

Government That Works!

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET REVIEW

WOODBRIIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DECEMBER, 2001



GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

The Report of the Woodbridge Township School District

New Jerseyans deserve the best government their tax dollars can provide. Efficiency in government and a common sense approach to the way government does business, both at the state and at the local level, are important to Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco. It means taxpayers should get a dollar's worth of service for every dollar they send to government, whether it goes to Trenton, their local town hall or school board. Government on all levels must stop thinking that money is the solution to their problems and start examining how they spend the money they now have. It is time for government to do something different.

Of major concern is the rising cost of local government. There is no doubt that local government costs and the property taxes that pay for them have been rising steadily over the past decade. The Local Government Budget Review (LGBR) program was created in 1994 by former Governor Whitman, marking the first time the state worked as closely with towns to examine what is behind those costs. The Local Government Budget Review (LGBR) program's mission is simple: to help local governments and school boards find savings and efficiencies without compromising the delivery of services to the public.

The LGBR program utilizes an innovative approach combining the expertise of professionals, primarily from the Departments of Treasury, Community Affairs and Education, with team leaders who are experienced local government managers. In effect, it gives local governments a comprehensive management review and consulting service provided by the state at no cost to them. To find those "cost drivers" in local government, teams review all aspects of local government operation, looking for ways to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

In addition, teams also document those state regulations and mandates which place burdens on local governments without value-added benefits and suggest, on behalf of local officials, which ones should be modified or eliminated. Teams also look for "best practices" and innovative ideas that deserve recognition and that other communities may want to emulate.

Based upon the dramatic success of the program and the number of requests for review services, in July, 1997, the program was expanded, tripling the number of teams in an effort to reach more communities and school districts. The ultimate goal is to provide assistance to local government that results in meaningful property tax relief to the citizens of New Jersey.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

In order for a town, county or school district to participate in the Local Government Budget Review program, a majority of the elected officials must request the help of the review team through a resolution. There is a practical reason for this: to participate, the governing body must agree to make all personnel and records available to the review team, and agree to an open public presentation and discussion of the review team's findings and recommendations.

As part of the review, team members interviewed each elected official, as well as employees, appointees, members of the public, contractors and any other appropriate individuals. The review teams examined current collective bargaining agreements, audit reports, public offering statements, annual financial statements, the municipal code and independent reports and recommendations previously developed for the governmental entities, and other relevant information. The review team physically visits and observes the work procedures and operations throughout the governmental entity to observe employees in the performance of their duties.

In general, the review team received the full cooperation and assistance of all employees and elected officials. That cooperation and assistance was testament to the willingness on the part of most, to embrace recommendations for change. Those officials and employees who remain skeptical of the need for change or improvement will present a significant challenge for those committed to embracing the recommendations outlined in this report.

Where possible, the potential financial impact of an issue or recommendation is provided in this report. The recommendations do not all have a direct or immediate impact on the budget or the tax rate. In particular, the productivity enhancement values identified in this report do not necessarily reflect actual cash dollars to the municipality, but do represent the cost of the entity's current operations and an opportunity to define the value of improving upon such operations. The estimates have been developed in an effort to provide the entity an indication of the potential magnitude of each issue and the savings, productivity enhancement, or cost to the community. We recognize that all of these recommendations cannot be accomplished immediately and that some of the savings will occur only in the first year. Many of these suggestions will require negotiations through the collective bargaining process. We believe, however, that these estimates are conservative and achievable.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET REVIEW
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
WOODBRIIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Local Government Budget Review (LGBR) unit of the New Jersey Department of Treasury conducted an extensive study of the Woodbridge Township School District in response to a request of the Board of education. Some 30 areas were reviewed, resulting in recommended cost savings, commendations and/or managerial reform. Several areas and numerous activities were recognized as best practices, along with other commendations cited in the findings. The following is an executive summary of the findings and recommendations and dollar savings, as appropriate:

Comparative Analyses

Three comparable school districts were selected for statistical data to make many of the recommendations contained in this report. Information from other benchmarking sources, such as New Jersey Department of Education publications, was also utilized.

Administration

According to the Department of Education Comparative Spending Guide, per pupil costs for salaries and benefits for administration in Woodbridge in 1999-00 were \$946, which ranked the district 88th of 95 school districts, ranked low to high. The Woodbridge Township School District total administrative cost in 1999-00 was \$1,078 per pupil, which was the highest of the three comparison districts and \$339 above the three-district average of \$739.

Woodbridge school officials should consider an examination of central office non-certificated supervisors and specialists to determine whether one less person is needed, for savings of \$60,000.

Woodbridge school officials should examine the respective supervisory and department chairperson positions to mitigate any redundancy. Reduction, by the equivalent of three full-time positions, would save the district about \$300,000 in salaries and benefits.

Woodbridge school officials should consider a study of the secretarial staffing of the district. With the recent increase in availability of networked computers and appropriate software, there should be increased efficiency in office operations in both central offices and in schools. The district, over a few years, by attrition, could likely decrease the number of secretaries by, perhaps, 12 or more, which could produce savings of \$360,000 or more in salaries and benefits.

Technology

Township and school district officials are commended for the Tech 2000 implementation to date. With capable management, the technology infrastructure has been thoughtfully planned and implemented with quality standards. Since the Tech 2000 goal of wiring all classrooms and installing about 1,000 computers has yet to be completed, the ultimate success of this shared services project is dependent upon adequate funding by the respective parties.

This report contains five recommendations for telephone cost savings, totaling \$45,800. District officials should evaluate the need and cost effectiveness of the cellular phone service. The use of two-way radios or pager services should also be considered. By utilizing telephone books, computer databases and directory assistance web sites, most directory assistance calls can be eliminated. The district should seek bids for intrastate, interstate, and intralata (toll and long-distance) telephone service.

The district should continue to monitor and evaluate photocopier usage on an annual basis to determine the most cost-effective number and capacity of photocopy machines for each location, for a cost savings of \$31,440.

Instruction

In the DOE Comparative Spending Guide, March, 2001, among the 95 school districts with enrollments of 3,500+ students, the Woodbridge Township School District ranked 56th in total classroom instructional per pupil costs of \$5,259 in 1999-00, compared with a statewide K-12 per pupil median of \$5,135. Woodbridge Township ranked 60th in classroom salaries and benefits with per pupil costs of \$5,073, compared with a statewide median of \$4,835.

Between December, 1998 and December, 2000, there was a disproportionate rise in the number of special education aides. The district is encouraged to review the procedures and assignment of aides/assistants in special education programs. A moderation in growth by eight aides would produce cost savings of \$153,912.

The district should take steps to ensure the enrollment of all Medicaid-eligible students to maximize the financial benefit to the district from the SEMI program. Additional revenue is estimated to be \$1,246 annually.

School officials should consider a review of the policies and practices that result in a relatively large number of general instructional teacher assistants and teacher aides. A reduction of five instructional aides @ \$20,000 in salaries and benefits would produce savings of \$100,000.

Business Office Operations

District officials have done an outstanding job of maximizing investment income. The district should continue to issue requests for proposals from time to time in an effort to maintain the highest rates possible.

Since surplus balances have consistently exceeded estimates from year to year, district officials should consider developing a policy statement on surplus and instituting methods that would result in more accurate annual estimates of budget expenditures, revenues, and surplus balances.

Elimination of two bank accounts that showed zero balances and no activity for the 1999-00 school year would save \$240 in fees.

While the district has comprehensive bidding procedures in place, officials should investigate procedures for purchasing through the state's Distribution and Support Services program, those items where significant savings are identifiable.

The district should review its procedures for the disposal of equipment to ensure that the general fixed asset group is properly updated. This would provide for potential cost savings in insurance premiums, the limiting of exposure in the event of loss, and the more informed decisions on future purchases resulting from accurately estimating fixed assets.

Service Contracts

The district should consider seeking Requests for Proposals (RFP) from a number of firms to promote competitive legal and auditing fees.

Insurance

The team commends district officials for requesting proposals from agents and/or brokers in an effort to obtain the best possible pricing.

Although the district maintains school safety and safety and loss control policies, the team suggests that school officials follow through with the establishment of a formal loss control program.

Facilities and Operations

A few years ago a bond issue referendum on proposed school construction was defeated by a large margin, by local voters. Recent State of New Jersey enactment of the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act will make available significant funding for future local school construction. In the meantime, necessary maintenance to the relatively old school buildings in Woodbridge has consistently been limited over the years due to budget shortfalls. Otherwise, the Woodbridge Township School District has approached the maintenance and custodial services in a methodical and businesslike manner.

District officials should endeavor to utilize the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act to secure funding for needed construction and/or capital improvements. District officials should also consider establishing a Capital Reserve Fund for appropriate school facility expenditures.

Personnel

Woodbridge school officials should examine and modify their personnel policies and recruitment and selection practices to ensure that the best qualified candidates from both within and outside the school district are obtained for all vacancies.

Since instructional salaries constitute such a large portion of the budget, school officials should analyze the schedules of teachers, who are shared in two or more buildings, to reduce travel time between buildings.

Transportation

LGBR commends the district for recognizing the need to reduce costs in the area of special needs routes and bidding those services in-house.

District officials should consider instituting a subscription-busing program for its courtesy busing students. Charging a minimal amount of \$200 per student would allow the district to realize annual revenue of \$249,600.

District officials should consider assessing applications for non-public school transportation to determine if the number of families reimbursed for transportation can be minimized.

Food Services

The district could issue requests for proposals to contract with a private firm to manage its food service program for estimated savings of \$964,761.

Board of Education

It is a good practice to have a policy that sets standards or limits for travel, lodging and meal expenses, for legitimate travel expense reimbursement for board members and district staff. School officials should consider whether the employees and/or the various unions should contribute to staff retirement and awards dinners.

Collective Bargaining Issues

The team commends the district regarding the savings already accomplished through labor negotiations as follows:

- Savings of \$112,000 were accomplished through negotiations on health plan changes (increased deductible, increased out-of-pocket maximum) that took effect on January 1, 2001 the district.
- Raising prescription co-pays resulted in district savings of approximately \$162,000.
- Negotiating the 2.5% rate reduction for dental costs saved an estimated \$32,750 over two years.
- Successfully negotiating a guaranteed 20% rate reduction and a plan design change for vision coverage saved an estimated \$37,000.

In contract negotiations with employee organizations, district officials should consider the following potential savings:

1. Compensation for work performed on recognized holidays should be limited to a maximum of double time pay.
2. Negotiate bus driver pay for actual time worked yielding potential cost savings in A: salary of \$372,000, and B: in overtime payments of \$108,000.
3. Bring overtime payment for all district workers in line with New Jersey's statutory provisions and uniformly limit overtime payments to time worked in excess of eight hours per day/40 hours per week - Potential Cost Savings of \$35,636.

4. Reduce the number of “grandfather” provisions that result in the possibility of 20 or 30-year “phase out” periods, since a proliferation of such clauses can result in increasingly more complex and, therefore, more costly, contract negotiations.
5. Elimination of summer “holiday pay” to the extent that payment is made other than in remuneration for hours worked - Potential Cost Savings: \$279,206.
6. Seek elimination of all vacation leave “cash out” provisions, such as those provided for tradesmen, secretaries and discretionary administrative employees - Potential Cost Savings: \$13,321.
7. Terminate the benefit providing 20 annual non-cumulative sick leave days. Employees would continue to receive the 12 days annual cumulative sick leave days currently provided by contract - Potential Cost Savings: \$221,018.
8. Reduce the cap on supplemental compensation at retirement for unused accumulated sick leave to no more than \$15,000 - Potential Cost Savings: \$1,142,134.
9. Eliminate the grandfather clause extending the 2.5% “computer use” differential – Potential Cost Savings: \$50,000.
10. Address the elimination of the shift assignment differential from the WTEA contract, making shift assignment a condition of employment, rather than a basis for additional employee compensation - Potential Cost Savings: \$17,516.
11. Elimination of salary increments in the form of longevity pay based solely on length of time in employment without reference to on-the-job performance - Potential Cost Savings: \$432,931.

Health Insurance

District officials should consider negotiating additional cost saving measures through employee cost sharing. Employee contributions could result in the following estimated savings:

- Health insurance – A 20% employee contribution of dependent costs would provide the district with savings of \$703,871.
- Prescription drug, dental, and vision premiums – A modest employee contribution of 10% of costs would result in additional saving of \$370,828.

Shared Services

District school officials are commended for participating in the REDI and REAP programs and are encouraged to continue to explore additional areas where shared services would be cost-effective.

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATION, STATE AID
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Administration			
Eliminate one position or not fill assistant superintendent for personnel position	\$60,000		
Reduce supervisory and department chairperson positions by three	\$300,000		
Reduce secretarial staffing by 12 or more	\$360,000		
			\$720,000
Technology			
Utilize two-way radios or pager services instead of cellular phones	\$4,000		
Eliminate directory assistance calls by utilizing telephone books, web sites, etc.	\$5,000		
Seek bids for intrastate, interstate, and intralata telephone service	\$36,800		
Replace low to medium volume machines with lower cost-per-copy machines	\$31,440		
			\$77,240
Instruction			
Review procedures and assignment of aides/assistants in special education		<i>\$153,912</i>	
Ensure enrollment of all Medicaid-eligible students in the SEMI program	\$1,246		
Review policies and practices of teacher assistants and aides, eliminating five	\$100,000		
			\$101,246
Business Office Operation			
Review monthly bank analysis statements for accuracy	\$240		
			\$240
Transportation			
Institute a subscription-busing program	\$249,600		
			\$249,600
Food Service			
Implement maximum cost effective action through privatization	\$964,764		
			\$964,764

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATION, STATE AID
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Collective Bargaining Issues			
Negotiate bus driver pay for actual time worked		\$480,000	
Renegotiate overtime payments to bring in line with NJ statutory provisions		\$35,636	
Negotiate elimination of summer "holiday pay"		\$279,206	
Negotiate to eliminate vacation leave "cash out" provisions		\$13,321	
Reduce annual cumulative sick leave days from 20 to 12		\$221,018	
Reduce cap on supplemental compensation for unused sick leave at retirement		\$1,142,134	
Negotiate elimination of the grandfather clause for secretarial salaries		\$50,000	
Eliminate shift assignment differential		\$17,516	
Negotiate elimination of salary increments in the form of longevity pay		\$432,931	
 <i>Health - Dental - Prescription Benefits</i>			
Negotiate a 20% employee contribution of dependent costs		\$703,871	
Negotiate a 10% employee contribution for prescription, dental & vision benefits		\$370,828	
Total Recommended Savings	\$2,113,090	\$3,900,373	\$2,113,090
*\$3,900,373 not included in savings of \$2,113,090.			
Total Amount Raised for School Tax			\$99,268,647
Savings as a % of School Tax			2%
Total Budget			\$123,280,442
Savings as a % of Budget			2%
Total State Aid			\$22,015,818
Savings as a % of State Aid			10%

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATION, STATE AID
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations

Annual Savings/
Expense

*Potential
Savings

Totals

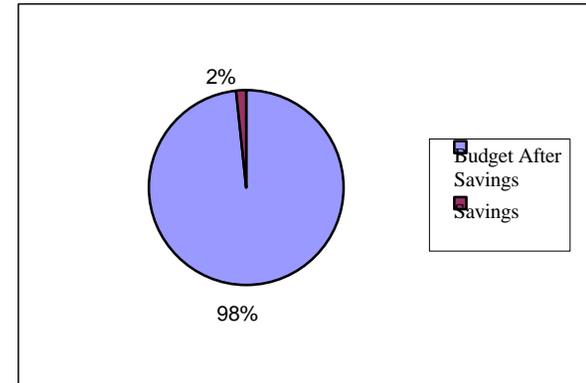
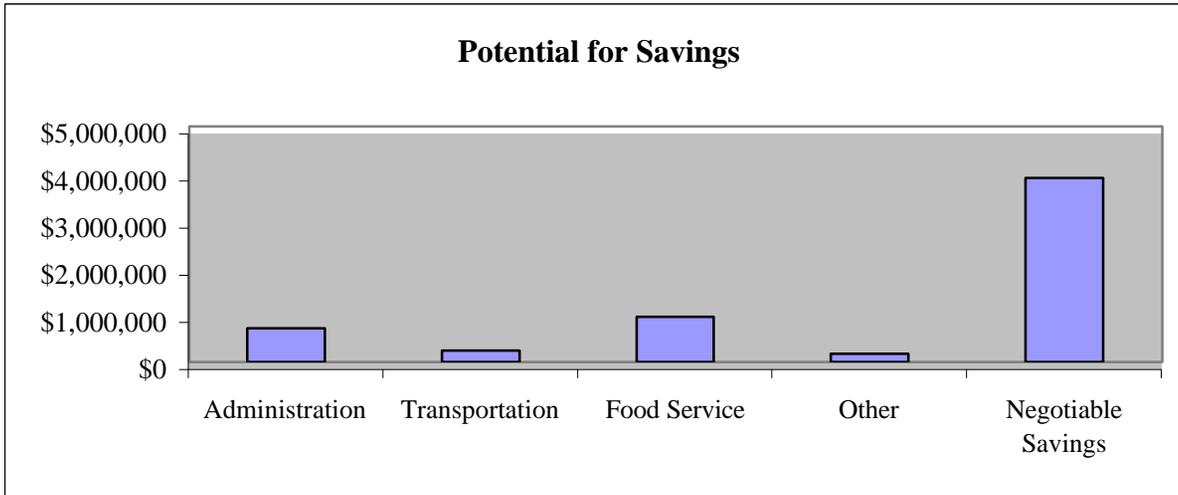


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COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Woodbridge Township had its roots from early settlers who migrated from various areas of New England, Long Island, New York and from Europe in the mid-1660's and in subsequent years. The area was extensive and, actually, covered portions of several present day counties. Various land grants and deeds evolved in conveyance of the lands to the new settlers and resulted in the area being redefined into numerous townships and communities stretching from as far south as Mercer and Burlington Counties and north to Sussex and Warren Counties. In 1665, Governor Philip de Carteret was commissioned to govern the existing province and, with the cooperation of the families that had migrated with him, promoted the settlement of the area. There currently are five wards, comprised of ten communities, that make up the current township. The communities are Avenel, Colonia, Fords, Hopelawn, Iselin, Keasbey, Menlo Park Terrace, Port Reading, Sewaren, and Woodbridge.

Woodbridge, with a 1998 estimated population of about 95,659 residents, is the oldest original township in the state. An elected mayor and nine-member part-time municipal council govern the township. The 1990 Census indicates that the median age of the residents was 35.4 years, with 18,007 persons being under 18 years of age and 12,139 age 65 or older.

The median 1989 household income was \$45,516 and family income was \$50,457, while the per capita income was \$18,213. The township's total civilian labor force in 1990 was 52,074 persons, including 13,227 managers and professionals, 19,018 technicians, sales and administrative support, 4,998 service workers, 5,572 craft and skilled workers, 6,530 laborers, 1,847 self-employed and 201 persons engaged in farming, fishing and forestry. In 1998, the total civilian labor force rose to 54,980. It was reported that the influx of new jobs in the past 10 years has added \$30 million to the area's payroll. The median value of a single family home in 1989 was \$160,000.

The 27 square mile township has a blend of residential and industrial areas and has experienced an estimated increase of over 1,800 new jobs during the last decade. Woodbridge is strategically located and serves as a transportation hub. Woodbridge Township is linked with major highways, such as routes 1, 9, 27, the Garden State Parkway, and the New Jersey Turnpike, that reach the far corners of the state and provide access/connection to other key points, east, west north and south. High-speed Amtrak railway transportation is provided via the Metro Park Railroad Station to New York, New England, and Pennsylvania, as well as to Washington, DC and the rest of the nation. There are four rail lines passing through the township, with two additional commuter railway stations located at Avenel and Woodbridge. The world at large is also accessible via Newark International Airport located relatively nearby and the docks for ocean going ships located in Port Reading. The township is located within an easy commuting distance of many art and entertainment facilities. Shopping can readily be accomplished at the Woodbridge Center, the largest enclosed mall in the east, having some major department stores and more than 200 other retail stores.

Ever since the township's chartering in 1669, the education of area students has been a key priority of the leadership, residents and local educators. The charter originally set aside 100 acres for schools. The district continues, in accord with the district's vision statement, to provide its students to be life-long learners who are able to live and thrive with diversity, rapid change and interdependence. A full range of educational programs and supportive activities is currently available to its 13,000 students who attend the district's 24 area schools. The district endeavors to involve the total community in achieving its educational goals. The 1990 census information indicates that there were 6,150 residents who had eight years or less of schooling, while nearly 25,000 residents were high school graduates and 13,210 had earned college degrees and beyond.

In the 1950's, the district was faced with the need to take immediate action to address the student population growth, lagging maintenance and upkeep of school facilities, plus the capability to adequately house future enrollments. A survey indicated there were three steps that the district should take at that juncture. First, all existing facilities should remain open and operational regardless of their condition. Next, half-day sessions and substandard classrooms should be eliminated. Lastly, there was a need to eliminate all inferior schools. Additionally, the recommended rehabilitation of existing facilities was to take place in accord with the availability of funds. Today, with a gradual increase in student enrollments, the district continues to encounter difficulties in maintaining adequate school facilities.

The Woodbridge Township School District is the sixth largest district in New Jersey. According to the NJEA Research Bulletin A00-1/March, 2001, Basic Statistical Data, 2000 Edition, Woodbridge Township School District had an equalized valuation per pupil of \$460,687, while the state K-12 median was \$436,442. The Woodbridge professional staff members per 1,000 pupils were 89.2 in 1999-00 compared to a Middlesex County average of 87.6 and a state K-12 median of 85.4. The Woodbridge Township equalized school property tax rate in 2000 was \$1.79, compared to \$1.62 for Middlesex County.

The New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) utilizes District Factor Groups (DFGs). Research shows a strong relationship between socioeconomic status and educational outcomes. The state's DFG system is used for analysis of district-by-district test results and in calculating spending differences between districts. Since it has been held that socioeconomic status cannot be measure directly, indicators were selected in formulating a composite statistical index to produce statistical scores, which are used to rank school districts. Districts were divided into eight groups reflecting the lowest to the highest socioeconomic districts starting with A, through B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and ending with J. The DFG for Woodbridge is DE.

I. BEST PRACTICES

A very important part of each Local Government Budget Review report is the Best Practices section. During the course of every review, each review team identifies procedures, programs and practices, which are noteworthy and deserving of recognition. Best practices are presented to encourage replication in communities and schools throughout the state. By implementing these practices, municipalities and school districts can benefit from the Local Government Budget Review process and possibly save considerable expense on their own.

Just as we are not able to identify every area of potential cost savings, the review team cannot cite every area of effective effort. The following are those best practices recognized by the team for cost and/or service delivery effectiveness.

Communicating and Sharing

In Woodbridge, there is an attitude of sharing and cooperation between township and school district officials. The township provides garbage pickup without charge to the school district. The Woodbridge Township Parks and Recreation Department frequently uses the public school buildings and fields. In turn, the township makes its 50 township parks available for scheduling the school district's extracurricular/athletic activities. Township officials surveyed student interests in planning the new community center. The new Colonia Middle School field house was constructed through mutual cooperation and contributions from the Colonia Girls' Softball League, the school district and the township. Township officials have also been active in the public school character education program.

Interlocal Agreements

The school district has several interlocal agreements with the township. As part of the Woodbridge Tech 2000 Project, the township and the school district are implementing a shared computer/network resources program with each of the 24 public schools and four school office buildings. Under this agreement, the township provides the school district with one project manager and two assistant managers for the purpose of managing the shared computer resources program. The district has agreed to pay \$50 per hour for the project manager and \$30 per hour for each of the assistant project managers. The Tech 2000 project is described in the Technology section of this report.

Implementation of phase one of Tech 2000 was funded by contributions of \$1.5 million by the school district, \$1 million by Woodbridge Township and nearly \$1 million by a private firm. A significant amount of free equipment was obtained from the Bell Atlantic Access New Jersey Program. In addition, the school district received \$389,000 in E-rate funding and about \$50,000 in other contributions and grants.

In August, 1999, a lease agreement was signed with Woodbridge Township for the use of the vacant Port Reading Library. District officials relocated the School #9 media center to the adjacent township library/media building, which allowed the district to convert the school media center to a classroom to house a special education autistic class. By locating the autistic class

within the district, the district achieved significant annual savings in out-of-district tuition and transportation costs. The renovations to the Port Reading Library cost the district \$95,000 from surplus funds and all renovations were performed by district personnel.

