| 7. Objectives | Identify measurable steps to achieving the goal. Three to five are recommended. |
| 8. Action Plan | For each objective, develop a detailed action plan. The plan should include specific action items or tasks to be completed; resources to be allocated; the name or title of the responsible party; a timeline for implementation and completion; and measureable outcome(s) that will be used to evaluate progress. The action plan provides the day-to-day steps for implementing the overall strategic plan. |
| 9. Evaluation | Establish a schedule for periodic status reporting and assessment of progress. The committee should meet at least annually to identify which objectives and goals have been met, identify obstacles, and identify solutions, if needed. Strategy/priority-specific workgroups should meet and communicate on a more frequent basis to ensure the plan remains on track. |

SOURCE: Created by the Review Team, 2012.

**EXHIBIT 1-4
OUTLINE FOR MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN**



SOURCE: Developed by the Review Team, 2012.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

STAFFING, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (REC. 3)

The responsibilities of and reporting relationships for MeyerPark administrators are not clearly defined and implemented.

In addition, the high number of administrators is not consistent with a school the size of MeyerPark with only 236 students. The organizational structure described in the original charter application approved by TEA included four proposed administrative positions as follows (positions indicated by “*” were to be filled as funds became available, with contracted consultants providing support for administrative and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) functions in the interim):

- Superintendent

- Principal*
- Assistant Principal/Counselor*
- Business Manager*

In contrast, the organizational structure reported in the MeyerPark Parent Information Guide, updated June 2010 and provided to the review team, indicated the school administration is comprised of the following:

- Superintendent/Principal – Julia Hutcherson (Wright)
- Executive Director – Shirley Pace
- Assistant Principal – Venus McDaniel
- Business Manager – Sheretta Hernandez

A third organizational structure, also provided by MeyerPark during the onsite visit, includes four administrative positions as follows:

- Superintendent/Principal – Julia Wright
- Administrative Services Director – Shirley Pace
- Operations Manager – Roy Pace
- Business Manager – Sheretta Hernandez

In addition, ECAP must submit an annual Internal Revenue Service Form 990 to maintain its status as a non-profit organization. Within this form, ECAP must indicate individuals who are officers, directors, trustees, and key employees. In 2009, three board members were named in this section of the 990 form. However, ECAP, doing business as MeyerPark Elementary School, identified other positions as officers and key employees, including the superintendent/principal on the 2011 TEA governance form.

In interviews with the review team, board members and administrators stated that the organizational structure was revised to address any potential conflicts or violations of statutory prohibitions against nepotism. Four individuals on the administrative leadership team are related to the others by consanguinity or affinity. To address this, the MeyerPark organizational/administrative structure provides for each administrator to report directly to the board.

A review of the descriptions for the principal and administrative services director positions revealed a significant amount of overlap, with no substantive differences between the two positions. Each position included responsibilities and duties for:

- Instructional Management;
- School or Organization Morale;
- School or Organization Improvement;
- Personnel Management;
- Management of Fiscal, Administrative and Facilities Functions;
- Student Management;
- Professional Growth and Development;
- Charter and Community Involvement; and
- Supervision.

Based on job descriptions provided to the review team, the stated primary role and purpose for these two positions are:

- Principal:
 - Oversee the instructional program and manage operations and personnel at the charter level.
 - Demonstrate leadership to ensure high standards of instructional services.
 - Ensure compliance with charter policies, success of instructional programs, and operations of all charter activities.
- Administrative Services Director:
 - Oversee some aspects of the instructional program, manage operations, personnel, be a liaison between the community and the charter school.
 - Demonstrate leadership to ensure high standard of administrative services.

The principal's job description includes a total of 33 responsibilities and duties, while the administrative services director position description includes 30. Twenty-six of the responsibilities and duties are the same or substantially the same between the two positions. **Exhibit 1–5** provides the responsibilities and duties that are unique to each position.

In an interview with the review team, the superintendent/principal provided the organizational chart as shown in **Exhibit 1–2**, but indicated that the chart did not accurately depict the current reporting structure. Unlike what is shown on the organizational chart, the reading specialists report to the superintendent/principal rather than to the administrative services director. It was not clear whether the instructional support positions also report to the superintendent/principal or whether they are supervised and receive guidance and support from the administrative services director. The original charter application stated that “the superintendent will supervise all professionals and paraprofessionals, and be responsible for the campus administration of the school.”

The current organizational chart also includes an operations manager who oversees bus drivers, bus monitor(s), and custodian(s). A position description for an operations manager's position was not provided. However, descriptions of director of maintenance and director of transportation positions were included in the information submitted to the review team by MeyerPark even though neither of these positions currently exist.

**EXHIBIT 1–5
MEYERPARK POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

| TOPIC/AREA | PRINCIPAL | ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR |
|--|--|---|
| Instructional Management | <p>Collaborate with charter committee on planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of charter education program.</p> <p><i>Oversee instructional and managerial program to validate effectiveness of program outcomes and use results to make adaptations.</i></p> | Same as Principal, with exception of the italicized item noted. |
| School/ Organization Morale | <p>Establishes resources and materials to aid teaching staff in achieving instructional goals.</p> <p>Encourages partnership and team building among charter members.</p> <p>Use effective communication practices with staff, students, parents, and community.</p> <p>Articulate and advertise requirement for high-level performance to staff and students.</p> <p>Handle conflicts quickly and efficiently.</p> | Same as Principal. |
| School or Organization Improvement | <p>Collaborate with staff for united school improvement plan.</p> <p>Recognize, renew, and apply data to encourage school improvement.</p> <p>Plan and implement yearly charter objectives for each Academic Excellence Indicator.</p> <p>Provide information system and records enabling progress of performance objectives in relation to Academic Excellence Indicator to be shown.</p> | Same as Principal. |
| Personnel Management | <p>Interview, choose, and orient new employees. Confirm all personnel assigned to charter.</p> <p>Instruct staff of performance requirements in relation to instructional strategies, classroom management, and communication with the public.</p> <p>Hold employee evaluation conferences based on records of performance observations.</p> <p>Designate and promote charter staff members.</p> <p>Collaborate with subordinates to plan and accomplish professional growth goals.</p> <p><i>Notify superintendent of employees who need termination, suspension, or non-renewal.</i></p> <p><i>Collaborate with appropriate committees to outline and implement activities for professional development.</i></p> | Same as Principal, with exception of the two italicized items noted. |
| Management of Fiscal, Administrative, and Facilities Functions | <p>Document needs of charter programs to develop an accurate budget.</p> <p>Ensure school facilities are managed effectively. Oversee facilities to ensure maintenance provides a clean and safe charter.</p> <p><i>Abide by all state and federal laws that apply to charter school, Commissioner’s Rules that apply to charter schools, and local charter policy.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure compliance with budget guidelines. Maintain fiscal control. Report accurate fiscal information.</i></p> <p><i>Gather, manage, and file all hardcopy and computerized reports, records, and other documents required, including accurate and timely reports of maximum attendance to requisition textbooks.</i></p> <p><i>Approval of purchase orders.</i></p> | Same as Principal, with exception of the four italicized items noted. |

**EXHIBIT 1–5
MEYERPARK POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

| TOPIC/AREA | PRINCIPAL | ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR |
|--|---|--|
| Student Management | Collaborate with staff and students to design a student discipline plan that encourages a positive environment and enhances student behavior. Provide for uniform enforcement of school rules and oversee appropriate and reasonable student discipline. Hold parent/teacher/student conferences in regards to the student and school issues. | Same as Principal. |
| Professional Growth/Development. | Enrich job skills through professional development. Model professional, ethical, and responsible behavior. | Same as Principal. |
| Charter and Community Responsibilities | Same as Administrative Services Director, with exception of four italicized items noted. | Convey the charter’s mission to the public and encourage support in accomplishing the mission. Illustrate understanding of charter and community needs and begin to meet those needs. Demonstrate use of productive and efficient skills to raise community and parent involvement. <i>Develop, plan, and/or coordinate various charter school activities (community outreach, media/public relation function, etc.) for the purpose of enhancing charter relationships, improving customer service and programs, and promoting a positive public image.</i> <i>Manage program evaluation and solicit feedback from employees, students, parents, board members, and community members.</i> <i>Recommend a variety of communication mechanisms for administrative staff for the purpose of providing a creative and innovative venue to clearly and accurately convey the charter school vision, mission, and motto.</i> <i>Oversee various programs and events for the purpose of communicating and implementing the charter school mission to the community.</i> |
| Supervisory Responsibilities | Oversee and assess the performance of charter employees, including but not limited to, assistant principal, teachers, counselor, librarian, instructional aides, clerical support staff and custodians | Same as Principal. |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary School Position Descriptions, 2012.

A review of MeyerPark board meeting agendas for the two-year period from January 2009 through December 2010 revealed that monthly reports to the board were provided by three individuals—superintendent/principal, business manager, and executive director. The executive director’s reports were related to property plans, buildings, enrollment, advertisement, banking, architects, and bus lease agreements. Neither the original nor the current organizational chart includes an executive director’s position, and none of the current descriptions for positions that report directly to the board include responsibilities and duties that reflect this type of information. Ms. Pace was originally the executive director,

but currently holds the position of administrative services director. It could not be determined during the course of this review whether Ms. Pace continues to perform the function of an executive director or if the board itself has taken on this role.

Exhibit 1–6 shows that MeyerPark expended 10.7 percent less than the state average of its total funds on instructional functions, and 11.2 percent less than its campus group. In contrast, MeyerPark spent 11.1 percent more of its total funds on leadership or administrative functions than the state average (19.7 percent compared to 8.6 percent) and 2.4

**EXHIBIT 1–6
MEYERPARK SELECTED OPERATING EXPENDITURES
INSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION**

| FUNCTION (CODE) | EXPENDITURE | PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES – ALL FUNDS | | | |
|---|-------------|--|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | DISTRICT REPORT | | CAMPUS REPORT | |
| | | MEYERPARK | STATE | MEYERPARK | CAMPUS GROUP* |
| Instructional | | | | | |
| Instruction (11, 95) | \$710,198 | 48.0% | 58.4% | 59.1% | 71.3% |
| Instructional–related Services (12, 13) | \$10,363 | 0.7% | 3.6% | 0.9% | 3.6% |
| Instructional Leadership (21) | \$61,078 | 4.1% | 1.5% | 5.1% | 1.4% |
| Total | | 52.8% | 63.5% | 65.1% | 76.3% |
| Leadership/Administration | | | | | |
| School Leadership (23) | \$112,328 | 7.6% | 5.5% | 9.3% | 6.9% |
| Central Administration (41, 92) | \$179,019 | 12.1% | 3.1% | N/A | N/A |
| Total | | 19.7% | 8.6% | 9.3% | 6.9% |

*Campus Group: Who TEA assigns each campus to a unique comparison group of 40 other public schools (from anywhere in the state) that closely matches that campus on six characteristics. Comparison groups are provided so that schools can compare their performance to that of other schools with whom they are demographically similar.

SOURCE: TEA Academic Excellence Indicator System, District Report and Campus Report, 2011.

percent more on school leadership than its campus group average (9.3 percent compared to 6.9 percent).

Although MeyerPark is a small school, the original intent to add a principal and an assistant principal once enrollment increased was appropriate and acknowledged the core educational mission and function of the school. Two additional administrative positions have since been added, for a total of four, but Ms. Wright continues to serve in the dual roles of superintendent and principal.

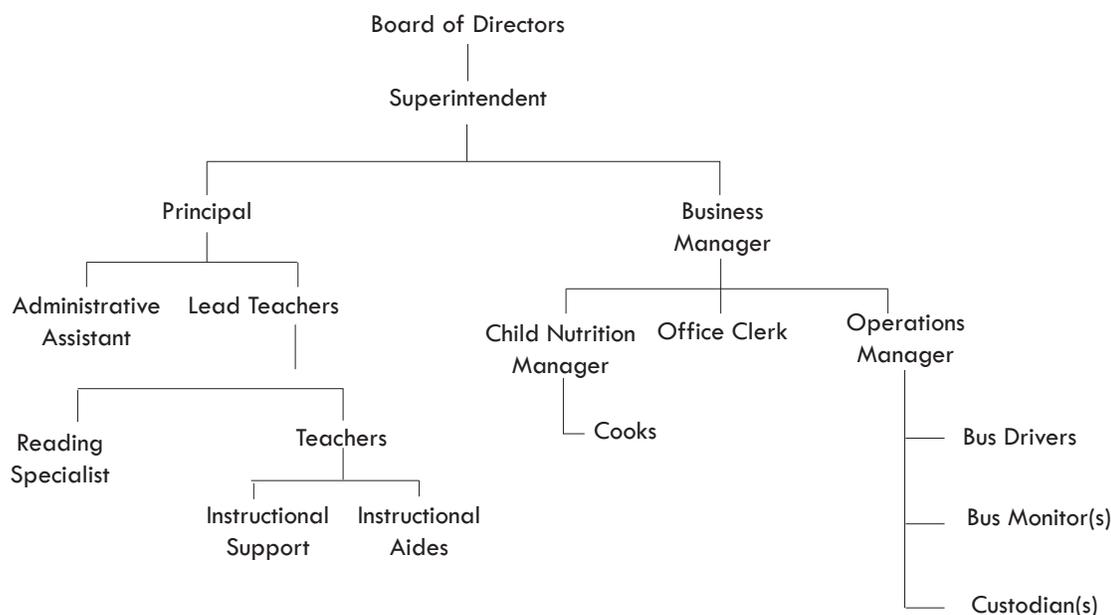
MeyerPark’s top-heavy organizational structure is also reflected in the comparison of instructional versus administrative spending. In addition, MeyerPark’s administrative structure is heavily weighted on the single position of superintendent/principal. This imbalance has the potential to impact both the quality and quantity of support that can be dedicated to increasing the quality of instruction and student learning. MeyerPark obtained a rating of academically unacceptable (AU) under TEA’s accountability system for school year 2010–11 based on the mathematics scores for all students and its African American and economically disadvantaged subgroups. In addition, student performance in mathematics has been significantly below the state and campus group average across grade levels for several years. This raises concern that the necessary resources may

not have been made available to meet the curricular and instructional needs of the school.

Clear roles and responsibilities, including designated authority and reporting relationships, are critical elements in an effective management structure. In addition, when resources are at a premium as they are in school operations, limiting redundancy and allocating resources as responsibly as possible is crucial. Appropriate resource allocation includes ensuring the organization has the tools it needs for effective oversight and management. If an administrator is performing functions commonly associated with an executive director, this should be reflected in the associated position description.

TEC, Section 12.1055, states that the nepotism laws under Section 171.003-171.007, the Texas Local Government Code, apply to members of the governing body of a charter holder or a member of the governing body or an officer of an open-enrollment charter school if the school has not been rated acceptable or higher under the state’s academic accountability system for two of the preceding three years. Under TEC Section 12.1012, an “officer of an open-enrollment charter school” is defined as the principal, director, or other chief operating officer of an open-enrollment charter school; an assistant principal or assistant director of an open-enrollment charter school; or a person

EXHIBIT 1-7
SAMPLE STREAMLINED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



SOURCE: Created by Review Team, 2012.

charged with managing the finances of an open-enrollment charter school.

Because of the existing familial relationships among the four-member administrative team and the district's status as academically unacceptable for 2011, it is critical that not only the organizational chart, but even more importantly, the day-to-day operations and relationships between the board and the administrative team members are free of interactions that would violate the nepotism restrictions or be perceived to do so. While the prohibition against nepotism does not apply at this time, a second academically unacceptable rating in a three-year period would invoke it. Both within an organization and from a public perception point of view, potential for conflict of interest or nepotism is important to consider because confidence in the integrity of an organization is vital. Parents, teachers, community members, and other parties with an interest in public education should have a level of trust and confidence that the charter school is open, fair, and unbiased in its relationships.

The MeyerPark board should reorganize the school's administrative structure to eliminate redundancy; provide additional academic support; and limit direct reports to the board.

Exhibit 1-7 presents proposed organizational changes that modify MeyerPark's current administrative structure. The change would allow administrators to concentrate on increasing student performance. The proposed reorganization includes the following:

- Separating the current superintendent/principal position into two positions, a full-time principal and a superintendent as was proposed in MeyerPark's original charter application. The creation of separate principal and superintendent positions will allow for a more equitable separation of duties providing the principal more freedom to concentrate on improving student academics while establishing a superintendent position that is responsible for the effective operation of the school. In addition, the creation of a superintendent position allows one individual to advise, make recommendations, and report to the school board instead of the current structure where four separate administrators perform these functions. This will not only streamline the board's oversight process, but will also improve the board's oversight and accountability as one individual is accountable for carrying out any board recommendations and/or directives instead of four.

- Reducing the number of administrative positions. The proposed organization eliminates the administrative services director position and removes the operations manager from being an administrative position. Currently, the duties of the administrative services director position greatly mirror those of the superintendent/principal. This position should be eliminated and any remaining duties incorporated into the new principal position. The operations manager's duties are not well defined and the position does not appear to warrant an administrative designation. This restructuring reduces the redundancy in job duties between the current administrative positions and frees up resources that can otherwise be used to provide additional instructional support.
- Requiring MeyerPark administrators to report directly to the new superintendent position. This structure avoids any possible nepotism concerns. Thus as long as MeyerPark hires a superintendent that is not related, either by consanguinity or affinity, to the other administrators, the school would be removed from any future problems that may occur if MeyerPark is no longer exempt from nepotism laws. In addition, having a superintendent that is not related to the other administrators is also an excellent business practice that helps to avoid any possible conflicts of interest, perceived or otherwise.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation assumes the elimination of the administrative services director position and the reclassification of the operations manager position. In addition, the recommendation assumes the separation of the current superintendent/principal position into two separate positions of a full time superintendent and principal. The review team was not provided salary information by MeyerPark and all salary data is based on data accumulated during the review. MeyerPark's board should evaluate the actual salaries of all administrative positions to determine an exact fiscal impact of any reorganization.

The current superintendent/principal salary is estimated at \$84,000. If this position were to be separated into two positions the new salaries are estimated to be \$84,000 for the superintendent position and \$63,000 for the principal position. These salaries are based on the average salaries of superintendents and principals at schools the size of MeyerPark throughout the state. The salary of the administrative services director is estimated at \$55,000 and the salary of the operations manager is estimated at \$40,000.

The reclassification of the operations manager to a non-administrative position is estimated to decrease the salary to \$28,000 based on the salaries of equivalent positions at schools the size of MeyerPark. The estimated fiscal impact of this recommendation is as follows:

Current Administrative Salaries

- Superintendent/Principal - \$84,000
- Administrative Services Director - \$55,000
- Operations Manager - \$40,000

Total: \$179,000

Recommended Administrative Salaries:

- Superintendent - \$84,000
- Principal - \$63,000
- Operations Manager - \$28,000

Total: \$175,000

The fiscal impact is a cost savings of \$4,000 a year.

EVALUATION SYSTEM (REC. 4)

MeyerPark has not implemented an evaluation system to assess the extent to which the school's administrative team is operating as expected and meeting the identified goals of the school.

In its original charter application, MeyerPark stated:

Administrative personnel will be evaluated in accordance with provisions of Subchapter BB issued under the Texas Education Code, Section 21.534 and Section 39.054, and the commissioner's recommended or established standards under the Code. The new charter school will accept the commissioner's recommendations as its method of evaluation for administrative personnel, which includes the following domains:

- instructional management;
- school or organization morale;
- school or organization improvement;
- personnel management;
- management of fiscal, administrative and facilities functions;
- student management;
- school or community relations;

- professional growth and development;
- academic excellence indicators and campus performance;
- school board relations (for superintendents only); and
- a student performance domain shall be included in the appraisal of superintendents.

Local school boards in Texas are required by statute to complete a written evaluation of superintendent performance at least once a year (TEC, Section 21.354(c)). Although guidance provided in the *Texas Open-enrollment Charter School Handbook* produced by the Texas Education Agency, Division of Charter School Administration (September 2011), states that “TEC Chapter 21 does not apply to open-enrollment charters,” MeyerPark stated that the school would conduct such evaluations in its charter application.

During interviews with the review team, the board secretary reported that the administrator evaluations are not currently conducted. This was reiterated by the superintendent and the business manager. One respondent indicated that the board chairman was assigned this duty. It is not clear if such evaluations were conducted at any time in the past.

School-level leadership has been shown to have a statistically significant relationship to student achievement. The following specific school-level leadership responsibilities have been found to show a particularly strong correlation with student achievement:

- engaging in a collaborative goal-setting process;
- setting non-negotiable goals for teaching and learning;
- engaging the board in support of these goals;
- monitoring the success of these goals; and
- allocating resources effectively to support the goals.

By not conducting a meaningful, structured, evidence-based evaluation of the superintendent or other school administrators, MeyerPark puts at risk its ability to effectively move the school forward and meets its goals for enhanced student achievement. MeyerPark is facing many challenges such as continued student enrollment growth, planning to build a new school campus, and working to improve its academic accountability rating of Academically Unacceptable (AU). Structured goal setting and accountability, accomplished in part through well-developed formative

evaluation of those in leadership roles, can help focus and guide the school as it tackles these challenges.

A variety of tools are available to assist schools in developing customized superintendent and administrator evaluation systems. The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) is a voluntary, nonprofit, statewide educational association that serves and represents local Texas school districts. To maximize effectiveness, TASB proposes a two-part superintendent evaluation instrument that includes:

- priority performance goals for the superintendent that address major district initiatives the board feels merit special time, effort, and resources from the superintendent during the year; and
- a separate group of items that assess performance on the major, ongoing management responsibilities of the superintendent.

In a model such as this, the priority performance goals likely change from year to year based on the current needs of the school. In contrast, the items related to ongoing management generally remain the same for several years, since they assess the management of ongoing functions. TASB has developed an editable template for the *TASB New Sample Superintendent Evaluation Instrument 2006*, which incorporates the two-part evaluation process. It also has posted on its website the *Commissioner-Recommended Student Performance Domain*, a template designed to collect and summarize the student performance data component of an evaluation. While the evaluation tools provided by TASB are largely geared for independent school districts, MeyerPark can use these tools as templates that can be adapted as needed to fit the unique needs of charter schools.

The Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) also has developed a manual for schools/districts to adapt as needed to their own requirements. The *Superintendent Evaluation Workbook 2009* proposes a three-part evaluation system to be completed by the superintendent as a self-evaluation and by the board itself. The system includes:

- professional performance standards based on those established by the American Association of School Administrators with the National School Boards Association;
- superintendent’s goals, which are determined annually by the board in collaboration with the superintendent; and

- a 360° evaluation that addresses more subjective information gleaned from those that he or she works with directly.

In discussing why evaluation is so important, OSBA describes the role of the superintendent as equivalent to the chief executive officer in the private sector and explains that “as such, the superintendent is charged, with leading and administering the organization according to the policies adopted by the school board.” The purpose of evaluating the superintendent is not to micromanage the organization, but to provide oversight and public assurance that the policies are being effectively implemented. Another critical purpose is to provide input and feedback to the superintendent to help him or her continually improve.