REDI and REAP

As indicated in the shared services section of this report, the Woodbridge Township School District has been actively involved in cooperative planning with other nearby governmental agencies. For example, district officials approved a joint application with Woodbridge Township for a Regional Efficiency Development Incentive (REDI) grant for \$95,639 to perform a feasibility study in shared voice telecommunications systems. The board also approved a joint REDI application with Woodbridge Township, all nine Woodbridge Fire Districts, all six Woodbridge Rescue Squads, the City of Perth Amboy and the Amboy Board of Education for \$90,000 to conduct a feasibility study in shared regional communications systems.

Business Contributions

District officials have been active in soliciting contributions from private businesses. There was a \$75,000 donation from a construction contractor to purchase bleachers for Woodbridge High School. Proceeds from the vending machine contract have been used to purchase two scoreboards for the baseball fields at JFK and Woodbridge high school baseball fields. The public schools have benefited from donations of laptop computers and desks/chairs from private companies. Several private firms made donations or offered discounts toward the Tech 2000 infrastructure installations.

Investment Earnings

The district has done an outstanding job of maximizing investment income. The district's banking design is well organized and competitively priced. Interest rates throughout 1999-00 ranged from 4.56% to 5.88% and compared favorably with the standards used by the review team. In addition to the bank accounts, which were used for daily operations, the district invested excess funds, when available, in higher yielding investment instruments. Fund balances were tracked daily and outstanding investments and interest paid were reported at month-end. Interest paid on the district's higher yielding investments was approximately \$600,000. This represented a net gain of approximately 0.3%, or \$35,000, for the year over what the district would have earned had these funds remained in the regular bank accounts.

Learning Differences

Menlo Park School has obtained a number of grants that benefit the student body. An initial grant in the amount of \$10,000 and a follow-up grant for \$25,000, shared with eight other New Jersey schools, have been used for staff training and implementation of a new comprehensive development and service program. The program offers elementary, middle and high school educators new methods for recognizing, understanding and managing students with differences in learning.

After-School Instruction

The Fords Middle School conducts an after-school program to prepare at-risk students for annual standardized tests. The program is staffed by teacher volunteers who donate one hour of

instruction twice a week, for a period of two months prior to testing, in the areas of math and reading, at no cost to the participants. Seventy-five percent of the 1999-00 student participants improved their standardized test scores, and a number placed out of remedial services.

Family Support

Elementary school programs to improve student self-esteem include a district-wide initiative in working with parents/guardians to provide support in the home for students to develop study/testing skills. The series of evening sessions to help parents support the academic programs includes family writing, mathematics and science presentations.

Bilingual/English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)

The district provides impressive bilingual and ESL programs to meet the needs of students who enroll with limited abilities to communicate in English. The decision to establish magnet schools at each level for bilingual and ESL allows the district to assign staff in an efficient manner. Responsiveness to changes in the student population has been demonstrated through the development of programs to address new linguistic groups moving into the district.

Job Sharing

The Woodbridge Township Teachers Association agreement provides teachers assigned to positions in kindergarten, middle school, high school and special areas the opportunity to engage in job sharing with the permission of the board. This provision, which first appeared in the 2000-03 contract, allows two teachers to perform separate parts of one full-time teaching assignment. The language of the agreement specifies that the cost to the district for salary and benefits for the two employees covered by a job sharing agreement shall be no greater than the cost to the board for employing one employee in the position.

Although no positions were being shared at the time of this review, this innovative clause should serve the district and its employees well in the years to come. As worded, it provides flexibility to teachers who prefer something less than full-time employment. At the same time, it gives the district additional options in employment and scheduling, and may help decrease “travel time” expenditures incurred by the board when individual teachers are assigned to multiple schools.

Service-Learning

The Iselin Middle School was recognized on May 30, 2001 as one of ten New Jersey schools selected by the Corporation for National Service as a National Service-Learning Leader School for 2001. New Jersey continues to lead the nation in the number of schools honored for their special commitment to inclusion of community service activities into their curricula.

Parent/Teacher Organization

During the visitations to the 24 schools, the review team was impressed with the degree of involvement by the school PTOs in school support and enrichment activities. The PTOs have been active and involved with many fund-raising projects, which have financed a variety of school improvements such as assembly programs, reading rugs, sound systems, wireless microphone, new stage curtains, portable public address system, grounds landscaping and new front signs. The PTOs also have organized parent/community volunteers to work within the

school setting, particularly in the media centers or to chaperone school dances. PTOs have initiated a series of family-oriented evening activities, such as roller-skating, movie night, and a hotline with staff/volunteers to assist students who encounter problems with homework. Through the PATS Forum, parents and teachers work together to promote academic enrichment by bringing in community people, former students and other individuals to address the students and answer questions. Teachers in the district have received a number of financial grants from Ecolab, the local education foundation and PTOs. Principals periodically publish brief newsletters informing parents about student activities and upcoming events.

II. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE/FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this section of the review report is to identify opportunities for change and to make recommendations that will result in more efficient operations and financial savings to the school district and its taxpayers.

In its study, the review team found the district makes a conscious effort to control costs and to explore areas of cost saving efficiencies in its operations. Many of these are identified in the Best Practices section of this report. Others will be noted, as appropriate, in the findings to follow. The district is to be commended for its efforts. The review team did find areas where additional savings could be generated and has made recommendations for change that will result in reduced costs or increased revenue.

Where possible, a dollar value has been assigned to each recommendation to provide a measure of importance or magnitude to illustrate cost savings. The time it will take to implement each recommendation will vary. It is not possible to expect the total projected savings to be achieved in a short period of time. Nevertheless, the total savings and revenue enhancements should be viewed as an attainable goal. The impact will be reflected in the immediate budget, future budgets, and the tax rate(s). Some recommendations may be subject to collective bargaining considerations and, therefore, may not be implemented until the next round of negotiations. The total savings will lead to a reduction in tax rates resulting from improvements in budgeting, cash management, cost control and revenue enhancement.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

Many of the recommendations contained in this report are based upon comparative analyses using New Jersey Department of Education data in comparison with districts of similar size and demographics (socio-economic district factor groups–DFG). The comparative data used in this report was compiled in school years 1998-99 and 1999-00, which was current at the time of the review. Other data sources are obtained from district documents, various state agencies, state education associations, publications and private industry. School districts used for comparison with Woodbridge Township include Clifton City, Edison Township, and Toms River Regional.

The following table, (Table 1), which is based upon the district’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), compares the revenue sources of the four comparable districts:

Table 1 - Comparison of Revenues - Based on Audit Report as of June 30, 2000

Revenues	Woodbridge		Clifton		Edison		Toms River	
General Fund								
Local Tax Levy	\$99,268,647	77.5%	\$64,023,136	69.9%	\$106,245,096	79.6%	\$86,986,838	53.3%
State Aid	\$22,015,818	17.2%	\$11,036,543	12.0%	\$17,620,458	13.2%	\$66,106,293	40.5%
Federal Aid	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$79,458	0.0%
Tuition	\$99,152	0.1%	\$173,368	0.2%	\$65,048	0.0%	\$366,997	0.2%
Interest on Investments	\$785,487	0.6%	\$861,081	0.9%	\$0	0.0%	\$1,046,597	0.6%
Transportation Fees	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$141,574	0.1%	\$0	0.0%
Lease Purchase Proceeds-Adm. Bldg.	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$2,000,000	1.5%	\$0	0.0%
Miscellaneous	\$540,481	0.4%	\$507,024	0.6%	\$903,220	0.7%	\$549,945	0.3%
Total General Fund	\$122,709,585	95.8%	\$76,601,152	83.6%	\$126,975,396	95.1%	\$155,136,128	95.1%
Special Revenue Fund								
State Aid	\$2,436,650	1.6%	\$7,996,848	8.7%	\$2,280,659	1.7%	\$2,203,169	1.4%
Federal Aid	\$2,051,906	1.9%	\$2,175,550	2.4%	\$2,292,886	1.7%	\$3,240,962	2.0%
Interest	\$0	0.0%	\$136,751	0.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Other	\$69,399	0.1%	\$500	0.0%	\$61,010	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Total Revenue Fund	\$4,557,954	3.6%	\$10,309,649	11.3%	\$4,634,555	3.5%	\$5,444,131	3.3%
Debt Service Fund								
Local Tax Levy	\$619,929	0.5%	\$4,164,965	4.5%	\$1,398,385	1.0%	\$1,250,051	0.8%
Interest on Investments	\$352	0.0%	\$2,257	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
State Aid	\$75,337	0.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$608,662	0.4%
Total Debt Service Fund	\$695,618	0.5%	\$4,167,222	4.5%	\$1,398,385	1.0%	\$1,858,713	1.1%
Fiduciary Fund/Trust Fund								
Interest on Investments	\$25,909	0.0%	\$9,304	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Miscellaneous	\$6,069	0.0%	\$118,471	0.1%	\$87,561	0.1%	\$615,019	0.4%
Employee Deductions	\$160,333	0.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Donations	\$125	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Total Fiduciary Fund	\$192,436	0.2%	\$127,775	0.1%	\$87,561	0.1%	\$615,019	0.4%
Capital Projects								
Miscellaneous	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$362,057	0.3%	\$0	0.0%
Interest	\$0	0.0%	\$415,662	0.5%	\$0	0.0%	\$76,912	0.0%
Total Capital Projects	\$0	0.0%	\$415,662	0.5%	\$362,057	0.3%	\$76,912	0.0%
Total Revenues (All Funds)	\$128,155,593	100%	\$91,621,460	100%	\$133,457,954	100%	\$163,130,903	100%

Source: Districts' CAFR for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2000.

Note: State aid in the general fund contains non-budgeted revenue items of On Behalf Payment for TPAF Pension Contributions and Reimbursed TPAF Social Security Contributions. These non-budgeted revenues are offset by the general fund expenditure.

In each of the comparison districts, most of the revenue for the general fund comes from local property taxes. For the Woodbridge Township School District, 77.5% of the general fund revenue comes from local taxes. The district also receives state aid amounting to 17.2% of general fund revenue.

Table 2 compares general fund expenditures based upon each district's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR):

Table 2 - Comparison of General Fund Expenditures, 1999-00

Actual	Woodbridge		Clifton		Edison		Toms River	
Regular Program – Instruction	\$45,378,733	36.8%	\$27,139,217	34.8%	\$44,904,902	35.5%	\$52,346,577	35.1%
Special Education	\$7,753,543	6.3%	\$5,377,127	6.9%	\$8,889,358	7.0%	\$7,061,831	4.7%
Basic Skills-Remedial	\$422,727	0.3%	\$3,944	0.0%	\$2,491,962	2.0%	\$1,688,974	1.1%
Bilingual Education	\$800,878	0.6%	\$880,265	1.1%	\$1,128,900	0.9%	\$170,324	0.1%
Vocational Programs	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$2,176,505	1.5%
Sponsored Co-curricular Activities	\$442,224	0.4%	\$228,594	0.3%	\$406,383	0.3%	\$634,861	0.4%
Sponsored Athletics	\$853,356	0.7%	\$615,473	0.8%	\$899,165	0.7%	\$2,365,070	1.6%
Other Instruction Programs	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$121,326	0.1%	\$35,643	0.0%
Community Services Programs	\$0	0.0%	\$17,126	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$96,593	0.1%
Total Instructional Cost	\$55,651,461	45.1%	\$34,261,746	43.9%	\$58,841,996	46.6%	\$66,576,378	44.7%
Undistributed Exp. – Instruction	\$4,874,411	4.0%	\$5,603,587	7.2%	\$6,029,582	4.8%	\$3,546,996	2.4%
General Administration	\$2,522,414	2.0%	\$1,224,042	1.6%	\$2,194,268	1.7%	\$2,551,855	1.7%
School Administration	\$7,490,077	6.1%	\$4,011,104	5.1%	\$4,555,228	3.6%	\$5,671,895	3.8%
Total Administration Cost	\$10,012,492	8.1%	\$5,235,146	6.7%	\$6,749,496	5.3%	\$8,223,750	5.5%
Food Service	\$712,928	0.6%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$20,000	0.0%
Health Service	\$1,354,187	1.1%	\$771,912	1.0%	\$1,417,970	1.1%	\$1,701,880	1.1%
Attendance & Soc. Work Service	\$76,425	0.1%	\$146,299	0.2%	\$136,428	0.1%	\$288,373	0.2%
Other Support Serv.-Student-Related Serv.	\$718,586	0.6%	\$1,268,457	1.6%	\$874,492	0.7%	\$1,005,620	0.7%
Other Supp. Serv.-Student-Extra Serv.	\$1,470,656	1.2%	\$428,764	0.5%	\$0	0.0%	\$354,491	0.2%
Other Support Serv.-Student-Regular	\$2,244,175	1.8%	\$1,484,188	1.9%	\$2,590,548	2.1%	\$3,403,211	2.3%
Other Supp. Serv.-Student- Spec. Serv.	\$2,203,390	1.8%	\$1,368,686	1.8%	\$2,091,080	1.7%	\$2,680,604	1.8%
Other – Imp. of Instructional Service-Staff	\$1,211,814	1.0%	\$109,040	0.1%	\$1,758,029	1.4%	\$2,013,716	1.4%
Media-Service/School, Library	\$1,471,886	1.2%	\$1,408,925	1.8%	\$921,262	0.7%	\$1,991,421	1.3%
Instructional Staff Training Service	\$0	0.0%	\$21,109	0.0%	\$187,292	0.1%	\$372,149	0.2%
Operation of Plant	\$8,029,523	6.5%	\$4,700,574	6.0%	\$8,243,208	6.5%	\$13,178,182	8.8%
Allowable Main. For School Facilities	\$0	0.0%	\$949,914	1.2%	\$2,116,210	1.7%	\$0	0.0%
Business & Other Support Service	\$1,978,732	1.6%	\$1,099,972	1.4%	\$1,312,781	1.0%	\$2,155,051	1.4%
Total Unallocated Benefits	\$14,354,441	11.6%	\$10,002,174	12.8%	\$13,283,901	10.5%	\$17,702,993	11.9%
Total Support Services	\$35,826,745	29.1%	\$23,760,014	30.4%	\$34,933,202	27.7%	\$46,867,691	31.4%
TPAF Pension & Reimb. SS & Contrib.	\$1,618,765	1.3%	\$913,231	1.2%	\$1,459,736	1.2%	\$1,431,634	1.0%
Reimbursed TPAF SS Contrib.	\$4,908,625	4.0%	\$3,066,643	3.9%	\$4,631,817	3.7%	\$5,875,760	3.9%
Transportation	\$7,238,415	5.9%	\$3,598,892	4.6%	\$6,209,823	4.9%	\$11,011,437	7.4%
Capital Outlay	\$2,507,802	2.0%	\$1,314,113	1.7%	\$6,951,382	5.5%	\$5,056,051	3.4%
Special Schools	\$641,727	0.5%	\$0	0.0%	\$416,881	0.3%	\$451,723	0.3%
Transfer of Funds to Charter School	\$0	0.0%	\$320,958	0.4%	\$105,500	0.1%	\$0	0.0%
Total Gen. Fund Expenditures.	\$123,280,442	100%	\$78,074,330	100%	\$126,329,414	100%	\$149,041,420	100%
Avg. Daily Enrollment (99-00)	12,251		9,369		12,719		17,234	

Source: School districts' 1999-00 CAFR and N.J. Department of Education Comparative Spending Guide (2001)

Table 3 indicates the comparative per pupil expenditures for selected cost factors for the 1999-00 school year:

Table 3 - Analysis of Similar Districts Using Per Pupil Expenditures or Staffing Data For School Year 1999-00

	<u>Woodbridge</u>	<u>Clifton</u>	<u>Edison</u>	<u>Toms River</u>
Total Cost Per Pupil	\$8,365	\$7,114	\$7,920	\$7,115
Total Classroom Instruction	\$5,259	\$4,525	\$5,278	\$4,345
Classroom Salaries & Benefits	\$5,073	\$4,293	\$5,116	\$4,168
Classroom General Supplies & Textbooks	\$176	\$186	\$152	\$138
Classroom Purchased Services & Other	\$10	\$45	\$10	\$39
Total Support Services	\$1,052	\$989	\$929	\$985
Support Services Salaries & Benefits	\$958	\$866	\$871	\$917
Total Administrative Cost	\$1,106	\$786	\$689	\$682
Salaries & Benefits for Administration	\$946	\$636	\$552	\$562
Operations & Maintenance of Plant	\$727	\$685	\$899	\$841
Salaries & Benefits for Operation/Maint. Of Plant	\$481	\$472	\$589	\$493
Food Service Cost per Pupil & Benefits	\$58	\$0	\$0	\$0
Extracurricular Cost	\$119	\$103	\$116	\$198
Equipment	\$55	\$35	\$101	\$195
Median Teacher Salary	\$64,000	\$44,530	\$67,773	\$55,500
Median Support Service Salary	\$65,554	\$61,079	\$73,217	\$63,430
Median Administrator Salary	\$85,514	\$92,040	\$90,394	\$92,220
Student/Teacher Ratio	13.8	14.6	14.0	15.6
Student/Support Service Ratio	102.0	97.3	119.6	115.3
Student/Administrator Ratio	205.9	220.0	219.5	238.6
Faculty/Administrator Ratio	16.9	17.3	17.5	17.4
Personal Service-Employee Benefits	17.6%	20.9%	16.7%	18.2%

Source: NJDOE Comparative Spending Guide March, 2001.

The total cost per pupil is calculated as the total current expense budget plus certain special revenue funds, particularly early childhood programs, demonstrably effective programs, distance learning network costs and instructional supplement costs. The calculation does not include the local contribution to special revenue, tuition expenditures, and interest payments on the lease purchase of buildings, transportation costs, residential costs and judgments against the school district. Also excluded from this per pupil calculation are equipment purchases, facilities acquisition and construction services, expenditures funded by restricted local, state and federal grants, and debt service expenditures.

A comparison of Woodbridge's per pupil costs with those of Clifton, Edison and Toms River, based on the Comparative Spending Guide (Table 3) illustrates that, overall, Woodbridge's costs are in the high ranges. Individual line comparisons reflect some costs as being higher, while other expenditures are lower. The total cost per pupil, total support services, administration, and foodservice costs are higher than the three other districts. Classroom instruction, classroom general supplies and textbooks, extracurricular, median teacher salary and median support service salary ranked the second highest, while median administrator salary ranked the lowest among the comparable schools. Classroom purchased services and other, operations and maintenance of plant, and equipment ranked third among the four districts.

In the 2001 Comparative Spending Guide, Woodbridge is grouped with 95 K-12 districts with enrollments of +3,500 students. Table 4 indicates the Woodbridge Township School District ranking within this group of 95 like enrollment/grade configuration districts.

**Table 4 - Comparison of Woodbridge Township to 95 School Districts
(Ranked from "1" (Low Costs) to "95" (High Costs)***

Ranked Low Cost to High Cost	1998-99		1999-00		2000-01	
	Actual	Ranking	Actual	Ranking	Budget	Ranking
Cost Per Pupil	\$8,034	48	\$8,365	45	\$8,362	36
Classroom Instruction	\$5,062	53	\$5,259	56	\$5,315	45
Classroom Salaries & Benefits	\$4,872	58	\$5,073	60	\$5,109	53
General Supplies & Textbook	\$182	53	\$176	36	\$194	37
Purchased Services & Other	\$8	8	\$10	9	\$13	10
Support Services	\$991	40	\$1,052	41	\$1,042	23
Support Serv. Salaries & Benefits	\$894	44	\$958	48	\$950	30
Total Administrative Cost	\$1,088	80	\$1,106	79	\$1,099	80
Salaries & Benefits for Admin.	\$928	86	\$946	88	\$944	87
Operations & Maintenance	\$684	5	\$727	8	\$703	4
Salary & Benefits for Operat./Maint.	\$448	29	\$481	34	\$478	31
Food Service Cost Per Pupil & Benefit	\$62	29	\$58	27	\$29	24
Extracurricular Cost	\$110	24	\$119	23	\$124	23
Median Teacher Salary	\$62,250	80	\$64,000	90	\$60,000	77
Median Support Service Salary	\$63,893	60	\$65,554	70	\$66,930	76
Median Administrator Salary	\$86,772	36	\$85,514	23	\$87,799	24
Ranked High Ratio to Low						
Student/Teacher Ratio	13.5	63	13.8	54	13.5	57
Student/Support Service Ratio	98.0	45	102.0	33	105.1	22
Student/Administrator Ratio	197.5	34	205.9	24	211.6	22
Faculty/Administrator Ratio	16.6	24	16.9	27	17.7	20

Source: 2000 & 2001 NJDOE Comparative Spending Guide
Total of 95 School Districts

Using the 2001 Comparative Spending Guide published by the New Jersey Department of Education, the cost per pupil for Woodbridge Township School District ranked 48th out of 95 school districts in 1998-99, 45th 1999-00 and 36th (budget) in 2000-01. A ranking of above 48 reflects a higher cost than the midpoint and a ranking lower than 48 indicates costs below the midpoint of the 95 districts.

The total per pupil expenditure in Woodbridge for 1998-99 was \$8,034 and for 1999-00 was \$8,365. This compares to a state average cost of \$8,204 for K-12 schools in 1998-99 and \$8,758 in 1999-00. Woodbridge Township School District was below the state average cost for K-12 districts by 2.1 % in 1998-99 and by 4.57% in 1999-00. Woodbridge ranked below the median in nine of 16 cost categories, but above the median in seven areas, including classroom instruction, administrative cost, median teacher salary and median support service salary.

Using the NJ School Report Card and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), Table 5 provides additional comparative data used in this report:

Table 5 - Comparisons Among Select School Districts on General Characteristics

Description	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
County	Middlesex	Passaic	Middlesex	Ocean
District Type	II	II	II	II
Grades	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
District Factor Group	DE	DE	FG	DE
Square Miles	27	12	32	50
Number of Schools				
Elementary	16	13	11	12
Junior High School	5	2	4	2
Senior High School	3	1	2	3
Total Schools	24	16	17	17
Average Daily Enroll. (99-00)	12,251	9,369	12,719	17,234
Staff				
Certified Employees	1,126	799	1,072	1,344
Other Employees	658	527	458	807
Total Employees	1,784	1,326	1,530	2,151
Median Salary				
Faculty	\$62,250	\$44,530	\$67,689	\$55,200
Administrators	\$86,772	\$86,134	\$91,046	\$89,220
Median Years of Experience				
Faculty	18	14	16	19
Administrators	29	28	29	28
School Hours				
Instructional Time	5 hrs. 15 min.**	5 hrs. 53 min.	5 hrs. 44 min.	5 hrs. 36 min.
State Average	5 hrs. 39 min.	5 hrs. 39 min.	5 hrs. 39 min.	5 hrs. 39 min.
Teacher/Student Ratio				
Elementary	1:12	1:17	1:22	1:25
Middle	1:10	1:19.5	1:23	1:20
High School	1:10	1:14	1:23	1:20
Administrative Personnel				
Students per Administrator	197.5	212	238.6	241.7
Faculty per Administrator	16.6	16.7	18.5	17
Average Class Size-High School	23	24	23	20
Student Mobility Rate-1998-99	14.2%	11.1%	6.5% - 9.1%***	19.8%
SAT Results				
Math Average Score	492	500	557	515
Verbal Average Score	468	481	511	490
Total SAT Score	960	981	1,068	1,005
Post-Graduation Plans				
4-year College/University	50%	55%	53%	43%
2-year College	29%	22%	34%	43%
Other Post-Secondary School	6%	6%	7%	3%
Full-time Employment	15%	10%	6%	5%
Unemployed	0%	0%	0%	2%
Other	0%	0%	0%	2%
Unknown	0%	7%	0%	2%

Source: School districts' 1999-00 CAFR and High School Report Card (1998-99)

** Instructional times are different in Woodbridge High and Colonia High School.

*** Student mobility rates are different in J. P. Stevens High School (6.5%) and Edison High School (9.1%)

Table 5 provides statistical data on the Woodbridge Township School District and the three comparison districts. Since Woodbridge is the sixth largest school district in New Jersey, there

are a limited number of districts of similar type, size and socio-economic characteristics. Each selected district has an elected board of education, K-12 enrollments that range from 9,369 to 17,234, and between 16 and 24 schools. Other comparisons include teacher/student ratios at elementary, middle and high school levels. The Woodbridge Township School District has the least number of students per teacher and per administrator. The median administrator's salary is the lowest of the comparable districts and the median teacher's salary is the second highest.

ADMINISTRATION

Central Office Administration

The general administration of the district is composed of a superintendent, assistant superintendents of personnel and instructional services, a business administrator/board secretary, and a director of special services. In March, 2001, the assistant superintendent for personnel was appointed superintendent and the assistant superintendent position was not filled at that time.

According to the organization chart, the superintendent has line responsibility for the 24 school principals and key central office personnel. The assistant superintendent for instructional services has responsibility for the supervisors and curriculum specialist and the community relations specialist, who provides information to the public regarding district programs, activities and events. The director of special services oversees two supervisors of special education programs, the respective child study teams (CST), speech/hearing teachers and the attendance counselor. The business administrator manages the assistant board secretary, supervisor of buildings and grounds, supervisor of transportation and food services, purchasing specialists, accounts payable, payroll, computer liaison, insurance specialist, and transportation specialists. The computer liaison is responsible for in-service training and coordination of district usage of the data processing services provided by Asbury Park Computer Center in the areas of student accounting, payroll, personnel and financial accounting.

Supervisory Staff

The district has a staff director of special services and 12 K-12 supervisors with 12-month contracts, who are located in the central offices and travel to the respective schools. According to the job descriptions, the position titles are as follows:

- Supervisor of business, home arts, ESL services, affirmative action services, federal and state report services and student transfers.
- Supervisor of English, writing and world languages (secondary).
- Supervisor of funded, testing and special programs (basic skills, Chapter I, ESL/bilingual and vocational programs).
- Supervisor of gifted and talented and elementary registration center.
- Supervisor of technology, media centers and K-12 staff development.
- Supervisor of mathematics and music.
- Supervisor of physical education, health, driver's education, athletics and nursing services.
- Supervisor of reading, language arts and world languages (elementary).
- Supervisor of science, industrial arts and district chemical hygiene programs.

- Supervisor of social studies, learn and serve education, guidance, substance abuse counseling and art.
- Supervisor of special education child study teams.
- Supervisor of special education programs.
- Supervisor of adult, continuing and community education.

School Administrators

The district has 24 school principals, including 16 elementary school principals, five middle school principals and three high school principals. Each of the five middle schools has a vice-principal and Woodbridge High School has three vice-principals, JFK High School has two vice-principals and Colonia High School also has two vice-principals. In summary, there are a total of 24 principals and 12 vice-principals.

Woodbridge Secondary School Student/Administrator Ratios			
School- 1999-00	Student ADE	Administrators*	Pupil/Adm. Ratio
Colonia High School	1,126	3	375
Kennedy High School	866	3	289
Woodbridge High School	1,471	4	368
Avenel Middle School	635	2	318
Colonia Middle School	602	2	301
Fords Middle School	555	2	278
Iselin Middle School	627	2	314
Woodbridge Middle School	449	2	225
Totals	6,331	20	Average 317

*Principals & Vice-Principals

In 1999-00, the 16 Woodbridge elementary schools had average daily enrollments ranging from a low of 277 to a high of 525 students and an average, per school, of 370 students. Each elementary school had a school principal and two secretarial personnel. Four elementary schools had average daily enrollments of less than 300 students. It should also be noted that student enrollments increased about 4% in 2000-01.

The three high schools had a total of 20 department heads in 1999-00 with seven each in Woodbridge and JFK high schools and six in Colonia High School. In the 2000-01 school year, the number of department heads was reduced to 19, as there was one less position in JFK High School. Six of the department heads have 12-month contracts and 13 individuals have 10-month contracts. The department head position titles are as follows: English, special education, business, school-to-work, guidance, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The middle schools have subject area staff leaders to assist the principal in organizing, developing and evaluating the instructional program of the assigned subject areas. Other positions with stipends include guidance staff leader in the middle school and head teacher in elementary schools.

In the Comparative Spending Guide, March, 2001 published annually by the New Jersey Department of Education, total administrative expenditures relate to the four areas of the annual

school district budget statement—general administration, school administration, business and other support services (both business and central) and improvement of instruction services. The 1999-00 total administrative cost in the Woodbridge Township School District was \$1,106 per pupil with a ranking of 79 out of 95 school districts (ranked low to high).

The comparable figures for total administrative cost for the four comparable districts are presented in the following table:

Total Administrative Cost – Selected K-12 Comparable Districts	1999-00 Actual Per Pupil* Cost	1999-00 % of Total Comparative Cost/Pupil	1999-00 Ranking
Clifton City	\$786	11.0%	23
Edison Township	\$689	8.7%	8
Toms River Regional	\$682	9.6%	7
Three-District Average	\$719	9.8%	13
Woodbridge Township	\$1,106	13.2%	79

*Average daily enrollments (ADE).

Administrative salaries and benefits include the full-time, part-time and prorated salaries of superintendents, assistant superintendents, and other general administrators, school business administrators/board secretaries, and other business and central office staff, principals, assistant principals, department chairpersons, supervisors of instruction, curriculum coordinators and related secretarial and clerical staff for these activities. Per pupil costs for salaries and benefits for administration in 1999-00 were \$946, which ranked the district 88th of 95 school districts. The comparisons for the four districts for 1999-00 are as follows:

Salaries and Benefits for Administration – Selected K-12 Comparable Districts	1999-00 Actual Per Pupil Cost (ADE)*	1999-00 % of Total Comparative Cost/Pupil	1999-00 Ranking
Clifton City	\$636	8.9%	26
Edison Township	\$552	7.0%	8
Toms River Regional	\$562	7.9%	9
Three-District Average	\$583	7.9%	14
Woodbridge Township	\$946	11.3%	88
Per Pupil Cost (above three-district average)	\$363		

*Average daily enrollment

An examination of salary levels indicates that Woodbridge Township had a median administrative salary in 1999-00 of \$85,514, or \$3,286 lower than the average of \$88,800 for the three comparable districts. The Woodbridge Township median administrative salary was also \$2,336 below the state median K-12 administrative salary of \$87,850 in 1999-00. The administrative experience statewide reportedly was 23 years in 1999-00, compared to 28 years in Woodbridge Township.

According to the Comparative Spending Guide, March 2001, employee benefits expenditures in 1999-00 in Woodbridge Township were 17.6% of total salaries compared with a 18.6% average for the three similar districts and a K-12 State median of 15.8%.

The costs for administrative salaries and benefits are determined by the number of persons employed and the amount or level of salary and benefits provided by the district. As indicated earlier in the comparative analysis, in 1999-00 Woodbridge Township had a student/administrator ratio of 205.9 students per administrator, compared to an average of 230.8 students for the three similar districts and a K-12 New Jersey average of 171. Consequently, the review team concludes that the number of certificated administrators in the Woodbridge Township School District remains somewhat more than average in comparison with the three-district average, although less than the New Jersey average.

It should also be noted that in a large school district, such as Woodbridge, there are a number of non-certificated persons who specialize in administrative or supervisory functions and whose salaries are charged to the business and other support services 290 line item. These include the assistant board secretary, supervisor of buildings and grounds, supervisor of transportation and food services, purchasing specialists, insurance specialist and transportation specialists.

General Administrative Costs

The review team also examined the Woodbridge Township general administrative costs in relation to the three other comparable districts. An examination was conducted of the Woodbridge Township, Clifton City, Edison Township and Toms River Regional Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA) function 230-Support Services, General Administration-account for fiscal year 1999-00. This function includes expenses associated with the board of education, central administration and school elections. The review revealed the following costs for fiscal year 1999-00 (based on the 6/30/00 Audit Report):

General Administration	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
CEIFA Function 230	Middlesex Co.	Passaic Co.	Middlesex Co.	Ocean Co.
Salaries	\$1,013,864	\$416,174	\$761,718	\$1,122,818
Legal Service	\$192,764	\$113,087	\$343,519	\$244,890
Other Purchased Professional Serv.	\$112,733	\$107,749	\$64,560	\$340,010
Purchased Technical Service	\$191,315	\$44,236	\$0	\$0
Communications/Telephone	\$368,028	\$298,983	\$524,588	\$463,408
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,967
Other Purchased Services	\$579,462	\$201,383	\$385,848	\$88,023
Supplies and Materials	\$23,575	\$16,409	\$86,005	\$79,144
Judgements Against District	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$97,683
Miscellaneous	\$40,674	\$0	\$28,031	\$107,912
Other Objects	\$0	\$26,021	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,522,414	\$1,224,042	\$2,194,268	\$2,551,855
Per Pupil (ADE)* Costs	\$206	\$131	\$173	\$148

*The 1999-00 districts average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251, Clifton City 9,369, Edison Township 12,719 and Toms River Regional 17,234 pupils.

An analysis of this data reflects that the general administrative costs for Woodbridge Township were \$206 per pupil as compared with \$131 for Clifton City, \$173 for Edison Township and

\$148 for Toms River Regional. Woodbridge Township's costs in other purchased technical services and other purchased services in this account were recorded as the highest of the comparative schools. Salaries, other purchased professional services, and miscellaneous were the second highest among the comparison districts. Telephone expenditures, insurance costs and legal services are addressed in more detail in separate sections of this report.

In this comparison, the Woodbridge Township total general administrative per pupil cost was the highest among the four districts and was \$55 per pupil above the three-district average. Salaries account for 48% of the higher costs, while the other line items provide the remaining 52%. However, line item expenditure differences may, in some cases, be determined by accounting decisions as much as employment or purchasing decisions.

School Administration

CEIFA Line 240-Support Service, School Admin.	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
Salaries				
Principals & Vice-Principals	\$3,261,200	\$2,093,537	\$2,630,219	\$3,721,741
Other Professional Staff	\$1,512,993	\$754,032	\$0	\$0
Dept. Heads Teaching Time	-\$756,500	\$0	\$0	\$0
Secretarial & Clerical	\$2,037,076	\$849,504	\$1,782,652	\$1,841,176
Other Salaries	\$604,845	\$106,428	\$5,577	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$151
Purchased Technical Service	\$0	\$90,152	\$0	\$0
Other Purchased Services	\$0	\$19,351	\$55,345	\$0
Supplies & Materials	\$71,863	\$77,190	\$81,435	\$98,394
Other Objects	\$2,100	\$20,910	\$0	\$0
Miscellaneous Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,433
Total	\$6,733,577	\$4,011,104	\$4,555,228	\$5,671,895
Per Pupil (ADE)*Cost	\$550	\$428	\$358	\$329

*The 1999-00 districts average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251, Clifton City 9,369, Edison Township 12,719 and Toms River Regional 17,234 pupils.

The salaries of 36 principals and vice principals are recorded in first line item above. It should be noted that Woodbridge had the largest number of schools of the comparison districts, with an average school size of 511 pupils compared with an average of 783 for the other districts. In particular, Woodbridge has more elementary and middle schools than the other districts.

The other professional staff includes the full salaries of 20 department heads in the three high schools. Some other school districts use different accounting practices for department head salaries. Most of the high school department heads teach for half the day or equivalent. Consequently, that portion of their salaries, which has been deducted by the review team in the above table, should have been recorded in the instruction section of the school budget.

A total of 59 full-time and several part-time salaries are recorded in the school secretarial and clerical amount above. The Other Salaries account includes the salaries of about 135 school

aides. Woodbridge has several elementary schools that were constructed in the campus style with several separated buildings. This situation creates the need for aides to escort small groups of children and individuals from building to building for security purposes.

As indicated above, Woodbridge Township’s total per pupil costs associated with the overall administrative responsibility of individual schools, including the salaries of principals, assistant principals, other supervisory assistants and secretaries were the highest of the four districts. The total costs of principal and vice principal salaries, secretarial and clerical staff and other salaries were the highest of the four districts on a per pupil basis. The Woodbridge Township per pupil cost of \$550 was \$178 higher than the three-district average of \$372.

Business and Other Support Services (Line 290)	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
Salaries	\$1,428,290	\$708,594	\$835,226	\$1,507,389
Purchased Prof./Tech. Services	\$18,931	\$366,250	\$132,116	\$26,465
Other Purchased Services	\$284,245	\$3,701	\$11,551	\$105,620
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,864
Supplies & Materials	\$70,729	\$17,958	\$27,542	\$199,572
Interest-Lease Purchases	\$173,657	\$0	\$306,346	\$25,710
Miscellaneous	\$2,881	\$3,469	\$0	\$288,431
Total	\$1,978,732	\$1,099,972	\$1,312,781	\$2,155,051
Per Pupil (ADE)* Cost	\$162	\$117	\$103	\$125

*The 1999-00 districts average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251, Clifton City 9,369, Edison Township 12,719 and Toms River Regional 17,234 pupils.

The Woodbridge Township business and other support service was the highest among the comparison districts, and at per pupil costs of \$162, was \$47 (or 41%) more than the three-district average of \$115. The Woodbridge business line 290 salaries were the highest with per pupil costs of \$117 compared to an average of \$77 for the three comparison districts, or \$40 more.

The review team examined the CEIFA Function 221 Improvement of Instruction Services. The detailed distribution of salaries among these accounts was not always consistent from district to district.

Improvement of Instruction Services (Line 221)	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
Supv. of Instruction-Salaries	\$989,144	\$107,985	\$1,564,522	\$1,848,607
Other Professional Staff	\$222,671	\$0	\$157,701	\$0
Secretarial & Clerical	\$0	\$0	\$28,406	\$120,090
Other Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,194
Purchased Prof. Educ. Svcs.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,662
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,835
Supplies & Materials	\$0	\$1,055	\$7,400	\$16,377
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$951
Total	\$1,211,814	\$109,040	\$1,758,029	\$2,013,716
Per Pupil (ADE) Cost	\$99	\$12	\$138	\$117

*The 1999-00 districts average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251, Clifton City 9,369, Edison Township 12,719 and Toms River Regional 17,234 pupils.

The Woodbridge Improvement of Instruction Services cost at \$99 per pupil was second lowest among the comparison districts, and somewhat comparable to two of the three districts.

Instructional Staff Training (Line 223)	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
Salaries of Teachers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,411
Supv. of Instruction-Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$73,499	\$195,519
Salaries/Other Prof. Staff	\$0	\$0	\$100,266	\$0
Secretarial & Clerical	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$69,410
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19
Purchased Prof. Educ. Srvc.	\$0	\$21,109	\$0	\$25,144
Supplies & Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$69,394
Misc. & Other Objects	\$0	\$0	\$13,528	\$10,252
Per Pupil (ADE) Total Cost	\$0	\$21,109	\$187,292	\$372,149

Instructional staff training is not included in the Comparative Spending Guide calculations for administrators. However, this data is included here since some districts are utilizing this accounting line item for supervisors' salaries. The totals of the five line items are summarized in the following table:

Totals-CEIFA Line Items 221, 223, 230, 240, & 290	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
General Administration	\$2,522,414	\$1,224,042	\$2,194,268	\$2,551,855
School Administration	\$7,490,077	\$4,011,104	\$4,555,228	\$5,671,895
Business & Other Support	\$1,978,732	\$1,099,972	\$1,312,781	\$2,155,051
Improv. of Instruction	\$1,211,814	\$109,040	\$1,758,029	\$2,013,716
Instruct. Staff Training	\$0	\$21,109	\$187,292	\$372,149
Total	\$13,203,037	\$6,465,267	\$10,007,598	\$12,764,666
Per Pupil (ADE) Cost	\$1,078	\$690	\$787	\$741

*The 1999-00 districts average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251, Clifton City 9,369, Edison Township 12,719 and Toms River Regional 17,234 pupils.

The Woodbridge Township School District total administrative cost in 1999-00 was \$1,078 per pupil, which was the highest of the comparison districts and \$339 above the three-district average of \$739. The Woodbridge Township median administrator salary was somewhat below the benchmarks, while the number of administrators remained slightly above the comparison districts. The following table isolates the total administrative and supervisory salary costs from the other expenditures.

Salary Totals-CEIFA Line Items 221, 223, 230, 240, & 290	Woodbridge Township	Clifton City	Edison Township	Toms River Regional
General Administration	\$1,013,864	\$416,174	\$761,718	\$1,122,818
School Administration	\$6,659,614	\$3,803,501	\$4,418,448	\$5,562,917
Business & Other Support	\$1,428,290	\$708,594	\$835,226	\$1,507,389
Improv. of Instruction	\$1,211,815	\$107,985	\$1,750,629	\$1,971,891
Instruct. Staff Training	\$0	\$0	\$73,498	\$267,340
Total	\$10,313,583	\$5,036,254	\$7,839,519	\$10,432,355
Per Pupil (ADE) Cost	\$842	\$538	\$616	\$605

*The 1999-00 districts average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251, Clifton City 9,369, Edison Township 12,719 and Toms River Regional 17,234 pupils.

Further examination by the review team revealed that combined administrative salary expenditures in Woodbridge Township totaled \$842 per pupil, while the average administrative salary cost in the three comparable districts was \$586. Woodbridge was \$226 per pupil above the second highest district, or the equivalent of \$2.7 million.

The review team selected the comparison school district with a nearly equivalent student enrollment and close geographic proximity for an examination of the number of staff positions (administrators, supervisors, secretaries/clerks and other specialists) in relation to those in Woodbridge. The following table contains pertinent information.

Position (1999-00)	Edison Township	Woodbridge Township
Central Administration	5	*5
Principals	17	24
Assistant Principals	10	12
Supervisors, Directors & Dept. Heads**	18	22.5 (13+9.5**)
Supervisors-Non Instruction	4	3
Secretaries & Clerks***	94	117
Clerical Aides***	1	16
School (lunch) Aides	114	139
Specialists	3	5
*Includes vacant asst. supt. position		
**19 Dept. Heads @ half time positions		
*** Secretaries in entire district		

The 1999-00 average daily enrollments were Woodbridge Township 12,251 and Edison Township 12,719.

At the time of the review, the Woodbridge assistant superintendent for personnel position had not been filled. Woodbridge had five specialists and three non-instructional supervisors, while Edison had only three specialists and four non-instructional supervisors. In the Woodbridge business administrator's office, there was an assistant board secretary and a purchasing agent. Edison had neither position. In summary, Woodbridge had one additional non-certificated central office person in the non-instruction supervisor/specialist categories.

Recommendation:

Woodbridge school officials should consider an examination of central office non-certificated supervisors and specialists to determine whether one less person is needed. Or as another option, comparable savings could be achieved by not filling the assistant superintendent for personnel position, retaining existing central office staff and reassigning duties.

Cost Savings: \$60,000

The major discrepancies in the above table involve the number of principals, supervisors and secretaries/clerical aides. The review team has previously commented about the larger number of schools in Woodbridge, which obviously increases the number of school principals.

Recommendation:

In planning for any future school construction, Woodbridge school officials should consider the high costs of operating a large number of relatively small elementary schools. Even by reducing the number of elementary principals by two positions, the district could save \$200,000 or more annually in salaries and benefits. The review team recognizes that any future school construction would involve voter approval or a lease purchase arrangement made pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-10.1.

In 1999-00, Woodbridge had 12 vice principals, while Edison had 10 vice principals. With an ADE of 866 students in Kennedy High School, it was marginal whether two vice principals were needed in 1999-00. The Kennedy enrollment increased above 900 in 2000-01. Smaller and more numerous middle and high schools in Woodbridge have resulted in more vice principals. In some of the New Jersey high schools with limited student enrollments, it is sometimes possible to combine a part-time vice principalship with another position, such as department chairperson or supervisor.

Edison has reduced the number of supervisors by designating department chairpersons as secondary supervisors for grades 6-12. Woodbridge has retained both high school department chairpersons and K-12 supervisors. A significant number of New Jersey school districts have consolidated some of these positions in recent years.

Recommendation:

Woodbridge school officials should examine the respective supervisory and department chairperson positions to mitigate any redundancy. Reduction by the equivalent of three full-time positions would save the district about \$300,000 in salaries and benefits.

Cost Savings: \$300,000

Perhaps the largest difference concerns secretaries/clerks where Woodbridge had a total of 133 secretaries/clerks in 1999-00, while Edison had 95. In other words, Woodbridge with 468 fewer students had 40% more secretarial/clerical staff than Edison.

Recommendations:

Woodbridge school officials should consider a study of the secretarial staffing of the district. With the recent increase in availability of networked computers and appropriate software, there should be increased efficiency in office operations in both central offices and in schools. The district, over a few years by attrition, could likely decrease the number of secretaries by perhaps 12 or more. This could produce savings of \$360,000 or more in salaries and benefits.

Cost Savings: \$360,000

TECHNOLOGY

Technology Plan

The district has in place an 82-page Technology Plan for 2001-04 that includes a multi-year expenditure and implementation proposal. The goals of the plan are that students will benefit from the opportunities to:

1. Access a broad-based technology and information literacy plan that is supported by both the district and township.
2. Become proficient in the use of current and emerging technological resources.
3. Interpret, analyze and communicate information in all formats.
4. Practice ethical and responsible behavior while using information and technology systems available throughout the school system and the community.
5. Learn from teachers who have been given the opportunity for staff development regarding the various technological tools and their infusion into the district curriculum.

Currently, the district technology staff includes project managers for Tech 2000 through a shared-services agreement with the township, a supervisor of technology, a computer specialist, a computer liaison for Asbury Park, a community relations specialists for web pages and Channel 36 TV and an AV/computer repair person. In addition, each of the 24 schools has a teacher/computer liaison to address faculty computer concerns, to document all hardware and software inventories, and to request needed supplies. There is a help-desk technology clerk in Town Hall to provide faster response time to community and school district users. The Technology plan anticipates the employment of two additional full-time technicians to complete the service requests coming to the help desk.

Staff development has been offered within the district for faculty and other staff both during and after the school day. Teachers have been sent to ETTC of Middlesex County and partnerships have been established with Berkley College for staff development. Media specialists have

received extensive training in the SIRS/Mandarin automation system, various electronic databases and the Internet. Selected teachers and staff have received training in network management and software application.

The district 2000-01 inventory of computers reveals 1,059 Apple computers and 774 IBM compatible computers, or a grand total of 1,833 computers. This amounts to about one computer for each seven students on a district K-12 basis. As summarized in the accompanying table, 61% of the computers are identified as obsolete and targeted for replacement within three years, as funding permits.

Obsolete Computers	Number
Apple IIe	219
Mac LC I, II, III	40
Mac LC 475 & higher	280
Power Mac	357
IBM Compatible 386	49
IBM Compatible 486	175
Total	1120

The total count of 1,833 computers within the schools also includes 713 more modern computers, including 163 G3 and iMac machines, 485 Pentium class machines and 65 laptops.

Recommendation:

District officials should continue to replace out-of-date computers and endeavor to provide one computer for every five students.

The school district supports a local origination television station (TV-36) to provide programming for community awareness of school events, programs, news and emergency information.

The 2000-01 budget includes \$3.5 million in phase one collaborative funding for Tech 2000 by a private firm, the township and the school district. The school district has identified slightly over \$1 million in state and federal funding that is available for technology. The \$1 million from the private firm is a one-time contribution. The technology plan contains a three-year 2002-04 budget proposal for implementation of the five specified goals, which totals \$17,415,900 over three years. At the time of the review team visit, commitments had not been made by either the township or the school district regarding the funding sources for these future technology endeavors. Clearly, there is a significant potential shortfall between the demonstrated availability of continued funding and the technology plan.

Management Technology

The Woodbridge Township School District contracts with the Asbury Park Information Technology Center for the student information system, which includes scheduling, grade reporting and attendance. The district also utilizes the Asbury Park payroll/personnel and budgetary accounting systems. The district pays about \$190,000 per year for these services, which are designed to meet school district needs.

Recommendation:

As the Woodbridge Township School District computer network and hardware systems become more sophisticated and widely available within the district, public school officials will have more options in purchasing or leasing management software or services. While migration to another system is a major commitment, district officials should consider, in the near future, either purchasing district administrative software or receiving from several sources, requests for proposals for comparable technology services.

Tech 2000

The Woodbridge Township School District and the township have an interlocal agreement for a shared services technology program entitled, Tech 2000. Under this agreement, the township provides the school district with one project manager and two assistant managers, for the purpose of managing the shared computer resources program. The district agreed to pay \$50 per hour for the project manager and \$30 per hour for each of the two assistant project managers. The Woodbridge Township School District has paid a total of \$100,000 annually under this section of the agreement.

Implementation of phase one of Tech 2000 was funded by contributions of \$1.5 million by the school district, \$1 million by Woodbridge Township and nearly \$1 million by a private firm. A significant amount of free equipment was obtained from the Bell Atlantic Access New Jersey Program. In addition, the school district received \$389,000 in E-rate funding and about \$50,000 in other contributions and grants.

Phase one of the shared computer resources program has provided wide area networking through high-speed (T-1) asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) for 28 school locations, including 24 public schools and four administrative/support staff buildings. The Tech 2000 network infrastructure contains 24 servers, 48 routers and 24 switches. The network enables the public schools to have Internet access and the capabilities for high-speed transfer of data, interactive video and voice. The Tech 2000 project has funded the installation of over 600 computers and the operation of a shared training center for staff. Each of the 24 school media centers has a local area network with six computer workstations per location. Also, there are information databases and software programs for shared on-line library cataloging, Windows 98 and Microsoft Office 2000.