The MeyerPark board should develop an annual administrator evaluation system. As part of creating this system, the board should include policies that clearly articulate how MeyerPark will implement a structured, multi-faceted system for evaluating each administrative position that reports directly to the board, establish a schedule (e.g., annual) for conducting the evaluation, and adhere to the protocol. The members of the board and each of the board’s direct reports should work collaboratively to develop the system, incorporating the school’s long-term strategic goals.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

| RECOMMENDATION | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | TOTAL | ONE TIME |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | | 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS | (COSTS) OR SAVINGS |
| CHAPTER 1: CHARTER LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | |
| 1. Develop fully articulated policies and procedures that will provide for effective stewardship, operation, and evaluation of the school. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 2. Develop a strategic plan to serve as a management tool to support effective governance and ensure successful implementation of the school's mission, vision, and values. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 3. Reorganize the school's administrative structure to eliminate redundancy; provide additional academic support; and limit direct reports to the board. | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$20,000 | \$0 |
| 4. Develop an annual administrator evaluation system. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTALS-CHAPTER 1 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$4,000 | \$20,000 | \$0 |

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY

CHAPTER 2. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

MeyerPark Elementary School (MeyerPark) is an open-enrollment charter school located in Houston, Texas, serving students in pre-Kindergarten through grade 6. MeyerPark was established in 1993 as a private elementary school for students in Kindergarten through grade 5. In 2003, MeyerPark submitted an application to become an open-enrollment charter school. The charter was granted and MeyerPark began operations as a public charter school during school year 2004–05. In 2009–10, the charter was amended to add a second site and expand the program to include prekindergarten, and in 2010–11, grade 6 was added.

Open-enrollment charter school districts are granted charters by the Texas State Board of Education and operate like independent school districts. A key element of an open-enrollment charter application is the educational plan. At MeyerPark, the curriculum is designed to follow the Dimensions of Learning Model, which organizes learning into five dimensions or types of thinking:

- attitudes and perceptions;
- acquiring and integrating knowledge;
- extending and refining knowledge;
- using knowledge meaningfully; and
- habits of mind.

This method values depth over breadth with a strong focus on “meaningful-use” tasks and authentic assessment in addition to more traditional knowledge acquisition methods. Instruction is based on a six-part foundation that includes:

- basic skills in the areas of reading, writing, arithmetic, listening, and speaking;
- thinking skills that tap creativity, decision-making, problem solving, reasoning, and “knowing how to learn;”
- personal qualities such as responsibility, self-esteem, integrity, and honesty;
- visual and performing arts integrated into all aspects of the curriculum;

- technology incorporated into instruction to develop keyboarding skills, knowledge and use of software applications; and
- program development; and creativity.

As an open-enrollment charter school, MeyerPark does not have a specific attendance boundary. Affected districts identified in its application include Houston Independent School District (ISD), Fort Bend ISD, Stafford ISD, Pearland ISD, and Alief ISD. The school accepts students who live within the boundaries of Highway 59 to the north and west of the school, Highway 288 to the east of the school, and no further than two to five miles south of Beltway 8 in Houston.

Exhibit 2–1 shows student enrollment data from school years 2008–09 to 2011–12. During this period, MeyerPark experienced a steady increase in enrollment primarily due to the addition of grade 6 and the increase in prekindergarten students.

**EXHIBIT 2–1
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
SCHOOL YEARS 2008–09 TO 2011–12**

| GRADE LEVEL | 2008–09 | 2009–10 | 2010–11 | 2011–12 |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Pre-Kindergarten | - | 12 | 38 | 59 |
| Kindergarten | 38 | 23 | 29 | 33 |
| First | 30 | 34 | 30 | 31 |
| Second | 31 | 38 | 31 | 29 |
| Third | 22 | 27 | 25 | 24 |
| Fourth | 21 | 22 | 24 | 23 |
| Fifth | 16 | 18 | 22 | 20 |
| Sixth | - | - | 15 | 17 |
| Total | 158 | 174 | 214 | 236 |

NOTE: Blanks in the chart indicate that the school did not have students enrolled in these grades during the indicated school year.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Student Enrollment Reports.

Exhibit 2–2 shows selected student demographics from school years 2008–09 to 2011–12.

The student population at MeyerPark is primarily African American and Hispanic. In school year 2011–12, approximately 82 percent of the total student enrollment was

EXHIBIT 2–2
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEARS 2008–09 TO 2011–12

| | 2008–09 | | 2009–10 | | 2010–11 | | 2011–12 | |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | NUMBER | PERCENT | NUMBER | PERCENT | NUMBER | PERCENT | NUMBER | PERCENT |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | | |
| African American | 137 | 86.7% | 157 | 90.2% | 179 | 83.6% | 194 | 82.2% |
| Hispanic | 21 | 13.3% | 17 | 9.8% | 21 | 9.8% | 34 | 14.4% |
| White | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 13 | 6.1% | * | * |
| Two or More Races | - | - | - | - | * | * | 0 | 0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 116 | 73.4% | 145 | 83.3% | 177 | 82.7% | 197 | 83.5% |
| Limited English Proficient | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| At Risk | 70 | 44.3% | 78 | 44.8% | 56 | 26.2% | 55 | 23.3% |

* - Counts less than 5 have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Student Enrollment Reports.

classified as African American, 14 percent as Hispanic, and less than 2 percent as White. There has been a slight upward trend in students classified as economically disadvantaged, from 73.4 percent in school year 2008–09 to 83.5 percent reported as such in school year 2011–12. In contrast, there has been a significant decrease in the population of students identified as at-risk during the same period, from 44.3 percent in school year 2008–09 to 23.3 percent in school year 2011–12.

Charter schools operate under and receive academic accountability ratings from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). All charter students in Texas take the same State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and End of Course (EOC) tests as independent public school students. As an open-enrollment charter school operating as a charter district, MeyerPark was one of 73 school districts, including 23 charter operators, to receive an Academically Unacceptable (AU) rating from TEA for school year 2010–11. The campus itself was one of 496 total public school campuses, including 38 charter campuses, to be rated as AU. The AU rating was the result of the charter's performance in mathematics for all students as well as its African American and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups.

In addition to the state accountability system, under the federal accountability provisions in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, all public school campuses, school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). MeyerPark's final 2010–11 results indicated that it did not meet AYP for reading and mathematics performance. However, for school

year 2011–12 preliminary data indicates that MeyerPark did meet AYP.

As an open-enrollment charter school, MeyerPark is governed by a Board of Directors (board). The school's educational program is overseen by the position of superintendent and principal. Ms. Julia Wright was appointed as the original CEO/superintendent. As of school year 2011–12, Ms. Wright continues to serve in the dual capacities of superintendent and principal.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ MeyerPark effectively and meaningfully incorporates performing and fine arts into classroom instruction across grades and content areas through project-based instruction.
- ◆ Teachers and administrators at MeyerPark clearly and passionately articulate a commitment to the students and families they serve.

FINDINGS

- ◆ MeyerPark does not effectively prepare its students to demonstrate mastery of grade level standards in the area of mathematics.
- ◆ MeyerPark does not implement a structured, comprehensive, schoolwide data analysis and response to intervention (RtI) process.
- ◆ MeyerPark's system of professional development does not rely on teacher and student data to determine

areas of need and include a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development efforts.

- ◆ MeyerPark does not implement an effective schoolwide system of positive behavioral supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 5: Conduct a fidelity review to determine the extent to which the math curriculum is being implemented as intended, and develop an ongoing system to ensure teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities for ongoing implementation.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 6: Expand the current data analysis and RtI process to focus on evaluation of the core instruction provided to students at all three tiers.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 7: Establish a comprehensive professional development plan based on identified student and staff needs that has as its goal increased student performance through the provision of consistently high quality instruction across grades and content areas.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 8: Integrate the components of positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) into the data analysis and RtI process to develop a single, comprehensive, multi-tiered system of student supports to address all aspects of an educational program for students, including behavioral and social/emotional development as well as academic achievement.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PERFORMING AND FINE ARTS

MeyerPark effectively and meaningfully incorporates performing and fine arts into classroom instruction across grades and content areas through project-based instruction. Early on, the school's administration determined what special activities and courses would be offered. Now the students make those decisions as they are routinely involved in the planning process, and are surveyed to identify the particular topics they would like to learn about and experience. Options have included drama club, theatre, ballet, photojournalism, video editing, and choir, among others. There are monthly cultural performances, a yearbook club, Spanish class twice per week, and art activities incorporated into all subjects and

grades. Student work was displayed throughout the school, and the pride of both students and staff in the quality of the work was evident.

CLIMATE

Teachers and administrators at MeyerPark clearly and passionately articulate a commitment to the students and families they serve. One teacher stated that “We don't let anything hinder us from doing our jobs—we take what we have and multiply it, nurture it, water it and watch it grow.” This same message was repeated by virtually every staff member. Strong collegial relationships were evident from teacher interactions and comments, and they spoke highly of each other's skills and willingness to provide assistance and support whenever needed. Teachers expressed appreciation for the quality and intensity of support they receive from the administration, and it was clear the administration also highly valued the commitment and hard work of its teachers. Small class sizes and personal attention to students are highly valued. Many staff indicated that the close personal relationships and ability to provide personal attention to both students and families was what brought them to MeyerPark and what keeps them there. Parent responses to the survey also were overwhelmingly positive.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS (REC. 5)

MeyerPark does not effectively prepare its students to demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards in the area of mathematics.

Curriculum and instruction are critical components for students to achieve established educational standards. With regard to curriculum, MeyerPark established a curriculum management cycle that appears to incorporate all the elements expected of an effective system. Despite these efforts, however, student performance in mathematics has not improved. While the actions taken by MeyerPark appear appropriate, they have not been implemented in a way that improved student performance. Consistent implementation of the mathematics curriculum occurred only through informal observations or incidental communication between teachers, their peers, and the principal. In addition, longitudinal data on student mathematics performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is evidence that the core curriculum, as implemented, is not effective for the majority of MeyerPark students.

MeyerPark obtained a rating of Academically Unacceptable (AU) under the state’s accountability system for school year 2010–11 based on the mathematics scores for all students and its African American and economically disadvantaged subgroups. Before 2011, MeyerPark achieved a rating of Academically Acceptable (AA) in school years 2007–08, 2008–09, and 2009–10, with Gold Performance Acknowledgement (GPA) for comparable improvement in mathematics in school year 2007–08; and GPA for writing, science, and reading/English language arts in school year 2008–09. However, student performance in mathematics has been significantly below the state and campus group averages across grade levels for several years. Student performance in science was significantly below the state average for three consecutive years, although science results for school year 2010–11 show promising improvement. However, on their 2012 Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System report, MeyerPark state test scores were above state averages in all areas including mathematics.

Exhibit 2–3 lists the percentage of students meeting the standard for mathematics, reading, writing, and science in grades 3 through 6, school years 2007–08 to 2010–11.

Providing high quality research-based instruction that is aligned to established content standards is the primary goal of educational systems seeking to increase student learning and performance on measures of academic achievement. The MeyerPark Curriculum Committee is responsible for ensuring that the curricula at each grade level and subject incorporates the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through ongoing development, review, and revision. The committee is led by the principal and includes the reading specialist, a lead teacher, and two other teachers. In interviews with the review team, committee members reported meeting weekly or bi-weekly during the summer for intensive curriculum development efforts, and somewhat less frequently during the school year to track progress and make changes as needed.

EXHIBIT 2–3
TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TAKS) PERFORMANCE BY STATE, CAMPUS GROUP, AND SCHOOL:
2007–08 TO 2010–11

| YEAR/GRADE | MATHEMATICS | | | READING | | | WRITING | | | SCIENCE | | |
|------------|-------------|-----|------------|---------|-----|------------|---------|-----|------------|---------|-----|------------|
| | STATE | CG | MEYERPARK | STATE | CG | MEYERPARK | STATE | CG | MEYERPARK | STATE | CG | MEYERPARK |
| 2010–11 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 88% | 80% | 63% | 90% | 84% | 79% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 89% | 85% | 45% | 86% | 83% | 73% | 91% | 88% | 77% | - | - | - |
| 5 | 86% | 79% | 60% | 87% | 83% | 80% | - | - | - | 86% | 84% | 75% |
| 6 | 83% | * | 47% | 85% | * | 73% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2009–10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 87% | 84% | 37% | 92% | 88% | 67% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 89% | 83% | 64% | 86% | 84% | 82% | 92% | 91% | 64% | - | - | - |
| 5 | 86% | 81% | 72% | 86% | 84% | 72% | - | - | - | 87% | 85% | 56% |
| 6 | 83% | * | * | 86% | * | * | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2008–09 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 86% | 71% | 62% | 90% | 78% | 67% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 88% | 83% | 77% | 86% | 80% | 79% | 92% | 90% | 93% | - | - | - |
| 5 | 86% | 78% | 62% | 85% | 80% | 77% | - | - | - | 85% | 78% | 62% |
| 2007–08 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 85% | 74% | 67% | 89% | 77% | 81% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 87% | 78% | 64% | 85% | 73% | 79% | 93% | 92% | 86% | - | - | - |
| 5 | 86% | 76% | 86% | 85% | 76% | 57% | - | - | - | 82% | 73% | 57% |

CG = Campus Group. * - Counts less than 5 have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

NOTE: Cells in bold font indicate results that are 20 or more percentage points lower than the state average.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System Reports.

The MeyerPark curriculum management system includes components calculated to promote student achievement across the curriculum. The process described by staff is a comprehensive and continuous cycle that comprises the following five (at times overlapping) phases:

- Phase 1: Reflection and Planning (May – June)
 - Reflect on current curriculum maps to identify gaps and redundancies across grade levels.
 - Identify needs and request appropriate textbooks and supplemental material.
- Phase 2: Review Materials and Make Recommendations (June – July)
 - Utilize criteria based on state standards and other measures established by the Board of Directors and the committee, review sample materials for sufficiency and alignment.
 - Review materials meeting initial criteria more thoroughly using the TEKS and Assessment frameworks.
 - Research usage in similar districts and evaluate costs, including textbooks, teacher resources, assessments, technology, and professional development.
 - Make team recommendation for adoption to Board of Directors.
- Phase 3: Staff Development and Implementation (Continuous)
 - Train staff on implementing the new series, including supplemental materials and any school-specific modifications.
 - Update curriculum maps to reflect vertical and horizontal articulation with teachers.
- Phase 4: Monitor and Reflect (August – May)
 - Continue monitoring and reflection throughout the school year through articulation and standardized test scores.
 - Conduct ongoing professional development to ensure best practices.
 - Present curriculum update to Board of Directors each July.
- Phase 5: Collect Data and/or Feedback (May-July)

- Survey teachers to identify perceived strengths and needs regarding current textbook series.
- Review standardized test scores to identify change over time; determine if change in curriculum is warranted and submit decision to Board of Directors.
- If a change in curriculum is warranted, return to Phase 1.
- If no change is warranted at this time, return to Phase 4.

Staff reported that, during the past two years, the committee has focused much of its efforts on increasing the rigor of instruction taking into consideration the expectations of the state accountability system, while at the same time fostering and supporting the unique nature of the school's educational program. This educational program is a system of project-based learning that incorporates humanities and the arts across all content areas. The mathematics curriculum implemented at each grade level is summarized in **Exhibit 2–4**.

In addition to the general statewide assessments (i.e., STAAR) and routine testing and other measures of achievement that are part of the instructional program, MeyerPark administers local assessments for the purpose of monitoring student progress. With regard to mathematics, students in kindergarten through grade 2 are periodically assessed via the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or Stanford Achievement Test, and six-week assessments. Students in grades 3 through 6 participate in benchmark assessments.

Staff report engaging in extensive systematic analysis of the student data generated from these assessment procedures. Under the leadership of the principal, teachers review and analyze the results for the purpose of identifying areas of concern, and then modifying or enhancing the basic curriculum to ensure those areas are addressed. Data collection and analysis for the purpose of monitoring student progress are integrated into the curriculum review and modification process. The MeyerPark curriculum evaluation process relies on data disaggregation, as shown in **Exhibit 2–5**, and analysis conducted throughout the year with the full range of available data.

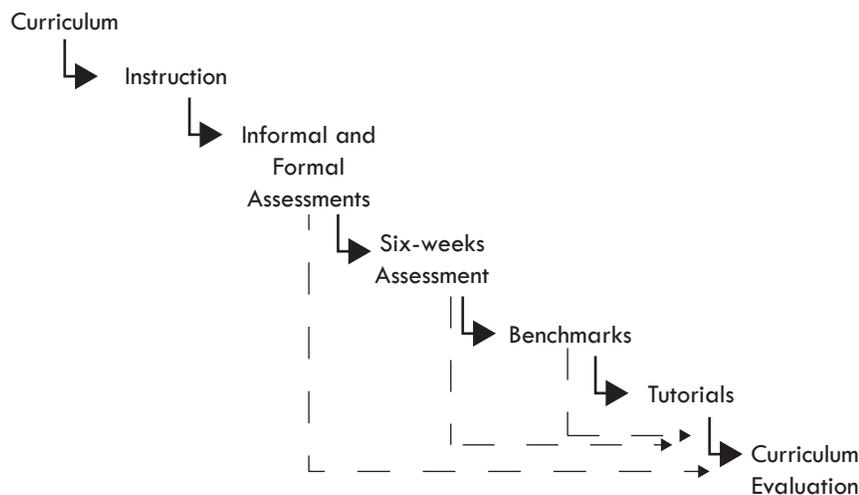
MeyerPark supports its teachers in implementing the curriculum and providing effective instruction through professional development opportunities and support from the principal, lead teachers, and reading specialist. Support is

**EXHIBIT 2-4
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM**

| GRADE LEVEL | MATHEMATICS |
|---------------------|--|
| Pre-Kindergarten | Basic pre-readiness/readiness skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HighReach |
| Kindergarten | Incremental instruction that includes presentation of new concepts and review of previous concepts daily; multi-modal (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile); integrated with literature and writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saxon Math |
| First | Continued incremental instruction at increasing levels of complexity; multi-modal (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile); integrated with literature and writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saxon Math • TAKS Prep using benchmarks • Number Pals |
| Second | Continued incremental instruction at increasing levels of complexity; multi-modal (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile); integrated with literature and writing; model and summarize problem-solving strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saxon Math • TAKS Prep using benchmarks • Number Pals |
| Third through Sixth | Continued incremental instruction at increasing levels of complexity; multi-modal (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile); integrated with literature and writing; model and summarize problem-solving strategies; enhanced focus on independent assignments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saxon Math • TAKS Prep using benchmark |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Pre-K-6 Parent Information Guide.

**EXHIBIT 2-5
DATA DISAGGREGATION PROCESS**



SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary School, 2012.

provided through observations, feedback and suggestions for effective instruction, and assistance with lesson planning to ensure areas of need are targeted and integrated across content areas. The lead teachers focus on mathematics, science, and social studies, while the reading specialist provides support to teachers and students in the areas of

reading and written expression. All lesson plans are submitted to one of the lead teachers for review prior to being submitted to the principal, who meets weekly with the teachers to review the plans and provide feedback.

In addition, MeyerPark provides supplemental academic support to students through small group or individual

pullout sessions conducted during the school day and tutorials. Tutorials are conducted in accordance with an established calendar, generally during after-school hours three days per week, and occasionally on Saturdays. Students whose grades fall below 70 in a given class are required to attend tutorials in that subject, and parents are required to provide transportation.

Surveys were administered to 27 staff members at MeyerPark, and 19 responses were returned, for a response rate of 70.4 percent (19 of 27). **Exhibit 2–6** shows survey items with implications for understanding MeyerPark’s processes for curriculum and instructional planning in mathematics.

While almost all responses were positive, there is a lack of alignment between the longitudinal data reflecting MeyerPark student mathematics performance and teacher responses to some survey items. Specifically, almost 89 percent of teachers report that the MeyerPark mathematics education program is effective and that the school’s curriculum guides are effective, yet TAKS results for all grade levels from 2008 to 2011 reveals performance consistently below the state average.

In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, each first-year AU campus must establish a campus intervention team (CIT) with at least one external member

who is a qualified member of the Professional Service Provider (PSP) network. On September 7, 2011, MeyerPark entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Herman Lee, LLC, to assist the school in its intervention activities. The principal reported that Mr. Lee provided valuable guidance and support throughout school year 2011–12, which the school would have been unable to access if it were not required as a result of the AU designation.

Overall, MeyerPark has taken many steps to establish an effective curriculum management system. MeyerPark strongly supports professional development for staff and provides supervisory and peer support in a variety of ways, including lesson plan review sessions with the principal and a range of mentoring, advising, and guidance activities by lead teachers and the reading specialist. Instruction also appears to be supported through extensive data analysis activities. In addition, multiple opportunities for targeted pullout interventions and mandatory tutorials are provided to struggling students. Lastly, the Saxon Math program being used as the core curriculum is designed to provide explicit direct instruction as well as multiple opportunities to review and revisit previously presented content and the program is aligned to the TEKS. In addition, there is a research base to support its effectiveness. Finally, during school year 2011-12, MeyerPark purchased Mentoring Minds as a supplementary

EXHIBIT 2–6
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SURVEY – EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
SELECTED ITEMS – STUDENT PERFORMANCE
SCHOOL YEAR 2011–12

| ITEM | SA/A COMBINED | NO OPINION | D/SD COMBINED |
|---|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| The staff development program relevant to my position is effective. | 72.2% | 13.7% | 5.6% |
| Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective. | 94.4% | 5.6% | 0.0% |
| Our school provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.* | 88.9% | 5.6% | 0.0% |
| The curriculum guides are effective tools. | 88.9% | 11.1% | 0.0% |
| The school has effective educational programs for the following: | | | |
| a) Reading | 88.9% | 0.0% | 11.1% |
| b) Writing | 83.3% | 5.6% | 11.1% |
| c) Mathematics | 88.9% | 5.6% | 5.6% |
| d) Science | 88.9% | 5.6% | 5.6% |
| Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups. | 88.9% | 11.1% | 0.0% |
| Our charter school can be described as a “good place to learn.” | 83.3% | 11.1% | 5.6% |

SA/A Combined – “Strongly agree” and “agree” responses combined.

D/SD Combined - “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree” responses combined.

*One respondent indicated N/A, so item does not sum to 100 percent.

SOURCE: 2012 Pilot Charter School Review – Texas Legislative Budget Board (Teacher/Staff Survey Results).

material to address the upcoming STAAR reporting categories. Despite all of these efforts, however, student performance in mathematics has not improved.

As a result, MeyerPark should conduct a fidelity review to determine the extent to which the mathematics curriculum is being implemented as intended, and develop an ongoing system to ensure teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities for ongoing implementation. The review should be conducted by a stakeholder group that includes, at a minimum, the principal and lead teachers as well as content area or curriculum experts. The review should include multiple opportunities for direct observation and guided teacher reflection. By grade level, the review should focus on the gaps in knowledge and skills identified through item analysis of ongoing progress monitoring of student performance, at the school, classroom, and individual student level, targeted in grade level curriculum plans. In addition, discreet teacher-level analysis should address the following:

- To what extent do lesson plans align with and incorporate targeted content?
- To what extent are enrichment and supplemental activities designed to improve student learning and performance with regard to targeted content?
- To what extent are lesson plans implemented as written and instruction provided in a way that meets the expectation of the school (e.g., student engagement, active learning, instructional environment)?
- What barriers to instruction or student learning are evident during classroom observations and through teacher reflection?

The results should be incorporated into Phases 4 and 5 of the mathematics curriculum review. If there is strong evidence that the curriculum is being implemented as intended and a significant proportion of students are not successful, MeyerPark should adopt a different core curriculum. In contrast, if there is evidence that implementation is inconsistent or inaccurate, targeted technical assistance and support should be provided to ensure all teachers have the skills, knowledge, and resources needed for implementation, and fidelity checks should be conducted on a regular and frequent basis. Additionally, the results should be used to inform the development of a schoolwide data disaggregation and response to intervention process as well as a system of professional development.