Four public libraries, seven senior citizen centers and the municipal complex are also included in the Tech 2000 operation. The main computer network hub, including the communications servers, routers, applications servers, Internet connections and the staff training center are located in the municipal building. The public school, police and municipal functions have separate domains on the network for the protection of confidential information and for security purposes.

At the time of the review team's visit, Woodbridge central office, Evergreen School, the Transportation Building and School 2/16 were connected to the Wide Area Network and had Internet access. All elementary media centers had telephone access and five wide area networked computers with Internet access, office products and an automated library catalog system. All secondary school media centers had telephone access and six computers with Internet access,

office products and an automated library/card catalog system. Iselin Middle School had one computer laboratory connected to the Internet. All schools are connected to the student information system through a dedicated line to the central offices. Central administrative offices that require the payroll and, or, GAAP systems are connected via the WAN.

The Tech 2000 program includes a training classroom/computer laboratory, which is housed within the township complex. Both municipal and school personnel attend training sessions at this facility, which is located adjacent to the technology management offices and the central wiring hub for computer network administration and control.

As of spring 2001, there was no Intranet in place to provide communication within the district. None of the school administrative offices were connected to any local area networks or the Internet. And, except for a wireless network in one elementary school, the classrooms were not yet wired for either a local or wide area network. Wiring all 717 classrooms for voice and data was planned for phase two of the project. Purchasing, configuring and installing about 1,000 workstations and printers in business education laboratories, instructional labs and selected classrooms was also planned. However, adequate funding for those purposes had not been identified by either school or township officials.

Recommendation:

Township and school district officials are commended for the Tech 2000 implementation to date. Our interviews indicate that the project has very competent and enthusiastic management. To date, the technology infrastructure has been thoughtfully planned and implemented with quality standards. Since the Tech 2000 goal of wiring all classrooms and installing about 1,000 computers has yet to be achieved, the ultimate success of this shared services project is dependent upon adequate funding by the respective parties. While the review team was impressed with the infrastructure installation and the accomplishments to date, the fact remains that the Tech 2000 network generally has not yet reached the classroom level.

Communications/Telephones

Based on the annual audit reports, the district spent \$344,653 in 1998-99 and \$368,028 in 1999-00 for communication/telephone charges. The communications/telephone cost increased 6.78% from school year 1998-99 to 1999-00. According to the Department of Education budget guidelines, all telephone expenses, postage equipment rental, and postage expenses should be recorded in the communications/telephones account. The team analyzed the communications cost for the 1999-00 school year, which revealed that the postage expense of \$84,614 was not recorded appropriately. The postage expense was incorrectly reported in function 290 (business and other support services). Therefore, the actual communication/telephone costs for school year 1999-00 should be recorded as \$452,642.

The school district has 721 telephone lines, which include 55 fax lines in the administrative/support offices and schools. Sixty-three telephones in the district have voice mail functions. Some of the telephone lines have restricted access, but many can be used to make local and long distance calls.

A comparison of the Woodbridge Township School District's communication expenses with schools of similar size and demographics revealed that the Woodbridge expenses were the second highest for 1999-00. The per pupil cost was \$37 compared to the highest per pupil cost in this group of \$41 and the lowest cost of \$27 per pupil.

1999-00	Woodbridge*	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Communications/Telephone	\$452,642	\$298,983	\$524,588	\$463,408
Cost Per Pupil	\$37	\$32	\$41	\$27

* Included postage expense adjustment.

The Woodbridge Township School District does not have a written policy concerning usage of its telephones, including personal usage. Under the honor system, staff members who make personal calls are required to reimburse the district. There was no indication that the district has bid for telephone services.

In reviewing the costs associated with the telephone service, the team looked at the actual billing, which showed that the district spent \$5,228 for directory assistance calls. The telephone company charges 35 to 50 cents for each local directory assistance call, 95 cents per national assistance call, and 30 cents for each completed call. We found numerous cases where the caller utilized the automatic dialing feature, thereby, costing the district additional fees. Also, the district's staff members accepted a number of collect calls, each of which was billed to the district at \$2.50 per minute. The board should consider adopting the necessary policies to reduce the number of directory assistance calls, prohibit users from having directory assistance automatically dial outgoing calls and limit collect calls to emergency situations.

The network infrastructure provides the public schools with the capabilities for high-speed transfer of data, interactive video and voice. The district may soon be in a position to consider switching from the traditional telephone technology to net phone products. Through a concept of convergence, all network data and voice traffic may be channeled through a single connection based on Internet Protocol (IP). By combining data and voice infrastructure, institutions may eventually be able to eliminate dual in-house networks, reduce leased line costs and operate a single network.

Recommendation:

District officials should continue to examine and seek to implement any cost savings and productivity enhancements that may become available through emerging networking technologies.

Sixteen cellular phones were issued to district personnel. The district pays a basic charge of \$30 to \$49.99 per month for each cellular phone and an additional 55 cents per minute when the

caller exceeds the allowance of free minutes. The total monthly bills for the cellular phones average \$784 and cost the district approximately \$9,410 annually. Besides cellular phones, the district has 42 pagers.

In 1999, the district entered into an agreement with an outside company to conduct a telephone audit to determine the extent of any incorrect charges. Under the agreement the auditors were paid a portion of the savings resulting from the audit. The district generated savings of more than \$50,000.

As indicated later under the shared services section of this report, application has been made to REDI/REAP for a feasibility study of a shared digital telephone system. When implemented, this would allow in a cost-effective manner for the provision of a phone in each classroom

Recommendations:

- 1. Cellular phones admittedly are convenient resources, but also costly ones. The use of such equipment should be carefully monitored. Generally, landline phones located within district buildings should be utilized in non-emergency situations. District officials should evaluate the need and cost effectiveness of the cellular phone service. The use of two-way radios or pager services should also be considered.**

Cost Savings: \$4,000

- 2. Directory assistance calls to telephone operators are convenient, but expensive. By utilizing telephone books, computer databases and directory assistance web sites, most directory assistance calls can be eliminated.**

Cost Savings: \$5,000

- 3. According to the NJ Department of Education budget guidelines, postage equipment rental and postage expenses should be recorded in the communications/telephones account.**

- 4. The district should seek bids for intrastate, interstate, and intralata (toll and long-distance) telephone service. The approximate savings can be from 10% to 15%. Conservatively, 10% savings would be \$36,800.**

Cost Savings: \$36,800

Photocopiers

The district leased 82 copiers under state contract at an annual cost of \$226,497. This is a rental agreement for a term of three years at which time the machines are returned and replaced. The district does not take ownership of the machines at the end of the contract. Copier supplies and maintenance are included in the contracted price. The district leases three different copier models of varying speeds, base volumes, and monthly cost. Model 6545, of which the district acquired 48, has a monthly volume allowance of 12,000 copies at a cost of \$156 per month. Model 6560, of which the district acquired 14, has a monthly volume allowance of 18,000 copies

at a cost of \$241.20 per month. And Model 6085 has a monthly volume allowance of 45,000 copies at a cost of \$400.50 per month. These monthly costs and volumes result in a cost-per-copy of \$.0130 for Model 6545, \$.0134 for Model 6560, and \$.0089 for Model 6085 and reflect the cost-per-copy under state contract at the time of the rental agreement. According to district officials, the cost-per-copy remains the same for copies in excess of the monthly minimum. The table below illustrates the district's cost-per-copy and the current state contract cost-per-copy for similar numbers of copies.

Woodbridge Township School District - Photocopy Costs							
		Annual	Annual	Cost Per	Per State	Total	Total
	# Copiers	Cost	Minimum	Copy	Contract*	Cost	Allowance
Model 6545	48	\$1,872.00	144,000	\$0.0130	\$0.0129	\$89,856.00	6,912,000
Model 6560	14	\$2,894.40	216,000	\$0.0134	\$0.0133	\$40,521.60	3,024,000
Model 6085	20	\$4,806.00	540,000	\$0.0089	\$0.0133	\$96,120.00	10,800,000
Grand Total						\$226,497.60	20,736,000
*Annual minimum copies are slightly different, but comparable.					Net Cost-Per-Copy		\$0.0109

The copiers are distributed among 27 locations, including administration buildings and schools, so as to best accommodate volume levels and maximize cost efficiency. In most cases, as required, each location has a high volume copier supplemented by one or more of the lower volume copiers. The district also owns five copiers from previous years' lease/purchases that are still in effect. The district pays a monthly base for these copiers, plus an additional fee of \$.007 per copy. Total copies for the year were not available as the vendor and not the district tracked the meter readings. An analysis based on a sample of monthly invoices produced a net cost-per-copy of \$.009, but did not include supplies and maintenance. The annual expenditure related to these copiers during 1999-00 was \$25,373.

In general, photocopier distribution and usage appear to be efficient. There are several copiers, according to counts supplied by the district, with usage significantly in excess of their maximum allotted usage; however, the vendor uses the annual copy allowance of the entire contract and these overages are offset by under usage of other machines in the district. A review of the district records for 1999-00 indicates that the district has not been billed for copies in excess of the monthly minimum.

At \$.0134 per copy, the annual cost for 358,656 copies on the mid-range capacity copier, would be the same as the annual cost for the high capacity copier. The high capacity copier would allow for 540,000 copies at that same price. Mid-range copier usage at Colonia High, Lynn Crest, Oak Ridge, Ross Street, and Outlook Avenue would have been more economical with the larger capacity copiers. When the contract allows, switching to high capacity copiers at these five locations could save the district \$18,336 per year.

According to district records, there were seven copiers with usage that was less than half the minimum allowance for which the district paid. Cost savings (\$13,104 annually) from consolidating this usage with other machines in the building might be considered, however, in some cases the under-utilized machines were located in the school libraries where they are primarily an educational resource for students.

Recommendation:

The district should monitor and evaluate photocopier usage on an annual basis to determine the most cost-effective copy allowance for each location. Depending on overall usage there could be some savings to the district. Copiers that are under-utilized, but that don't prove cost-effective in offsetting overages on other machines in the district, may be returned, and their usage combined with other machines. Low and medium volume machines that are over-utilized can be replaced with machines with a lower cost-per-copy.

Cost Savings: \$31,440

INSTRUCTION

As an integral component of the review, the LGBR team had a comprehensive tour of each of the 24 schools, 16 elementary schools, five middle schools and three high schools, during the months of February and March, 2001. Interviews were conducted with the school principals.

Elementary

The school district has about 6,000 students enrolled in the kindergarten through fifth grade. The district provides instruction in integrated language arts, which includes reading, writing, listening, viewing, spelling and handwriting. Other general areas of instruction include mathematics, social studies, science, health, physical education, computers, library/media, guidance, music and art.

For grades K-2 in schools #4/5, #11, #20, #23 and #28, the district has instituted a "Fundamentals First Pilot Program," which calls for intensive efforts to enhance student interest and to develop improved abilities in the comprehension and enjoyment of literacy and numerical concepts. The district has Demonstrably Effective Programs in Ross Street School #11, Woodbine Avenue School #23, and Lafayette Estates School #25.

Elementary school programs to improve student self-esteem include a district-wide initiative in working with parents/guardians to provide support in the home for students to develop study/testing skills. The program includes family writing, math and science.

- Family Math, an outgrowth of the University of California @ Berkeley project, endeavors to get parents to be more involved in their children's mathematics education. Schools, through a Title IV Grant, have teachers over four evening meetings engage parents in family mathematics exercises.
- Family Writing and Reading experiences assist parents in working with their children to increase their skills. The programs operate for five sessions, or 10 hours of instruction each.
- Teachers serve as members of the "I Am Lovable And Capable" (IALAC) committee, which is funded through the Drug Free program. This provides an opportunity for elementary students to discuss areas of concern and to receive additional support to improve their abilities to reach their potential.

- Staff members also serve in the P.A.L.S. program (Parents Active in Literacy Support). Title I and Title IV fund these literacy improvement efforts, which are conducted in the Avenel Street, Claremont Avenue and Matthew Jago Elementary Schools.

The district also has a character education program that:

- 1) promotes ethical values and good character;
- 2) includes thinking, feeling and behavior;
- 3) promotes core values in all phases of school life;
- 4) develops students' intrinsic motivation and creates opportunities for moral action; and
- 5) elicits parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.

Avenel Street School #4 & #5

The Avenel Street School, composed of three connected structures, is the largest elementary school in the district. The original school was built in 1912 as a three-story school and the adjacent single-storied school #5 was added, in sections, in 1948 and in 1968. In accordance with the custom of the time, a gymnasium was located on the second floor of the original school. The entire school design provides a U-shaped hallway, with 45-degree angles. The primary grades are located in School #5 and the upper grades have classrooms in School #4.

The school enrolls 510 students in grades K-5, with four sections per grade, except for three classes of half-day kindergarten. Class enrollments for grades K-3 range from 17 to 25 and in grades 4-5, the class sizes are from 18 to 26 students. At the time of the review team visit, the average regular class size for the entire building was 22.2 students. There were no ESL classes or self-contained special education classes; however, there were resource centers for 24 students. Kindergarten through grade two students are involved in the "Fundamentals First" program.

According to the 1998-99 School Report Card, English is the language spoken at home for 87% of the students. The student mobility rate was 21.3% in 1998-99, compared to 15.5% for the state. About 30% of the students are transported to and from school via three large buses. Extracurricular activities include student council, intramural kickball and dodge-ball, and safety patrol.

The school received \$50,000 from a private corporation for 10 laptop computers and the installation of a wireless network for the entire building. This older building, with thick solid walls, would be difficult to wire in the traditional manner. The school purchased two additional laptops for a total of 12. The wireless network provides maximum flexibility in terms of mobility of laptops for utilization in various settings by connection with a variety of appliances for class presentations.

The school features support for the development of student self esteem. There is also considerable emphasis upon the development of student proficiencies in written responses to open-ended questions and in preparation for success on state assessment tests.

The PTO is very active in the school with many fundraisers, such as book fairs, bake sales, etc. and the financing of a total of \$12,000 for field trips, a digital camera, risers for the chorus, carpet for library/media center and scholarships for high school students. They also provide educational assemblies, teacher appreciation breakfasts, and handle the yearbook. In addition, parent representatives participate in school based planning and parent volunteers assist in the media center.

Claremont Avenue School #20

The Claremont Avenue School is a single-story 1957 building with three classroom wings branching at 90-degree angles from the office area and all-purpose room. The wings contain grades K and one, two and three, and four and five, respectively. The school is located on an 10.4-acre site, with about five acres owned by the school district and the remainder by the township. The building houses 341 students in grades K-5, with three classes per grade for grades K-3 and two classes per grade for 4-5.

In the primary grades class sizes ranged from 17 to 24 students, while in grades four and five the numbers ran from 22 to 30 pupils. District policy on class size allows up to 25 students in grades K-3 and up to 30 students in grades 4 and 5. Since there are few sidewalks in Colonia, about 98% of the students are transported to and from school.

The school is an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) magnet school and there are classrooms for bilingual and ESL, with ESL sharing a room with basic skills instruction (BSI). The school serves as the bilingual center for the Pakistan Urdu language. There are no self-contained special education classes in the building. There is an after-school child care program from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., which is operated by the district but supported financially by parental fees.

The school faculty is one of five school faculties within Woodbridge involved in a pilot, “fundamentals first initiative,” which originally developed as a part of a site-based management assessment at Claremont Avenue School. Particularly in grades one and two, emphasis is placed on reading, writing and mathematics in teaching and learning.

The library/media center houses four computers connected via cable to the Internet. A part-time librarian and parent volunteers staff the media center, which has 6,000 library books. Each classroom has at least one computer and grades four and five have four computers in each classroom. There are 46 computers in the building for instructional purposes and three computers in the administrative office.

Through Title VI funds, the school offers four nights of family mathematics, science and writing to help parents become involved in their children’s education. Classes were given for parents and their children by grade-level groupings. Also, two teachers were paid a stipend to serve as instructors in the Parents Active in Literacy Support program.

The PTO is very active with newsletters and major fundraisers, such as “tricky tray,” which is a Chinese auction. In 1999-00, the PTO budgeted \$10,000 for book stands, audio-visual screens and magnetic write (dry erase) boards. In 2000-01, the organization plans to spend \$8,000 on risers for the chorus.

Ford Avenue Elementary School #14

Fords Avenue Elementary School consists of one three-story building constructed in 1924 on a 1.7 acre site. A playground is adjacent to the building. The building has had no additions since 1926. Both the building and playground show signs of age and are in need of repair. Water damage is evident on walls and ceilings, and one leak can be traced down from the third to first floor. The building currently houses about 290 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, with three second grades and two sections of all other grade levels. The auditorium, located on the ground level, serves as an all-purpose room, with a stage, basketball court, and removable old wooden fold-up seating. The library/media center, faculty room, and the only two student bathrooms in the school are also located on the ground floor. Apart from the kindergarten, all other classrooms are located on the second and third floors of the building. It was noted that, due to the small number of tradesmen employed by the district and the demand for emergency services necessitated by the age and condition of the buildings, work orders pile up.

The principal, who has worked in the Woodbridge Township School District for eight years, and is under a 10-month contract, is assisted by one full-time, 10-month secretary and a part-time clerical aide who works three hours a day. In addition to the teaching staff that averages about 10 years of experience, the school has one full-time nurse and a part-time guidance counselor. The guidance counselor, who is shared with two additional schools, is scheduled three half-days per week at Ford Avenue. The library/media specialist is assigned to the school two and one-half days per week. Parent volunteers work to provide students with additional library/media access. Three part-time teachers who are shared with other schools provide physical education. Special education for fourth and fifth graders is delivered both as a pullout program and through in-class support. For the lower grades, special education instruction is provided on a pullout basis only.

It was noted that the school and community population has become more transient in recent years. In the first three months of 2001, the school received 24 to 25 new students.

Ford Avenue Elementary School is one of several district “after-school care” sites. Students are bused in from other near-by elementary schools for this program, which begins after the normal 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. school day, and lasts until 6:00 p.m. Parents pay a minimal fee for the after-school care program, which is staffed through the district office.

An active PTO initiates fund raising in support of school activities and contributes to the principal’s monthly newsletter. The PTO also provides funding for class trips and supports the school’s annual field day.

Indiana Avenue School #18

Constructed in 1956 on 12.2 acres, Indiana Avenue School is housed in a one-story building with several open courtyards flanked by classrooms on each side. One wing of classrooms was added

at a later date. The building is used extensively. The district frequently holds in-service instruction in the library, and community groups, including the township recreation department, use the gym for basketball and volleyball in the evenings. At the time of this review, the school contained 468 students, divided into three sections each of grades K through 5. The school has an experienced faculty, with few new teachers. With the exception of the clouded-over windows, this building appears to be in excellent condition.

In school year 2000-01, Indiana Avenue School had a part-time librarian assigned 2.5 days per week. Thanks to a parent volunteer, the school has been able to keep the library open additional hours. The school's library-media center has five student computers with Internet access. While the majority of the classrooms in this building have one or more stand-alone computers, a number of the first through third grade classrooms have none. It is anticipated that full implementation of Tech 2000 will ameliorate this situation.

Indiana Avenue School is a district magnet school for grades K through 5 special education. As such, it has two resource rooms, and the child study team is on-site two full days per week. Three teachers provide basic skills instruction in mathematics and English, using both in-class and pullout instruction. The school also has two part-time speech teachers; one is assigned to the building four days per week, and the other 2.5 days per week. There is a full-time nurse in the building, and one part-time guidance counselor is available 2.5 days per week.

The school offers both bilingual and English as a Second Language instruction and is the magnet site for Korean speaking students. The report card indicates that the student mobility rate of 18.1% is higher than the 15.5% state average school rate. There is concern for finding dedicated new teachers to replace the district's experienced faculty members, many of whom will soon be retiring. The theme that the review team heard repeated by several school administrators was pride in the district's emphasis on student interests and welfare.

Indiana Avenue School has a very active and involved PTO that issues a monthly calendar and sponsors both day and evening activities. Their fund raising has greatly benefited the school.

Kennedy Park School #24

Kennedy Park School, constructed in 1960 on a 14.5-acre site, is a one-story structure with a central section and four separate units leading off from it. Three of these units, containing four inter-connected classrooms each, are part of the original construction. The fourth, a six-classroom unit with a corridor, is a later addition. Two of the original units can be reached only by going outdoors, a configuration that poses additional security issues.

There were 308 students enrolled at School #24 when the review team visited the school in March, 2001. While enrollment numbers at this school have remained steady over the past several years, the student mobility rate has increased significantly, reflecting immigration patterns in the surrounding neighborhoods. The NJ Department of Education 1998-99 School Report Card cites Kennedy Park School mobility rates of 9.2% in the 1994-95 school year, as compared to 20.4% in 1998-99.

In school year 2000-01, School #24 offered two sections each of kindergarten, first and second grade, and three sections each of grades 3, 4, and 5. Kennedy Park School is a district magnet school for the Gujarati bilingual program and, consequently, has one full-time English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, two full-time bilingual teachers, and a full-time bilingual aide. Gujarati-speaking students from throughout the district remain in the Kennedy Park School linguistic support program until they are ready to return to their neighborhood school.

Having experienced these population shifts over the past half-decade, Kennedy Park School is at the forefront of changes that are now occurring, or beginning to occur, in other parts of the district. The school staff takes pride in anticipating and meeting the needs of its diverse student population. To this end, Kennedy Park School has initiated several support programs in addition to the district-wide ESL instruction, and has also volunteered to participate in the district's pilot teaching program as a "Fundamentals First School" beginning in school year 2001-02. School PTA members, many of whom are able to bring other native language skills to bear in their interactions with students, volunteer time assisting in the classrooms. The school partners with John F. Kennedy High School, whose National Honor Society Students volunteer tutoring and enrichment time at Kennedy Park School. In addition, a JFK High School student studying advanced placement Spanish volunteers time with Spanish-speaking students at Kennedy Park School.

There are computers in each classroom at Kennedy Park School, including older computers used in the first, second and third grade classrooms, and newer machines in the grades 4 and 5 classrooms. The five computers in the library are currently the only ones in the school with Internet access. ESL and bilingual classes at School #24 all have computers as well. The school has one self-contained class for children with behavior difficulties, staffed by a full-time teacher and a full-time aide. There is also a resource center staffed by one and one-half teaching positions. The basic skills instruction program (BSI) offers pullout instruction for 30 minutes two times per week; only pullout instruction is available because of time constraints, as the school's BSI program is staffed by one shared .5 BSI position. The school shares a number of certificated positions with other schools in the district. The guidance counselor, physical education teacher and vocal music teacher are all assigned part-time to Kennedy Park School. According to district principals, apart from instructional time lost in transit, the only real problem with shared-time professional positions arises when two or more professionals are assigned to one part-time position in a building. This is the situation for art instruction at School #24, which has two part-time art teachers.

Kennedy Park School families are proud of the close relationship between their school and its local community. The school has benefited in a number of ways from its PTA, as well as from the generosity of businesses located in the area. The PTA, whose members meet monthly, provides class trips, audio/visual/computer equipment and a number of activities for students. Recently they agreed to donate, over a period of several years, \$5,000 worth of books to the school library. Businesses donating used office furniture to the district have supplied necessities for the principal's office as well as the classrooms. At the close of school year 1999-00, a family-run landscaping business donated numerous plantings directly to the school.

Lafayette Estates School #25

The physical plant of this school, constructed in 1960 and featuring a campus layout on a 12.3-acre site, consists of five separate one-story buildings. The main building, housing the principal's office, the all purpose room, the library/media center, as well as several instructional rooms and the boiler room, is the largest of the five with its own design. The other four buildings are smaller and are identical to one another, with each containing four classrooms and a lavatory. Innovative for its day, the design has consistently proved impractical for a number of reasons. Multiple buildings, each with multiple points of access, give rise to additional security needs. In addition, there are no sheltered connections between buildings and HVAC duct-work for the complex, buried under ground between buildings, is difficult and expensive to access for repairs. Obviously, cleaning of the HVAC ductwork is prohibitively expensive. There have been no additions to the facility since it was built.

At the time of the review, the school housed a diverse student body of approximately 325. School #25 houses three sections of each grade level, including two sections of morning kindergarten, and one afternoon kindergarten. According to the NJ Report Card, the student mobility rate was 18.8%, which was above the state average rate of 15.5%. Between 28% and 30% of the school's students are bused to school each day. The principal is assisted by a full-time, 10-month secretary and one part-time clerical aide, who works three hours per day. The principal publishes an informational newsletter, The Lafayette Lion Ledger, which also serves as a vehicle for publishing student work. A guidance counselor, who is assigned to three different schools, reports one and one-half days per week to School #25.

Lafayette Estates School is the district magnet elementary school for Spanish-speaking students. Spanish-speaking kindergarten to fifth grade students in need of support instruction in English are bused to Lafayette Estates School where a bilingual teacher provides instruction in mathematics and reading. For the remainder of the day they are scheduled into regular classrooms, with the exception of those students receiving English as a Second Language instruction for 30 minutes a day. The students return to their neighborhood schools as their increasing English proficiency allows.

Lafayette Estates Elementary School receives DEPA funding, which has financed several otherwise unobtainable programs for students. Using the DEPA funding, the principal has hired an additional first grade teacher to reduce the student-teacher ratio at this level. DEPA funding was also invested in the school's computer laboratory, and for school year 1998-99, was used to hire an computer teacher. This was at a time when the district closed the elementary school computer labs to obtain more classroom space; DEPA funding allowed School #25 to keep its computer lab in operation, upgrade its equipment, and hire the computer instructor. Additionally, the school has used its DEPA funding to hire a part-time reading specialist, who works with students two days per week in support of the reading program.

Parents at School #25 are provided the opportunity for extensive involvement and have responded through PTO membership activities, as well as through individual volunteer opportunities. During the 2000-01 school year, 20 parents volunteered on a regularly scheduled

basis, providing a minimum of one hour per week service to the school. The PTO gives the school an annual gift of \$1,000 for use as teachers determine best. The monthly PTO bulletin and calendar give an idea of the numerous student-focused activities sponsored by this group.

In addition to parent activities, Lafayette Estates School partners with the NASDAQ Corp., which has offices nearby. NASDAQ personnel volunteer time during which they are scheduled to work with teachers and students in the building. School year 2000-01 was the second year of this volunteer partnership.

Lynn Crest School #22

The Lynn Crest School has a core facility with administrative offices, all-purpose room, media center and about 10 classrooms. This campus-style school consists of multi-classroom pods, ranging from three to six rooms each. Each pod contains girls' and boys' restrooms, which are accessible via a short corridor on one side of each pod. Any movement of students between classrooms occurs through an adjacent room. The school is located on a 22-acre site, with a baseball field and a wooded section with a nature trail.

There are no connecting covered hallways for this campus setting, and while there have been no reported incidents, this arrangement has triggered some parental concerns in the past about security. At the present time, all outside doors are locked at 9:10 a.m. and communication is available via the public address system and intercom phones in each classroom. The district employs an aide in the a.m. and p.m. to escort any students who must travel outside to move from one part of the school to another section.

This elementary school has a total enrollment of 426 students. There are three classes per grade level and four classes of pre-K students, two each in the a.m. and p.m. Consequently, 116 students under six years old are in attendance at the school. There is a self-contained special education class at grade four level.

Reportedly, the school is a microcosm of the larger school district, with students coming from various socioeconomic levels and sections of the community. About 55% of the students are transported to and from school via six large school buses and eight vans and/or small buses. Upon completion of fifth grade, individual students progress to Avenel, Colonia, or Woodbridge Middle School, depending upon residential patterns.

The school has been selected to serve as a pilot in a seven-year National Institute of Health Sciences project entitled "Students Understanding Critical Connections of the Environment, Society and Self" for the development of environmental education curricula. A group of scientists from Rutgers University will participate in writing the curriculum and then will interact with students utilizing distance learning via computers. Teachers will be released for in-service education training, which will be provided by university and outside speakers.

Mawbey Elementary School #1

The Mawbey School, a single story 16-classroom building constructed in 1962 on a 4.2 acre parcel of land, has an enrollment of 342 students in grades K-5. Each grade level has three

classes of students, except for grades three and four, which have two sections each. Two classes in the building have enrollments of 28 and 31, respectively, and, therefore, aides are assigned to these classes. School hours are from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. About 45% to 50% of the students are transported to and from school via three school buses. Prepared food for the school lunch program is transported from the Avenel Middle School.

The school has a multipurpose room and a library/media center. The media center has six computers which are connected to the Internet. Also, the book collection is available via computer catalogue. Each fourth and fifth grade class has four computers, which were purchased by the school district. The other grades generally have two computers, which often were donated to the school. The PTO funded a 64-inch TV in the multipurpose room and several TVs for classrooms.

The school is staffed with one principal, one secretary and a three-hour per day clerical aide. There are two custodians, one during the day and another in the evening from 3 to 11 p.m. The media specialist and the speech teacher are shared with another school. A guidance counselor comes to the building one day per week to teach group lessons and provide some individual counseling. The principal is very active in public relations, publishing monthly newsletters, arranging field trips to local businesses, and scheduling events to involve parents and members of the community. Family mathematics, reading and science programs are offered to parents in the evening. Reportedly, the attendance rate at biannual parent/teacher conferences is 98%.

The school has a number of worthy programs that involve students in self improvement and community service ventures such as:

- Two local retail establishments give first grade students behind the scenes observations of store operations.
- A bank helps second grade students understand the concept of bartering as a method of handling money.
- Students visit a firehouse and firemen come to school for presentations. Use of 911 for emergencies is being taught by firefighters through participation in a pilot program with a major communications company.
- The student council coordinates drives for collecting clothing, food or sharing other items with less fortunate children, disabled veterans, etc.

The school does not have any self-contained special education classes or ESL/bilingual education classes. The kindergarten program is a half-day one. There is an after school child care program from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., which is one of five such programs offered in the township.

At the time of the review team's visit, the school was clean, safe and colorful with decorations in the hallways and on bulletin boards. All exterior doors were locked from the outside and entrance was obtained through an exterior callbox. There was evidence of continuing roof leaks and many windowpanes were clouded Plexiglas. It was reported that donations of furniture from a private firm assisted in meeting school needs that could not be met through the regular budgetary allocation.

Matthew Jago School #28

This elementary school, originally known as Glen Cove, is a 47,433 square foot single-story building that was constructed in 1969 on a 8.7-acre site. The architectural style is quite unusual, as the classrooms are “honey combed” in shape and arranged in clusters off core central hallways. Each of the four clusters of six classrooms has a central open court. The building has a relatively small library/media center, a triangular shaped all-purpose room and a small gymnasium. The school has many small rooms without parallel walls for speech, basic skills and resource room instruction.

Enrollment in the spring of 2001 consisted of about 450 students in grades K-5. There are 14 regular education classes for 324 students and 12 self-contained special education classes for 123 classified students. The school serves as a magnet school for a number of special education programs, including four preschool handicapped classes. The school has a basic skills program but does not have any ESL/bilingual programs.

The building was designed to function as a special education school and, as a single story building, accommodates physically handicapped students. Also, the school serves as the district location for the extended year, summer instruction for 350 to 400 handicapped students. The special education section of this report contains additional information about special education classes.

In cooperation with Kean University, this facility serves as a professional development school for faculty. On the day of the review team visitation, six teachers from Matthew Jago School were in attendance at two-day workshops at the university. A grant had been obtained to pay the cost of the substitute teachers. College sophomores and juniors, who are in teacher preparation programs, gain experience by either working with students or student teaching in the school.

Menlo Park Terrace School #19

Constructed in 1957 on a 10-acre site, Menlo Park Terrace School is a single-story structure with four classroom corridors leading out from the entrance lobby. The building shows its age in a number of ways, from stained ceiling tiles and an active ceiling leak (it rained on the day of the team visit), to rusting and ill-fitting exterior doors.

In school year 2000-01, the facility housed 369 students with two sections of half-day kindergarten, and three sections each of grades one through five. Approximately 50% of the students are transported to school on four buses and a van. The building and grounds are used beyond school hours by township sports programs, as well as by Brownies, Girl Scouts and the school’s very popular evening implementation of the district family math, writing and science programs. The family academic programs, consisting of activities presented by faculty in each of the named disciplines, have proved so successful at School #19, that attendance is on a “first come, first served” basis.

In addition to the school’s 22 full-time faculty, there are a number of instructional positions shared with other schools, including the school guidance counselor who is assigned to the building 1.5 days per week, the speech teacher, the physical education teacher and vocal and

instrumental teachers. The library/media center position is shared with another school at 2.5 days per week. Parent volunteers fill in as available when there would otherwise be no one to supervise the library/media center. Menlo Park Terrace School houses one resource room and one self-contained special education class. There are, however, no bilingual or English-as-Second-Language classes in the building. With money received from an Eisenhower Grant, the school established a “Grade 1 Extension Program,” which provides an extended reading and math program for all first graders.

Menlo Park School has obtained a number of grants that benefit the student body. Among those received over the past five years were:

Two Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Grants. The initial grant in the amount of \$10,000, and a follow-up grant for \$25,000 shared with eight other New Jersey schools, have been used for staff training and implementation of a new comprehensive development and service program. The program offers elementary, middle and high school educators with new methods for recognizing, understanding and managing students with differences in learning. This new program is credited with lowering School #19’s special education child study team interventions from eight or 10 children per year, to two, by better enabling teachers and students to understand individual learning. The superintendent and director of special services have supported the principal in the implementation of the program.

A Woodbridge Township Chamber of Commerce Teacher Incentive Grant was awarded for the school’s “Grade 1 Extension Program.” The awarded money was used to enhance this instructional program by infusing technology into the initial model.

The Menlo Park Terrace PTO is important for its support and service to the school. The PTO brings into the school a variety of different programs. The PTO recently donated air conditioners for the all-purpose room and, also, provided the funds needed each year to send grade 5 students on a class trip. In addition to the PTO activities, a number of parents volunteer their services to assist in classrooms on a scheduled basis and to operate the school store.

Oak Ridge Heights School #21

This single-story elementary school was constructed on 6.2 acres in 1959 as a campus complex, with classrooms located primarily in separate four-unit pods. In 1964 and 1968, additional sections and hallways were added to connect the various separate buildings. As is common in Woodbridge schools, there are many Plexiglas windowpanes throughout the building.

The school contains a total of 332 students in K-5, with two classes per grade, except for three classes each in kindergarten and grade four. There are two special education self-contained classes at the 1st and 5th grade levels, and no ESL/bilingual students. About one-third of the students are transported to and from school by two 54 passenger buses and two vans for special education.

The school has benefited from donations of laptop computers and desks/chairs from private companies. Also, the school district periodically distributes lists of obsolete equipment, particularly from the secondary level, which may still be useful at the elementary school level. In an effort to increase cost savings, the Woodbridge public schools share books and furniture to accommodate grade-level bulges in student enrollment that may be temporary. The Woodbridge elementary schools also share personnel, such as the media specialists, child study teams, guidance counselors, teachers of special subjects, etc.

School officials are proud of the relatively high academic standards maintained by the students as demonstrated by state ESPA and commercial achievement test scores. The school received a \$500 competitive grant from Solid Waste Management, which is being matched by the PTO. The school was featured on the Internet site *digitalcity.com* in the article “Best Public Schools.”

While security measures are in place, there are a number of activities that engender an open environment for the school. Parents are invited by grade level to have lunch at the school with their children. Senior citizens and other community members are scheduled to read to students at various grade levels. The PTO is very involved and provides many parent volunteers to work in the school, particularly in the media center. With fund-raising proceeds from market day, plant and candy sales, the PTO provides \$10 per child for instructional purposes. The parents’ group also sponsors various activities, such as school dances, the primary grade carnival, evening movies, etc. and purchases reading rugs for grades one and two. The school building is used extensively after school and in the evening for Brownies, Scouts, and sports sponsored by the township recreation department.

Pennsylvania Avenue School #27

This single-story building was constructed in 1964 on a 7.9-acre site. The building is L shaped with upper and lower grade wings that contain a total of 316 students. The school has two sections per grade, except for three sections in third grade. Class sizes in grades one through three range from 17 to 22 students, while kindergarten classes were 25 and 26. The fourth and fifth grade enrollments were 21 to 27 students per class. There are three self-contained special education classes, one at the second grade level and two at the fifth grade level. The principal has a background in special education, having served as a teacher for 15 years.

About 20% of the students are transported to and from school via two large buses and five smaller buses or vans. There are courtesy bus routes, as some students live on the other side of major traffic roadways or intersections, which are consider hazardous.

District supervisors have provided staff training, such as holistic scoring instruments for open-ended responses, problem solving strategies through using calculators, etc. Supervisors also assist in the evaluation of non-tenure teachers. The school has a publishing cart with story starters and book binding materials. A private firm provided a \$500 grant for financing presenters for poetry sessions in fifth grade.

The fifth grade teachers attended a Drew University technology workshop sponsored by a business and industry consortium. Their extensive knowledge about integrating the use of

computers into the curriculum has been utilized to train other teachers in the district. As a follow-up on a previous grant, one fifth grade classroom has an Internet connection. The school has 23 computers for instructional purposes and four computers used by administration and other staff.

Port Reading School #9

The Port Reading Elementary School is an attractive single-story building that was constructed in 1962. The school has an enrollment of 372 students in grades K-5. The school has an upper wing for grades 4 and 5 and a lower wing for grades 1 through 3. There are three classes per grade level, except for two sections of kindergarten. The all-purpose room, which is used for gym and lunch, is located across the entrance lobby from the principal's office complex. Food for school lunch is transported in insulated containers from another location and students are served in two groups from 12:00 until 12:50 p.m. The library/media center is located in a separate adjacent building, which was a former municipal library. The former library space within the school building was converted into needed classroom space.

An acting principal, one full-time and one part-time secretary, and 2.5 custodians are on the school staff. There is a school nurse and a half-time media specialist. The teaching staff is a mix of veteran and relatively young teachers.

Any ESL/bilingual students are assigned to another building until reasonable mastery of English, when they are returned to their "home" school. There is one self-contained special education class of second graders and 1.5 teachers provide pullout resource room services. The PAC committee meets on Tuesday mornings and the child study team spends Wednesday mornings in the building. A guidance counselor is assigned to the school 1.5 days per week.

The school population qualified for DEPA funds, and in school year 2001-02, that budget item will be \$123,000. Since only 61% of the students passed the ESPA tests, faculty emphasis is being placed upon basic skills, i.e., reading, writing and mathematics instruction. Supervisors completed an analysis of the ESPA test and prepared practice questions for use by classroom teachers. A third grade summer session is planned to be held in the air-conditioned media center during 2001.

Six school buses transport about 40% of the students to and from school. Students are transported from the Hopelawn and Keasbey sections of the township. After completion of fifth grade, the students progress to the Avenel or Fords Middle Schools.

The school has a computer laboratory containing 17 Apple Macintosh computers. Since there are no computer teachers assigned to the building, classroom teachers use the laboratory on a sign-up basis. In addition, there are four computers in each classroom in grades three through five. Grades one and two have either two or three computers. Four computers in the media center are connected to the Internet and the book collection is bar-coded.

On the day of the review team visitation, the PTO president was in the building. Also, there were three parents in the media center, who had volunteered to serve in the absence of the media specialist. The PTO sponsors or supports a number of school activities, including an October Festival and the purchase of notebooks for students.

Robert Mascenik School #26

The Robert Mascenik Elementary School (former Benjamin Avenue School) was named after a former administrator in the district. This one-story building, constructed in 1964, housed 369 students at the time of the review. There has been a steady trend toward stable growth at this school, with a low mobility rate that is well under the state average. Students graduating from School #26 attend Iselin Middle School.

It was reported that the majority of the faculty in this K-5 building consists of teachers in mid-career, with several new teachers, and several who will most likely be retiring within the next few years. The principal is assisted by one full-time secretary, and one part-time aide assigned four hours per day.

Robert Mascenik School was selected to participate in the district's "fundamentals first" initiative. Schools offering this program place particular emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics in the lower grades. There is one self-contained special education class in the building, with a full-time teacher and a full-time aide. A second aide assists a student who receives instruction in the regular classroom. While only the library-media center had Internet access at the time of the review, every classroom in the building had at least one computer. Having taken advantage of district in-service offerings, the faculty in the building is technologically literate. There are no ESL or bilingual education classes in the building, as students requiring these classes are sent to a magnet school until such time as they test into the full-time English language classroom. The school has one full-time nurse. One part-time counselor and a part-time library-media specialist are each assigned to the school 2.5 days per week. The library-media center is able to remain open additional hours thanks to parent volunteers.

Each month selected students are designated as school All-Stars to encourage student achievement. There is a collective celebration for these students at the end of the year. The school also has a program for fifth grade students called ACTION, which stands for "All Children Take Intelligence Ownership Naturally." The program is a multi-discipline approach divided into 10 monthly projects to expand student thinking capabilities through the collaborative efforts of classroom teachers, the media specialists, the guidance counselor and parents.

School #26 is one of several sites at which the district offers an "after care" program. District parents pay a minimal amount for this 10-month program that provides student activities after school five days a week until 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. The district pays a stipend to those teachers who choose to work in the program.

Parents at Robert Mascenik School have formed a very active Home & School Association (H.S.A.) that assists the school in a number of ways. It was noted that over the past four years,

H.S.A. has purchased individual air-conditioning units for each classroom. Woodbridge residents have evidenced involvement and pride in their community, in their school district and in individual schools.

Students and their families are welcomed to the academic family writing, family mathematics and family science programs held in the evenings at the school. The principal publishes a brief monthly newsletter informing parents about student activities and upcoming events in the building and the district.

Ross Street Elementary School #11

The Ross Street School is a three-storied 22-classroom building, which was originally constructed in 1920, with an addition in 1930. This is the second oldest operating school building within the school district. The lower level contains the library/media center, cafeteria, copy machine and reproduction room, and art, music, speech and reading rooms. On the first floor, 10 academic classrooms are located on the perimeter of the building with a multi-purpose room surrounded by hallways in the center of the structure. The principal's office, nurse's office, and teachers' room are also located on the first floor. The second floor has 12 regular classrooms and two resource centers. The age of the building was quite evident with clouded Plexiglas windowpanes, original doors and a somewhat cluttered appearance.

The school currently contains 430 students in grades K-5. Two school buses transport about 85 to 90 students to and from school to balance district school attendance zones with available classroom space. Prepared food for the school lunch program is transported from another site. Lunches are served from 12:00 noon to 12:50 p.m., with lower and upper grade students alternating eating and playground activities.

A principal, one secretary and a part-time clerk, one part-time and two full-time custodians staff the school. Also, there is a school nurse, a full-time media specialist and a full-time vocal music teacher. A guidance counselor works at the school for two days per week. There is a child study team present one day a week and instrumental music instruction is offered two days per week. There are three sessions of half-day kindergarten daily. An after-school childcare program is available for parental purchase from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. on weekdays.

The school contains enough disadvantaged students to qualify for Demonstratively Effective Program Aid (DEPA) ranging from \$130,000 to \$150,000 annually. The school does not contain any ESL/bilingual programs. A teacher and two aides provide basic skills instruction, which is financed through Chapter 1 program funding.

The student council has a monthly food drive in conjunction with a local church and the township department of health. There is also an Intergenerational Friends Program to foster senior citizen participation in school activities.

The PTO is active and involved with monthly meetings with the principal. PTO projects have included the yearbook, calendar, and the purchase of a number of televisions and carts for the respective classrooms. Four or five times per year, the principal sends home a newsletter highlighting coming events, teachers' comments, student news and the principal's messages.

District in-service programs are available for professional staff on three levels. Teachers may sign up to attend in-district courses, which are taught by supervisors and/or other teachers. The district holds an in-service day in March each school year. Also, teachers may be funded to attend out-of-district workshops in areas of interest or need.

Woodbine Avenue School #23

The Woodbine Avenue School was constructed in 1960 on a 7.1-acre site as a collection of four-classroom pods, designated as units A through E. At later dates (1964 & 1968), enclosed hallways were constructed in the shape of a plus sign to connect each pod and the administrative offices, library and all-purpose room.

The school contains a total of 416 students in grades K-5. There are three classes at each grade level, except for the four third grade sections. Class sizes range from 16 to 24 in grades K-3 and from 21 to 26 in grades 4-5. The school has a diverse population with many ethnic groups, including a significant number of Asian and Egyptian students. The 1998-99 School Report Card lists the languages spoken at home as English-24%, Urdu-14%, Gujarati-13%, Arabic-13%, Spanish-9%, Panjabi-3%, Kamil-3% and other 21%. The school serves as a district magnet for the Arabic bilingual program and there is also an ESL program.

Most students walk to school from nearby apartment buildings. With a large proportion of low-income families, 110 students receive free lunches and 45 receive reduced price lunches. As a satellite program, lunches are served in three sittings in good weather and in two sittings on rainy days. Ten lunch aides work in the all-purpose room and playground during the lunch periods.

The school receives Demonstratively Effective Programs Aid (DEPA) of about \$160,000 annually, which funds salaries for a reading recovery teacher, a basic skills teacher and half of the media specialist's salary. In school year 2001-02, DEPA funds will pay participating teachers an hourly rate to remain after school to assist students. Also in 2000-01, the school anticipates receiving \$500 from a private corporation to enhance the book and materials selection in the school library.

The school's mobility rate has been as high as 33%. As is the case in most schools located in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods, school personnel and students are challenged to raise test scores on commercial achievement and state assessment tests. The school curriculum emphasizes the fundamentals of reading, writing and mathematics.

With a new principal in September, 2000, efforts were increased to organize the PTO and about 60% of the parents are now members. In addition to the district-wide family night offerings in

reading, writing and mathematics, the local PTO has initiated a series of family oriented evening activities, such as movie night, roller skating, etc. The students would benefit from additional parent/community volunteers working within the school setting.

Avenel Middle School #40

Avenel Middle School, which was constructed in 1964 on an 18.3-acre site, was built around a core rectangle with extensions on both ends, a courtyard in the center, and a second story of classrooms extending along the front of the central rectangle. This was one of several schools closed by the Woodbridge Township Board of Education in the late 1980s when district enrollment was low. Several of the closed schools were sold at that time, but Avenel Middle School was used for offices and also, for a time, served as an Alternative School. The building is currently used primarily as a Middle School, but is also the only in-district location for a number of other programs. Four full-time custodians, including three day custodians, and one evening custodian, are responsible to clean the facility. Two part-time custodians come in at 3:30 p.m. The building is in high demand and consequently is used most weekday evenings until 10:30 or 11:00 p.m.

The principal and vice principal are assisted by an office staff of two 12-month secretaries and one, 10-month secretary. The gifted and talented program also has a full-time secretary and the guidance department shares a 10-month guidance clerk half time. Faculty members are assigned in a team approach, which allows them to address the emotional needs of students in this age group. Avenel's 680 students, which figure does not include those students bused in for part-time programs, are grouped into two teams per grade, grades 6 through 8.

Avenel serves as a magnet school for the district's gifted and talented (G&T) program. Consequently, students at all grade levels from throughout the district are pulled out of their regular classrooms and bused from their base schools to Avenel Middle School for participation in this program. District-wide theater, visual and music arts G&T instruction grades 3 through 12, and G&T academic enrichment for grades K through 5 are all located at Avenel Middle School. Only G&T academic enrichment for grades 6 through 12 is offered on-site at each base school. The Avenel Middle School facility thus services students at all grade levels, K through 12. This influx and egress of students, some of whom, spend up to three-quarters of the day at Avenel Middle School, gives rise to unique security issues, creates its own set of logistical challenges, and to differing degrees, substitutes transport time for instructional time.

Avenel Middle School also receives middle school and high school special education students from all over the district for participation in the Employment Opportunity Program which is offered only at this site. These self-contained classes provide students with a variety of pre-employment and simulated employment experiences. In addition, Avenel Middle School is the one receiving school for the district's trainable mentally retarded students. This small-group class, whose students are mainstreamed to join their Avenel peers for gym, lunch, and whenever else possible, includes a tuition-paying student from out of district.

It was noted that, over the past three to five years, the school district has undergone a change to a more diverse clientele. Apart from district-wide changes, Avenel Middle School has undergone a continuing increase in its student mobility rate. School personnel find that the high student mobility rate impacts the continuity of the student learning process.

Avenel Middle School, the Woodbridge Township School District and the local township mayor and council frequently recognize and praise students for their achievements. Avenel Middle School students have received recognition for a number of academic and community-focused activities. Students raised \$400 to be sent for relief aid following recent devastating flooding in India, and received a plaque from the town council for their success in this project. Students have also worked to raise money for health awareness and scientific research by walking to fund breast cancer research, and by jumping rope to raise money to combat heart disease.

The PTO has been active in support of school needs and activities. The anticipated expenditures for 2000-01 totaled \$9,025 and fans were purchased for most classrooms. Parent volunteers also have been very helpful in the school.