At the time of the on-site review, CSCOPE was being evaluated and researched to use as a core curriculum to address curriculum deficiencies. Since the time of the on-site review, MeyerPark staff reported that CSCOPE was approved by the board and is being implemented for school year 2012–13.

This recommendation can be implemented initially with existing resources and the support of the CIT. Additional fiscal impact may apply, depending on the school's decision regarding implementing additional curriculum needs.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (REC. 6)

MeyerPark does not implement a structured, comprehensive, schoolwide data analysis and response to intervention (RtI) process.

Teacher and principal interviews confirmed that, while the structure for an effective schoolwide RtI system is in place, its current focus is on individual student needs, and not on guiding schoolwide reform and instructional decisions.

RtI is a multi-tiered approach to instruction that provides a framework for all students to ensure that they have the opportunity to experience a full range of educational opportunities through the general education program. The *2008-09 Response to Intervention Guidance*, Texas Education Agency – Division of Curriculum, describes RtI as the practice of meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students through the implementation of high-quality instruction and scientific research-based tiered interventions aligned with individual student need; frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic and/or behavioral decisions; and application of student response data to important educational decisions.

The Texas RtI framework comprises three tiers as follows:

- **Tier 1: Core Instruction**—Teachers use high-quality core class instruction aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in which about 80 percent or more of the students are successful. This tier is the crucial foundation of the RtI instructional model.
- **Tier 2: Small Group Intervention**—Students are identified for individual or small group intervention in addition to core class instruction. This level includes scientific research-based programs, strategies, and procedures designed and employed to supplement, enhance, and support Tier 1 activities. District-

established standard protocol matches appropriate intervention strategies to specific student needs. Tier 2 addresses the needs of approximately 10 percent to 15 percent of the students.

- **Tier 3: Intensive Intervention**—Students who have not responded adequately to Tiers 1 and 2 receive specific, custom-designed individual or small group instruction (designed using a problem solving model) beyond the instruction in Tier 1. This level of intervention is aimed at those students who have identified difficulties academically or behaviorally. Tier 3 addresses the needs of approximately 5 percent to 10 percent of the students.

The value of a systematic data disaggregation and analysis, incorporated into a comprehensive RtI framework for meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students, has long been appreciated and reported in education literature. Increasing attention has been paid to RtI with the incorporation of scientifically based instruction as an expectation for all students in the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 and then its adoption under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* of 2004 (IDEA) as a primary method for identifying students with specific learning disabilities. An unintended consequence of the latter is that many schools and districts associate RtI primarily with the process of evaluating students who may be eligible for special education under IDEA. Its primary use as the foundational system to ensure high-quality instruction for all students is often overlooked.

The RtI framework currently in place at MeyerPark involves an initial review of all student data at the start of the school year, with individual students identified for Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. The principal, lead teachers, and other staff, as appropriate, work with the classroom teachers to identify interventions and document student progress.

However, the focus of the RtI program is geared toward the needs of individual students and not on improving MeyerPark's overall instructional system. Comprehensive RtI models examine data on how the total group of students and subgroups of students are performing. A generally accepted norm for successful system performance is to have 80 percent of students as a whole and every subgroup meeting the established state standard. It is clear from the review of student performance described in Recommendation 1 that MeyerPark should be addressing at a systemic level the gaps

in its Tier 1 core curriculum and Tier 2 supplemental supports and interventions in mathematics.

Exhibit 2–7 illustrates the cyclical and interactive nature of a three-tiered RtI model in which data from all students and all curricular areas are continuously reviewed to ensure optimum effectiveness schoolwide.

MeyerPark should expand the current data analysis and RtI process to focus on evaluation of the core instruction provided to students at all three tiers.

Tier 1 activities should be coordinated with the school's existing curriculum management cycle and provide a focus for the review. As a first step, MeyerPark should apply this process to review its student data in the area of mathematics. MeyerPark has much of the structure in place to implement a schoolwide RtI system. Focused attention to the relationships among student performance; content and methodology of instruction; fidelity of instruction; and effective measurement and monitoring procedures will increase the effectiveness and positive impact of that system.

Targeted questions to consider, by tier, are provided in **Exhibit 2–8**.

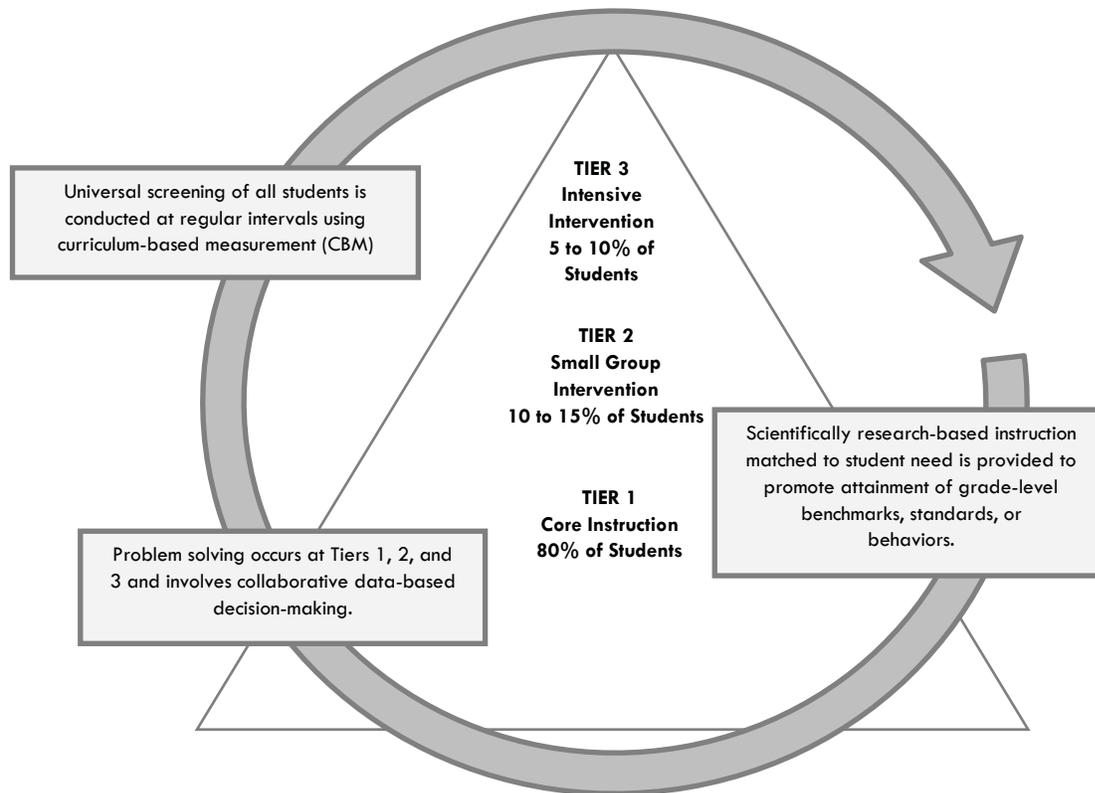
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (REC. 7)

MeyerPark's system of professional development does not rely on teacher and student data to determine areas of need and does not include a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development efforts.

MeyerPark is not using systematic data-based decision-making to identify its specific professional development needs at either a school or teacher level, nor has MeyerPark determined the most effective way to address those needs. In addition, MeyerPark does not effectively evaluate the impact professional development has on targeted student performance areas.

The professional development system described in MeyerPark's original charter application and described during interviews with the review team requires each staff member to participate in professional development activities "as curriculum is developed and as additional skills are needed to serve the student body." The system provides for staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions, and the results are used to inform ongoing professional development.

**EXHIBIT 2-7
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION THREE-TIERED MODEL**


SOURCE: Created by the Review Team, 2012.

**EXHIBIT 2-8
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION – GUIDING QUESTIONS BY TIER**
TIER 1: CORE INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORTS

- 1) Are students provided with well-delivered, scientific, research-based core instruction? How is this verified?
- 2) What assessment tools or processes are used to identify instructional needs and the students' response to instruction or intervention?
- 3) Is the core instruction/support effective?
 - a) What percent of all students are achieving standards, benchmarks, or behavioral expectations?
 - b) What percent of students in the subgroup are achieving benchmarks, standards, or behavioral expectations? (Should be 80 percent or more.)
 - c) If addressing an individual student's needs, what percent of students in his/her subgroup are achieving benchmarks, standards, or behavioral expectations? (Should be 80 percent or more.)
- 4) If core instruction is not effective,
 - a) Is the curriculum appropriately matched to the needs of the students?
 - b) Is support provided for implementation fidelity? Do the teachers have the skills, time, and resources to implement it?
- 5) To what extent is the school-based leadership team engaged in Tier 1-level problem solving in order to increase the effectiveness of core instruction or behavioral supports?
- 6) How are parents and students involved or engaged in supporting effective core instruction and behavioral supports?

EXHIBIT 2–8 (CONTINUED)**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION – GUIDING QUESTIONS BY TIER****TIER 1: CORE INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORTS (CONT.)**

- 7) What is the decision rule to determine if student(s) will require supplemental and more intensive, individualized intervention or support?

TIER 2: SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

- 1) What specific supplemental intervention/support is planned to improve the performance of students who need additional instruction and support (more academic-engaged time, more focused intervention, smaller group, type of delivery, methodology, in addition to and aligned with core instruction, etc.)? Consider at least six pieces of information:
- Amount of additional time
 - Focus of the intervention and support
 - Specific instructional strategies/behavioral support
 - Method and frequency of progress-monitoring assessments
 - Evidence of fidelity
 - Sufficiency of intervention/support
- 2) How is the supplemental intervention implemented?
- Academic-Engaged Time – How much more time is provided?
 - Curriculum – What is used?
 - Personnel – Who, when, and where is it provided? Are the highest levels of instructional expertise and skill matched to the students with the most significant needs? How is support provided to ensure fidelity of implementation?
 - Parents – How are the student's parents involved or engaged in supporting the interventions?
- 3) How effective is the supplemental instruction for groups of students who need additional instruction and support?
- What assessments are used for ongoing data collection aligned with core instruction?
 - How frequently are assessments conducted? How frequently are they analyzed by the team?
 - How are the student's parents engaged in the progress monitoring and analysis of level of performance and rate of progress?
 - How does the team determine whether the instruction/intervention is effective?
 - If the intervention is ineffective (poor or questionable student response), how does the team monitor and support implementation fidelity?
 - What is the decision rule to determine if student(s) will require more intensive, individualized intervention/support?

TIER 3: INTENSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

- 1) What specific intensive, individualized intervention is planned to improve the level of performance and the rate of progress of the individual student (e.g., more academic-engaged time, more focused intervention, smaller group, type of delivery, methodology, in addition to and aligned with core/supplemental instruction)? Consider at least six pieces of information:
- Amount of additional time
 - Focus of the instruction/intervention
 - Specific instructional/behavioral strategies
 - Evidence of fidelity
 - Sufficiency of instruction/support
 - Method and frequency of progress-monitoring assessments
- 2) How is the intensive, individualized intervention delivered?
- Academic-Engaged Time – How much more time is needed?
 - Curriculum – What does the student need?
 - Personnel – Who, when, and where is it provided? Are the highest levels of instructional expertise and skill being matched to the students with the most significant needs? How is support provided to ensure fidelity of implementation?
 - Parents – How are the student's parents involved or engaged in supporting interventions to increase the students' level of performance and rate of progress?

EXHIBIT 2–8 (CONTINUED)**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION – GUIDING QUESTIONS BY TIER****TIER 3: INTENSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (CONT.)**

- 3) How effective is the intensive, individualized intervention for the student?
- What assessments are used for ongoing data collection?
 - How frequently are assessments conducted? How frequently are they analyzed by the team?
 - How, and to what degree, are the student's parents involved or engaged in the progress monitoring and analysis of the student's level of performance and rate of progress?
 - How unique is the student's response in comparison to peers?
 - How do teams determine whether the intervention is effective?
 - What is the decision rule to determine any necessary adjustments to the instruction/interventions?
 - If the intervention is ineffective (poor or questionable student response), how does the team monitor and support implementation fidelity?

SOURCE: Adapted from Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem Solving (GTIPS), Florida Department of Education.

In addition, the application includes a commitment that the school's instructional leader and all professional development will focus on the need to disaggregate data and address deficiencies routinely in order for students to experience academic success.

A review of student performance from school years 2008–09 to 2010–11 reveals that there has been little or no improvement in mathematics during that period. The percentages of students meeting the TAKS grade level standards has remained 20 or more points below the state average during the four-year period, and the results are consistent across grade levels. Although staff at MeyerPark actively participate in a variety of professional development activities, only four of the approximately 180 documented professional development activities involved mathematics instruction, the subject MeyerPark students most consistently struggle with in statewide assessments. This is evidence that MeyerPark is not effectively prioritizing its specific professional development needs to ensure that teachers' professional development is closely aligned with the needs of students.

A comprehensive professional development plan should focus on identified priorities for student learning as identified through detailed analysis of student data as well as the learning needs of educators for supporting that student learning. As with data analysis and RtI at the student level, teacher interventions in the form of targeted professional development must be based on both the specific area of need and the identified root cause of that need. Sometimes data analysis reveals gaps in student content skill sets; other times it reveals gaps in teacher pedagogical skill sets. For example, in an elementary school setting with a single teacher

responsible for all instruction, if student expectations involving problem solving and higher-level thinking are weak only in the area of mathematics, it is likely that more content-specific instruction in mathematics methodology is required. In contrast, if these skills are weak across all subjects, it is likely that the teacher would benefit from instruction in teaching and modeling these processes from a more global perspective.

MeyerPark has accessed professional development through the Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4), Harris County Department of Education, Alternative Certification Program, and Museum Educators. Each of these agencies offers extensive opportunities for group training sessions through an external "class-type" format. However, other avenues for professional development are described below as part of a comprehensive system.

Useful information related to job-embedded professional development is provided in the April 2010 Issue Brief entitled *Job-Embedded Professional Development: What it is, Who is Responsible, and How to Get it Done Well* published collaboratively by the Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center, and National Staff Development Council. Examples of authentic professional development that can be implemented within schools without additional costs for substitutes or travel include:

- **Individual Professional Growth/Learning Plans**— Under the guidance of a lead teacher or administrator, teachers develop their own professional growth plans and track their growth in a competency area.
- **Lesson Study**—Teachers prepare and implement a lesson to demonstrate a specific teaching and learning

goal while other teachers observe and document what they see. After the lesson, the teachers meet to discuss strengths and recommendation for improvement. Based on the feedback, the lessons can be implemented again and the process repeated to continually refine the quality of instruction.

- **Mentoring**—Matching teachers of the same content area, establishing common planning time, providing for observations of actual classroom teaching, and structuring time for further collaboration, mentoring can be a powerful tool for both mentor and mentee.
- **Portfolios**—Teachers assemble lesson plans, student work, reflective writing, and other materials that are used to prepare for teaching or are used directly in the classroom. The act of developing the portfolio can be a powerful learning activity in itself, as can presenting it to a group of peers or meeting with a coach to review it.
- **Professional Learning Communities**—Teachers collaborate to analyze their practice and discuss new strategies and tactics, testing them in the classroom and reporting the results to each other.
- **Study Groups**—Similar to book clubs, teachers meet in small groups or as a faculty and generate topics for study related to school improvement goals or student data and then read and react to educational research or other literature on teaching and student learning.

TEA offers *Concept to Classroom*, a series of free, self-paced workshops covering a wide variety of education topics. These workshops can apply toward professional development credit. A Letter to Administrator, Syllabus, and Rubric and List of Criteria are provided with each workshop for participants requesting credits from their districts for successful completion. Topics include:

- After-School Programs – From Vision to Reality;
- Assessment, Evaluation, and Curriculum Redesign;
- Constructivism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning;
- Cooperative and Collaborative Learning;
- Inquiry-based Learning;
- Interdisciplinary Learning in Your Classroom;
- Making Family and Community Connections;

- Tapping into Multiple Intelligences;
- Teaching to Academic Standards;
- WebQuests; and
- Why the Net? An Interactive Tool for the Classroom.

Because of the complex nature of educational systems, it is often difficult to attribute change in a given student's performance at some point in the future to his or her teacher's participation in professional development at some time in the past. As a result, the most common form of evaluation is a survey or questionnaire, administered immediately after a training session, asking the participant's opinion regarding the helpfulness of the session; its applicability to the participant's current work; and the likelihood the participant will implement the lessons learned. This method of evaluation is somewhat helpful in identifying professional development that is clearly ineffective, but it is less accurate with regard to identifying professional development that truly is effective in influencing long-range student outcomes.

An extension of the "immediate" survey method of evaluation involves following up with participants within a certain amount of time after they participated in the training. At that point they will have had an opportunity to apply the skills they left the training with, and it is hoped they will respond honestly regarding the extent they have changed their instruction as a result of what was learned. Within a contained setting like MeyerPark, this can be further (and more accurately) assessed through direct observation by a principal, mentor, peer teacher, or coach. It also can be assessed through guided reflective writing exercises.

The first two levels of evaluation are designed to measure change in teacher behavior. The third and most challenging level involves measuring changes in student behavior (e.g., academic performance; engagement; compliance with classroom rules). The number of variables influencing student performance is immense, making even correlational assessments uncertain. However, in many cases a high-level analysis of performance (or changes in performance) among students whose teachers have participated in a particular training, and continue to implement the specified intervention or methodology with fidelity, can be very useful in identifying programs with the greatest potential for positive impact.

MeyerPark should establish a comprehensive professional development plan based on identified student and staff needs that has as its goal increased student performance through

the provision of consistently high quality instruction across grades and content areas.

A stakeholder team of administrators, teachers, and members of the MeyerPark board should conduct a needs assessment. The assessment should identify specific needs and prioritize them in order of significance and potential for impact. For example, items with the potential to improve student performance in mathematics will have a higher priority than items with the potential to improve student's writing. Based on the results, the team should set a reasonable number of attainable and measurable goals for meeting the highest priority needs. To the extent possible, professional development options should reflect the full range of opportunities, from formal courses to job-embedded authentic experiences to self-directed independent modules. Lastly, the system should be designed to include explicit evaluation procedures to ensure selected methods are effective and appropriately aligned with targeted needs.

MeyerPark should incorporate into its professional development plan explicit procedures for collecting data aligned to the school's identified measurable goals and use these data to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the professional development. Measures should include the full range of impact levels, including but not limited to the following:

- number of participants;
- costs in terms of time, resources, and funds;
- immediate impressions of potential impact, including identification of most valuable components and suggestions for improvement;
- subsequent self-report of implementation and perceived effect;
- documentation of implementation through naturally occurring artifacts;
- observations to verify deliberate practice and fidelity of implementation; and
- review of student outcome measures to identify trends or other evidence of effect.

To be most effective, a team comprised of school leaders, teachers, and content area specialists should develop the plan. Some of these measures may already be in place or can be implemented with little effort (such as post-training surveys and training logs). Others may be in place, but to a

limited extent. For example, a principal conducting an observation for the purpose of annual evaluation or through an informal 'drop in' might note a specific action or behavior on the part of the teacher that reflects the influence of a professional development experience. These incidents are difficult to capture and often overlooked. In this case, the professional development plan would include an explicit expectation that the principal look for evidence that particular skills, content, or other "lessons learned" are being applied by the teacher in his or her instruction or classroom management. The last category of outcomes, actual student outcomes (e.g., STAAR results), is the most challenging to tie directly to a specific professional development activity. However, over time MeyerPark should be able to identify trends in student outcomes that, taken in conjunction with teacher reflection and observation, will allow the school to judge the overall effectiveness of a given type of professional development activity. The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide (M. Bruce Haslam; October 2001) is available on the Maryland Public Schools website and is a useful reference tool for developing an evaluation plan.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

DISCIPLINE (REC. 8)

MeyerPark does not implement an effective schoolwide system of positive behavioral supports.

The disciplinary measures implemented at MeyerPark do not match the disciplinary information provided to parents. MeyerPark has not effectively examined the negative impact of out-of-school suspension programs. In addition, MeyerPark does not incorporate the components of its disciplinary program into a comprehensive schoolwide system that addresses both the academic and behavioral development of students.

In 2005, MeyerPark adopted the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model through the Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI) to respond to disciplinary referrals. PBIS is a disciplinary system that emphasizes a schoolwide system of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Schools that employ PBIS develop a documented discipline system that is integrated with the school's Code of Conduct. The goal of PBIS is that when problem behavior occurs, students are provided with a full continuum of supports to address the

behavior. If students do not respond, the intensity of the support increases. PBIS works under the premise that most problem student behaviors have either an academic or social base.

MeyerPark staff reported that the school's art teacher is a member of the school's PBIS team, and noted that her involvement is very helpful in keeping the PBIS process focused on positive interventions and outcomes, and encouraging student engagement, instead of on punitive or negative engagement. Despite this, MeyerPark has experienced an increase in each of the past three years in the number and percent of out-of-school suspensions (OSS). A summary of in-school suspensions (ISS) and OSS is provided in **Exhibit 2-9**.

As can be seen from the data, the number and percentage of students suspended out-of-school for disciplinary infractions increased from 14 students reflecting 7.73 percent of the student body in school year 2008–09 to 34 students reflecting 14.85 percent of the student body in school year 2010–11. The data for school year 2011–12 were not available at the time of this review, but the principal indicated that disciplinary incidents resulting in OSS have continued to rise. It is also notable that the data reported indicate that no students were awarded ISS during school year 2010–11, despite the significant increase in the rate of OSS. Each of the OSS actions was discretionary (i.e., in response to a violation of the local Code of Conduct) and not mandatory (i.e., required by state law for certain offenses).

During interviews with the review team, teachers indicated that they are generally able to address challenging behaviors within the classroom. They reported that there is not a formal ISS program or classroom, but that students might be removed from the classroom and sent to guidance or an administrative area if they are disrupting class. This is in

conflict with the description of discipline management techniques in the Parent Information Guide, which includes in-school suspension and detention before, during, or after school or on Saturday as examples of disciplinary alternatives.

The PBIS model implemented at MeyerPark was described during interviews and through documents provided to the review team. The principal reported that the school was provided substantial support free of charge for the original PBIS implementation period. However, as an established PBIS school, support is no longer available at no or low cost, presenting the school with a significant challenge.

Teachers and staff at MeyerPark are trained or updated annually in strategies to incorporate positive techniques for classroom management. As part of the daily routine of the school, daily class reports are prepared by teachers and submitted to the principal. These reports summarize what has taken place that day, and include descriptions of minor class disruptions. In conjunction with disciplinary referrals used to document more significant infractions, the daily report allows the principal to keep abreast of the behavioral climate in each classroom. Examples of information provided through formal referrals and through the daily report are provided in **Exhibit 2-10**.

MeyerPark implements a campus-wide set of expectations directed toward being safe, respectful, and responsible. The expectations apply across environments, including classroom, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, playground, and buses, and provide three explicit examples of expected behaviors for each attribute and setting. Motivational posters, activities, and assemblies are used to reinforce the concepts. Student incentives include Lion of the Week, with recognition during morning announcements, a certificate, and restaurant coupon; Lion Tickets, used to purchase incentive items; Cafeteria All-Stars; and Fun Nights or Fun Days, during

EXHIBIT 2-9
MEYERPARK DISCIPLINE DATA: 2007-08 TO 2010-11

| SCHOOL YEAR | STUDENTS | ISS ACTIONS | ISS STUDENTS | ISS PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS | OSS ACTIONS | OSS STUDENTS | OSS PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS |
|-------------|----------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 2007-08 | 136 | 5 | 5 | 3.68 | 22 | 16 | 11.76 |
| 2008-09 | 181 | 7 | 7 | 3.87 | 20 | 14 | 7.73 |
| 2009-10 | 191 | * | * | * | 28 | 19 | 9.95 |
| 2010-11 | 229 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 34 | 14.85 |

ISS – In-School Suspension.