Colonia Middle School

The Colonia Middle School, which opened in 1960 on a 23.1-acre site, has an enrollment of 606 in grades 6-8. The school building is composed of classrooms and hallways located around two open rectangular courtyards. The school has a two teaching station gymnasium, a cafetorium with a stage and a library/media center. The media center has five computers that provide access to the Internet and a computer with the catalog of library books and materials. There are woods and metal shops and home economics facilities for foods and clothing.

The classrooms are arranged in wings of the building, with sixth grade on the second floor in the 200 wing, and seventh and eighth grades on the first floor. The three wings of the building have two science rooms each, which have a sink area for teacher laboratory demonstrations. There is a computer laboratory with about 30 machines. The administration suite has offices for the principal and vice principal and two guidance counselors. The nurse's office is located across the hall.

The school day begins with homeroom at 8:25 a.m. and ends after eight periods at 3:05 p.m. Each teacher has five class periods, one preparation period, one team planning period and one duty period. The academic program is delivered by two teams for sixth grade, and 1.5 teams each for grades seven and eight. Each team consists of five teachers, each providing instruction in one of the major disciplines of science, mathematics, English, reading and social studies/history. The school also has teachers of special subjects, such as industrial arts, home economics, music, art, etc. There are three self-contained special education classes and a number of classrooms that serve as resource rooms.

The building shows evidence of "wear and tear" from lengthy usage and limited financial resources for replacements and improvements. While the boilers were replaced four years ago,

the pneumatic systems do not function adequately to distribute the heat around the building. There is some evidence of water damage from roof leaks. The building has benefited from lighting retrofitting, and new bell and intercom systems.

The PTO has been active and involved with fund-raising projects and the financing of a sound system for the cafetorium, new stage curtains, grounds landscaping and a new front sign. A PTO hotline assists students who encounter problems with homework. Also, parents volunteer to assist in the media center and to sponsor school dances.

There are eight school buses, which transport about half of the students to and from school. Students are assigned seats on the buses, with the eighth graders in back and the sixth graders in the front. The vice-principal spends considerable time on discipline issues, with many of them related to transportation. The administration would like to have video cameras on the buses to record student behavior and to simplify discipline proceedings.

Fords Middle School

Fords Middle School houses approximately 620 students, grades 6 through 8, in a single-story building with three main wings. Each wing houses a separate grade level, six through eight. These main wings are connected by intersecting hallways at each end, thereby creating courtyards separating the wings and grade levels. One intersecting wing contains the library/media center, the cafetorium and vocal and instrumental music rooms, as well as the boiler room and maintenance area. The second intersecting wing contains the physical education space, including the gymnasium and student locker rooms. The fine arts, industrial arts and home arts rooms are also clustered on this intersecting wing. The building, constructed in 1960, sits in its original footprint with no additions. Although clean and brightly decorated, the building has original elements, such as aging floor tiles and gym floor, which clearly attest to the wear of constant use over the years.

The building is administered by a principal and vice principal, who are assisted by two full-time, 12-month secretaries. In the guidance office there is an additional full-time, 10-month secretary who handles attendance, as well as a half time, 10-month secretary. Support staff includes a full-time library/media specialist, a full-time nurse, and two full-time guidance counselors. The custodial staff consists of three full-time day custodians, two full-time evening custodians, and two part-time evening custodians. There are five full-time cafeteria workers, including the cafeteria manager.

The student school day is from 8:15 a.m. until 3:05 p.m. The student body is a microcosm of the district's diversity in student population.

The school's special education program consists of three self-contained classes, one at each grade level. These students attend all industrial arts, fine arts and home arts classes with their classmates. Resource room teachers in the building provide both pullout instruction and in-class support.

The school has approximately 55 full-time faculty. Faculty members are grouped into teams in providing instruction. For the sixth grade, there are two developmental teams consisting of four core teachers. The seventh grade has 1 3/5 developmental teams, consisting of eight core teachers, and the eighth grade has 1 2/5 developmental teams with seven core teachers.

Fords Middle School does not receive DEPA funding. DEPA requires approximately 20% of student population to meet entry-level requirements, while at Fords MS about 18% of the student body currently meet DEPA entry level requirements.

The school has a very active PTO that provides fundraisers in support of school programs and activities. PTO members contribute to the bimonthly newsletter published by the school administration, and sit on the school planning committee.

The student body is transported in nine regular buses, plus two vans for special education students. About 75% of the student population are bused to and from school.

Students at Fords Middle School are involved in Service Learning Projects through the Early Act Club. At the time of the review, students were engaged in fund-raising to purchase a defibrillator for a local senior citizen complex.

Iselin Middle School

The Iselin Middle School has a campus appearance on a 20.2-acre site, with a V-shaped central core for administration and special facilities, including a cafetorium, art, home economics and industrial arts areas. There are five separate classroom wings, which branch out with connecting covered walkways and a separate gymnasium structure with an arched roof. The 1960 building provides a bright and airy interior with an abundance of exterior views of an expansive lawn setting. The school is located on the same large site adjacent to the John F. Kennedy (JFK) High School and there is some sharing of facilities, such as the track, high school auditorium, etc.

Iselin Middle School has an enrollment of 680 students in grades 6-8. The school day runs from 8:15 a.m. until 3:05 p.m., with a homeroom and eight class periods. Channel 1 TV is provided during homeroom from 8:21 to 8:37 a.m. Lunch is served, one grade at a time, during periods four, five and six. There is a 20-minute silent reading period during the second half of each lunch period.

The school has nine homerooms in grade 6 and 10 homerooms each in grades 7 and 8. Two teams of teachers, per grade, provide the academic instruction and teachers of special subjects/skills provide exploratory courses in art, music, industrial arts and home economics. There are 13 non-tenured teachers in the building and, with the principal on sick leave, district supervisors conduct many of the classroom observations and evaluations. Staff area leaders, who are full-time teachers, are paid a stipend for conducting departmental meetings.

The school serves as the English as a Second Language magnet school, receiving eligible students from throughout the district. There is one special education self-contained class (LLD) at each grade level and one behavior disorder class (BD) for grades 6-8. There are no world

languages in the building, except for Spanish as an elective for advanced students. There are honors English and mathematics classes and a gifted and talented academic pullout program for two days per week. The gifted and talented music and art students go to the Avenel Middle School for instruction.

The administration uses the computer software from the Asbury Park School District for preparing the master schedule and printing the schedule of classes for students and teachers. The same service is utilized for progress reports and report cards.

The school has both cable and dial-up access to the Internet. The media center has five computers that are connected to the Internet, as well as color and black and white printers. The school also has a computer laboratory with about 28 Apple machines for student use.

The district operates a SPLASH summer program at Iselin Middle School for about 30 unclassified students. The program invites voluntary participation by students and emphasizes positive self-images for “at risk” sixth and seventh graders.

The school has an active PTO with a number of fund-raisers, including a walkathon and the sale of entertainment books and T-shirts. The PTO funds dances, field trips and the purchase of classroom TVs and VCRs. The PTO also issues a periodic newsletter.

The Iselin Middle School was recognized as one of ten New Jersey schools selected by the Corporation for National Service as National Service-Learning leader Schools for 2001. New Jersey continues to lead the nation in the number of schools honored for their special commitment to inclusion of community service activities into their curricula.

Woodbridge Middle School

The Woodbridge Middle School is a three-story 1910 building on a 3.8-acre site, which served as the high school for Woodbridge Township from 1911 until 1956. This is the oldest operating school building in the district. Over the years there have been a number of additions, including a single-loaded corridor of classrooms on the back, a shop and gymnasium complex, a 1930 auditorium and stage, a wooden building housing instrumental music, and the library/media center and a kitchen and cafeteria area.

The school is administered by a principal and vice principal and there are two guidance counselors, one school nurse, and one media specialist. There are three secretaries and five custodians, with three custodians scheduled during the day and two in the evening. Each week, one of the custodians is assigned to work Tuesday through Saturday to cover extra activities and community events. There is a police officer assigned to the building by the township.

The school has a spacious auditorium where holiday and spring concerts are held. In addition, grade level meetings are held there, as well as promotion exercises. The school band holds its rehearsals on the stage.

While there have been some repairs over the years, the school has a number of signs of maintenance neglect. At least one cold water line in the basement leaks, some gutters are in disrepair and there is evidence of ceiling and wall damage in several areas from past roof leads. Many of the windows and doors are quite old and show excessive wear from long usage.

The school houses about 478 middle school students in grades six through eight. The school is organized instructionally into three grade-level teams of teachers, who have common planning periods. Teachers normally teach five classes daily and have an administrative duty. Academic classes are located throughout the building primarily on the basis of grade. Class periods are 46 minutes in length during an eight-period day. Students are served by grade level in three 35-minute lunch period sittings. There are two regular school buses and one special education bus that transport students to school; however, over 90% of the students live within two miles of the school and are not transported.

The school had a community service project that involved researching about the members of students' families in World War II. The students raised \$1,500 for a memorial stone to be placed in the township commemorating the gallant contributions these individuals made so long ago.

While the school does not have a web site, the principal prepares a monthly newsletter that provides useful information for parents. Channel 1 TV programs are observed daily during the homeroom period. Teachers in the school have received a number of financial grants from Ecolab and the local education foundation. Reportedly, the PTO is very active and has funded several projects, including a portable public address system, a floor mat and a wireless microphone.

Colonia High School

Colonia High School, a two storied building that was opened in 1967, was designed with two open courtyards and classrooms and hallways arranged in a double square configuration. The exterior classroom windows and interior courtyards provide an abundance of light for the corridors and classrooms. On the first floor there are separate wings extending to the double cafeterias and to the auditorium and the shop and music areas. The gymnasium is located off the front corridor and toward one end of the administrative office suite. The second floor contains academic classrooms, the library/media center and the foreign language laboratory.

The school is staffed by a principal and two vice principals, seven secretaries, six full-time and three part-time custodians and 10 cafeteria employees. There is a guidance director, with a 100-student load, and 3.5 guidance counselors are available for the remaining 1,150 students. There are six instructional departmental heads, who teach three blocks each during the school year. There are 125 faculty members including 22 non-tenure teachers, of whom 12 are alternate route teachers who have "master" teachers assigned to provide guidance.

The school has a block master schedule, with 80-minute periods. The exception, block three, is 115 minutes long which includes a 30-minute lunch. Reportedly, the longer periods provide enhanced opportunities for teachers to become familiar with students and to provide positive reinforcement. There is emphasis on reading and writing and upon cooperative learning. Less

movement in the hallways results in fewer discipline problems in corridors, rest rooms and cafeterias. Also, students can complete up to 160 credits over four years. Teachers teach three blocks one semester and two blocks the other semester, plus a duty assignment.

The Home and School Association is very active in support of school programs and needs. They conduct fundraisers and have purchased nine air conditioners, new flags and a new public address system. A second parent group, the Parents and Teachers Forum, assists in the academic process. Programs involve speakers from the student body, from the community and students who have graduated. Senior citizens are also involved in the school and have donated money for band trips and for the purchase of outdoor signs at the school entrance.

John F. Kennedy High School

In March, 2001, 907 students attended John F. Kennedy High School, a two-story building constructed in 1964. The building consists of a central rectangle containing classrooms on both floors, and two one-story wings, one containing the kitchen and cafeteria, and the other the gymnasium, locker rooms, auditorium and several classrooms. The only addition to the building was an addition to the gymnasium completed 20 or more years ago. John F. Kennedy High School receives most of its student body from Iselin Middle School, although a small number of students from Fords Middle School also attend. The school prides itself on the diversity and harmony of its student body.

The building is maintained by seven full-time custodians, three of whom work a full-time day shift, three the evening shift, and one who is assigned exclusively to the field house and grounds. These seven positions are, at times, assisted by up to two part-time custodians for four hours per shift. The facility and grounds are used extensively by the students well beyond the last class, and by adult education classes from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Outside youth groups use the building, as available, and the township recreation department holds activities on the high school fields during the summer.

John F. Kennedy High School was the first school in the district to initiate block scheduling. The school day begins with an eight-minute homeroom period, followed by four, 85-minute block periods and a 30-minute lunch. The school day concludes at 2:30 p.m. Students assigned in-school suspension report to an in-school suspension room staffed by a full-time teacher. For the most part, teachers teach five block periods per year: two block periods, with a duty and professional period one semester; and three block periods and a professional period the other semester. The administration takes great pride in the cooperative spirit of both faculty and support staff in the building.

John F. Kennedy High School serves as the district magnet school for all high school students requiring courses in English as a Second Language. The school also has several self-contained special education classes. Basic skills instruction is provided, as needed, in addition to the regular English and/or mathematics classes.

The school has a weather station from which data is collected and used to broadcast the local weather via the school's in-house television production lab. The library-media center had

approximately ten computers on line during school year 2000-01. These were the only on-line computers in the building at the time the review team visited, although lines have been installed through the Tech 2000 funding initiative to bring Internet connections to additional locations in the building.

The cafeteria kitchen at John F. Kennedy High School serves as a production kitchen, preparing and sending out hot meals to a number of the district elementary schools. As such, it is staffed with 11 full-time and three part-time employees.

John F. Kennedy High School has several very active parent groups, including its Parent Faculty Forum (PFF). PFF supports a number of activities at the school through volunteer parent involvement and fund raising events. Monies raised by PFF fund events that would otherwise be impossible for the school to finance. For example, PFF funds scholarships that are presented to seniors at the school's annual awards ceremony.

John F. Kennedy High School has received national recognition as a Learn and Serve School. This program has created a number of different student service-learning projects, which reach outside the traditional classroom to benefit other members of the community, both locally and statewide. Over 80% of the school's students have participated in service learning projects.

The principal publishes a newsletter four times per year, providing information on recent and upcoming school events, and noting student and faculty achievements at the school.

Woodbridge High School

Woodbridge High School, with an enrollment of 1,550 students, is an expansive building, which was constructed in 1956. The school consists of two separate buildings that are connected at several locations with enclosed and open walkways. The main complex is a single story structure with a four-station gymnasium, a 1,800 seat auditorium and a spacious kitchen located between two cafeteria areas. This section also contains the art, home economics, print and wood shops and band room. The adjacent three-story building holds most of the academic classrooms, as well as science laboratories, computer labs, administrative and guidance offices and the library/media center.

The school is administered by a principal, three vice principals and five department heads who teach two to three classes each. The staffing includes 180 certified teachers and 100 non-certified support persons. The guidance department consists of a director and five counselors. The staff includes one school nurse and one media specialist, who receive part-time assistance by sharing professionals with other buildings. Among the support staff, there are 15 custodians and eight secretaries. One full-time and one part-time police officer, one who begins early in the morning and the other who arrives at 11:00 a.m., support the school staff.

The high school operates on the basis of eight periods (43 minutes each) per day between the hours of 7:50 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Due to the large size of the building, students are provided five minutes between periods to walk to the next scheduled class. Periods four through six are lunch periods. It is anticipated that block scheduling, which will provide 85-minute periods and reduce

the amount of time spent in passing between classes, will be introduced in September, 2001. On the day of the review team visit, there were 20 students in the in-school suspension room for non-conformity with school rules and regulations. Nevertheless, the atmosphere within the building appeared to be orderly and productive.

The attendance zone for Woodbridge High School covers a large geographic area; consequently about 40% of the students are transported to and from school. The high school has three “feeder” middle schools, including Woodbridge Middle School, Avenel Middle School and Fords Middle School. In addition, two private/parochial schools, St. James and St. John, provide incoming students.

The review team toured the facility and discovered evidence of some roof leaks and limited circulation of air throughout the structure. Some staff volunteered that the air quality in the building was very poor. The distribution of heat throughout the building was uneven, with some rooms too hot and others too cold. Many of the windows were Plexiglas, which had become clouded with exposure to sunlight over time.

The PTO meets once a month and has been active in raising money for special events, such as Project Graduation. Both the principal and the guidance department publish newsletters three or four times per year and the school newspaper is published periodically. A sponsored club in the school prepares Channel 36 TV broadcasts on school news and special events.

Adult Education

The Woodbridge Office of Adult and Community Education provides instruction in the following areas:

- Adult Basic Education-concentrates on the basics of reading, writing and mathematical skills necessary for adults to function in society. Some individuals are prepared for further instruction leading toward a diploma.
- Adult High School-provides students with instruction to enable them to obtain sufficient credit to graduate from high school.
- English as a Second Language-designed to increase the speaking, reading and writing levels of adults who have limited or no ability to speak English.
- General Educational Development (GED)-offers educational assistance to permit students to take and pass the high school level GED test.

In addition, there were about 100 enrichment courses (eight sessions each) and 18 field trips were offered on a fee basis each semester. Additionally, 15 vocational courses, which were primarily computer courses, were also offered. Eligible veterans and resident senior citizens (60+) with a golden pass card could enroll for a \$5 registration fee. School district employees with proper documentation could also register for \$5.

Adult Education Revenues and Expenditures-1999-00

Adult Programs	Expenditures	Tuition	State & Fed. Aid	Local Taxes
Adult High School	\$125,051	\$0	\$134,112	\$0
Employee Benefits	\$23,898*	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Adult High School	\$148,949	\$0	\$0	\$14,837
Adult Educ. Enrichment	\$140,144	\$83,298	\$0	\$0
Employee Benefits	\$27,749*	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Adult Educ. (local)	\$167,893	\$0	\$0	\$84,595
Adult Vocational Education	\$68,298	\$0	\$0	\$0
Employee Benefits	\$13,005*	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Adult Vocational	\$81,303	\$0	\$0	\$81,303
High Sch. Equival. Grants	\$12,603	\$0	\$12,603	\$0
Adult Basic Educ. Grants	\$40,602	\$0	\$40,602	\$0
Total Adult Educ. Grant	\$53,205	\$0	\$53,205	\$0
Grand Total Adult Educ.	\$451,350	\$83,298	\$187,317	\$180,735
*Fringe benefits@19.8% of salaries.				

In the table above, it is apparent that the tuition and fees paid by participating adults in enrichment courses funded only 50% of the cost for 1999-00 and the adult vocational program was paid entirely from local property taxes. The adult high school program was nearly self-supporting and the high school equivalency and adult basic education grants were break-even programs. However, local property taxes, totaling \$180,735, funded 40% of the total adult education expenses.

In the preparation of the 2001-02 budget, the Woodbridge Township School District eliminated the local funding of about \$165,900 for the adult enrichment and vocational programs. These programs were scheduled to end on June 30, 2001. The adult high school program, which is primarily funded by state/federal funds, will continue in operation.

Woodbridge Township School District is a member of the “Edison Consortium” that includes the school districts of Edison, Rahway and South Plainfield. The consortium provides adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and general education development (GED) for adults at various sites in the participating districts. The ESL program assists foreign-born residents to improve their skills in reading, speaking and writing the English language. The GED program prepares students for the GED tests for high school equivalency. The ABE program provides elementary level instruction for adults in writing, listening, speaking and arithmetic. The consortium ESL, ABE and GED programs were supported by federal and state funds totaling about \$250,000. On April 30, 2001, the districts were notified that there were insufficient state/federal funds to finance the program offerings during the 2001-02 school year. These programs, which served over 1,300 students in the area, will leave considerable unmet adult educational needs if alternative sources for funding are not located.

Gifted and Talented

The Woodbridge Township School District has a large gifted and talented (G&T) program, which serves 1,200 students K-12, or 9.5% of the district student population. Of that number about half, or 626 students, are in the academic enrichment program, while 574 students are in an arts program. The May, 2001 enrollments by program were as follows:

Woodbridge Gifted and Talented Enrollment

G & T Programs	G&T Enrollments
Elementary Enrichment/PEG	189
Middle School Enrichment	226
High School Enrichment	211
Music (Grades 3-12)	181
Theatre Arts (Grades 3-12)	235
Visual Arts (Grades 3-12)	158
Grand Total G&T Enrollment	1,200

A supervisor, 10 teachers, one secretary and an aide staff the program. There is a teacher of gifted and talented located in each of the three high schools and two teachers instruct the grade 6-8 students in the middle schools. About 765 students are bused, on a rotating basis, for gifted and talented instruction in Avenel Middle School.

Primary Elementary – Selected students in kindergarten through third grade participate in multi-grade, half-day experiences in communication, problem solving, creative thinking and self-direction. Units on cross-cultural connections are also included in the program.

Intermediate Elementary - In grades four and five these students work on more advanced levels in the four above-mentioned areas. Students work in various laboratories on a rotating basis on extended projects.

Elementary Arts - Talented students spend a half-day per week doing advanced work in music, visual arts or theatre arts. While at Avenel Middle School, the students prepare for an annual exhibit, music recital or play performance.

Program for the Exceptionally Gifted (PEG) – PEG provides for acceleration in mathematics, English, reading and spelling for 37 students who are two or more years above grade level. These students also complete the gifted and talented enrichment program during the two full days at the middle school.

Middle School Students who meet the district criteria for the gifted and talented program are scheduled for two classes per week with a G&T teacher at the middle school. Field trips and performances in nearby towns are also provided. Talented art students are scheduled for two-hour classes, which are held every three weeks. These students are transported to Avenel Middle School on designated dates for classes in music, theatre or visual arts. Students are responsible for academic work missed in their regularly assigned classes during these periods.

High School - G&T students may take an elective gifted and talented course for five credits during each year of high school. The curriculum challenges these capable students through research and discussion of philosophical and ethical situations, by exploring the nature of creativity and by analyzing and debating selected great books. Additionally, students develop time management and leadership skills, review the SATs, conduct a college search and prepare a portfolio for college.

Talented arts students continue to be mentored by G&T teachers and periodically are transported to Avenel Middle School for field trips to work in studio settings. They leave the high schools for either an a.m. or p.m. session and return before dismissal. Students are placed into appropriate art courses in high school and are offered the opportunity to audition for accelerated courses at the Middlesex County Arts High School.

Media Center/School Library

Library media centers endeavor to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The library media specialists and other educators, through collaborative efforts, design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students. There are 19 librarian/media specialists and two substitutes to serve the district’s 24 school libraries/media centers. Ten of the specialists are assigned split schedules to provide coverage for two schools each. Each middle and high school has at least a full-time specialist, plus another specialist who also shares time with another high school. Only four of the 16 elementary schools have a full-time specialist assigned, leaving the other elementary schools to share the services of certificated staff, substitutes and volunteers to provide for the effective functioning of the libraries. Travel time is necessary on the days when the specialists are in transit between two assigned schools.

With the increased emphasis on the gathering and utilization of data, especially via electronic data systems, it would appear that the elementary schools may need a reassessment of the actual needs to effectively implement the library/media program.

Media Service/School Library	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Salaries	\$1,106,769	\$1,203,739	\$687,457	\$1,013,495
Salaries-Secretarial & Clerical Asst.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$536,407
Purchased Prof. & Tech. Services	\$0	\$42,944	\$0	\$77,862
Other Purchased Services	\$0	\$3,354	\$0	\$679
Supplies and Materials	\$365,116	\$157,960	\$233,805	\$263,730
Other Objects	\$0	\$928	\$0	\$99,248
Total Media/School Library	\$1,471,885	\$1,408,925	\$921,262	\$1,991,421
Cost Per Pupil	\$120	\$150	\$72	\$116

Among the comparison districts, Woodbridge is the second highest in per pupil costs and also higher than the three comparative districts’ average cost of \$113. The cost for salaries has been kept in line by the use of volunteers, whereas Clifton and Toms River both use the service of other individuals who are paid to supplement their library/media staff. District officials may want to examine the expenditure for library/media supplies and materials, with a view towards inclusion in cooperative purchasing efforts with other systems.

The middle and high school media centers feature a computer system that is Internet connected and CD-ROM equipped. Currently, the district has over 200,000 books in 24 libraries, and in almost all of the elementary facilities, there is a connection with the Internet.

Health Services

Generally, the nurse's office in each school was visited, an interview was conducted with the supervisor responsible for this program and some procedures pertaining to nursing unit operations were reviewed.

The health program has a nurse assigned to each school. Additionally, there are three part-time aides who stay after each three-hour assignment to serve as instructional aides. The head nurse for the district, who is located at Woodbridge High, performs department head duties in the mornings and then functions as a school nurse for the remainder of the school day. The supervisor, who has the health program in her purview, also has responsibilities for covering other key areas. Each nurse has been provided with a laptop computer that was contributed by a private firm. This computer linkage enables the central administration to interact with the nurses quickly. It also allows the timely and efficient transfer of medical records or data and the expeditious preparation of reports. Nurses provide health instruction primarily for the fifth grade classes.