OSS – Out-of-School Suspension.

*Counts less than 5 have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency PEIMS Data.

**EXHIBIT 2–10
BEHAVIORAL REPORTING**

| DISCIPLINE FORM | DAILY CLASS REPORT |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Fighting | Pencil tapping |
| Disrespect | Talking |
| Walking out of class | Getting out of seat |
| Harassment | Talking out of turn |
| Bullying | Throwing paper |
| Stealing | Chewing gum |
| Cursing | Laughing in class |
| Endangering other students | |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Handbook.

which students with exceptional behavior and attendance are invited to participate in themed events.

In addition to student- and teacher-focused strategies to address student behavior, in its original charter application MeyerPark described parent-focused classes that would be provided based on the positive action character development program. The parenting classes were designed to teach parents, and then have the parents go home and teach the

concepts to their families. The principal reported that they had not had a formal parent education program during recent years, but would be providing the classes again beginning in summer 2012. This decision was in response to the increase in the number and intensity of disciplinary issues the school is experiencing.

There is a substantial body of research supporting the idea that out-of-school suspension does not work; it is not effective in preventing disciplinary infractions and it is counter-productive when it is applied. Students cannot be taught if they are not in school. A large percentage of students who receive OSS were struggling academically prior to being suspended. When they return to school, even after missing only a few days, they have missed critical instruction and feel left behind. In turn, the less connected a student feels to school, the more likely the student may engage in behaviors that will result in additional suspensions. As discussed in Recommendation 2, MeyerPark has much of the structure in place to implement a schoolwide data analysis and RtI system. A campus-based PBIS model as illustrated in **Exhibit 2–11** is tier-based and aligns directly with RtI. However, currently MeyerPark has not worked to integrate these two

**EXHIBIT 2–11
MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF STUDENT SUPPORTS**

| TIER | RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION | POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | <p>Core Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction provided to all students. • General grade level or content area curriculum and methodology. • Universal screening of all students. | <p>Universal/Primary Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support strategies applied to all staff, students, and areas within the campus setting. • Focus on preventative and proactive strategies. • Organization-wide systems that actively teach and recognize appropriate social skills and behavior. • Consistent systems discourage inappropriate behavior. |
| 2 | <p>Small Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive or targeted instruction for groups of students who are not “closing the achievement gap” within a reasonable amount of time. • Classroom, small group, or simple individualized intervention strategies. • Based on more discreet data analysis (drilling down) and hypothesis development. | <p>Selected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive or targeted interventions to support students who are not responding to primary prevention efforts. • Classroom, small group, or simple individualized intervention strategies. • Based on basic functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and support or intervention plan. |
| 3 | <p>Intensive/Individualized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on the unique needs of an individual student whose performance is significantly discrepant from age and grade norms. • Based on progressively more discreet data analysis or diagnostic assessment. | <p>Targeted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on the unique needs of an individual student who exhibits patterns of problem behavior • Based on comprehensive FBA and behavior intervention plan. • May include rearrangement of the antecedent setting or environment. • May include emergency procedures. |

SOURCE: Created by Review Team, adapted Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org).

systems into a more cohesive and effective system of interventions.

MeyerPark should integrate the components of positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) into the data analysis and RtI process to develop a single, comprehensive, multi-tiered system of student supports to address all aspects of an educational program for students, including behavioral and social/emotional development as well as academic achievement. For many students, academic and behavioral challenges are closely correlated. Both identifying interventions that address the function of challenging behaviors and teach appropriate replacement behaviors and identifying effective instructional strategies to foster increased student learning and engagement will be effective in decreasing behaviors that result in students being removed from school.

A workgroup of stakeholders, including the CIT, counselor or behavioral specialist, and grade level and curriculum leaders should collaborate to develop the unified system. The system should include standardized procedures for data analysis and progress monitoring, and an established timeline or calendar for school- and grade-level analyses. Regularly scheduled weekly or biweekly meetings should be held to monitor the progress of individual students and identify patterns or overlapping issues that are common to both academic performance and student behavior.

MeyerPark should contact the Texas PBIS Technical Assistance Center Partner or State Coordinator at the Region 4 Emergency Operations Center to discuss potential sources of supplemental support. It is not uncommon to require periodic review and analysis of the level and quality of implementation of any schoolwide system such as PBIS. Given that MeyerPark reported having successfully implemented PBIS in the past, staff should use the Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ) and Tier II self-assessment tools available on the Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports website at www.pbis.org.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

| RECOMMENDATION | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS | ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY | | | | | | | |
| 5. Conduct a fidelity review to determine the extent to which the math curriculum is being implemented as intended, and develop an ongoing system to ensure teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities for ongoing implementation. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 6. Expand the current data analysis and Rtl process to focus on evaluation of the core instruction provided to all students at all three tiers. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 7. Establish a comprehensive professional development plan based on identified student and staff needs that has as its goal increased student performance through the provision of consistently high quality instruction across grades and content areas. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 8. Integrate the components of positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) into the data analysis and Rtl process to develop a single, comprehensive, multi-tiered system of student supports to address all aspects of an educational program for students, including behavioral and social/emotional development as well as academic achievement. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTALS-CHAPTER 2 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

CHAPTER 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY

CHAPTER 3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Charter schools face the task of carefully balancing the dual demands of educating children while balancing their budgets with available resources. Now more than ever, charter schools must demonstrate innovative teaching methods and identify resourceful means of obtaining better value. Success depends on their ability to establish innovations in the delivery of academic services and manage business affairs wisely and efficiently. Sound financial management, asset and risk management, and purchasing techniques, provide some of the tools charter schools need to meet that challenge. These functions are collectively referred to as business services.

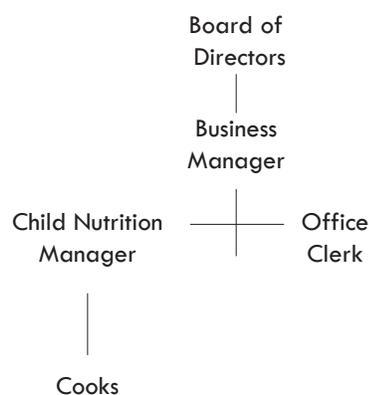
Financial management plays a major role in charter school activities and touches every aspect of school operations. Financial management requires that charter schools receive and manage revenue from varied sources; develop balanced budgets for effective spending; and issue timely, accurate, and relevant financial reports. Asset and risk management uses efficient banking structures to manage cash and liquidity; employs a variety of cash management techniques; maximizes investment earnings; ensures the health and well being of school employees; reduces the risk of loss from unforeseen, catastrophic events; and safeguards fixed assets. Effective procurement practices ensure that the “right” goods are acquired, at the “right” time, in the correct quantities, at the “right” price, and in accordance with state and local purchasing regulations and guidelines.

MeyerPark Elementary School’s (MeyerPark) financial, risk, and purchasing functions are under the supervision and oversight of the Business Manager who has two direct reports, the Child Nutrition Manager and Office Clerk.

Exhibit 3–1 provides an overview of the organization in which business services functions reside at MeyerPark.

The adopted budget for fiscal year 2011–12 for MeyerPark is approximately \$1,572,214 and for fiscal year 2010–11 approximately \$1,849,862. The school derives 92 percent of its revenue from the state, 1 percent from local sources, and 7 percent from the federal government. Local revenues are drawn primarily from fundraisers, food service sales, and miscellaneous revenues. The budget is developed and adopted at the functional level which defines how a school spends its money. On a functional basis, the school’s top three budgeted

EXHIBIT 3–1
MEYERPARK BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2011–12



SOURCE: MeyerPark Business Services, 2012.

expenditures are for instruction, plant maintenance and operations, and school leadership:

- The instruction function is used for activities that deal directly with the interaction between teachers and students and includes expenses such as salaries and benefits for classroom teachers, teacher aides and assistants, instructional materials, field trips, etc.
- The plant maintenance and operations function is used for activities to keep the facilities and grounds open, clean, comfortable and in effective working condition and repair.
- The school leadership function is used for expenses that are directly used for managing, directing, supervising, and providing leadership for staff who provide general and specific instructional services.
- The school’s external auditor is McConnell & Jones, LLP. MeyerPark’s latest audit report indicated an unqualified opinion that the school’s financial statements are an accurate representation of the school’s financial condition.
- MeyerPark received a rating of Standard Achievement for school years 2008–09, 2009–10, and 2010–11 on the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (School FIRST). This is the second highest rating achievement through this rating system.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- ◆ MeyerPark has substantial universal employee participation in the direct deposit of payroll disbursements.

FINDINGS

- ◆ MeyerPark lacks current, documented policies and procedures for critical accounting functions and processes and does not consistently update its existing policies and procedures.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks adequate segregation of duties for certain critical financial transactions.
- ◆ MeyerPark does not produce nor include on its website, a budget document that adequately communicates the financial details of the school's budget.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks proper inventorying of fixed assets.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks written guidelines for contract management and does not centrally monitor contract performance.
- ◆ MeyerPark does not adequately manage its vendor list.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 9: Develop procedures for critical business and accounting processes and activities such as investments, budget, payroll, and purchasing.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 10: Establish a proper segregation of duties for financial transactions.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 11: Improve the budget document so that it communicates school financial information in a more detailed manner, and post this information on the MeyerPark website.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 12: Improve inventorying of fixed assets to strengthen financial controls and help ensure the accuracy of financial information and accountability.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 13: Develop written guidelines for and centrally manage all contracts.**

- ◆ **Recommendation 14: Analyze and update the vendor directory to ensure an accurate listing of valid vendors.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

DIRECT DEPOSIT

MeyerPark has substantial universal employee participation in the direct deposit of payroll disbursements. All but two MeyerPark employees use direct deposit.

Direct deposit of payroll disbursements benefits both the school and the employees. Direct deposit simplifies the payroll processing for the school and makes banking more timely and convenient for employees. Disbursement acknowledgements are more efficient than distribution of payroll checks.

Direct deposit expedites the availability of funds to employee bank accounts, and eliminates the need for the employee to travel to the bank to make a deposit. For the school, it greatly reduces the chances of a paycheck being lost or stolen, and makes it easier to track payments since the money goes directly into another bank account.

DETAILED FINDINGS

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 9)

MeyerPark lacks current, documented policies and procedures for critical accounting functions and processes and does not consistently update its existing policies and procedures.

MeyerPark staff responsible for business and financial functions have been with the school for many years. Therefore, many of the day-to-day functions are performed from experience. Interviews indicate policies and procedures are updated as needed, however, the most recent Policy and Procedures Manual shows an adoption date of 2003.

Critical functional knowledge of specific positions, however, has not been documented describing how to perform essential functions, such as:

- processing and recording accounts receivable and cash receipts;
- purchasing and accounts payable;
- processing payroll;
- monitoring daily cash and investment balances;
- journalizing bank reconciling items;

- preparing and entering journal vouchers;
- tracking and maintaining budget amendments and transfers;
- performing general ledger maintenance including reconciliation of asset and liability accounts; and
- preparing Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) financial data submissions.

School personnel use verbal communication and various forms to provide guidance and documentation for procedures. In some instances, the form includes written procedures. Although a component of comprehensive procedures, individual forms are no substitute for a current, documented procedures manual. **Exhibit 3–2** provides examples of various accounting and business-related forms and procedures used by MeyerPark.

Written procedures are critical components of institutional memory and continuity and are an important component of internal control because they provide:

- a permanent record of critical functions and processes;
- directions for performing critical departmental tasks;
- a reference for existing employees;
- a training tool for new employees; and
- uniformity and continuity of transaction processing when regular employees are unavailable and tasks must be performed by individuals not familiar with the processes.

In the *Special Supplement to the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide for Charter Schools* by the Texas Education Agency, very detailed guidance on requirements specific to charter schools is provided. Section 1.5.5, entitled *Accounting Policies and Procedures*, discusses policies and

procedures as critical elements of a strong system of internal control. **Exhibit 3–3** outlines the recommended financial-related components of a comprehensive manual.

Exhibit 3–3 does not represent an all inclusive list. Charter school officials should also carefully consider the various administrative, accounting, business, contractual, financial, legal, operating, payroll, personnel, and programmatic functions that need to be included in its accounting policy and procedures manual.

The superintendent should work with staff to update business-related board policies and operating procedures. This should include a review to determine policies for update in accordance with the current needs of MeyerPark. After the policies are updated, the superintendent should submit the revised policies and operating procedures to the board for approval.

The business manager should develop written procedures for critical business and accounting processes and activities such as investments, budget, payroll, and purchasing. The development of policies and procedures can be addressed through an organized, systemic approach that uses common day-to-day practices as a basis for the written procedures.

For example, documenting the payroll process would use the following as a general guide:

- employees input time;
- office clerk gathers and reviews timesheets;
- office clerk resolves questions and/or concerns, approves timesheets, and forwards to business manager;
- Business manager reviews data, then enters and processes payroll;

**EXHIBIT 3–2
MEYERPARK ACCOUNTING AND BUSINESS FORMS AND PROCEDURES EXAMPLES**

| DESCRIPTION | PURPOSE |
|------------------------------|---|
| Direct Deposit Authorization | Authorizes direct deposit of employee’s check |
| Donation Receipt | Receipt for persons making donations |
| Extra Duty Time Report | Authorize extra duty pay |
| Capital Assets | Prescribed format for asset record |
| Sample Petty Cash Log | Documentation for petty cash reconciliation |
| Purchase Order Form | Guidance for requisition/purchases |
| Travel Reimbursement Form | Request reimbursement of travel expenses |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary Business Office, May 2012.

EXHIBIT 3–3
FINANCIAL COMPONENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
UPDATE 5.0

1.5.5 Accounting Policies and Procedures

An important element of a strong system of internal control is a charter school's accounting policies and procedures. These may be included as part of a comprehensive manual that identifies the charter school's administrative, accounting, business, contractual, financial, legal, operating, payroll, personnel, and programmatic functions. The accounting policy and procedures manual is an important means of establishing a strong control environment and should be strictly adhered to by charter school personnel. A sound accounting policy and procedures manual can provide numerous benefits including:

- providing internal controls and safeguards;
- providing timely reporting on the status of funds; and
- allowing systematic disbursements to maximize available funds.

At a minimum, the accounting policy and procedures manual should include discussion concerning:

- the budgeting process including preparation, amendment, and board approval;
- the accounting reports prepared for management and the governing body of the charter school;
- the review and approval of the annual financial and compliance report by the governing body of the charter school;
- the issuance and appropriate use of credit and/or debit cards including the reimbursement process and approval of expenditures;
- the control and confidentiality of accounting, business, contractual, financial, legal, operating, payroll, personnel, and program records;
- the release of accounting, business, contractual, financial, legal, operating, payroll, personnel, and program records to the general public pursuant to open records statutes;
- the data and/or reports needed to ensure that state and federal reporting requirements are met (e.g., PEIMS, Single Audit, expenditure reports);
- the duties performed by administrative and/or business office personnel with particular emphasis on the segregation of key responsibilities and duties;
- the individuals authorized to initiate, approve, and record transactions;
- the procedures to be followed for the different accounting, business, contractual, financial, legal, operating, payroll, personnel, and programmatic transactions conducted on behalf of the charter school by employees of the charter school, the charter holder, and/or affiliates of the charter holder;
- the charter school's chart of accounts with particular emphasis on compliance with and accurate use of the account codes discussed in the Special Supplement To Financial Accounting and Reporting;
- the charter school's purchasing functions with an emphasis on compliance with state and federal statutes and regulations; and
- the types of documents (e.g., purchase requisition, purchase order, invoice, receipt, utility billing statement) required for the disbursement of funds.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency's Special Supplement to the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide for Charter Schools, 2012.

- Business manager reviews information for accuracy, submits payroll for payment and reviews information for accuracy prior to release; and
- Business manager submits payments for Internal Revenue Service Form 941 taxes and other payroll related items.

Critical processes should be identified and placed on a schedule showing when procedures for that function will be documented. The superintendent should instruct employees that are responsible for these functions (e.g., budget, payroll, purchasing, etc.) to document the steps incrementally while they are being performed during the normal work routine. The procedures could be documented in as many sessions as required while staying consistent with the established schedule. The business manager should devise a template to

facilitate the documentation of procedures and to ensure a uniform format.

Information gathered from this process would form the basis for development of the written procedures. Once specific procedures have been established, they should be documented and communicated.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

INTERNAL CONTROLS (REC. 10)

MeyerPark lacks adequate segregation of duties for certain critical financial transactions. A proper segregation of duties can be challenging for small charter schools, such as MeyerPark, because there are fewer employees to perform tasks. Employees have numerous responsibilities and tend to

operate in a more informal, personal manner. Because of the risk involved, however, and the fact that the school is a steward of public resources, it is important to ensure that segregation of duties exists.

Several areas of operation lack such segregation. These include:

- Processing payroll transactions—the business manager has access to add new employees and access to processing of payroll; and
- Financial transactions such as extra pay—related employees oversee and approve extra-duty pay for relatives.

Exhibit 3–4 shows examples of siblings overseeing and approving extra-duty pay for each other.

A proper segregation of duties is a critical component of internal control because it ensures that no one person has complete access to a process or function that would allow them to both perpetuate and conceal improper activities. Payroll functions are best controlled when authorization is distinct from processing and approval. Cash collections, such as food service, are best controlled when collection is distinct from reporting and accounting. Controls for segregation of duties are imperative for prudent management of financial transactions.

In 1992, the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) issued *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (Framework)* to help businesses and other entities assess and enhance their internal control systems. The *Framework* consists of the following five components:

- Risk assessment—is the identification and analysis of relevant risks to achievement of the school’s objectives. All organizations face a variety of risks from external and internal sources.
- Control activities—are policies and procedures that help ensure management directives are carried out and include a range of activities such as approvals, authorizations, verifications, reconciliations, reviews of operating performance, security of assets and segregation of duties;
- Control environment—sets the tone of the organization and influences the control consciousness of its people and includes factors such as integrity, ethical values, management’s philosophy and attention of the Board;
- Information and communication—is a framework communicated in a form and timeframe that enables people to carry out their responsibilities and includes internal and external stakeholders; and
- Monitoring—assesses the quality of performance over time.

Determining whether an organization’s internal controls are effective involves judgment resulting from an assessment of whether the five components are present and functioning effectively without material weakness.

MeyerPark should establish a proper segregation of duties for financial transactions. The superintendent should strengthen internal controls over key financial processes. The COSO best practice framework should be used as a baseline for

**EXHIBIT 3–4
EXTRA PAY APPROVAL EXAMPLES
SCHOOL YEAR 2011–12**

| EVENT | PAYEE | APPROVED | RELATIONSHIP |
|---|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Title I Part A, ARRA, Saturday Academy, 8:30 to 12:15 @ \$45 per hour, 2/14/2011–6/1/2011 | Superintendent | Business Manager | Siblings |
| Title I Part A, ARRA, Saturday Academy 8:30 to 12:15 @ \$45 per hour, 2/14/2011–6/1/2011 | Business Manager | Superintendent | Siblings |
| Title IA-2011 Part A, TAKS 3:30 – 5:45 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday @ \$20 per hour 9/1/2010–2/4/2011 | Superintendent | Business Manager | Siblings |
| Title I Part A, TAKS tutorials, 3:30 – 5:45 @\$25, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 2/5/2011–6/30/2011 | Superintendent | Business Manager | Siblings |
| Title I Part A Summer School, General Fund Summer School, SSI Summer School, 8:00 – 2:00 Monday – Thursday @ \$TBA per hour, 6/1/2011–6/30/2011 | Superintendent | Business Manager | Siblings |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary; Review Team Analysis, June 2012.

evaluating and improving the existing internal control structure.

Obvious weaknesses in internal controls, such as segregation of duties, should be corrected. Access to payroll processing should be segregated. For example, the superintendent should assign an employee independent of the payroll function with the responsibility to add employees.

MeyerPark's business office should adapt the *Framework* to its circumstances and continually monitor adherence to the five components as the school's internal control environment changes and evolves. The business manager should monitor internal controls relative to changes in staffing and changes in employee duties and responsibilities.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BUDGET DOCUMENT (REC. 11)

MeyerPark does not produce nor include on its website, a budget document that adequately communicates the financial details of the school's budget.

When asked, MeyerPark provided a spreadsheet of school budgets that show revenues by source and expenditures by function for the last three years. These budgets do not explain the details of the functions nor readily identify changes from previous years. Unless users are familiar with school accounting or budgeting, such presentation makes it difficult to understand the meaning of the budget.

Exhibit 3–5 shows the MeyerPark approved budgets for school years 2009–10 to 2011–12. From the exhibit, users can identify revenues and expenditures, and the budgeted differences, yet not discern the story the budget has to tell. Moreover, users not familiar with how school finance categories are defined could become confused or misinterpret the data.

The *Special Supplement to the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide for Charter Schools* (FASRG) of the Texas Education Agency provides a recommended budget process, but also explains the importance of budget documents that clearly communicate the school's goals and objectives.

Charter schools must adopt a budgeting process that is consistent with the requirements discussed in the Budgeting module of the FASRG. Specifically, charter school officials must consider carefully the comments noted in the following sections of the FASRG:

- 2.1 Preface
- 2.3 Budget Process Overview
- 2.4 Budgetary Approaches
- 2.10 Review, Approval and Maintenance of the District Budget
- 2.12 Budgeting for Grant Programs
- 2.13 Budgets for Multi-year Construction Projects

Section 2.1 describes budgets in the public arena as the ultimate policy document since the budget represents the plan to achieve goals and objectives by reflecting:

- public choices about what goods and services are to be consumed or produced;
- priorities among the wide range of activities in which schools are involved;
- relative weight given to influence various participants and interest groups; and
- acquisition and use of resources.

MeyerPark is missing an opportunity to communicate with its stakeholders. A more detailed budget with explanations that provide context for the amounts presented would more clearly communicate the priorities and choices of the school. Charts and graphs would enable general users to more easily see what the amounts represent.

One potential means of wide communication is the MeyerPark website. The website shows several sections for general information without mention of finance or business operations. Included on the school's website are sections for welcome, academics, activities, administration, calendar, news, photo gallery, and contact. However, the budget is not included on the website. This is contrary to state law requirements for posting of the adopted budget located in Texas Education Code Section 39.084.

Exhibit 3–6 shows parent survey results regarding whether financial reports are easy to read and understand and whether the school's financial reports are readily available.

When asked if MeyerPark financial reports are easy to read and understand 48.1 percent (33.3 percent plus 14.8 percent) strongly agreed or agreed, but 51.8 percent (40.7 percent plus 11.1 percent) either have no opinion or say financial reports do not apply. This implies that slightly more than half

**EXHIBIT 3–5
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL
APPROVED BUDGETS 2009–10 TO 2011–12**

| | | 2011–12 | 2010–11 | 2009–10 |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Revenue: | | | | |
| 5700 | Local and Intermediate Sources | \$15,000 | \$1,684 | |
| 5800 | State Program Revenues | \$1,550,838 | \$1,778,895 | \$1,294,786 |
| 592x | Child Nutrition Program Review | \$119,021 | \$99,200 | \$63,650 |
| | Total Revenues | \$1,684,859 | \$1,879,779 | \$1,358,436 |
| Expenditures: | | | | |
| 11 | Instruction | \$835,367 | \$865,352 | \$515,867 |
| 12 | Instructional Resources, Media Services | - | | |
| 13 | Curriculum & Staff Development | \$6,950 | \$4,200 | \$2,739 |
| 21 | Instructional Leadership | \$58,356 | \$65,063 | \$63,275 |
| 23 | School Leadership | \$162,356 | \$182,308 | \$106,335 |
| 31 | Guidance & Counseling, Evaluation | - | | |
| 32 | Social Work Services | - | | |
| 33 | Health Services | - | | |
| 34 | Student Transportation | \$102,450 | \$100,101 | \$109,958 |
| 35 | Food Services | \$128,775 | \$125,529 | \$97,803 |
| 36 | Co-curricular Activities | \$5,703 | \$9,400 | \$475 |
| 41 | General Administration | \$145,672 | \$216,385 | \$180,788 |
| 51 | Plant Maintenance & Operations | \$201,751 | \$223,553 | \$141,272 |
| 52 | Security and Monitoring | \$5,750 | \$4,150 | \$3,355 |
| 53 | Data Processing | \$4,300 | \$48,521 | \$46,389 |
| 61 | Community Service | \$2,500 | \$1,556 | \$500 |
| 71 | Debt Service | - | | |
| 81 | Facilities Acquisition and Construction | - | | |
| | Total Adopted Expenditure Budget | \$1,659,930 | \$1,846,118 | \$1,268,756 |
| | Difference in Revenue/Expenditures | \$24,929 | \$33,661 | \$89,680 |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary Business Office.

**EXHIBIT 3–6
MEYERPARK SURVEY
FINANCIAL REPORTS**

| SURVEY RESPONDENTS (N=40) | SURVEY QUESTION | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
| Survey Question: "The charter school's financial reports are easy to read and understand." | | | | | | |
| Parents | 33.3% | 14.8% | 40.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 11.1% |
| Survey Question: "The charter school's financial reports are readily available to parents and community members." | | | | | | |
| Parents | 26.9% | 19.2% | 38.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 15.4% |

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, May 2012.

the survey respondents are not engaged in the financial reporting process.

When asked if MeyerPark financial reports are readily available to parents and the community 46.1 percent (26.9 percent plus 19.2 percent) strongly agreed or agreed, but 53.9 percent (38.5 percent plus 15.4 percent) have no opinion or say financial reports do not apply. Again, slightly more than half the survey respondents are not engaged in the process.

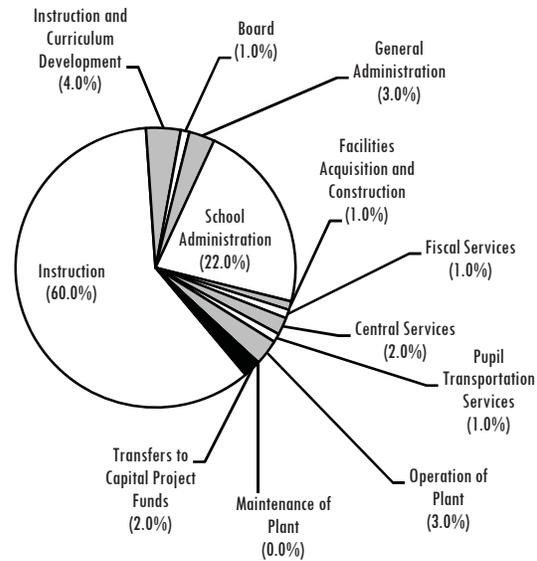
The budget is prepared in spreadsheet format for reporting purposes and is not designed as a communications tool. The budget includes no discussion of budget goals, priorities, or objectives. Also, there are no explanatory narratives, charts, or graphs to highlight important information and numerical relationships. These deficiencies limit the budget’s usefulness as a communications device, policy document, and financial plan. In its present form, the MeyerPark budget cannot be used to understand financial allocation details. Consequently, MeyerPark is missing an opportunity to enhance its image in the community and to its stakeholders by demonstrating a commitment to financial accountability, transparency, and stewardship.

A budget can and should be more than just a financial plan. A budget can have additional purposes such as a communications device and a policy document. In fact, budgets are most useful and effective as a means for both the school staff and the community at-large to understand the financial allocation details of the school. MeyerPark has an opportunity to “tell its story” when the budget communicates what is behind and beyond the numbers.

The Government Finance Officers Association’s (GFOA) is a national organization that promotes excellence in the form, content, and presentation of budget documents through budget award programs. The GFOA’s program is designed for any governmental entity. These programs establish a number of criteria for exemplary budget documents. Many educational institutions across the country use these criteria to improve their budget document’s content, format, and presentation.

MeyerPark could use GFOA criteria and examples from GFOA award winning budgets to improve its budget document. For example, MeyerPark could significantly improve the budget document by summarizing its budgeted use of funds for planned priorities. To illustrate, **Exhibit 3–7** presents an example of a graphic depiction of a budget in pie chart format.

**EXHIBIT 3–7
BEST PRACTICE BUDGET SUMMARY CHART**



SOURCE: Review Team, June 2012.

The MeyerPark superintendent should improve the budget document so that it communicates school financial information in a more detailed manner, and post this information on the MeyerPark website. The superintendent should work with the business manager to determine the most pertinent information for public dissemination to tell the story of the school’s priorities and direction. For example, information such as the number of teachers and/or instructional assistants per student represented by the instruction budget would be interesting to the public. The budget document should be developed to clearly show the planned use of funds and include charts, written analysis, summaries, and other methods that can provide more insight. The superintendent should present the enhanced budget documents to the board and post the document on the school’s website to improve transparency and accountability.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

ASSET MANAGEMENT (REC. 12)

MeyerPark lacks proper inventorying of fixed assets.

MeyerPark maintains inventory records for furniture, equipment, and federal capital assets. At the beginning of the school year, teachers send a list of classroom inventories to

the business office. This inventory listing has columns to compile information showing the item description, quantity of each item and condition of each item. In addition, each teacher is issued an inventory list yearly that includes information technology and other hard assets. Teachers sign a lost item liability form that acknowledges they will assume all costs for any items that need replacement. The business manager compiles an equipment inventory listing showing the asset serial number, item description, location, condition, vendor and years in same room, but does not include other pertinent information such as acquisition date, cost, or disposition that are recommended in Section 1.2.4.9 of the *Special Supplement to the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide for Charter Schools* (FASRG).

Exhibit 3–8 shows an excerpt from the MeyerPark Elementary equipment inventory list. As the inventory list shows, included are the asset identification number, item

description, location, condition, vendor, and years in same room.

The lack of documentation for the item acquisition date and cost precludes a proper inventorying of MeyerPark assets. Without the acquisition date to determine the date placed into service, financial statements could be impacted through the depreciation calculation. The lack of documentation of the price precludes a proper determination as to capitalization of the asset.

Exhibit 3–9 shows an excerpt from MeyerPark procedures for capital assets. This document delineates the treatment of assets depending on the cost at acquisition. It is the practice of MeyerPark to track capital assets with a true value of \$5,000 or greater. In addition, items valued from \$1,000 and \$4999.99 are also inventoried and tracked.

EXHIBIT 3–8
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY EQUIPMENT INVENTORY LIST (EXCERPT)

| ASSET OR SERIAL NUMBER | ITEM DESCRIPTION (MADE AND MODEL) | LOCATION | CONDITION | VENDOR | YEARS IN SAME ROOM |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| D2GWK-JF7JD-7WMGC-RR88W-YMCBB | P.C. | Aaron | Good | Dell | 2 |
| 004677 | Teacher Monitor | Aaron | Good | Dell | 2 |
| CC2048409PCDCVDAM | Student Apple | Aaron | Excellent | Macintosh | 1 |
| CC2048409Y4DCYDA2 | Student Apple | Aaron | Excellent | Macintosh | 1 |
| F942T-CY7D4-VFVG8-249PK-MJ8HD | P.C. | Blue | Good | Dell | 5 |
| 009228 | Teacher Monitor | Blue | Good | Dell | 5 |
| CC2048409NADCVDAS | Student Apple | Blue | Excellent | Macintosh | 1 |
| CC2048409SZDCVDAR | Student Apple | Blue | Excellent | Macintosh | 5 |
| DHMRC-KJFBD-MD843-RH28D-XW82W | P.C. | Terry | Good | Dell | 3 |
| 004680 | Teacher Monitor | Terry | Good | Dell | 3 |
| QN666AA#ABA | P.C. | Stewart | Excellent | HP | 1 |
| 3CQ131NL7M | Teacher Monitor | Stewart | Excellent | HP | 1 |
| 115300020520010704R3GS | P.C. | Drumm | Good | Dell | 3 |
| MG17R1006100184 | Teacher Monitor | Drumm | Good | Dell | 3 |
| 00196051115068 | P.C. | McDaniel | Good | HP | 3 |
| 005NDW5T991 | Teacher Monitor | McDaniel | Good | HP | 3 |
| 00204840A22DCVDAR | Student Apple | McDaniel | Excellent | Macintosh | 1 |
| YT8TK-PBT18-RBVJH-J74D7-PTPRW | P.C. | Heard | Good | HP | 2 |
| 3CQ131NL7L | Teacher Monitor | Heard | Excellent | HP | 1 |
| 002048409SUDCVDAW | Student Apple | Heard | Excellent | Macintosh | 1 |
| 002048409V2DCVDA4 | Student Apple | Heard | Excellent | Macintosh | 1 |
| D019HCHA100007J | Teacher Monitor | Brown | Need | | 4 |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary Business Office.

**EXHIBIT 3–9
MEYERPARK CAPITAL ASSETS
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING PROCEDURE (EXCERPT)**

CAPITAL ASSETS

Capital Assets Summary

Our Capital Assets Program has been designed to allow the charter school to purchase, record, track, and report on items such as land/buildings, vehicles, and equipment. Having a capital asset program benefits us because it:

- Provides us with a system to value, track, and report items with significant value for accounting purposes. Our program enables us to meet State and Federal Cost Accounting requirements and contributes to our charter school achieving a good financial rating during our annual audits.
- Includes a process for annual inventory of our assets. If assets are found to be missing or at inappropriate locations, the problem is identified in a timely manner and allows for corrective action.
- In addition, the program assists us in identifying idle surplus property, thereby preventing unneeded purchases.

Definition

Our charter school defines a capital asset as an item, tangible in nature, with a true value of \$5,000 or greater, and having a useful life in excess of one year. Capital assets are acquired by purchase, construction, or can even be a donation.

Inventory Items

In addition to recording and tracking capital assets, items valued between \$1,000 and \$4,999.99 are also inventoried and tracked.

Items in this value range are not of significant value to formally report for accounting purposes, but are of a value that is considered necessary to track and inventory on a periodic basis.

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary Business Office Financial Policy Manual.

Exhibit 3–10 shows an example of information captured for fixed assets records from MeyerPark’s financial policy manual. At a minimum, the policy includes data elements, such as the quantity, unit cost, date purchased, control number, description, percent local/state/federal, location, condition, and life expectancy.

MeyerPark should improve its inventorying of fixed assets to strengthen financial controls and help ensure the accuracy of financial information and accountability. The superintendent should work with the business manager to amend the capital asset form to bring the procedure into compliance with MeyerPark policy. The business manager should expand the property records to more adequately reflect requirements such as cost, acquisition date and disposition. The business

manager should document the change in practice and communicate to all employees.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 13)

MeyerPark lacks written guidelines for contract management and does not centrally monitor contract performance.

Contracts are managed and monitored individually at the point of origination by the employee responsible for the contract performance. MeyerPark lacks written procedures for developing contractor work plans or schedules, monitoring performance, conducting inspections, or

**EXHIBIT 3–10
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY CAPITAL ASSETS
FINANCIAL POLICY MANUAL (EXCERPT)**

Fixed assets may include land, building, machinery, furniture and other equipment. “Fixed” denotes probability or intent to continue to use of an asset and does not indicate immobility of an asset.

The emphasis in accounting for fixed assets is on control and accountability. Accordingly, a variety of data relating to a charter school’s fixed assets must be accumulated to maintain control and accountability over them. The charter school may identify the amount to be determined by the board and record data that shall include the items shown below:

| QUALITY | UNIT COST | DATE PURCHASED | CONTROL # | DESCRIPTION | % LOCAL % STATE % FEDERAL | LOCATION | CONDITION | LIFE EXPECTANCY |
|---------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Business Office Financial Policy Manual.

reviewing vendor contractual expectations. The school also lacks a comprehensive list of contracts and a central location to file contract documentation.

Exhibit 3–11 shows examples of contracts and the reported school contact.

**EXHIBIT 3–11
CONTRACT EXAMPLES AT MEYERPARK**

| SERVICE | NAME | SCHOOL CONTACT |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Legal | Schulman, Lopez & Hoffer | School Board |
| Special Education | Barbara Williams Consulting | Principal |
| Campus Improvement | Herman Lee Consulting | Principal |
| Accounting | Kenneth O. Dyke, CPA | Business Manager |
| Accounting | Daphne Glover | Business Manager |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary Business Office.

Contracts are consistently approved by the board, however the MeyerPark contract process is decentralized. Employees using contracted goods or services manage their respective contracts. The school does not have a systemic methodology to monitor contract performance to ensure contract provisions are met.

Effective contract monitoring ensures that vendors fulfill all contractual obligations on a timely basis with the delivery of expected outcomes. Effective contracts include measures and deliverables that provide for expected outcomes such as:

- deliverables;
- deliverable completion dates;
- schedule of vendor invoices and payments;
- dispute resolution;
- insurance requirements; and
- common vocabulary of terms and conditions.

Centralized contract management helps ensure a consistently applied monitoring process and increased control over expenditures. Terms, conditions, and payment schedules can be routinely monitored centrally by personnel trained in contracts management. Such monitoring provides an added level of control over the contracting process.

MeyerPark should develop written guidelines for and centrally manage all contracts. The superintendent should work with the business manager to establish a contract management procedure that includes written guidelines for developing, managing, and monitoring contracts. The business manager should identify all contracts and compile this information into a master file documenting the pertinent information such as contract period, contracted services, contract contact(s), contract price, and renewal provision.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

VENDOR LISTS (REC. 14)

MeyerPark does not adequately maintain its vendor list.

Purchasing controls rely on management of the vendor list to help ensure vendors and related vendor information is valid and accurate. The MeyerPark vendor list is stale, meaning that it includes inactive vendors. Interviews indicate the vendor list is updated as needed, but has not been updated for at least a couple of years.

The vendor list provided for review indicates every vendor on the list as active, and includes a vendor name, but no vendor number. Unique vendor numbers help establish control to minimize the possibility of duplicate or fraudulent vendors. The vendor payment history for fiscal year 2010–11 includes payments to vendors including the vendor name, date of transaction, check number, account code and payment amount.

Exhibit 3–12 shows the difference in number of approved vendors on the active vendor list and the number of unique vendors paid for school year 2010–11. As the exhibit shows, the approved vendor list has 324 vendors and the vendor

**EXHIBIT 3–12
ANALYSIS OF VENDOR LIST TO VENDOR PAYMENT HISTORY
SCHOOL YEAR 2010–11**

| NUMBER OF APPROVED VENDORS ON VENDOR LIST DATED APRIL 23, 2012 | NUMBER OF UNIQUE VENDORS WITH PAYMENTS 2010–11 | NUMBER OF VENDORS NOT USED DURING 2010–11 |
|--|--|---|
| 324 | 183 | 141 |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary; Review Team Analysis, July 2012.

payment history has 183, a difference of 141 vendors. That difference indicates that 141 vendors on the approved list of 324 were not used during school year 2010–11.

Proper vendor management is important to help ensure a system of internal control. Such control, over the vendor list and the ability to add vendors or change addresses, is especially important in a small school where distinct segregation of duties can be difficult.

The business manager should analyze and update the vendor directory to ensure an accurate listing of valid vendors. A schedule should be established to periodically purge the vendor list of stale vendors and update the list with current vendor contact information. The superintendent should ensure that authority to change the vendor list is restricted and changes are documented to help ensure internal control.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

| RECOMMENDATION | | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | TOTAL | ONE TIME |
|--|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | | | 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS | (COSTS) OR SAVINGS |
| CHAPTER 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | | |
| 9. | Develop written procedures for critical business and accounting processes and activities such as investments, budget, payroll, and purchasing. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 10. | Establish a proper segregation of duties for financial transactions. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 11. | Improve the budget document so that it communicates school financial information in a more detailed manner, and post this information on the MeyerPark website. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 12. | Improve inventorying of fixed asset transactions to strengthen financial controls and help ensure the accuracy of financial information and accountability. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 13. | Develop written guidelines for and centrally manage all contracts. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 14. | Analyze and update the vendor directory to ensure an accurate listing of valid vendors. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTALS—CHAPTER 3 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

CHAPTER 4

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY

CHAPTER 4. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Facility planning, use, and management represent significant activities and challenges for a charter school. Planning and maintenance functions must be coordinated to ensure the facilities meet the needs of students and staff. The manner in which a school manages its facilities can have a significant effect on the educational programs of the school. Charter school facilities staff must manage its campus to generate a safe, productive, and clean environment to support the educational programs of the charter school. Useful, well-maintained, up-to-date, and cheerful learning environments can help reinforce positive attitudes and performance by students, teachers, and administrators. For example, high indoor air quality and thermal comfort have been shown to improve concentration and learning. Facilities that are neither overcrowded nor underutilized provide an educational community where teamwork, cooperation, and other positive attributes can be practiced and promoted. Clean facilities with attention to hazardous materials management help maintain a level of appreciation and respect for the buildings of a charter campus. Facilities that provide a visible energy conservation program promote staff and student involvement while ensuring opportunities to reduce costs.

For a facilities planning process to effectively contribute to educational programs and student needs, the process must establish and consider:

- educational programmatic requirements;
- student growth or decline;
- optimum utilization of existing facilities;
- funding and leasing considerations; and
- accurate student demographic information to ensure facilities are located in appropriate geographic areas, designed to optimum capacity, and expandable, if necessary.

Preventive maintenance and timely repairs ensure that facilities are in working order and provide an atmosphere conducive for learning. An ongoing formal facilities assessment to evaluate exterior, interior, mechanical systems, and safety and building code compliance is an important part of an effective facilities management process. Custodial operations provide for the general cleanliness and daily upkeep of facilities. Grounds operations ensure that the

schoolyards are properly groomed and maintained. An energy management/conservation program focused on monitoring energy costs and usage, and establishing energy conservation practices is most effective.

MeyerPark Elementary School (MeyerPark) was established as a private elementary school in 1993 and became an accredited open enrollment charter school in 2004. The school is located at South Post Oak Road in Houston, Texas where a majority of its students are housed. However, pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes are located at another facility on Main Street.

Notes to the MeyerPark financial statements as of August 31, 2011 indicate the school has land valued at approximately \$445,000 and leasehold improvements valued at approximately \$16,281. Note 6 of the Financial Statements indicated the school has one operating lease for its office space and classrooms and one operating lease for its storage which expires July 2012. The school year 2011–12 cost of the lease payment for South Post Oak Road totals approximately \$71,000 while the lease costs for the Main Street facility total approximately \$71,500. MeyerPark indicated in May 2012 they have approximately 91 students at the Main Street location and 132 students at the South Post Oak Road location. The Main Street location is shared with an existing operational daycare center. According to MeyerPark, the current business relationship is just to lease space from the daycare facility for MeyerPark pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students.

Exhibit 4–1 depicts the charter school’s building inventory. MeyerPark maintains a lease with Turk Investments LTD for the South Post Oak facility. The most current lease provided by MeyerPark is dated July 2001 and reflected a monthly rent of approximately \$4,300. Based on the annual lease payments, the current monthly rent is approximately \$5,900 for the Main campus. The square footage of the South Post Oak Road facility is approximately 8,800 square feet. The square footage of the Main Street facility is approximately 9,000 square feet. In addition, MeyerPark owns land at a location at West Fugua which is intended to house a future school site once MeyerPark can secure adequate financing.

The facilities organizational chart of MeyerPark consists of an operations manager, one full-time custodian, and the support

**EXHIBIT 4-1
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDING INVENTORY
SCHOOL YEAR 2011-12**

| FACILITY | BUILDING | YEAR(S) MAIN BUILDING BUILT | SQUARE FEET | COST OF LEASE AGREEMENT | GRADE RANGES | TOTAL STUDENTS |
|--|---|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 10912 South Post Oak Road Houston, TX 77035 | Main Campus Building | Not provided | 8,800 | \$70,800 | 1-6 | 132 |
| 13663 Main Street Houston, TX 77035 | Second Campus(shared with daycare center) | Not provided | 9,000 | \$71,500 | Pre-K to K | 91 |
| 4950 West Fugua Street Houston, TX 77035 | Currently raw land | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Elementary May 2012.

of outsourced contracts to address maintenance, grounds, and pest control. Although the operations manager works directly with the administrative services director, these positions both report directly to the Board of Directors (board). The operations manager oversees the campus’ maintenance and custodial operations and has a dotted line reporting responsibility to the administrative services director who more directly represents the day-to-day monitoring of operational activities for the board.

Both facilities provide playground areas for students to use. According to the Federal Asset Report from the audit of the period ending August 31, 2011, the main campus’s heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) unit was replaced in September 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- ◆ MeyerPark uses a behavior support program to encourage students to assume a role in taking care of the facilities.

FINDINGS

- ◆ MeyerPark lacks a formal facilities assessment.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks policies and procedures for facilities master planning.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks a formal plan or guidelines for maintaining acceptable levels of indoor air quality.
- ◆ MeyerPark does not have a hazardous materials management plan and lacks appropriate material safety data sheets, signage, and material for staff.
- ◆ MeyerPark lacks a visible comprehensive energy conservation program and effective communication and staff support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 15: Initiate a regularly scheduled formal facilities assessment.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 16: Develop and implement a formal policy and process for facilities master planning.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 17: Develop guidelines for maintaining acceptable levels of indoor air quality.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 18: Implement a hazardous materials management plan to include the appropriate right-to-know information sheets, signage, and materials for staff and contractors.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 19: Implement a visible and comprehensive energy conservation program.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

MeyerPark uses a behavior support program to encourage students to assume a role in taking care of the facilities. Throughout the campus, staff are piloting a voluntary positive behavior support initiative with the motto “What does it take to be a LION... Leading with Integrity Leads to Opportunity so I Never give up.” The concept is to increase student awareness of caring about the facilities; promote good attendance; and go the extra mile to perform activities, such as cleaning up after using supplies or other items.

As part of this program, if a student notices trash and picks it up, they are rewarded. All activities to promote good student behavior earn students what is known as a Lion ticket (a reference to the school mascot). Students earn tickets for all types of good behavior and support of the facilities. Tickets are collected and turned in at the end of each week to their

teacher. Bus drivers can also reward tickets for good behavior. Teachers record classroom checkmarks in a log and collect tickets for and on behalf of the students. All tickets and teacher-rewarded classroom checkmarks are collected and tabulated at the end of every week. Every six weeks students with a certain number of tickets and checkmarks as determined by the principal are rewarded for their efforts. The rewards include an ice cream social, a luau, and even a movie night.