There are two pediatricians who conduct physical examinations for the kindergarten, fifth and tenth grade students. The district pays \$3 per physical. Three dentists conduct screenings in the elementary and middle schools. Each dentist has seven schools and receives a \$700 annual stipend. There are three certified trainers contracted from the club, a local rehabilitation center, for \$7,000 per year. Each trainer is assigned to a high school. In turn, the club allows the district to hold a limited number of events, such as the health fair, at its facility at no cost to the district.

Supplies are ordered through the central office. Each nurse receives a printout of the ordered items and the remaining budget allocation for future use.

Health Services	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Salaries	\$1,301,046	\$732,052	\$1,251,992	\$1,597,972
Purchased Prof. & Tech. Services	\$0	\$25,673	\$144,885	\$601
Other Purchased Service	\$0	\$804	\$0	\$52,733
Supplies and Materials	\$53,141	\$13,383	\$21,092	\$50,574
Total Health Services	\$1,354,187	\$771,912	\$1,417,970	\$1,701,880
Cost Per Pupil	\$111	\$82	\$111	\$99

The district's per pupil cost was equal with the highest expenditure at \$111 and was 14% above the \$97 average of the three comparative districts. District officials should consider examining the cost of materials and supplies to identify a means for reducing the amount being expended for these items.

Guidance

The guidance counselors are involved in a wide range of activities including orientation for new students and parents, scheduling, testing, team meetings, preparatory work-ups for student transition on to the next level of their educational pursuit and numerous other elements of the counseling program.

Each of the elementary counselors provides services for three schools and/or programs. The Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Educational Improvement and Financing (May, 1996) sets forth that the ratio of guidance counselors to students at the elementary level should be 1:500, at the middle school level 1:337 and 1:225 at the high school level. Based upon the district having a total of 5,920 elementary students and six counselors for a ratio of 1:986.7, the district should evaluate the adequacy of guidance services for elementary school students.

On the middle school level, there are 2,869 students and two counselors for each school. With a total of 10 counselors and a ratio of 1:287, this is well above the DOE suggested staffing ratio of 1:337. According to the guidelines, 8.5 counselors can provide guidance services for the current middle school enrollments and 1.5 middle school counselors could be transferred to the elementary school level.

Each high school has a guidance department head and several counselors to deliver guidance services to students. Including the department head, Colonia High School has five counselors for 1,126 students, Kennedy High School has four counselors to work with 866 students and Woodbridge High School has six counselors for 1,471 students. The guidance department heads service a number of students in addition to their administrative responsibilities.

- The Colonia High School department head services 100 students, leaving the balance of 1,026 students to be divided among the remaining four counselors.
- The J. F. Kennedy High School department head reportedly counsels 262 students and the three remaining counselors have a total of 604 counselees.
- The Woodbridge High School department head has a 105-student counseling load, leaving 1,366 students to be assigned to the six full-time counselors.

In summary, there are 12 full-time counselors, excluding the department heads, who counsel about 3,000 high school students, or an average of 250 students each. In addition, there are four drug counselors who are assigned one to each high school and one for the five middle schools. And in the Alternative High School there is a program, Project Alive, which provides student-counseling services through the special services office.

In conclusion, during annual budget deliberations school officials should evaluate the adequacy of guidance staffing and the equity of guidance assignments according to student enrollments. District officials should also clearly define the counseling load of guidance department heads as a specified number of counselees, or perhaps as half-time counselors and half-time department heads.

The comparative costs of the four school districts are contained in the following table:

Guidance	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Salaries of Professional Staff	\$2,240,375	\$1,280,607	\$2,129,067	\$2,804,052
Salaries-Secretarial & Clerical Staff	\$0	\$175,134	\$266,818	\$553,888
Other Salaries	\$0	\$13,710	\$18,653	\$0
Purchase Professional Educ. Serv.	\$3,800	\$590	\$169,179	\$240
Other Pur. Prof. & Tech. Serv.	\$0	\$7,115	\$95	\$0
Other Purchased Services	\$0	\$544	\$0	\$1,550
Materials and Supplies	\$0	\$6,488	\$6,735	\$30,414
Other Objects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,067
Total Guidance	\$2,244,175	\$1,484,188	\$2,590,547	\$3,403,211
Cost Per Pupil	\$183	\$158	\$204	\$197

The district's per pupil guidance cost is slightly below the \$186 average for the three comparative districts.

Bilingual and English As A Second Language (ESL)

Woodbridge is a district whose communities include families from all parts of the world. The diversity the students bring into the schools is reflected in the multitude of linguistic backgrounds reported on the Non-native English Language Survey. As of October, 2000, a total of 2,597 students identified a language other than English as the one they learned first or which is spoken in the home. There were 62 different languages cited. The majority of those students have no difficulty understanding and using English in school, but there were 325 designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

The linguistic groups most frequently declared by Woodbridge students and their families are shown in the following table.

Language	Total	LEP
Spanish	631	71
Gujarati	370	50
Urdu	228	36
Arabic	117	23
Korean	69	16
Polish	144	14
Telugu	67	14
Hindi	128	10
Portuguese	91	7
Filipino	139	3

Source: Limited English Proficient Student Enrollment Report, 10/00.

Because of the diversity indicated by these statistics, the district offers an extensive array of programs and services for students whose proficiency in English is limited. During the 2000-01 school year, six elementary schools in Woodbridge were designated as bilingual magnet schools for the five languages, with the highest total of students meeting the Limited English Proficiency

criteria. Schools #22 and #25 were designated the Spanish sites. School #24 contained the Gujarati program, and School #20 served the Urdu group. The Arabic program was housed at School #23, while School #18 was the location for the bilingual Korean program.

The most recent three-year Bilingual/ESL Program Plan for the district included the years 1999-02. That document, used as the basis for determining needs and describing the programs, showed that enrollments of LEP students in four of the above five languages exceeded the number of students (20) required by the New Jersey Department of Education to establish a bilingual program. (While the number of LEP students whose native language is Korean fell below that level in October, 2000, the population of such students had been above 20 for a number of years.) Considering the age disparity of the students, the district provided extensive bilingual services to the students while including most of them with their age peers in the regular classroom whenever possible. As mentioned below, a full-time bilingual program was established for kindergarten students who spoke Spanish or Gujarati. In addition to the six languages that justified bilingual programs, 166 students from other linguistic groups had language needs requiring attention. Those students received programming through the ESL program only. The distribution of Bilingual/ESL students is shown below by grade.

Grade	Bilingual Education	ESL-Only
Kindergarten	43	28
Grade 1	20	36
Grade 2	16	19
Grade 3	12	15
Grade 4	8	17
Grade 5	12	11
Grade 6	10	7
Grade 7	8	5
Grade 8	11	5
Grade 9	14	5
Grade 10	12	9
Grade 11	13	7
Grade 12	6	2
Totals	185	166

Source: District Three-Year Bilingual/ESL Program Plan, 1999-2002

Programming for LEP students in Woodbridge varies with the school level. The supervisor of funded programs, testing, and special programs, who reports to the assistant superintendent of instructional services, directs these programs. In the designated magnet elementary schools, there are both bilingual and ESL programs and staff. The kindergarten programs in Gujarati and Spanish are full-time programs. In the Arabic, Korean, and Urdu programs, kindergarten students receive 90 minutes (45 minutes for reading and writing, 45 minutes for mathematics) of instruction from the bilingual teacher and 30 minutes of instruction from the ESL teacher each day. For all students in the bilingual programs in grades 1 through 5,

instruction consists of 90 minutes (split evenly between language arts and mathematics) with the bilingual teacher and 30 minutes with the ESL teacher daily. At the middle school and high school levels, students are scheduled for one block period of ESL daily, during which they receive English and language arts instruction, as well as support for their other academic subjects.

During the 2000-01 school year, 16 certified teachers and seven bilingual aides were deployed throughout the district to provide the above services. Staff were funded through a combination of sources, including local funds, state bilingual aid, and a grant under the Emergency Immigrant Education Program.

In order to identify students eligible for the bilingual or ESL programs, each new student is assessed for English proficiency, using the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) if there is a question about language skills. Parents are given information about the program and their rights in the native language, as forms and letters have been translated into a wide variety of languages for this purpose. A student who meets the limited English proficiency criteria is assigned to a school with the appropriate age level and language group unless the parent chooses to decline this program choice. Annual testing on the LAB or on the Maculaitis Assessment Program is used as one indicator of student improvement and as part of the determination of the student's readiness to exit the bilingual or ESL program. Other criteria that comprise the multiple measures are classroom performance in the regular English class, reading level and results of standardized achievement tests (in English), and teacher ratings. A weighted system incorporates all those elements in the calculation of a total score. Students exceeding a specified level (110 points) are then exited from the program.

According to the most recent program evaluation summary submitted by the district, showing data from the 1999-00 school year, 151 students met the exit criteria. Of those students, 70% reached the exit score by the end of their second year in the bilingual or ESL program, while 86% met the criteria by the end of their third year, attesting to the success of this approach. Those figures compare favorably with the statewide statistics included in one report "Public Education: Meeting the Needs of Students with Limited English Proficiency" released by the U. S. General Accounting Office in February, 2001. According to that document, 57% of LEP students in New Jersey schools were exited from bilingual or ESL programs after two years, while a total of 78% were exited after three years. In all other states cited in the report (Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Texas, and Washington), the percentages were much lower. Woodbridge School District staff reported that the students who exited generally were successful academically, although a few required remedial instruction in English through the basic skills program.

Expenditures of local funds by the district to serve the LEP population over a three-year period are shown below. As indicated, the overall increase in expenditures was 6%, a very modest amount, especially considering that the bilingual Urdu program was initiated during that time.

Woodbridge – Bilingual/ESL Expenditures			
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Salaries, Teachers	\$664,258	\$711,013	\$731,560
Other Salaries for Instruction	\$26,000	\$30,717	\$54,388
Other Purchased Services	\$0	\$2,138	\$2,677
Instructional Supplies	\$34,642	\$0	\$0
Salaries - Support Services	\$14,116	\$0	\$0
General Supplies	\$10,476	\$14,042	\$12,254
Travel/Community Service	\$3,544	\$0	\$0
Bilingual/ESL – Total	\$753,036	\$757,910	\$800,878

Source: District Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), 6/00.

In relation to the other districts in the comparison group, Woodbridge was third highest in both local expenditures for bilingual and ESL programming and for state categorical aid in this area.

The following table, taken from the CAFR for each district, illustrates this information. Although not displayed, a more detailed comparison revealed that each district committed more than 90% of its local funds to salaries of teachers and aides for the programs.

Comparative Summary Of Bilingual/ESL, 1999-00		
District	Local Expenditures	State Bilingual Aid
Woodbridge	\$800,878	\$415,077
Clifton	\$880,265	\$508,921
Edison	\$1,128,900	\$452,400
Toms River	\$170,324	\$67,077

Source: Districts' Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), 6/00.

To support funding of the bilingual and ESL programs in the district, Woodbridge has qualified for and received funding through the Federal Emergency Immigrant Education Program. For the 1999-00 school year, that source produced \$90,790, while for the 2000-01 school year, the allocation was for \$96,347. That additional revenue has been used for salaries and benefits of a teacher and bilingual aides, presentations and programs for parents, educational supplies and materials related to the bilingual and ESL programs, and district membership in the "Trans-Act" translation library.

The district provides an impressive program to meet the needs of students who enroll with limited abilities to communicate in English. The decision to establish magnet schools at each level for bilingual and ESL allows the district to assign staff in an efficient manner. Responsiveness to changes in the student population has been demonstrated through the development of programs to address new linguistic groups moving into the district.

Co-Curricular Activities

The district endeavors to deliver a well-rounded program addressing student needs within budgetary constraints. The individual schools have essentially tailored their offerings to perceived student interests or needs. The middle and high schools have considerably larger offerings than the elementary schools. Salary costs are based on the stipends allocated for faculty advisors who oversee the activities of the participating students. Most activities have very strong student participation.

Co-Curricular Activities	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Salaries	\$327,054	\$179,409	\$320,131	\$417,953
Purchased Professional Services	\$40,856	\$0	\$0	\$23,613
Other Purchased Services	\$0	\$30,327	\$0	\$2,399
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,201
Supplies and Materials	\$49,018	\$5,858	\$86,251	\$161,115
Other Objects	\$25,295	\$13,000	\$0	\$11,580
Total Co-Curricular Activities	\$442,223	\$228,594	\$406,382	\$634,861
Cost Per Pupil	\$36	\$24	\$32	\$37

The Woodbridge cost per pupil is the second highest among the four comparison districts and also falls \$5 above the average of the other three districts. The expenditures for the purchase of professional services and other objects are higher than the comparable district expenses.

Basic Skills/Remedial

The basic skills/remedial programs in Woodbridge are organized under the supervisor of funded programs, testing, and special programs, a 12-month employee who reports to the assistant superintendent for instructional services. Also in the office are two clerical staff members. Local and Title I funds are used to operate these programs.

In order to identify those with remedial needs, students in the district schools participate in assessment of academic achievement at all grade levels. In kindergarten, the Test of Basic Experience (TOBE) is given. Text-based assessment instruments are used in grades 1 and 2, while the California Achievement Test (CAT5) is administered in grades 3 and 5. Fourth grade students take the New Jersey Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA). In the middle schools, the CAT5 is used in grades 6 and 7, while the New Jersey Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) is the instrument administered students in that grade. For high school students, the New Jersey High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) is given at grade 11 (and at grade 12 for those who have not previously met this graduation requirement), while the CAT5 is the academic achievement measure for grades 9 and 10. Each of those standardized assessments is regarded as the primary determinant regarding student needs for remedial instruction. In addition, other input includes report card grades, classroom performance, and teacher recommendations.

A variety of instructional models and programs are used throughout the district to provide remedial services to identified students. All basic skills staff in the district are fully certified teachers. While there is variability based on the needs of different schools, all students in basic skills receive at least two 30-minute periods of remedial instruction twice per week. A combination of pullout and in-class instruction by basic skills teachers was found in the elementary schools. As the district expands its new Fundamentals First program, which was piloted in five elementary schools during the 2000-01 school year, with expansion to an additional five elementary schools planned for 2001-02, greater emphasis will be placed on services provided in the regular class by basic skills teachers. Reading recovery is a form of direct, one-to-one instruction found in some, but not all, of the elementary schools. Students in the middle schools receive basic skills instruction as part of their English and/or mathematics class rather than as an additional course. The three high schools differ in providing basic skills, with some using a separate course, in addition to the regular English and/or mathematics class, while others use the regular English and math class as a way of delivering those services.

As of October, 2000, there were 2,161 students participating in basic skills programs in Woodbridge schools. A duplicated count included 1,507 students in communications classes and 1,408 in mathematics classes. Because so many of the teachers who provide remedial instruction also have other teaching duties, particularly at the secondary level, or have responsibilities in more than one school, the total number of staff assigned (in terms of full-time equivalents) cannot be determined. However, a total of 78 individual teachers throughout the district were assigned at least one class of basic skills instruction.

Expenditures

Funding for the basic skills/remedial programs in Woodbridge is derived from both local and Federal Title 1 sources, although not all schools in the district are eligible to receive Title 1 funds. The following table displays local expenditures for these instructional programs in Woodbridge and the other districts used for comparative purposes.

Basic Skills/Remedial Expenditures Comparison 1999-00				
	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Salaries of Teachers	\$422,727	\$0	\$2,491,962	\$1,660,049
General Supplies	\$0	\$3,339	\$0	\$24,314
Textbooks	\$0	\$605	\$0	\$1,027
Cleaning, Repair, Maint. Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,273
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$358
Miscellaneous Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	953
Total Basic Skills/Remedial	\$422,727	\$3,944	\$2,491,962	\$1,688,974

Source: Districts' Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), 6/00.

As indicated, there is a wide disparity among the four districts, with expenditures in Woodbridge significantly below two of the other three. A comparison of Title I funds for these districts reveals that Woodbridge ranks near the bottom in terms of funds received for the 1999-00 school year, as shown below.

Comparison of Title I Revenue, 1999-00	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Total from CAFR (Exhibit C-2), 6/00	\$402,075	\$729,036	\$401,488	\$1,132,346

Source: Districts' Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), 6/00

If the two sources of revenue (local funds and Title I) are combined, expenditures for Basic Skills/Remedial in Woodbridge are again near the lowest of the four districts. When district enrollment is then used to calculate a per pupil expenditure for Basic Skills/Remedial programs, Woodbridge is shown to spend the least of the four districts, less than one-third of the highest.

Basic Skills/Remedial: Combined Revenue	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Title I from CAFR (Exhibit C-2)	\$402,075	\$729,036	\$401,488	\$1,132,346
Local Basic Skills/Remedial	\$422,727	\$3,944	\$2,491,962	\$1,688,974
TOTAL	\$824,802	\$732,980	\$2,893,450	\$2,821,320
Average Daily Enrollment	12,196	9,035	12,377	17,373
Per Pupil Expenditure, Basic Skills/Remedial	\$68	\$81	\$234	\$162

Sources: Districts' Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), 6/00 & New Jersey Department of Education Comparative Spending Guide, 3/01.

The Woodbridge Township School District is providing for its students with remedial needs in a cost-effective manner using all available funding sources. Fundamentals First, the locally developed instructional approach for the primary grade levels, is designed to address students' deficits within the regular classroom. The district is utilizing empirical data to expand and refine this methodology.

Special Education

Special education programs in Woodbridge provide a continuum of options, including supported regular education, resource programs, and many types of self-contained classes. When this wide range of programs cannot meet a student's special education needs, placement outside the district may be considered as part of the process through which the individualized education program, or IEP, is developed. In addition to instructional programs, related services are available from the district's speech-language specialists, an art therapist, counselors, or from other staff contracted to provide physical therapy, occupational therapy, or other interventions required by a student's IEP.

The special education programs are organized under the assistant superintendent for special services. There are two supervisors for the department, as well. One supervisor oversees the child study team operations and staff, while the other is responsible for the special education instructional programs. The assistant superintendent and the supervisor in charge of special education instruction are housed in the board of education office building on School Street, while the other supervisor's office is in School #2 & #16, along with the child study team members. In addition to certified staff, the department has the support of seven full-time and one part-time clerical staff, five located in the School Street building and three in School #2 & #16.

The students with disabilities on-roll in the district, from the Application for State School Aid (ASSA) for the most recent three years, are summarized below according to the New Jersey Department of Education "tier" system. Used as a basis for determining state special education categorical aid to school districts, the tiers provide a general index of the severity of disability. Tiers II, III, and IV relate to a student's special education classification category. Tier I is not shown; that designation includes a duplicate count of students listed in one of the other tiers and receiving related services, as specified in their IEP. (Students placed in a county special services school district, a regional day school, or a state facility are not included in these totals.)

Category	October 1998	October 1999	October 2000	Change 1998-00
Tier II	1,101.0	827.0	814.0	-287.0
Tier III	212.5	202.5	255.0	+42.5
Tier IV	78.5	399.5	402.0	+323.5
TOTAL	1,392.0	1,429.0	1,471.0	+79.0

Source: Application for State School Aid (ASSA).

While the total number of students in these tiers changed only five percent over the three years, there was a marked shift within the tiers, specifically reflecting a decrease in Tier II and a corresponding increase in Tier IV. The primary justification for that change was the number of students placed in the district's extended school year program, initiated in the summer of 1999. On the most recent ASSA documentation, 333 students were listed as being in Tier IV because of the extended school year.

The rate of students in Woodbridge classified by the child study team in relation to the comparison group is shown in the table below. As indicated, the classification rate has been relatively stable and at or near the top of the reference group, but still below the statewide average by approximately one percent.

	RESIDENT ENROLLMENT					% CST CLASSIFIED				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Woodbridge	11,834	11,944	12,221	12,400	12,750	10.6	10.9	11.3	11.1	11.6
Clifton	8,558	8,771	8,965	9,217	9,574	10.4	10.9	10.8	10.6	11.2
Edison	12,659	12,770	12,474	12,622	12,698	9.2	9.5	10.1	11.2	11.2
Toms River	17,098	17,409	17,420	17,558	17,560	9.3	9.2	9.0	9.2	9.4
STATE AVERAGE						11.7	12.0	12.1	12.4	12.8

Source: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Annual Report.

Child Study Team Staff

A basic child study team, consisting of a school psychologist, a school social worker, and a learning disabilities teacher-consultant, is responsible for conducting assessments of students to help determine whether or not special education is required. In addition to their assessment responsibilities, child study team members are assigned as case managers of students who have been referred, as well as those previously identified as having an educational disability. In Woodbridge, case managers are selected from the particular child study team assigned to the school that a student attends. When a student changes schools due to placement in a special education program within the district, the case manager changes after a 30-day trial period, in order to make sure that the student is adjusting satisfactorily to the new placement.

On the district's Annual Data Report of December 1, 2000, there were 27 staff identified as child study team members. In addition to 23 individuals assigned as traditional team members, that figure included four staff members who functioned separately from the basic child study team. Specifically, they were two therapeutic social workers, one social worker hired as a transition coordinator, and one psychologist who served as a behavioral specialist.

With eight child study teams distributed among 24 district schools, not including tuition placements outside the district, the amount of time team members were scheduled to be in any one school was quite limited, as little as one half-day per week in many of the elementary schools. However, in crisis situations, child study team personnel are an integral part of the response team, with a school psychologist and social worker being called to the scene immediately, in accordance with board policy.

Comparing the number of team members per student enrollment for the district to the guidelines under the State Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Funding Act (CEIFA), it appears that there is one less team than would be sufficient, if the therapeutic social workers and behavioral specialist are not included. The recommended ratio is 439:1, or 28 staff members for the Woodbridge population (average daily enrollment of 12,209), while the actual number of team members during the 2000-01 school year was 23.

A number of other professionals were employed by the district to provide diagnostic evaluations and services to students with special needs. This included 13 speech-language specialists, one art therapist, and three counseling staff (two counselors and one social worker) at the three district high schools. As mentioned previously, one additional social worker served as the district's

“transition coordinator,” helping students develop post-secondary school plans. Physical therapy and occupational therapy were contracted and arranged by the district through a private agency when required by a student’s IEP.

District Self-Contained Programs

During the 2000-01 school year, special education programs in Woodbridge included 65 self-contained classes, spread over 16 of the 24 district schools. A total of 586 students were placed in those programs at the time of the LGBR visit. The most prevalent type of program was the learning and/or language disabilities class, with 38 classes. Other program types included Autism (three classes), behavioral disabilities (seven classes), Cognitive-Mild (five classes), Cognitive-Moderate (two classes), Multiple Disabilities (one class), and Preschool Disabilities (nine half-day classes). In addition, one first grade class at School #28 was designated as an “inclusion” class. Seven students with disabilities were placed in that first grade classroom, with both a regular education teacher and a special education teacher present to provide instruction.

Also of note is the “Flex” program at Woodbridge High School, a special education program (designated as a self-contained Behavioral Disabilities class) for students whose educational needs could not be met using other district resources. The students, drawn from all areas of the district, attend classes from 1:00 until 5:00 p.m. rather than during the regular school day. While some students attend this program for as little as one marking period, others remain for more than one year.

The following table shows the distribution of self-contained classes in the district. As indicated, the number of classes and program types was justified by the enrollment figures.

SELF-CONTAINED SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASS DISTRIBUTION								
	ELEMENTARY		MIDDLE		HIGH			
	SCHOOL		SCHOOL		SCHOOL		TOTAL	TOTAL
CLASS TYPE	CLASSES	STUDENTS	CLASSES	STUDENTS	CLASSES	STUDENTS	CLASSES	STUDENTS
Autism	2	11	1	5	0	0	3	16
Behavioral Disabilities	1	6	2	19	4	36	7	61
Cognitive - Mild	2	19	1	8	2	16	5	43
Cognitive - Moderate	1	7	1	4	0	0	2	11
Learning &/Or Language	21	206	10	87	7	57	38	350
Multiple Disabilities	0	0	1	9	0	0	1	9
Preschool Disabilities	9	96	0	0	0	0	9	96
TOTALS	36	345	16	132	13	109	65	586

Source: District records.

Also of note is the presence of tuition students from neighboring districts in some classes, particularly the Cognitive-Mild program at the high school level. Woodbridge has accepted students from nearby districts into its special education classes for a number of years, with tuition revenue helping support the programs. For the 1999-00 school year, the district received \$99,152 in tuition payments.

Recommendation:

The district is commended for expanding the programs offered within its public schools, particularly the Autistic class, which recently expanded into the middle school setting due to the age of some students, and the Preschool Disabilities classes. As indicated by the table, there is room for additional enrollment in many of the classes without exceeding the maximum number allowed by the Administrative Code. Efforts to bring district students back from out-of-district placements would increase the efficient use of staff and funds. Additionally, encouraging more participation from students in neighboring districts in these classes would enhance revenue. In order to promote the placement of out-of district tuition students, information about available space in Woodbridge programs can be communicated to personnel in other school districts through announcements at meetings, such as county special education roundtables.