MeyerPark is commended for its successful efforts to modify the behavior of students and use positive support to reinforce the school's objectives.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FORMAL MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENT (REC. 15)

MeyerPark lacks a formal facilities assessment.

The operations manager conducts a very informal walk-around review of its facilities on a weekly basis, but lacks a formal documented process assessing the status of its facilities. Based on interviews, observations, and document review while on site, the existing process of walking around from time to time and writing down what appear to be problems is placing the campus in more of a reactionary rather than proactive mode regarding facility maintenance. While some proactive facility maintenance is occurring, such as a check of the HVAC unit each spring and monthly filter changes, a dedicated preventative maintenance process is not apparent as an integral part of a facilities annual assessment process. This can lead to variations in the maintenance load experienced by staff.

The operations manager indicated that he uses a note pad to record items in need of repair during a weekly facility walkthrough. Teachers also write down concerns and turn in a daily list to the front office that is incorporated into the operations manager's master list. This list is then printed out for the manager to review and address as he deems appropriate. The master list, as maintained, becomes an informal work order system for the manager with both personal experience and impact to the classroom used as the basis for establishing priorities. This process is not a formal preventative maintenance activity incorporated into a facilities assessment as much as a manual work order system to capture all current concerns of teachers and the operations manager from his walk around activities. Use of the current process means the extent to which a problem is identified is

entirely limited to the experience and knowledge of the operations manager and identification by teachers.

MeyerPark provided the review team with a listing of work order requests for multiple years. The list captures a running record of items requested by date with data documented to make decisions on how to best prioritize the work orders. Based on the multiple page listing provided, the operations manager had approximately 44 work orders in 2009, 37 work orders in 2010, 96 work orders in 2011, and 26 work orders to date in 2012. The large increase in items needing replacement in 2011 were attributed to general electrical and light fixture replacement.

The operations manager attempts to fix what he can, but if the problem is beyond his expertise or if he does not have the appropriate resources or tools, he contacts an outside vendor from a master list of available vendors maintained at the front office. Vendors are placed on the master list by responding to campus requests for information or requests for quotes. A review of vendor payment history from September 2010 through August 2011 showed expenditures for the following facilities-related items: pest control, playground maintenance, plumbing, and waste services.

During the on site walkthrough, the review team found that:

- the custodial closet was not properly locked allowing access to cleaning chemicals;
- numerous first grade classrooms had air circulation problems with small fans located at the top of the classrooms used to mitigate the problem;
- areas of the carpet appeared very dirty;
- the educational space was cramped in many classrooms; and
- the storage closet was cramped and unorganized.

Lack of establishing a formal facility assessment process could potentially cause the school to overlook a major developing flaw or deficiency in its facilities infrastructure. Maintenance and timely assessment of facilities should first and foremost ensure safe building conditions. Cleanliness, orderliness, cost-effectiveness, and instructional program support are important, but safety takes a priority over all elements of a facility management process.

As mentioned previously, MeyerPark is leasing two facilities for educational purposes. The lease terms and conditions

indicate that MeyerPark is responsible for the day-to-day upkeep and maintenance of the facility.

Leasing a facility presents another set of issues in terms of capturing important information regarding the age and status of the facility and equipment. Facilities leasing requires more active involvement and follow up with the lessor to capture the initial baseline of necessary information related to the facility condition, service history on key items, and age of high-cost components. Baseline data such as these are a prerequisite for establishing a facilities maintenance plan and provides the campus with the ability to perform its own assessments.

One resource available online is the National Center for Education Statistics' *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (February 2003). The guide was designed for staff at the local school district level, including school business officials, school board members, superintendents, principals, facilities maintenance planners, maintenance staff, and custodial staff.

The guide focuses on:

- school facility maintenance as a vital task in the responsible management of an education organization;
- the needs of an education audience;
- strategies and procedures for planning, implementing, and evaluating effective maintenance programs;
- a process to be followed, rather than a canned set of 'one size fits all' solutions; and
- recommendations based on best practices, rather than mandates.

The guide points out that "facility managers must be expert collectors, organizers, and assessors of facilities data if a school district is to have safe and well-maintained school buildings." The guide covers who should collect facility data; what data should be collected; a list of essential building components, grounds areas, and equipment to assess; when data should be collected; and the data management process. According to the guide, once this information is assembled, it must be formatted so that preventive maintenance tasks can be scheduled easily. Best practice ratios for tasks such as basic grounds care are provided. The guide also discusses an appropriate process work flow for a work order system and how to best integrate facility partners and contractors into the process.

MeyerPark should initiate a regularly scheduled formal facilities assessment. The existing process forms an initial component of the much needed facilities assessment activity. The operations manager and administrative services director should develop and manage a preventive maintenance program that would be integrated into the existing work order system. This would include the development of a viable checklist and process that incorporates elements of the data reflected below. A timeline for gathering data should be established to allow adequate time to capture information relevant to MeyerPark.

The annual assessment and effort to collect necessary data should focus on:

- gathering information on all facilities;
- infrastructure condition;
- adequate room space conducive to learning;
- interior walls and doors, floors, hardware, egresses, communications equipment, and windows;
- condition of the grounds, landscaping, playground area, surrounding area, signage, traffic patterns, trees and shrubs, and equipment;
- boilers and/or HVAC systems;
- flooring, plumbing fixtures, electrical distribution systems;
- heating and air conditioning controls;
- roof type and condition;
- furniture, lighting, ceilings, fire alarms, doors and hardware, windows;
- technology including computers and related hardware such as servers and necessary wiring;
- air circulation and indoor air quality;
- asbestos, fire occupant safety concerns, energy efficiency, susceptibility to vandalism;
- storage of supplies such as ballasts, motor oil, cleaning agents, pesticides and other chemicals;
- accessibility in terms of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance concerns; and
- instructional efficiency and ability of space to meet learning environment requirements.

Key questions that should be answered include:

- Where are the items located and what is their estimated age?
- What are the model numbers, serial numbers, and brand names as appropriate?
- What is the condition of the item or situation?
- What is the repair history?
- Is the item working as expected?
- Are there any special upkeep requirements or legal concerns to note?
- What is the recommended service timeline for any equipment or facility component?
- Are the space and/or equipment meeting the needs of the educational environment users?

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FACILITIES MASTER PLANNING (REC. 16)

MeyerPark lacks policies and procedures for facilities master planning.

The process and scope for facilities master planning is informally conducted among staff during monthly meetings and with an annual meeting to address more facility-related issues. In general, the annual meeting focuses on space utilization for the upcoming year and needed facility enhancements or changes. During the annual meeting, staff discuss expenses, utilities, and facilities. Staff indicated the only planning document used as part of a facilities master planning discussion is the facility floor plan layout to review utilization and opportunities for change. The campus was more focused on preparation for 2012 and obtained input from teachers rather than also providing a plan for the short term and long term as they relate to the school's vision and goals for its facilities.

MeyerPark owns land that was purchased with the intent to eventually build its own school facility when the charter can obtain adequate funding. MeyerPark is limited in its ability to upgrade its facilities by virtue of its lease arrangement and the fact that any major improvements remain with the leased facility should MeyerPark eventually build its own educational facility.

MeyerPark does not have a governing board policy related to facilities master planning for the campus and the educational needs of the school. The original and subsequently amended charter application to the Texas Education Agency indicated the existence of policies, guidelines, and resources incorporated within the *MeyerPark Elementary PK-6 Parent Information Guide*. MeyerPark used the Dallas Independent School District Emergency Preparedness Plan as its original resource for its application.

A formal facilities master planning process represents a blueprint for effective daily decision making and a road map for future facility and maintenance considerations. It typically represents a formal way to establish the necessary documentation for all stakeholders and any potential funding approval authorities. Without a formal facilities master plan, the school is not making the best informed data-driven decisions to maximize its limited resources and could be bypassing cost savings or cost avoidance opportunities.

Charter schools face challenges in obtaining funding for facilities expansion. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national organization with the goal “to revitalize neighborhoods and improve quality of life,” noted in their 2010 Charter School Facility Finance Landscape report that “securing adequate and affordable facilities remains a central challenge, hindering the growth of some of the country’s highest performing schools.” However, the MeyerPark facilities master plan should include funding information or, at the very least, be tied to the school’s overall strategic plan which discusses future facility funding.

In 2011, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools outlined federal facility funding opportunities by department specifically available and widely used for facilities expansion, including:

- New Markets Tax Credit Program—Created in 2000 to stimulate private investment and economic growth in low-income communities, including loans to charter schools for facilities projects.
- Qualified School Construction Bond (QSCB) Program—For the construction, rehabilitation or repair of public school facilities, acquisition of land, furniture and equipment. A State’s role is to provide bond issuance authorizations for public and charter school projects, based on the assurance they meet federal criteria for the programs. A limited number of charter schools in Texas have issued QSCBs.

- Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) Program— Assists eligible public schools to renovate facilities, purchase equipment, and develop curricula and train teachers and personnel. New construction or land acquisition is not allowed.

Exploring federal options for charter facilities funding may yield opportunity for MeyerPark, but state funding opportunities for charters also exist. As mentioned previously in the 2010 LISC Report, the options for Texas charter schools to obtain facility financing are through access to tax-exempt debt through conduit issuers, Texas’s credit enhancement program, and the QSCB or QZAB programs.

The Texas Credit Enhancement Program (TCEP) for Texas open-enrollment charter schools was established to provide a guarantee fund for issuing tax exempt revenue bonds to provide financing for the acquisition, construction, repair, or renovation of Texas charter school facilities, including refinancing of facilities debt within federal program guidelines. To be eligible for the 2013 TCEP, a charter must:

- meet the federal definition of “charter school”;
- have earned a state accountability rating no lower than Academically Acceptable or AEA: Academically Acceptable for two consecutive years;
- have a status of “Accredited” as defined in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 97.1055; and
- earned at least a ‘standard’ rating in the 2011 School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) for charter schools.

In addition, the Texas Education Agency’s QSCB program listed MeyerPark as a candidate for the program with a maximum authorization of \$5 million (or \$5.25 million with the “Plus Green 5 percent”) and was authorized for \$5 million as of the October 31, 2011 report date. However, at the time of the review, no information was provided to the review team on this program from school leaders.

MeyerPark should develop and implement a formal policy and process for facilities master planning. The superintendent should designate a lead person as responsible for managing development of a facilities master plan and providing annual updates on MeyerPark’s progress towards meeting its facilities goals to school leadership and its board.

Elements of an effective facilities master plan would include:

- a capacity analysis for the charter’s campus utilization which should reflect the campus instructional programs;
- formal guidelines to help determine priority needs for facilities that would include criteria such as:
 - health and safety of students
 - health and safety of employees
 - instructional needs
 - efficiency of operations
 - cost effectiveness;
- a more comprehensive way of reviewing and considering the technology capabilities within the existing campus;
- a multi-year approach that considers the community demographics and growth potential which will impact potential student growth;
- at least a five-year student enrollment forecast of students by grade and program to be factored into the plans for future renovations or enhancements;
- an estimated source or sources of funding that should be tied to the facilities needs and anticipated expenditures;
- an overall analysis of the campus to determine its best use based on the mission of the charter school and its capacity to meet its educational priorities in the short term and long term;
- any important information related to state and federal compliance issues or concerns that must be considered; and
- an extensive analysis of the charter’s campus facilities in terms of condition and educational functionality.

The school should discuss its best options for working with an effective partner. This could include making use of its Texas Charter School Association membership and/or the National Resource Center on Charter Schools. The Texas Education Agency Charter School Division is also another resource for assistance.

Part of this recommendation is intended to encourage MeyerPark to actively consider funding opportunities, such as QSCB funds, and other potential state and federal funding options, that could support their long-term facilities plans.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. There should be no additional costs to MeyerPark Elementary for taking steps to work with other state agencies/associations to evaluate available resources that could support their long-term facilities planning efforts.

MAINTAINING INDOOR AIR QUALITY (REC. 17)

MeyerPark lacks a formal plan or guidelines for maintaining acceptable levels of indoor air quality.

Although this is not a mandatory statutory requirement for charter schools, it is related to the health of children and the working environment. Observations of the campus site and several on site interviews highlighted that MeyerPark does not have any active guidelines that are readily known and shared to identify what are acceptable levels of indoor air quality. The operations manager indicated that they have never had to evacuate the facility other than for fire drills and emergency readiness drills so the concern for indoor air quality has never been an issue.

According to the 2006–07 Texas Asthma Call Back Survey, more than 30 percent of children with current asthma who had attended school within the past 12 months missed greater than or equal to five days of school due to asthma related issues. Cockroaches, dust mites, and pesticides are prime causes and triggers for this condition. These concerns are the result of schools failing to adequately monitor all aspects of indoor air quality (IAQ).

The *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities*, developed by the National Center for Education Statistics, in conjunction with the Association of School Business Officials, is an excellent resource for all elements of school facilities. In the reference guide, the Center discusses the ‘four horsemen’ of school facilities maintenance as indoor air quality, asbestos, water management, and waste management. Schools typically find themselves with IAQ issues because they fail to respond to warning signs. The guide provides reasonable actions to undertake to be proactive in relation to IAQ. The guide addresses the common indoor air pollutants and potential sources of IAQ contaminants. The potential sources include odors from dumpsters, lab and workshop emissions, cleaning process emissions, insects and other pests, insecticides and pesticides, furnaces and fuel lines, underground sources such as sewer lines, and HVAC equipment.

Critical incidents are not the preferred method of learning about environmental regulations that apply to a school

campus. Schools must take a proactive approach to learn about their responsibilities from regulatory agencies, state departments of education, and other professional associations.

The location of dumpsters next to the facility; previously noted poor air circulation and placement of fans; cramped classroom facilities; and cramped storage closets are all potential sources of IAQ complaints and issues.

The Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District developed the TEAMS (Tools for Schools, Energy, Asbestos, Moisture Management, Safety and Security) approach to managing the school environment for IAQ. The El Paso Independent School District responded to mounting indoor air quality concerns during the school year by implementing IAQ Tools for Schools guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov).

MeyerPark should develop written guidelines for maintaining acceptable levels of indoor air quality. Resources that may be useful in this process are the federal *IAQ Tools for Schools Framework* that provides a common language to describe drivers of IAQ program success. **Exhibit 4–2** identifies the six key drivers to deliver effective school IAQ management programs.

**EXHIBIT 4–2
INDOOR AIR QUALITY FRAMEWORK SIX KEY DRIVERS**

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Organize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Systematic Approach • Identify Existing Assets • Design Standard Operating Procedures • Empower an IAQ Leader • Build an Effective Team • Create Champions • Secure Senior Buy-In |
| Communicate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Your Goals • Make IAQ Meaningful • Be Transparent & Inclusive • Communicate Results |
| Evaluate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit Feedback • Capture Return on Investment |
| Assess | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk the Grounds • Listen to Occupants • Use Technology • Determine a Baseline • Keep Customers Satisfied • Identify and Prevent Risks |
| Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate Staff About IAQ to Change Behavior • Train Occupants to Address IAQ Risks • Address the Source of Problems |
| Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize Actions • Put Goals in Writing • Start Small • Work in Stages • Plan for the Future |

SOURCE: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, May 2012.

In addition to the key drivers, the framework outlines six technical solutions to define the most common issues that schools need to address to effectively manage IAQ risks. **Exhibit 4–3** identifies the technical solutions.

The City of Houston maintains a list of IAQ consultants in the Houston area on their website (www.houstontx.gov).

These consultants can perform an IAQ assessment that typically includes testing for molds (spore-trap samples), measurement of basic indoor air quality parameters (temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide), and sampling for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and particle dusts.

**EXHIBIT 4–3
INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ) FRAMEWORK: SIX TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS**

| SOLUTION | STEPS | MEYERPARK COMPLETING (Y/N)(X-UNKNOWN) |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Quality HVAC | Inspect HVAC systems regularly | Y |
| | Establish a maintenance plan | N |
| | Change filters regularly and ensure condensate pans are draining | Y |
| | Provide outdoor air ventilation according to ASHRAE Standard or local code | N |
| | Clean air supply diffusers, return registers, and outside air intakes | X |
| | Keep unit ventilators clear of books, papers, and other items | X |
| Control of Moisture/ Mold | Conduct routine moisture inspections | N |
| | Establish mold prevention and remediation plan | N |
| | Maintain indoor humidity levels between 30 percent and 60 percent | X |
| | Address moisture problems promptly | Y |
| Strong Integrated Pest Management (IPM) | Dry wet areas within 24-48 hours | Y |
| | Inspect and monitor for pests | Y |
| | Establish an IPM plan | N |
| | Use spot treatments and baits | Y |
| | Communicate with occupants prior to pesticide use | X |
| Effective Cleaning & Maintenance | Mark indoor and outdoor areas treated with pesticides | X |
| | Conduct routine inspections of school environment | X |
| | Develop a preventative maintenance plan | N |
| | Train cleaning/maintenance staff on protocols | N |
| | Ensure material safety data sheets (MSDS) are available to staff | N |
| | Clean and remove dust with damp cloth | X |
| Smart Materials Selection | Vacuum using high-efficiency filters | X |
| | Walk the grounds | Y |
| | Maintain products inventory | X |
| | Develop low-emitting products purchasing and use policies | X |
| | Use only formaldehyde-free materials | X |
| | Use only low-toxicity and low-emitting paint | X |
| Aggressive Source Control | Select products based on product rating systems | N |
| | Use least toxic cleaners possible (only) those approved by the district | Y |
| | Conduct regular building walkthrough inspections | Y |
| | Test for radon; mitigate if necessary | X |
| | Implement a hazardous materials plan (use, label storage and disposal) | N |
| | Establish a school chemical management and inventory plan | N |
| | Implement Smoke-Free policies | N |
| Establish an anti-idling school bus policy | N | |
| | Use walk-off mats at building entrances | N |
| | Conduct pollutant-releasing activities when school is unoccupied | X |

SOURCE: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, May 2012.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT (REC. 18)

MeyerPark does not have a hazardous materials management plan and lacks appropriate material safety data sheets, signage, and material for staff.

On site observations noted a lack of material safety data sheets (MSDS) or signs are available near or in the custodial storage area. During the walk-through on site, the custodial closet was not secured and there was no evidence of MSDS signage although numerous chemicals were located within the cluttered closet. It was noted during interviews that the custodian is scheduled to receive summer hazardous material training.

Improper handling and storage of hazardous materials can result in a number of scenarios that can cause adverse effects to human and animal health and the environment. The U. S. Department of Labor Occupational Health and Safety Administration's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) includes all workers exposed to hazardous chemicals in all industrial sectors. The standard is based on a simple concept that employees have both a need and a right to know the hazards and the identities of the chemicals they are exposed to when working. They also need to know what protective measures are available to prevent adverse effects from occurring. The HCS preempts all state or local laws which relate to an issue covered by HCS without regard to whether the state law would conflict with, complement, or supplement the federal standard, and without regard to whether the state law appears to be "at least as effective as" the federal standard. There are an estimated 650,000 existing hazardous chemical products and new ones introduced every day.

Chemical manufacturers and others must convey the hazard information they learn from their evaluations by means of labels on containers and MSDSs. All employers are expected to have a hazard communication program to get the information to their employees through labels on containers, MSDSs, and training. Chemicals used by the custodial staff or maintenance contractors may need to be noted on a material safety data sheet to verify that proper procedures for their use, storage, and disposal have been properly followed. No potentially hazardous material should be brought into a school campus without being properly labeled and having an MSDS on file. A school campus is responsible for ensuring that its contractors take appropriate measures to ensure compliance with all safety regulations. An example noted in

the Hazard Communications Standard guide states: "many people know that when the roof leaks, wood can get wet and mold can grow. Fewer people know that the bleach used to clean mold stains may itself have serious health ramifications if the space is not properly ventilated during use."

The Texas Department of State Health Services' *Texas Guide to School Health Programs* (May 2009) recommends that schools keep copies of current MSDSs easily accessible to "minimize exposure to people." Mesquite Independent School District opted to deploy 3E Company's online-MSDS, which ensures that MSDSs are up-to-date and always available. This online service specializes in MSDS information and provides a hotline for assistance and questions. Online service providers offer the advantage of adding new information to MSDS as it becomes available on chemicals stored in the system. A sample MSDS from Mesquite Independent School District can be found at www.mesquiteisd.org.

MeyerPark should implement a hazardous material management plan to include the appropriate right-to-know information sheets, signage, and materials for staff and contractors. School districts and other employers are required to maintain a binder of MSDSs related to hazardous materials exposed on the campus property either by custodial supplies, art supplies or other relevant hazardous materials. The up-to-date binder must be available for employees' access for their right to know what they may be exposed to and what remedies are available by the campus. Custodial closets should have appropriate signage and MSDS availability for employees and workers.

The first course of action to implement this recommendation should be to provide MSDSs for all chemicals located at MeyerPark. The second action is to compile the MSDSs by using a digital or hardcopy process of the school's choosing. The operations manager or administrative service director should review the process and determine the best course of action for the school. In addition to the Texas Department of State Health Services, school districts and the Environmental Protection Agency are other potential resources for assistance.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. There could be additional costs if the school should decide to pursue the services of an online service to address the need for MSDS documentation.

ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (REC. 19)

MeyerPark lacks a visible comprehensive energy conservation program and effective communication and staff support.

MeyerPark maintains policies and procedures for the daily opening and closing of its facilities. These procedures include instructions on manual adjustment of heating and cooling at both the opening and close of school and a walkthrough powering down of all copiers, printers, and computers at the end of the day. However, on site observations by the review team noted the lack of lighting sensors and the lack of automated air control.

The Texas Education Code, Section 44.902, *Long-Range Energy Plan to Reduce Consumption of Electric Energy* states “(a) The Board of Trustees of a school district shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district’s annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district’s energy plan.” Although this code may not directly apply to charter schools, the need to have an energy conservation program is an effective business practice and can help schools save dollars with quality practices.

Most facilities, including charter campus sites, incur utility expenditures that represent a significant cost to the operation. **Exhibit 4-4** shows MeyerPark utility expenditures for the past three years. Utility costs have increased significantly from school years 2009–10 to 2010-11. Expenditures have remained high, averaging over \$50,000 per year. Current

recording of utility expenditures obtained from MeyerPark did not specify the type of utility expense, however MeyerPark contracted for its second lease in early 2010–11 for its Main Street campus. The higher utility expenditures includes costs related to two operational leases and campus sites.

Discussions while on site highlighted that there is no ongoing analysis of utility costs to support monitoring aspects of a comprehensive energy conservation program at the campus. Heating, cooling, electric lights, and sufficient power for equipment (copiers, IS hardware, cleaning equipment) are essential in today’s educational environment. Consequently, schools are well-advised to take all reasonable measures to reduce energy consumption without compromising human comfort, and the ability to perform teaching and learning activities.

The review team’s survey results, shown in **Exhibit 4-5**, showed a general lack of opinion with regard to the school having an effective energy management system. Only 27.8 percent of the teachers and staff were somewhat supportive of the energy management process while 38.9 percent had no opinion and another 11.2 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Based on both responses, it would appear the school needs to improve its energy management initiatives.

With the advent of increased costs for energy to provide power for HVAC systems and other related activities, schools have established numerous and varied methods for increasing efficiencies in energy consumption and reducing operating costs.

Energy management or conservation programs cover not just electricity, but also incorporate conservation of water, recycling and waste removal. The Ysleta Independent School District (YISD) implemented a comprehensive district energy and resource management program. YISD’s district energy and resource management program includes a clear policy to conserve energy and natural resources while exercising sound financial management. The policy includes general guiding statements and specific energy conservation and building and resource management guidelines. The

**EXHIBIT 4-4
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY
UTILITY EXPENDITURES
SCHOOL YEARS 2009-10 TO 2011-12**

| YEAR | TOTAL UTILITIES EXPENDITURES |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 2009-10 | \$23,403 |
| 2010-11 | \$73,231 |
| 2011-12 | \$63,068 |

SOURCE: MeyerPark Business Office, 2012.

**EXHIBIT 4-5
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SURVEY
ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

| SURVEY RESPONDENTS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| Survey Question: “Our charter school has an effective energy management program.” | | | | | | |
| Teachers/Staff | 11.1% | 16.7% | 38.9% | 5.6% | 5.6% | 22.2% |

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, May 2012.

conservation efforts focus on reduction of usage with and without additional capital investment. YISD’s conservation efforts included peak load-shedding to lower electrical costs, installation of waterless urinals and xeriscaping to receive water conservation rebates, lighting retrofits focused on the largest consumer areas first, and implementation of a consolidated 4-day (10 hours per day) work schedule for the summer.

The Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) provides several programs and resources that charter schools can use to develop an energy management program and formal policy to promote energy usage awareness throughout the school.

SECO also provides charter schools with the Energy Education Curriculum Program at no cost to the school. The Energy Education Curriculum program promotes energy conservation and efficiency through education. The goal of the SECO Energy Education Curriculum Program is to increase teacher awareness of alternative energy in their communities and to improve their understanding of the nature and extent of energy and its resources, energy

conservation and efficiency, the economic and environmental effects of energy use, and alternative energy technologies. SECO also recommends best practice elements for an energy management program that include a mission statement, ongoing monitoring and distribution of facility-specific energy bills, documents reasonable achievable savings targets for annual energy consumption/costs, and documents energy-related tasks for custodial, maintenance, and administrative staff.

MeyerPark should implement a visible and comprehensive energy conservation program. The campus should assign someone to oversee the program who will establish the necessary framework for a comprehensive approach. Meyerpark should also establish an ongoing formal analysis of all energy-related costs to be incorporated into the process. Engagement with teachers and staff should be included in the implementation process to secure their buy-in and ensure all personnel are made aware of the initiative.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules, or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

| RECOMMENDATION | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS | ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| CHAPTER 4: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | |
| 15. Initiate a regularly scheduled formal facilities assessment. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 16. Develop and implement a formal policy and process for facilities master planning. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 17. Develop written guidelines for maintaining acceptable levels of indoor air quality. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 18. Implement a hazardous materials management plan to include the appropriate right-to-know information sheets, signage, and materials for staff and contractors. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 19. Implement a visible and comprehensive energy conservation program. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTALS-CHAPTER 4 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

CHAPTER 5

SAFETY AND SECURITY

MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY

CHAPTER 5. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Many school safety actions involve the safety of students and staff and the campus property. Safe and secure schools typically involve surrounding schools with fences to create safe zones. Today's environment requires a more balanced and comprehensive approach of prevention, intervention, enforcement, and recovery to create a more effective safety and security program. Safe and secure schools require identifying threats and vulnerabilities, developing plans to minimize risk, and then implementing the plans.

Traditionally, schools provided safe environments through building access management, identification processes, fire protection, communication systems, crisis management/disaster planning, playground safety, and overall building and grounds safety. Today, school facilities maintenance staff must also be concerned with the implementation of numerous environmental regulations governing school facilities.

MeyerPark Elementary School (MeyerPark) developed both formal and informal safety and security policies and procedures that incorporate reasonable elements of prevention, intervention, and enforcement. The operations manager and administrative services director share joint responsibility for safety and security of the MeyerPark campus. They are supported by a Crisis Team that includes the at-risk coordinator, the assistant principal, the superintendent, and the administrative assistant. A sample of the policies and procedures currently in place include visitor policies and campus safety plans originally modeled after Dallas ISD's program. A comprehensive Emergency Procedure Guideline Handbook was also included in its original charter application to the Texas Education Agency.

MeyerPark has an effective safety and security process for controlling access to its facility. The campus has implemented programs in prevention and intervention to engage students in crisis management situations. The school has used the support of its community partners for involvement in its safety and security programs. In addition, MeyerPark conducts regular fire drills and quarterly emergency preparedness drills to augment safety preparation.

The Emergency Procedures Guidelines incorporate the following categories of information for teachers, staff, and leadership at MeyerPark:

- Response to Any Emergency;
- Staff Responsibilities-covers Principal and Teachers;
- Fire information and reminders;
- Hazardous Materials directions;
- Bomb Threat immediate actions and evacuation procedures;
- Intruder/Hostage covering intruder, if the intruder refuses to leave, hostage, if hostage taken;
- Serious Injury/Death covering if incident occurred in school, if outside school, and post-crisis intervention;
- Suicide/Attempt covering if in school, if suicidal death or serious injury, and post-crisis intervention;
- Evacuation/Relocation Centers covering Principal and Teacher duties and relocation centers; and
- Emergency Contact Numbers-contact numbers plus 20 local numbers for national organizations.

MeyerPark has developed various procedures to establish guidelines for safety and security on campus, including the parent information guide. Some of the safety and security topics highlighted in this document include:

- identification of areas of the school accessible to students before and after-school;
- guidelines for the campus being a closed campus;
- safety and crisis response procedures; and
- overview of the use of security cameras and trained dogs for searching school property.

The campus uses a parent notification system called School Reach which is a web-based service and hosted solution. The system does not require on site hardware or access to school phone lines. Software tools allow staff to create and manage parent, staff, and faculty lists while outbound messages can be recorded voice, email, or short text messages. The system can inform parents and others of school cancellations, emergency notifications, and general announcements. School Reach supports the emergency preparedness efforts of

the campus, operational efficiency, and the ability to administer parent surveys for feedback.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ MeyerPark established effective methods of using the support of available emergency community services.
- ◆ MeyerPark implemented an effective safety and security process for the control of access to its buildings.
- ◆ Students are engaged in campus prevention and intervention programs regarding crisis management situations.

FINDINGS

- ◆ MeyerPark has not implemented a formal plan and process to evaluate its safety and security programs.
- ◆ MeyerPark has not developed and implemented a formal disaster recovery plan.
- ◆ Personal identification policies while on MeyerPark facilities do not extend to staff.
- ◆ MeyerPark playground safety and security standards and practices are inadequate, increasing the risk of injury on the playground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Recommendation 20: Develop and implement a formal plan and process to annually evaluate safety and security programs.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 21: Develop and implement a formal disaster recovery plan to address key actions necessary after an emergency event.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 22: Issue identification badges to all staff and require employee display of these badges at all times while on campus.**
- ◆ **Recommendation 23: Prioritize the playground area as a risk to safety and security of the children and move forward with improvement plans.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EFFECTIVE USE OF SCHOOL EMERGENCY SUPPORT COMMUNITY SERVICES

MeyerPark has established effective methods of using the support of available emergency related community services.

Community safety and security specialists in the areas of law enforcement, fire departments, poison centers, and hotline centers are contacted throughout the year for various events conducted on campus to increase the awareness of staff, teachers, and students.

Representatives from the fire department and law enforcement are invited to visit the campus and to speak to students in their classrooms. In addition, the school holds special assemblies for the purpose of having community members come to campus and share information in relation to fire safety and law enforcement activities. The campus conducts a health fair each year and invites various community organizations to participate and to provide information to the campus to increase the awareness of the community and its stake in the safety and security of the school.

Within its Emergency Procedures Guidelines, MeyerPark incorporated all local and national contact numbers for many emergency contact agencies (such as suicide prevention, mobile crisis services, victim assistance, runaway hotline, crisis intervention, family violence hotline, hazardous materials/poison center, office of emergency preparedness, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, American Red Cross, National Weather Service, Emergency Broadcasting System, and many other relevant contact numbers) to serve as a quick emergency reference for stakeholders. MeyerPark also has access to an on-call counseling service in the event of a student death or similar traumatic event.

MeyerPark is commended for its extended efforts to engage the emergency services organizations within its community in its safety and security practices to provide stakeholders with better awareness and to help students make connections with support available from various emergency preparedness community members.

EFFECTIVE SECURITY ENTRANCE PROCESS

MeyerPark implemented an effective safety and security process for the control of access to its buildings. Based on interviews and observation, it was noted that all visitors must ring a bell to access the front office. Signage on the outside of the building directs visitors to come to the front office as a means of entering the facility. The staff in the front office can see who is at the main entrance before allowing them to enter. Once an individual is cleared to enter, they must sign in on the campus log, show a proper ID, and obtain a visitor pass. Staff and teachers are trained to question individuals in the building not wearing a proper visitor badge and to escort

them to the front office if necessary. Teachers and staff are trained to keep strangers in the front of the building and use predetermined alert codes which indicate a stranger is in the building.

Surveillance cameras are used throughout the building, including the front and rear entrances, in key areas to monitor areas of concern or potential safety and/or security situations. These cameras are monitored at the front office. The front and rear doors are locked at the beginning of school and stay locked for the exception of certain times of the day for students who need to exit for activities or other required reasons. All doors are equipped with panic hardware so individuals inside can leave in the event of an emergency, and visitors cannot enter.

It is equally important that the campus requires visitors to return their identification badge and sign out of the building. MeyerPark has established a verification process for parents or guardians to be authorized to pick up children by requiring each parent to sign a parent authorization form.

The building has a key control process and master keys are only provided to selected staff (such as a lead teacher, principal, administrators, and others as necessary). The building is securely locked during summer vacation. Keys must always be turned in when an individual leaves for vacation.

Key individuals, such as teachers, have walkie-talkies for effective communication which can be used in case of emergency. Additionally, the front office has a code system that can be used through the walkie-talkie to transmit an emergency signal to all staff in the event of an emergency. Classrooms have the use of radios for communication.

MeyerPark is commended for its efforts to secure access to its facility and to provide effective safety and security for its employees and students.

CAMPUS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Students are engaged in campus prevention and intervention programs regarding crisis management situations. The Parent Information Guide contains a section on Lion Pride noting: “respect right and privileges of other students, teachers, and staff; respect property of others, including school property and facilities; cooperate with or assist school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.” There is a section on school safety indicating that “providing a safe learning environment is the school’s top priority and as a proactive step the campus has a safety and crisis response procedure.”

Prevention and intervention programs regarding crisis management are incorporated into classroom activities and individual teachers from time to time coordinate visits from local law enforcement and/or fire departments to visit classrooms and increase student awareness of what the agency is all about and how students can assist both the school and the community in situations.

The campus holds a monthly assembly for students. Several times a year, the older children are involved in acting out how to respond to selected crisis management situations for the rest of the student body. Because of their involvement in the process, students are more aware of the situations being displayed during the assembly.

MeyerPark is commended for its process and efforts to engage students in campus prevention and intervention activities.

DETAILED FINDINGS

EVALUATION OF SAFETY AND SECURITY PROGRAMS (REC. 20)

MeyerPark has not implemented a formal plan and process to evaluate its safety and security programs.

MeyerPark conducts monthly fire and evacuation drills and has developed a comprehensive set of procedures that provides details on how staff should respond to specific emergency events. Information on these procedures is provided to staff during annual orientation sessions prior to the beginning of school. However, these routine activities are not evaluated by MeyerPark administration to determine any weaknesses identified during the drill or exercise that could be used to improve these drills.

A survey conducted by the review team included statements on safety and security. The survey was issued to school teachers and staff as well as parents. **Exhibit 5–1** shows attitudes expressed regarding the safety and security program for MeyerPark Elementary. Overall, both teachers/staff and parents have a positive attitude regarding the safety and security program at MeyerPark. The question regarding “school disturbances are infrequent” was responded to favorably, with more than 75 percent agreement for both stakeholder groups. “Students feel safe and secure at school” was only rated by the parents and received a 96 percent agreement rating indicating the children and parents feel safe at the campus. Finally, the statement “Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds” also received high marks and more than 70 percent of teachers/staff and 88 percent of parents

**EXHIBIT 5-1
MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY SURVEY RESULTS**

| SURVEY RESPONDENTS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| Survey Question: "School disturbances are infrequent." | | | | | | |
| Teachers/Staff | 23.5% | 52.9% | 11.8% | 5.9% | 5.9% | 0.0% |
| Parents | 51.7% | 37.9% | 6.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.4% |
| Survey Question: "Security personnel have a good working relationship with Principal and Teachers." | | | | | | |
| Teachers/Staff | 17.6% | 5.9% | 23.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 52.9% |
| Survey Question: "Security staff are respected and liked by the students they serve." | | | | | | |
| Teachers/Staff | 17.6% | 5.9% | 23.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 52.9% |
| Survey Question: "Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds." | | | | | | |
| Teachers/Staff | 41.2% | 29.4% | 17.6% | 5.9% | 5.9% | 0.0% |
| Parents | 60.7% | 28.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 0.0% |
| Survey Question: "Students feel safe and secure at school." | | | | | | |
| Parents | 53.6% | 42.9% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, May 2012.

agreed with the statement. When stakeholders feel that safety and security is effective, it reflects positively on the school; however, it is not an indication that the school's safety and security program is comprehensive and continually revisited for improvements.

Survey statements also probed stakeholder perception regarding internal relationships between security personnel and students, teachers, and staff. In both instances, 76.4 percent of stakeholders responded with "no opinion" or "N/A." This is an indication that stakeholders either do not know who security personnel are or do not feel the relationship is good. The high response rate for "No Opinion" and "N/A" may indicate that the level of awareness and elevation of these relationships within the school could be improved once an assessment is completed. Identification of weaknesses, such as low awareness of the safety and security program, is a result of an effective program evaluation.

Interview results indicate the needs for safety and security within the facility are largely determined by the growth of the campus. MeyerPark implied that as the enrollment increases, the need for more safety and security practices would become more relevant. Waiting for enrollment to increase ignores the important aspect of safeguarding existing students and staff while making sure that the students and classrooms are the immediate priority.

A self-administered safety and security audit for school campuses is conducted annually by Texas school districts. The audit is part of an annual process required by the Texas

Education Code with a formal progress report required every three years. Each year, school districts typically conduct a walk around to follow-up on the prior assessment. A formal report is shared with the principal and it is up to the campus to implement any recommendations.

The Texas School Safety Center resources offers safety and security audit assistance as a means of supporting the school's efforts to implement a more formal process for evaluating the effectiveness of its safety and security programs. These resources include:

- school facility safety and security audit toolkits;
- school facility safety and security audit survey templates for teachers, staff, students, and parents;
- interview guides for a school facility safety and security audit;
- report templates for a school facility safety and security audit;
- training for a school district facility safety and security audit;
- list of best practices for school safety and security standards;
- emergency operations planning (EOP) guides and checklists; and
- training on other topics such as gang awareness, suicide prevention, digital wellness, and school violence, to name a few. Currently, the center has

approximately 25 trainings scheduled through the end of 2012. A complete list of upcoming trainings can be reviewed on the web at www.txssc.txstate.edu. The Texas School Safety Center allows charter school representatives to attend trainings being delivered at nearby public school districts at no charge; however, at this time, the center is not able to provide on site training to charter schools.

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPAGGA) *School Safety and Security Best Practices Self-Assessment* is part of a State of Florida requirement for its schools to conduct an annual self-assessment of their safety and security programs. The form is available at www.fldoe.org. The self-assessment form covers criteria in the areas of performance effectiveness and efficiency; emergency and safety procedures; and school safety plan with stakeholder input, to name a few.

In addition, the New Jersey Department of Education provides its schools with a school safety and security plan review checklist which can easily be reviewed and selectively adopted to provide some quality guidance in what and how to best conduct a review of the safety and security process and plan for its programs. The checklist provides an outline of key areas to be evaluated such as school security incident reports; physical environment in and around the campus; and the likelihood of a natural disaster.

MeyerPark should develop and implement a formal plan and process to annually evaluate its safety and security programs. Consideration should be given to using support material designed to aid schools in developing and using the self-assessment tool, such as are available through the Texas School Safety Center.

The administrative services director and operations manager should initiate the process by establishing a collaborative process with the MPES Crisis Team. The Crisis Team should be delegated responsibility for establishing contacts and developing the necessary assessment tools. Individual members should be given responsibility for specific activities and then convene a meeting to share and establish a way of work to develop the necessary documents and communication activities.

For example, an evaluation checklist measuring the effectiveness of the process should be developed. This form would be completed after each fire and evacuation drill and a summary provided to the safety and security contact person. Some factors to be considered as MeyerPark establishes its

assessment tools are orderliness of the evacuation, participant's awareness of their required location, and the amount of time needed to evacuate the facility by each group.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN (REC. 21)

MeyerPark has not developed and implemented a formal disaster recovery plan.

Research indicates that schools are increasingly more susceptible to crisis situations that adversely affect large numbers of students and faculty. Schools today are facing new types of trauma and emergencies that were almost nonexistent 20 years ago, including hostage-taking, sniper attacks, murders, terrorist activities and bomb scares to name a few. These types of situations cause an aftermath of issues difficult to predict. The more direct the exposure to the event, the higher the risk for emotional harm. This requires post-intervention planning to assist students and staff to recover from the physical, psychological and emotional trauma associated with tragic events. As mentioned previously, MeyerPark has access to an on-call counseling service in the event of a student death or similar traumatic event. The recovery plan should provide immediate help and referral procedures for those in need.

All disaster or crisis situations must be considered in the recovery plan so that the campus is prepared to deal with situations that might arise. Disaster planning is more than dealing with response activities. It is also being prepared for recovery situations regardless of the crisis or disaster. Finding the school in the middle of a crisis recovery without a comprehensive plan is not the appropriate situation for making decisions that impact students and faculty and could have unintended negative consequences.

The Emergency Procedure Guidelines identified the activities related to post-crisis intervention and lists crisis team members and emergency contact numbers. The emergency preparedness guidelines also include alternative sites selected if necessary. The sites were noted for evacuation/relocation centers, but not necessarily recovery sites to allow the school to continue to function for an undefined amount of time.

The Texas School Safety Center provides training on emergency operations, including "response or recovery efforts." Information on training dates, times, and locations can be found on the Center's website (www.txssc.txstate.edu).

MeyerPark should develop and implement a formal disaster recovery plan to address key actions necessary after an emergency event. A member of the MeyerPark Crisis Team should be selected to receive training on recovery planning and serve as the primary coordinator to accomplish this recommendation.

Once the school has prepared and completed its background research, the campus should direct the MeyerPark Crisis Team to collaborate and develop the plan, including assessment tools, and have it approved by school leadership. After the school has an acceptable plan it should be approved by the Board of Directors, and implemented, monitored, and updated at least annually.

The MeyerPark recovery plan must consider an alternative location to establish the continuation of the educational process and the necessary support functions to conduct business. In addition to weather, consideration must be given to the recovery steps necessary to deal with a major event that destroys or renders a major portion of the facility unusable. This should include a process for establishing communications; the ability to provide the proper information systems or technology support to the operations; a method for document retrieval from the dislocated facility; and the ability to continue with all financial services and human resource support in order to conduct business.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

IDENTIFICATION BADGES (REC. 22)

Personal identification policies while on site do not extend to MeyerPark staff.

The school has established an effective entrance and access process for students, parents and visitors. This includes requiring each visitor to obtain a visitor's pass so that they are properly identified while in a facility. However, this process does not extend to include school personnel. Not including staff in the security access and control process sends the wrong message to other stakeholders about consistency in school safety and security and can create a breach of effective safety and security practices.

MeyerPark Elementary should issue identification badges to all staff and require employee display of their badges at all times while on campus. Individuals who are authorized to be on campus should be clearly identifiable, even from a distance.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

PLAYGROUND SAFETY (REC. 23)

MeyerPark playground safety and security standards and practices are inadequate, increasing risk of injury on playground grounds.

During on site interviews, playground safety was discussed as a concern by staff and an observation of the playground noted several potential safety concerns:

- the blacktop road entrance to the current playground area was deteriorated to the point that large sections of the road were broken apart and loose, making walking to the play area a safety concern;
- the entrance gate is secured by a lock, but can easily be broken without much effort or, at a minimum, the gate can be pushed apart to allow entrance without opening the gate;
- the playground equipment itself had several areas that protruded in places that were potential injury hazards for students;
- one side of the climbing area had what appeared to be indented steps which were completely filled with water and trash and appeared to have mold indicating the area had not been cleaned in some time; and
- the area around and beneath the equipment was deteriorated and the weed-control mesh was protruding in numerous places allowing areas for someone to run and easily trip and create potential injury situations.

Although Meyerpark staff indicated that mowing of the playground occurred monthly, the observed condition of the play area does not support that statement.

Exhibit 5–2 entitled *Avoiding the Dirty Dozen of Playground Safety* is extracted from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Forum on Education Statistics, and 'Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities.' The criteria can be used as a guide in making sure that playground safety is incorporated into the safety and security assessment process for MeyerPark as well as being part of its facilities assessment process. The exhibit identifies comments specifically related to MeyerPark to help capture examples of concern.

EXHIBIT 5–2
ENSURING SCHOOL FACILITIES: AVOIDING “THE DIRTY DOZEN” OF PLAYGROUND SAFETY

| ISSUE | DESCRIPTION | MEYERPARK |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Improper protective surfacing | The surface or ground under and around playground equipment should be soft enough to cushion a fall. Improper surfacing material under playground equipment is the leading cause of playground-related injuries. Hard surfaces such as concrete, blacktop, packed earth, or grass are not acceptable in fall zones. In fact, a fall onto one of these hard surfaces could be life-threatening. Acceptable surfaces include hardwood fiber, mulch, sand, and pea gravel. These surfaces must be maintained at a depth of 12 inches, kept free of standing water and debris, and prevented from becoming compacted through routine maintenance efforts. Synthetic or rubber tiles and mats also are appropriate for use under play equipment. | Inadequate |
| Inadequate fall zone | A “fall zone” or “use zone” is the area around and beneath playground equipment where a child might fall. A fall zone should be covered with protective surfacing material and extend a minimum of 6 feet in all directions from the edge of stationary play equipment such as climbers and chin-up bars. The fall zone at the bottom or exit area of a slide should extend a minimum of 6 feet from the end of the slide for slides 4 feet or less in height. For slides higher than 4 feet, add 4 feet to the entrance height of the slide to determine how far the surfacing should extend from the end of the slide. Swings require a much larger fall zone. It should extend twice the height of the pivot or swing hanger in front of and behind the swings’ seats. It should also extend 6 feet to the side of the support structure. | Not determined |
| Protrusion and entanglement hazards | A protrusion hazard is a piece of hardware that might be capable of impaling or cutting a child if a child should fall against it. Some protrusions also are capable of catching strings or items of clothing, causing entanglement that could result in strangulation. Examples of protrusion and entanglement hazards include bolt ends that extend more than two threads beyond the face of the nut, hardware configurations that form a hook or leave a gap or space between components, and open “S” type hooks. Rungs or handholds that protrude outward from a support structure may be capable of causing eye injury. Special attention should be paid to the area at the top of slides and sliding devices. Ropes should be anchored securely at both ends and not be capable of forming a loop or noose. | Wear & tear indicated several areas of concern |
| Entrapment in openings | Enclosed openings on playground equipment must be checked for head entrapment hazards. Children often enter openings feet first and attempt to slide through the opening. If the opening is not large enough it may allow the body to pass through the opening and trap the head. Thus no opening on playground equipment should measure between 3 ½ inches and 9 inches in diameter. | Acceptable |
| Insufficient equipment spacing | Improper spacing between pieces of play equipment can cause overcrowding of a play area, which may create hazards. Fall zones for equipment that is higher than 24 inches above the ground cannot overlap. Therefore, there should be a minimum of 12 feet between two play structures to provide room for children to circulate and prevent the possibility of a child falling off one structure and striking another. Swings and other pieces of moving equipment should be located in an area away from other structures. | Inadequate |
| Trip hazards | Tripping hazards are created by play structure components (or other items) on the playground. Exposed concrete footings, abrupt changes in surface elevations, containment borders, tree roots, tree stumps, and rocks are all common tripping hazards that are found in or near play equipment. | Inadequate |
| Lack of supervision | Playground supervision directly relates to the overall safety of the environment. A play area should be designed so that it is easy for a caregiver to observe children at play. | Acceptable |
| Age-inappropriate activities | Children’s developmental needs vary greatly from age 2 to age 12. In an effort to provide a challenging and safe play environment for all ages, playground equipment must be appropriate for the age of the intended user. Areas for preschool-age children should be separate from areas intended for school-age children. | Not Determined |
| Lack of maintenance | A Systematic preventive maintenance program is required to keep playgrounds in safe condition. There should not be missing, broken, or worn-out components, and all hardware should be secure. The wood, metal, or plastic should not show signs of fatigue or deterioration. All parts should be stable, without apparent signs of loosening. The surfacing material also must be maintained, and signs of vandalism should be noted, remedied, and subsequently monitored. | Inadequate |

**EXHIBIT 5–2 (CONTINUED)
ENSURING SCHOOL FACILITIES: AVOIDING “THE DIRTY DOZEN” OF PLAYGROUND SAFETY**

| ISSUE | DESCRIPTION | MEYERPARK |
|--|--|--|
| Pinch, crush, shearing, and sharp-edge hazards | Components in the play equipment should be inspected to make sure there are no sharp edges or points that could cut skin. Moving components such as suspension bridges, track rides, merry-go-rounds, seesaws, and some swings should be checked to make sure that there are no moving parts or mechanisms that might crush or pinch a child’s finger. | Wear & tear indicated areas of concern |
| Platforms without guardrails | Elevated surfaces such as platforms, ramps, and bridge ways should have guardrails that will prevent accidental falls. Equipment intended for preschool-age children should have guardrails on any elevated surface higher than 20 inches. Equipment intended for school-age children should have guardrails on elevated surfaces higher than 30 inches. | Inadequate |
| Equipment not recommended for the public | Accidents associated with the following equipment have resulted in the Consumer Product Safety Commission recommending that they not be used in playgrounds: Heavy swings (such as animal-figure swings) and multiple-occupancy glider-type swings; Free-winging ropes that may fray or form a loop; Swinging exercise rings and trapeze bars that are considered to be athletic equipment and, therefore, are not recommended for public playgrounds. Overhead hanging rings with short chins (generally four to eight rings) are acceptable on public playground equipment. | Not determined |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, NCES 2003-347.

The second MeyerPark campus located at the Main Street location has a quality playground which is safe and secure. The review team found no safety and security issues with this site. This facility is a role model of what a playground facility should represent.

MeyerPark should prioritize the playground area as a risk to the safety and security of the children and move forward with improvement plans. During on site interviews, MPES staff indicated they were trying to improve the playground. The operations manager should use the criteria in **Exhibit 5–2** as a basis for developing a playground checklist to be used when the playground is checked, and the sheet should be signed, dated and maintained in the front office as part of regular discussions about facilities. A playground assessment should be part of the annual facility assessment process of the safety and security programs. Mowing the area more frequently is another step to improve the playground.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Following on site work, it was noted that MeyerPark expended \$450 for playground maintenance. Since the school is planning to improve the playground, MeyerPark has already allocated funds for this purpose.

FISCAL IMPACT

Some of the recommendations provided in this report are based on state or federal laws, rules or regulations, and should be promptly addressed. Other recommendations are based on comparisons to state or industry standards, or accepted best practices, and should be reviewed to determine the level of priority, appropriate timeline, and method of implementation.

| RECOMMENDATION | | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | TOTAL | ONE |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | | | | | | 5-YEAR | TIME |
| | | | | | | | (COSTS) | (COSTS) |
| | | | | | | | OR | OR |
| | | | | | | | SAVINGS | SAVINGS |
| CHAPTER 5: SAFETY AND SECURITY | | | | | | | | |
| 20. | Develop and implement a formal plan and process to annually evaluate safety and security programs. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 21. | Develop and implement a formal disaster recovery plan to address key actions necessary after an emergency event. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 22. | Issue identification badges to all staff and require employee display of these badges at all times while on campus. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 23. | Prioritize the playground area as a risk to safety and security of the children and move forward with improvement plans. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| TOTALS-CHAPTER 5 | | \$0 |

APPENDICES

MEYERPARK ELEMENTARY

TEACHER/STAFF SURVEY

Completion Rate = 66.7 Percent

N = 18

Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

| | LESS THAN 2 YEARS | 2 TO 5 YEARS | 6 TO 10 YEARS | 11 TO 15 YEARS | 16 YEARS OR MORE |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1a. How long have you been employed by your charter school? | 43.8% | 37.5% | 18.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | TEACHER | SUPPORT STAFF | | | |
| 1b. Position at school: | 81.3% | 18.8% | | | |
| | ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | HIGH SCHOOL | MULTIPLE GRADE RANGES | OTHER |
| 1c. What school level is the campus on which you are located? | 93.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |

B. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 2. School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management. | 31.3% | 37.5% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% |
| 3. The superintendent(headmaster) is an effective leader. | 56.3% | 31.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 4. The school administration is efficient in providing services to our school. | 50.0% | 37.5% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 5. Our charter school administration is efficient. | 50.0% | 37.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 6. Our charter school's strategic plan guides daily decision making. | 31.3% | 43.8% | 18.8% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 7. Most administrative practices in our charter school are highly efficient and effective. | 37.5% | 50.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 8. Faculty and staff who do not meet expected work standards are held accountable for improving their performance. | 43.8% | 37.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 9. The schools communicates with parents in a timely manner. | 25.0% | 68.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 10. Our charter has a sufficient number of volunteers to help student and school programs. | 13.3% | 20.0% | 13.3% | 33.3% | 6.7% | 13.3% |

B. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 11. School salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market. | 0.0% | 25.0% | 31.3% | 25.0% | 12.5% | 6.3% |
| 12. The school has an effective employee recruitment program. | 6.3% | 43.8% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 18.8% |
| 13. The staff development program relevant to my position is effective. | 13.3% | 53.3% | 20.0% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% |
| 14. I receive an annual personnel evaluation. | 25.0% | 37.5% | 25.0% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 15. The school states qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion. | 20.0% | 20.0% | 26.7% | 13.3% | 6.7% | 13.3% |
| 16. Employees are rewarded for superior performance or are counseled about less than satisfactory performance. | 25.0% | 37.5% | 31.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 17. The school has a fair and timely grievance process. | 25.0% | 12.5% | 37.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.0% |
| 18. The school health insurance package meets my needs. | 6.3% | 6.3% | 50.0% | 0.0% | 25.0% | 12.5% |

C. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 19. Education is the main priority in our school. | 56.3% | 37.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 20. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective. | 37.5% | 56.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 21. The needs of the college-bound student are being met. | 13.3% | 26.7% | 20.0% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 33.3% |
| 22. Our school provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects. | 37.5% | 50.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% |
| 23. The curriculum guides are effective tools. | 31.3% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 24. The school has effective educational programs for the following: | | | | | | |
| a) Reading | 31.3% | 56.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| b) Writing | 31.3% | 50.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| c) Mathematics | 31.3% | 56.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| d) Science | 25.0% | 62.5% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| e) English or Language Arts | 31.3% | 56.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| f) Computer Instruction | 0.0% | 26.7% | 33.3% | 26.7% | 6.7% | 6.7% |
| g) Social Studies (history or geography) | 28.6% | 50.0% | 14.3% | 0.0% | 7.1% | 0.0% |
| h) Fine Arts | 18.8% | 68.8% | 0.0% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| i) Physical Education | 7.1% | 14.3% | 28.6% | 42.9% | 7.1% | 0.0% |
| j) Business Education | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.0% | 31.3% | 6.3% | 37.5% |

C. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| k) Career and Technology Education | 0.0% | 12.5% | 25.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 50.0% |
| l) Foreign Language | 6.3% | 37.5% | 18.8% | 31.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 25. The school has effective programs for the following: | | | | | | |
| a) Library Service | 0.0% | 12.5% | 25.0% | 31.3% | 12.5% | 18.8% |
| b) Honors/Gifted and Talented, and Advanced Placement Education | 0.0% | 6.3% | 37.5% | 25.0% | 12.5% | 18.8% |
| c) Special Education | 0.0% | 18.8% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| d) Head Start and Even Start | 6.3% | 18.8% | 31.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 37.5% |
| e) Dyslexia | 0.0% | 20.0% | 40.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 26.7% |
| f) Student mentoring | 7.1% | 42.9% | 21.4% | 7.1% | 7.1% | 14.3% |
| g) Literacy | 6.3% | 43.8% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.0% |
| h) Drop-out Prevention | 6.3% | 6.3% | 43.8% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 37.5% |
| i) Summer school | 26.7% | 66.7% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| j) Alternative Education | 6.7% | 0.0% | 33.3% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 53.3% |
| k) "English as a second language" | 6.7% | 0.0% | 40.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 40.0% |
| l) Career counseling | 6.7% | 0.0% | 26.7% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 53.3% |
| m) College counseling | 6.7% | 0.0% | 26.7% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 53.3% |
| 26. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school. | 12.5% | 56.3% | 18.8% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 27. Teacher turnover is low. | 12.5% | 43.8% | 18.8% | 12.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| 28. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings. | 12.5% | 50.0% | 18.8% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| 29. The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable. | 26.7% | 60.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 30. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse. | 6.3% | 37.5% | 6.3% | 18.8% | 6.3% | 25.0% |
| 31. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups. | 31.3% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 32. Our charter school can be described as a "good place to learn." | 50.0% | 31.3% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |

D. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|------|
| 33. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning. | 18.8% | 31.3% | 31.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| 34. Our charter school is clean. | 40.0% | 40.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 0.0% |
| 35. Our charter school is well-maintained. | 31.3% | 50.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 36. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly. | 53.3% | 40.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 0.0% |

D. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 37. Our charter school has sufficient space and facilities to support its instructional programs. | 6.7% | 40.0% | 20.0% | 20.0% | 13.3% | 0.0% |
| 38. Our facilities are open for community use. | 0.0% | 12.5% | 37.5% | 18.8% | 12.5% | 18.8% |
| 39. Our charter school has an effective energy management program. | 12.5% | 12.5% | 43.8% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 18.8% |

E. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PURCHASING

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 40. Site-based budgeting is used effectively. | 6.3% | 6.3% | 50.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 31.3% |
| 41. Funds are allocated fairly. | 0.0% | 18.8% | 37.5% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 37.5% |
| 42. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques. | 0.0% | 37.5% | 18.8% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 37.5% |
| 43. The school's financial reports are easy to read and understand. | 0.0% | 13.3% | 40.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 46.7% |
| 44. The school's financial reports are readily available to parents and community members. | 0.0% | 6.3% | 50.0% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 37.5% |
| 45. Because of effective internal controls, our school is safe from abuse or misuse of funds. | 6.3% | 31.3% | 31.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 25.0% |
| 46. The school contract management is efficient and effective. | 13.3% | 13.3% | 40.0% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 26.7% |
| 47. The school provides teachers and administrators appropriate materials in a timely manner. | 25.0% | 62.5% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 48. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor so I get what I need when I need it. | 0.0% | 43.8% | 37.5% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 12.5% |
| 49. The school acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost. | 0.0% | 37.5% | 43.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 18.8% |
| 50. Students are issued textbooks in good shape and in a timely manner. | 31.3% | 43.8% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 12.5% |

F. SAFETY AND SECURITY

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|------|
| 51. School disturbances are infrequent. | 18.8% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 52. Gangs are not a problem in this school. | 56.3% | 37.5% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 53. Drugs are not a problem in this school. | 50.0% | 43.8% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

F. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 54. Vandalism is not a problem in this school. | 50.0% | 37.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 55. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers. | 12.5% | 6.3% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 56.3% |
| 56. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve. | 12.5% | 6.3% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 56.3% |
| 57. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the school. | 12.5% | 0.0% | 43.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 43.8% |
| 58. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct. | 31.3% | 56.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| 59. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds. | 37.5% | 31.3% | 18.8% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |

G. OVERALL OPERATIONS

| CHARTER SCHOOL OPERATION | SHOULD BE ELIMINATED | NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT | NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT | ADEQUATE | OUTSTANDING | DON'T KNOW |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| a) Strategic Planning | 0.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 25.0% | 12.5% | 50.0% |
| b) Curriculum Planning | 0.0% | 12.5% | 12.5% | 18.8% | 37.5% | 18.8% |
| c) Facilities Planning | 0.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 13.3% | 13.3% | 60.0% |
| d) Budgeting | 0.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 12.5% | 75.0% |
| e) Financial Management | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 6.3% | 18.8% | 68.8% |
| f) Asset Management | 0.0% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 13.3% | 80.0% |
| g) Risk Management | 0.0% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 80.0% |
| h) Program Evaluation | 0.0% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 13.3% | 73.3% |
| i) Instructional Coordination | 0.0% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 20.0% | 13.3% | 53.3% |
| j) Student Support Services | 0.0% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 18.8% | 25.0% | 43.8% |
| k) Federal Programs Coordination | 0.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 18.8% | 0.0% | 75.0% |
| l) Instructional Technology | 0.0% | 12.5% | 18.8% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 56.3% |
| m) Professional Development | 0.0% | 12.5% | 12.5% | 31.3% | 12.5% | 31.3% |
| n) Facilities Maintenance | 0.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 18.8% | 25.0% | 43.8% |
| o) Custodial Services | 0.0% | 6.3% | 18.8% | 18.8% | 25.0% | 31.3% |
| p) Safety And Security | 0.0% | 6.3% | 12.5% | 18.8% | 18.8% | 43.8% |

H. GENERAL QUESTIONS

| SURVEY STATEMENT | EXCELLENT | GOOD | FAIR | POOR | DON'T KNOW |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 60. I think the overall quality of education in our charter school is: | 31.3% | 50.0% | 12.5% | 6.3% | 0.0% |

H. GENERAL QUESTIONS

| SURVEY STATEMENT | IMPROVING | STAYING THE SAME | GETTING WORSE | DON'T KNOW |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 61. I think the overall quality of education in our charter school is: | 68.8% | 18.8% | 0.0% | 12.5% |

| SURVEY STATEMENT | HIGHLY EFFICIENT | ABOVE AVERAGE IN EFFICIENCY | AVERAGE IN EFFICIENCY | LESS EFFICIENT THAN MOST OTHER CHARTER SCHOOLS | DON'T KNOW |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 62. The overall operation of our charter school is: | 25.0% | 31.3% | 25.0% | 18.8% | 0.0% |

PARENT SURVEY

Completion Rate = 13.2 Percent

N = 30

Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

| | 0 TO 5 YEARS | 6 TO 10 YEARS | 11 YEARS OR MORE |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. How long has your child attended the charter school? | 90.9% | 9.1% | 0.0% |

B. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 2. School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management. | 44.0% | 40.0% | 12.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.0% |
| 3. The superintendent (headmaster) is an effective leader. | 60.7% | 21.4% | 17.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 4. The school administration is efficient in providing services to our school. | 50.0% | 35.7% | 10.7% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 5. The charter school's financial reports are easy to read and understand. | 33.3% | 14.8% | 40.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 11.1% |
| 6. The charter school's financial reports are readily available to parents and community members. | 26.9% | 19.2% | 38.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 15.4% |
| 7. The charter school communicates with parents in a timely manner. | 55.6% | 25.9% | 3.7% | 7.4% | 3.7% | 3.7% |
| 8. Charter school facilities are available for community use. | 26.9% | 19.2% | 38.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 15.4% |
| 9. The charter school has a sufficient number of volunteers to help with student and school programs. | 32.1% | 39.3% | 21.4% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 3.6% |
| 10. The charter school's administration is efficient. | 53.6% | 39.3% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 11. The charter school's strategic plan guides daily decision making. | 46.4% | 35.7% | 7.1% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 3.6% |
| 12. Most administrative practices in the charter school are highly efficient and effective. | 50.0% | 35.7% | 14.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 13. Faculty and staff who do not meet expected work standards are held accountable for improving their performance. | 42.9% | 25.0% | 17.9% | 0.0% | 7.1% | 7.1% |

C. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 14. The charter school provides a high quality education. | 69.2% | 26.9% | 3.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 15. The needs of the college-bound student are being met. | 42.3% | 23.1% | 15.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 19.2% |
| 16. The charter school has effective educational programs for the following: | | | | | | |
| a) Reading | 62.1% | 34.5% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| b) Writing | 62.1% | 37.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| c) Mathematics | 62.1% | 34.5% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| d) Science | 62.1% | 24.1% | 10.3% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| e) English or Language Arts | 62.1% | 31.0% | 6.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| f) Computer Instruction | 48.3% | 20.7% | 24.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.9% |
| g) Social Studies (history or geography) | 58.6% | 34.5% | 6.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| h) Fine Arts | 60.7% | 32.1% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.6% |
| i) Physical Education | 51.9% | 29.6% | 14.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.7% |
| j) Business Education | 28.6% | 21.4% | 21.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 28.6% |
| k) Career and Technology Education | 22.2% | 29.6% | 22.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.9% |
| l) Foreign Language | 20.7% | 48.3% | 20.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 10.3% |
| 17. The charter school has effective programs for the following: | | | | | | |
| a) Library Service | 27.6% | 37.9% | 13.8% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 17.2% |
| b) Honors/Gifted and Talented, and Advanced Placement Education | 28.6% | 25.0% | 21.4% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 21.4% |
| c) Special Education | 20.7% | 20.7% | 31.0% | 3.4% | 3.4% | 20.7% |
| d) Head Start and Even Start | 24.1% | 20.7% | 24.1% | 3.4% | 3.4% | 24.1% |
| e) Dyslexia | 13.8% | 6.9% | 44.8% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 31.0% |
| f) Student mentoring | 24.1% | 31.0% | 20.7% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 20.7% |
| g) Literacy | 27.6% | 27.6% | 20.7% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 20.7% |
| h) Drop-out Prevention | 7.1% | 17.9% | 39.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 35.7% |
| i) Summer school | 14.3% | 35.7% | 21.4% | 0.0% | 3.6% | 25.0% |
| j) Alternative Education | 14.3% | 21.4% | 35.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 28.6% |
| k) "English as a second language" program | 7.1% | 21.4% | 28.6% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 35.7% |
| l) Career counseling | 10.3% | 13.8% | 34.5% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 37.9% |
| m) College counseling | 6.9% | 10.3% | 41.4% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 37.9% |
| 18. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school. | 34.5% | 27.6% | 13.8% | 13.8% | 6.9% | 3.4% |
| 19. Teacher turnover is low. | 41.4% | 31.0% | 13.8% | 10.3% | 0.0% | 3.4% |
| 20. A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child. | 48.3% | 34.5% | 13.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.4% |
| 21. Classrooms are seldom left unattended. | 41.4% | 37.9% | 13.8% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 3.4% |

C. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 22. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach. | 62.1% | 27.6% | 10.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 23. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse. | 34.5% | 20.7% | 24.1% | 13.8% | 0.0% | 6.9% |
| 24. Students are issued textbooks in good shape and in a timely manner. | 40.7% | 25.9% | 22.2% | 3.7% | 0.0% | 7.4% |
| 25. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups. | 51.9% | 22.2% | 22.2% | 3.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 26. The charter school can be described as a "good place to learn." | 63.0% | 29.6% | 7.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

D. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 27. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning. | 44.4% | 18.5% | 33.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.7% |
| 28. Our charter school is clean. | 53.6% | 46.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 29. The charter school is well-maintained. | 48.1% | 51.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 30. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly. | 38.5% | 30.8% | 23.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 7.7% |
| 31. The charter school has sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs. | 35.7% | 53.6% | 3.6% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

E. SAFETY AND SECURITY

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NO OPINION | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 32. Students feel safe and secure at school. | 53.6% | 42.9% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 33. School disturbances are infrequent. | 51.7% | 37.9% | 6.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.4% |
| 34. Gangs are not a problem in this charter school. | 65.5% | 27.6% | 3.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.4% |
| 35. Drugs are not a problem in this charter school. | 60.7% | 35.7% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 36. Vandalism is not a problem in this charter school. | 67.9% | 28.6% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 37. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct. | 67.9% | 21.4% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 3.6% |
| 38. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds. | 60.7% | 28.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 0.0% |

F. OVERALL OPERATIONS

| CHARTER SCHOOL OPERATION | SHOULD BE ELIMINATED | NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT | NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT | ADEQUATE | OUTSTANDING | DON'T KNOW |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------|-------------|------------|
| a) Strategic Planning | 0.0% | 3.8% | 3.8% | 15.4% | 34.6% | 42.3% |
| b) Curriculum Planning | 0.0% | 0.0% | 15.4% | 15.4% | 46.2% | 23.1% |
| c) Facilities Planning | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 20.0% | 24.0% | 56.0% |
| d) Budgeting | 3.8% | 0.0% | 3.8% | 23.1% | 11.5% | 57.7% |
| e) Financial Management | 0.0% | 3.8% | 3.8% | 23.1% | 11.5% | 57.7% |
| f) Asset Management | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 23.1% | 11.5% | 65.4% |
| g) Risk Management | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 23.1% | 19.2% | 57.7% |
| h) Program Evaluation | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.8% | 23.1% | 23.1% | 50.0% |
| i) Instructional Coordination | 0.0% | 7.7% | 0.0% | 30.8% | 23.1% | 38.5% |
| j) Student Support Services | 0.0% | 3.8% | 3.8% | 23.1% | 30.8% | 38.5% |
| k) Federal Programs Coordination | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 19.2% | 23.1% | 57.7% |
| l) Instructional Technology | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.0% | 32.0% | 24.0% | 40.0% |
| m) Professional Development | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 26.9% | 30.8% | 42.3% |
| n) Facilities Maintenance | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 32.0% | 28.0% | 40.0% |
| o) Custodial Services | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 26.9% | 42.3% | 30.8% |
| p) Safety And Security | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 30.8% | 53.8% | 15.4% |

H. GENERAL QUESTIONS

| SURVEY STATEMENT | EXCELLENT | GOOD | FAIR | POOR | DON'T KNOW |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|------|------------|
| 39. I think the overall quality of education in our charter school is: | 69.2% | 19.2% | 11.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

| SURVEY STATEMENT | IMPROVING | STAYING THE SAME | GETTING WORSE | DON'T KNOW |
|--|-----------|------------------|---------------|------------|
| 40. I think the overall quality of education in our charter school is: | 72.0% | 16.0% | 0.0% | 12.0% |

| SURVEY STATEMENT | HIGHLY EFFICIENT | ABOVE AVERAGE IN EFFICIENCY | AVERAGE IN EFFICIENCY | LESS EFFICIENT THAN MOST OTHER CHARTER SCHOOLS | DON'T KNOW |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|------------|
| 41. The overall operation of our charter school is: | 45.8% | 25.0% | 29.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% |