Resource Programs

Resource programs allow students with disabilities to spend a substantial portion of the day integrated with nondisabled peers and to experience the regular education curriculum to the extent appropriate. Students may be instructed in a separate classroom or within the regular class, depending on their IEP. This program option exists in all Woodbridge schools. On the December, 2000 Annual Data Report, 87 certified staff in the district were identified as resource teachers. In addition to the typical academic subjects available in the resource programs, teachers trained in the Wilson reading program worked at the secondary level with students who were identified as needing that type of instructional approach.

Speech and Language Services

Speech-language specialists provide a variety of services to district students in Woodbridge. They are called on to assess students who may be referred due to possible difficulties with articulation, voice, or fluency. Such a student may be “Eligible for Speech-Language Services.” When a student’s language development is a concern, an assessment may be required as part of a comprehensive child study team evaluation to determine whether a student requires special education programming. Speech-language specialists work with students individually and in groups, either outside or within the class. They also develop and implement lessons for entire class groups, particularly with the preschool disabilities classes. In Woodbridge, 455 students classified by the child study team were listed on the December, 2000 Annual Data Report as receiving speech services as part of their IEP. In addition, there were 259 students in public schools identified as Eligible for Speech-Language Services, but not otherwise classified.

Paraprofessionals/Aides

One area of significant growth within special education over recent years is the number of aides employed. In December, 1998, there were 67 aides listed on the district’s Annual Data Report, while that number increased to 90 in December, 2000, representing a jump of 34%. With the number of students with disabilities (excluding those designated as eligible for speech-language services) increasing by approximately 12%, there was a disproportionate rise in the number of special education aides. Certificated instructional staff in special education also increased over that period, but at a rate parallel to that of the students, that is, approximately 12%.

While this upsurge in paraprofessionals is reflective of the district’s efforts to provide the supports students need to function in the regular education environment, as addressed in each IEP, it is an area that should be monitored closely. It is recognized that special or extraordinary conditions may exist requiring assignment of more than the minimum number of staff permitted, in consideration of the functioning of the class as a whole. However, savings may be realized if the number of personnel in those positions is held to those needed. If the growth rate were even twice that of the other special education classroom staff, the resulting savings, based on the salaries and benefits for eight aides (\$19,239 each), would be \$153,912.

Recommendation:

As a potential cost saving, the district is encouraged to review the procedures and assignment of aides/assistants in special education programs. Compliance with pertinent Administrative Code requirements and individual student IEPs must be assured in making decisions regarding the use of these paraprofessionals.

Potential Cost Savings: \$153,912

Tuition Placements

While more than 90% of Woodbridge students with disabilities are provided appropriate programs within the district, a very small group of students requires instruction outside the district’s schools. That number was quite stable over the period from 1997-98 to 2000-01 according to reports filed annually. At the time of the LGBR visit, there were 145 students placed in special education programs in other facilities. That total included 15 students in state-related programs, 39 students in other public schools, and 91 students in private programs. All but one of the students in placements initiated by the district were in day programs.

Tuition paid by Woodbridge for students placed in special education programs was lower than in two of the other three comparative districts, as shown below.

COMPARISON OF TUITION EXPENDITURES, 1999-00				
Undistributed Expenditures-	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Instruction (Sp. Ed. Tuition)	\$4,573,724	\$4,909,969	\$6,015,302	\$3,500,195

Source: Districts’ Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), 6/00.

Revenue

In addition to state special education categorical aid, which is based on the number of students with disabilities listed in the tiers on the annual Application for State School Aid, Woodbridge has applied for and received aid each year for students whose programming qualified for “extraordinary aid” because costs exceeded \$40,000. For the 1999-00 school year, \$153,256 in extraordinary aid was distributed to the district.

IDEA, Part B

Each year Woodbridge applies for its full allocation of Federal flow-through funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These funds are used to support additional costs associated with special education. Virtually all of the funds are typically expended by the end of the grant period, which includes the carryover year.

For Fiscal Year 2000, the district designated the major portion of its IDEA, Part B Basic flow-through and capacity building funding (\$1,225,218) for staff salaries, specialized professional services needed for students with special education needs, and instructional equipment. Included in the application are salaries for teachers (4), teacher aides/assistants (6), speech-language specialists (2), child study team members (6), supplies and equipment for use by special education students and staff, and staff development activities. In addition, to meet regulatory requirements, funds were set aside for services to district resident students with disabilities placed by their parents in nonpublic schools, as provided through the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission. Most of the district’s IDEA Preschool funding, which totaled \$91,829, was used for the salary of a teacher for the Preschool Disabilities program and for nonpublic school services.

SEMI

The Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) program provides an opportunity for districts to file claims for increased revenue in support of certain services to eligible classified students. Psychological counseling, nursing services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language services, and various evaluations are among the reimbursable activities.

The Woodbridge Board of Education began participating in SEMI during the 1995-96 school year. For those students who are classified by the child study team, or who subsequently become classified, and who receive services eligible for payment, the service provider submits documentation of the activity to the special services office, where the data are compiled and submitted monthly.

As indicated below, by the end of June, 2000, the Woodbridge School District had recouped a total of \$102,262 from SEMI. During the 1999-00 school year alone, the district received \$33,635 in Medicaid reimbursements through this program.

SEMI Payments					
FY1996	FY1997	FY1998	FY1999	FY2000	TOTAL
\$6,787	\$22,892	\$15,888	\$23,060	\$33,635	\$102,262

Based on the claims reported over a 12-month period, the SEMI contract manager corresponded to the district in January, 2001 a projected additional reimbursement potential of \$1,246.

The district participates in another Medicaid program, Early Periodic Screening and Diagnostic Treatment (EPSDT), which allows school districts to receive payments for administrative expenses associated with a wide range of diagnostic and other health-related activities performed

by school personnel. The supervisor of physical education, health, nursing, and athletics oversees that program. The Woodbridge Township School District received funds in the amount of \$28,279 through that program during the fiscal year 2000.

Recommendation:

The district is commended for participating in the SEMI and EPSDT Medicaid reimbursement programs since their inception. The review team recommends that the district take steps to ensure the enrollment of all Medicaid-eligible students in the SEMI program to maximize the financial benefit to the district. Additional revenue is estimated to be \$1,246 annually.

Revenue Enhancement: \$1,246

Professional Development

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:11-13, active teaching staff members whose positions require the instructional or education services licenses, must participate in on-going professional development. Each person is required to complete 100 clock hours of state-approved in-service education every five years. The initial period extends from September, 2000 to September, 2005. The Woodbridge Township School District has a Plan for Professional Staff Development, dated November, 2000 to insure implementation of this state requirement.

The needs assessment included a district-wide survey of all staff, through a questionnaire prepared by the professional development committee. Utilizing the survey results and taking into account each teacher's professional improvement plan (PIP), experiences were developed that included ongoing district in-service activities, conferences and seminars, curriculum development, formal courses and other activities that enhance student learning. The plan lists, in table format, 43 goals and a wide variety of related professional development opportunities. The people responsible, the timelines, the resources required, the state standard(s) addressed and how to measure progress are also identified. The report concludes with an addendum of registration, record keeping, evaluation and certificate of participation forms.

The 2000-01 Quality Assurance Annual Report also contains a list of 35 types of staff development activities for the 1999-00 school year. Standardized testing (ESPA, GEPA and HSPT), writing, school safety, portfolio assessment and Tech 2000 were covered. Activities by school level were as follows:

- Elementary school - Guided reading, early literacy, recipe for reading and world languages.
- Middle school - Calculator-based instruction, open-ended science questions, reading intervention and character education.
- High school - Block scheduling was the emphasis as two of three Woodbridge high schools have implemented it.

The professional development costs amounted to \$18,000 for presenters and \$13,372 for supplies and materials. In addition, the district expended \$29,717 sending staff out-of-district for training for a total of 336.5 professional days. The district also had community representation and involvement through the Character Education Commission.

Instructional Costs

In the DOE Comparative Spending Guide, March, 2001, among the 95 school districts with enrollments of +3,500 students, the Woodbridge Township School District ranked 56th in total classroom instructional per pupil costs of \$5,259 in 1999-00, compared with a statewide K-12 per pupil median of \$5,135. Woodbridge Township ranked 60th in classroom salaries and benefits with per pupil costs of \$5,073; this compared with a statewide median of \$4,835. Classroom salaries include the amounts paid to district personnel for regular, special education, basic skills, bilingual and other instructional programs. It includes the salaries and benefits of teachers, substitutes and aides. Classroom general supplies and textbooks ranked 36th at \$176 per pupil, compared to a K-12 state median of \$198. Classroom purchased services ranked 9th of 95 districts at \$10, which is less than the K-12 state median of \$51 per pupil.

Instructional costs are determined primarily by: 1) the number of staff, and 2) the salary levels/fringe benefits that are provided by the district. Salary levels and fringe benefits are discussed under the collective bargaining section of this review.

According to the NJEA Research Bulletin A00-1/March, 2001, Basic Statistical Data, 2000 Edition, the Woodbridge Township School District employed 89.2 professional staff members per 1,000 pupils in 1999-00 compared to a Middlesex County average of 87.6 and a state K-12 median of 85.4. Also, in the Comparative Spending Guide March, 2001, the Woodbridge student/teacher ratio was 13.8 compared to an average for the three comparable districts of 14.7. This indicates that in 1999-00 Woodbridge had about 6% more teachers than the comparison districts. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Woodbridge Township staff/student ratio was slightly above average for districts of similar size and type.

The review team also collected more in-depth comparisons of the staffing between Woodbridge and the nearby Edison school districts. In Woodbridge Township, there were 86 teacher assistants and 33 teacher aides in 1999-00, or a total of 133 non-certified instructional staff. In contrast, in Edison Township there were 78 paraprofessionals and 11 library aides, or a total of 89 non-certified staff. This is a difference of 44 staff members or 49% more non-certified instructional staff in Woodbridge for a nearly equal student enrollment.

Recommendation:

School officials should consider a review of the policies and practices that result in a relatively large number of teacher assistants and teacher aides. A reduction of five instructional aides @ \$20,000 in salaries and benefits would produce savings of \$.1 million.

Cost Savings: \$100,000

BUSINESS OFFICE OPERATION

Surplus/Budget

Surplus is the amount of money held in reserve and remaining when current year revenues have exceeded expenditures. A deficit occurs when expenses exceed the amount of revenues, plus any prior year carry over of surplus of funds. In accordance with state law, public school accounts cannot go into deficit. Surplus is included in a district's budget in order to provide funds for emergencies or other unanticipated expenditures which are beyond the board's control. Sound financial controls are required to ensure that surplus funds are accurately estimated and used according to established guidelines.

The Comprehensive Education Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA) N.J.S.A. 18A:7F1 through 18A:7F-34, which became effective December 20, 1996, established a maximum allowable undesignated surplus of 6%. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-7, excess surplus that is over the allowable maximum shall be appropriated or returned to taxpayers. The state does not stipulate the minimum amount of surplus a district should maintain. However, as expenditures may vary from month to month and revenues are not always received on a timely basis, the district must anticipate cash flow needs throughout the year.

A district's ability to estimate surplus accurately is strongly predicated on success in establishing internal controls and sound budgetary procedures. Implementation of these procedures can ensure adequate budgetary and financial control during the year and accurate accountability at year-end. When significant budget and accounting data deviations from original estimates occur, management can be alerted and corrective action can be instituted.

Tracking trends in revenues, expenditures, and annual surplus can assist districts in estimating surpluses accurately. When district personnel prepare the budget, they know fairly precisely the amount of revenue the district will receive for the upcoming year. Over the past three years (1997-98 through 1999-00), local taxes provided approximately 85% to 89% and state financial aid 10% to 13% of total revenue for the Woodbridge Township School District general fund. Miscellaneous revenue provided approximately 1% and tuition revenues provided less than 1% of the total general fund revenue for the past three years.

General Fund	1997-98		1998-99		1999-00	
	Actual	%	Actual	%	Actual	%
Local Tax Levy	\$92,651,918	88.7%	\$95,946,448	87.8%	\$99,268,647	85.4%
Tuition	\$66,066	0.1%	\$54,290	0.1%	\$99,152	0.1%
Misc.	\$1,349,319	1.3%	\$1,336,768	1.2%	\$1,325,967	1.1%
State Aid*	\$10,386,854	9.9%	\$11,954,543	10.9%	\$15,488,429	13.3%
Total Revenue	\$104,454,158	100.0%	\$109,292,050	100.0%	\$116,182,195	100.0%

Sources: Districts' CAFR *excluded pension and social security contributions.

Over this period, the amount of revenue anticipated and actually received was exactly the same, except for tuition, state aid and miscellaneous revenue. The district projected miscellaneous revenue of \$650,000 for school year 1997-98 and \$900,000 for school year 1998-99, but it actualized over \$1.3 million. For school year 1999-00, miscellaneous revenue was overestimated

at \$187,033 or 12.36%. The district's miscellaneous revenue includes interest earned from investment, insurance reimbursement, adult enrichment program, special education Medicaid initiative, rentals, and donations. For school year 1999-00, the district received donations of \$38,000 from the Colonia Girls' Softball League and \$75,000 from Slayton Development BTS Realty. These donations were reported in the miscellaneous revenue categories.

From 1997-98 to 1999-00, the Woodbridge local tax levy increased \$6.6 million, or 7% over two years, while state financial aid increased \$5.1 million or 49%. During the same two-year period, the student average daily enrollment increased approximately 2%.

Approximately 71% of Woodbridge Township School District's 1999-00 expenses were for salaries. Except during contract renewal years, the district should be able to determine, with reasonable accuracy, the budgeted amount needed for salaries. However, salary estimates can often be higher than actual expenditures as a result of resignations, retirements, etc. which may occur after the budget has been adopted. The other 29% of the general fund budget is more variable, although budget projections can be reasonably determined through the use of multiyear contracts and purchase agreements and by examining the trends in prior revenues.

The following table illustrates the difference between the Woodbridge budgeted and actual revenues, expenditures, and surplus in the general fund for school years 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-00.

	Analysis of General Surplus Fund								
	1997-98		Chg. in %	1998-99		Chg. in %	1999-00		Chg. in %
	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual	
Local Tax Levy	\$92,651,918	\$92,651,918	0.0%	\$95,946,448	\$95,946,448	0.0%	\$99,268,647	\$99,268,647	0.00%
Tuition	\$59,825	\$66,066	10.4%	\$60,000	\$54,290	-9.5%	\$50,000	\$99,152	98.3%
State Aid*	\$10,379,900	\$10,386,854	0.1%	\$11,954,543	\$11,954,543	0.0%	\$12,175,190	\$15,488,429	27.2%
Miscellaneous	\$650,000	\$1,349,319	107.6%	\$900,000	\$1,336,768	48.5%	\$1,513,000	\$1,325,967	-12.4%
Total Revenue	\$103,741,643	\$104,454,158	0.7%	\$108,860,991	\$109,292,050	0.4%	\$113,006,837	\$116,182,195	2.8%
Total Expend.	\$105,718,821	\$103,457,831	-2.1%	\$111,832,755	\$111,540,098	-0.3%	\$116,645,830	\$116,040,124	-0.5%
(O)/U Expend	-\$1,977,178	\$996,327	298.5%	-\$2,971,764	-\$2,248,048	-32.2%	-\$3,638,993	\$142,071	103.9%
Other Fin. Sources	\$0	\$0	0.0%	-\$757,208	\$1,926,651	139.3%	-\$712,928	\$154,515	561.4%
Surplus or (Deficit)	-\$1,977,178	\$996,327	298.5%	-\$3,728,971	-\$321,397	-1060%	-\$4,351,922	\$296,586	106.8%
Beg. Fund Bal.	\$4,577,296	\$4,577,296	0.0%	\$5,573,623	\$5,573,623	0.0%	\$5,252,226	\$5,252,226	0.0%
Ending Fund Bal.	\$2,600,118	\$5,573,623	114.4%	\$1,844,652	\$5,252,226	184.7%	\$900,304	\$5,548,812	516.3%
Fund Bal./T. Exp.	2.46%	5.39%		1.65%	4.71%		0.77%	4.78%	

Sources: The districts' CAFR. *Excluded TPAF pension and social security contributions.

In 1997-98, to fund \$105 million in projected expenses, the board appropriated \$1.97 million from the \$4.57 million surplus balance, leaving a projected surplus of \$2.6 million, or 2.46% of projected general fund budget amount. In the end, the district had a net gain of \$996,627, resulting in a surplus of \$5.57 million (5.39%). For the 1998-99 budget, the board appropriated \$3.72 million from surplus and estimated an end-of-year surplus balance of \$1.84 million (1.65%). However, the district under-spent the budget and generated a surplus of \$723,716. This did not include the other financial sources of \$1.92 million transferred into the general fund.

With other financial sources, the fund balance increased from the budgeted amount of \$1.84 million (1.65%) to an actual \$5.25 million (4.71%). During the 1999-00 budget, the board estimated a \$900,304 (.77%) surplus, but instead actualized over \$5 million, or a 4.78% surplus.

Based on the past three budget years, on average the district has maintained a year-end actual surplus fund balance of 4.73% compared with the original budget estimates averaging 1.63%. While the actual surplus balances are well within the 6% maximum, the district has consistently closed each school year with a greater surplus than originally estimated. To reduce the variances between the budgeted and actual surplus, the district could improve its estimates of revenues, expenditures and balances.

Recommendations:

Since surplus balances have consistently exceeded estimates from year to year, district officials should consider developing a policy statement on surplus and institute methods that would result in more accurate annual estimates of budget expenditures, revenues and surplus balances.

Cash Management

During 1999-00, the district maintained 36 different interest-bearing checking accounts at one bank. There was one account each for the operation of the custodial fund, payroll, payroll agency, unemployment claims, food service, EDA grant funds, medical flex reimbursements, and medical claims clearing. In addition, there were 28 student activity accounts maintained by the individual schools. The table below lists the district’s bank accounts with their average monthly balances.

Woodbridge Township School District Listing of Bank Accounts	
Account Description	Average Monthly Balance
Custodial	\$3,699,446.69
Payroll	\$656,058.10
Payroll Agency	\$861,619.45
SUI	\$439,983.92
Food Service	\$409,706.60
NJPSFLAP-EDA Grant	\$4,797.66
Flex Reimbursement	\$27,447.08
Claims Clearing	\$967,243.15
28 School Bank Accounts	\$322,976.30
	\$7,389,278.94

The pricing for banking services and the amount of interest paid on the district’s funds are based on monthly analyses of all the accounts. The district pays for services through compensating balances. Instead of being billed for activity, the district is required to maintain a compensating balance, and is subject to a reserve requirement, for which no interest is paid. Generally, the foregone interest approximately offsets the amount that would have been charged for services.

Activity and balances on all accounts are combined so that accounts with sufficient balances can offset service charges in accounts with smaller balances, usually the student activity accounts. Interest is then paid on the remaining investible balances. The table below shows the average monthly balances on all accounts along with average float, reserve requirement, compensating balance, investible balance, and interest rate.

Woodbridge Township School District 1999-00 Account Analysis	
Average Ledger Balance	\$7,701,222.28
Less: Average Float	\$311,943.34
Average Collected Balance	<u>\$7,389,278.94</u>
Less: Reserve Requirement	\$738,927.89
Less: Balance to Offset S/C	\$849,563.81
Average Investible Balance	<u>\$5,800,787.24</u>
Average Interest Rate	<u>5.27%</u>
Total Interest Paid	<u>\$312,598.12</u>

Source: 1999-00 Bank Account Analyses.

The district's banking design is well organized and competitively priced. Interest rates throughout the year ranged from 4.56% to 5.88% and compared favorably with the standards used by the review team. As an example, the average rate on Treasury bills for the year was 5.5% while the NJ Cash Management Fund paid an average of 5.7%. Total interest paid on these accounts from 8/1/99 through 7/31/00 was \$312,598.

Recommendation:

The bank analysis statement should be reviewed monthly for accuracy. Two of the accounts, for which the district had been charged a \$10 monthly maintenance fee, had zero balances and no activity for the entire year.

Cost Savings: \$240

In addition to the bank accounts, which were used for daily operations, the district invested excess funds, when available, in higher yielding investment instruments. Fund balances are tracked daily and outstanding investments and interest paid are reported at month-end. Interest on investments with fixed terms is not accrued. It is shown when paid in the month the investment is redeemed. The table below provides a summary of these investments.

Woodbridge Township School District 1999-00 Summary of Investments			
	Investment Balance	Average Rate	Interest Paid
Jul-99	\$9,639,544	4.81%	\$30,240
Aug-99	\$16,622,084	5.08%	\$28,006
Sep-99	\$11,622,084	5.15%	\$54,831
Oct-99	\$12,139,544	5.23%	\$63,076
Nov-99	\$17,431,236	5.26%	\$35,610
Dec-99	\$8,921,356	5.53%	\$64,322
Jan-00	\$8,911,495	5.57%	\$107,671
Feb-00	\$13,929,977	5.63%	\$31,279
Mar-00	\$6,996,184	5.74%	\$87,327
Apr-00	\$7,018,075	5.85%	\$32,485
May-00	\$6,055,325	5.83%	\$37,516
Jun-00	\$1,106,411	6.01%	\$27,332
	\$10,032,776	5.47%	\$599,696

Source: Districts' Monthly Interest and Investment Reports.

Interest paid on the district's higher yielding investments was approximately \$600,000. This represented a net gain of approximately 0.3% or \$35,000 for the year over what the district would have earned had these funds remained in the regular bank accounts.

Recommendation:

The district has done an outstanding job of maximizing investment income. The district should continue to issue requests for proposals from time to time in an effort to maintain the highest rates possible.

Purchasing

A full-time purchasing specialist heads the purchasing office of the Woodbridge Township School District with two full-time clerical assistants. The office processes approximately 8,000 purchase orders annually. Purchasing expenditures during 1999-00 totaled approximately \$15,926,328 or 12.4% of total expenditures for all government fund types. In comparison, district salaries were approximately \$83,735,512 or 65.4% of total expenditures, while social security, benefits, and pension contributions were approximately \$21,088,878 or 16.5% of total expenditures.

The district has published a purchasing manual that clearly defines the required procedures regarding the preparation of purchasing requisitions, the issuance and authorization of purchase orders, bids and quotes, state contract purchasing, and emergency contracts. The purchasing office is responsible for the review of each requisition to ensure the availability of funds, compliance with state law and board policy and proper account coding. Valid requisitions are issued purchase order numbers, which are then signed by the business administrator. Receipts of

purchased items are verified at the time and place of delivery. In the event of partial orders and missing or damaged items, notifications are sent to the purchasing office and the accounting department.

One of the primary goals of the purchasing office, as stated in the district’s purchasing manual, is to achieve savings of money through proper purchasing practices. The district employs various methods to achieve these savings. During 1999-00, the district conducted 44 separate bids, some in coordination with the township and neighboring school districts where large quantity or ‘bulk’ purchasing could induce lower prices. For example, the district bid for office supplies in coordination with Woodbridge Township and Carteret Borough School District. This bid enabled the participants to purchase through the catalog of a major vendor at discounts of 56% on general supplies, 40% on furniture, and 30% on electronics and computer supplies. This compares to catalog discounts under state contract for similar purchases of approximately 51%, 35%, and 25%, respectively. In addition, the district purchases in cooperation with the township for health supplies, motor oil, antifreeze, and other automotive supplies. They have entered into cooperative purchasing with several other districts through the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission for copier paper, natural gas, electricity, and special education and non-public transportation. Where bidding and cooperative purchasing were unable to provide effective cost savings, the district used state contracts. During 1999-00, the district used state contracts for the rental of photocopiers, certain school furnishings like chalkboards and playground equipment, computers, and gasoline.

The review team commends the district on the variety of purchasing techniques they employ in an effort to obtain the lowest prices. The real test comes when those prices are compared to other available sources. The table below shows a cross-section of items commonly purchased by a school district, and compares prices quoted by the district’s purchasing office with those of state distribution and a large purchasing cooperative operating in the state.

Pricing Samples	Woodbridge Schools	Purchasing Cooperative	State Distribution
Paper Towels/Case	\$43.63	N/A	\$9.77
Toilet Tissue/Case	\$42.13	N/A	\$30.46
Trash Bags 23X17X46 Clear	\$16.13	N/A	\$15.30
Copier Paper 81/2 X 11	\$21.50	\$28.30	\$22.36
#10 Envelopes 500 each	\$11.63	\$5.54	\$7.05
Beef Hot-Dogs 10 lbs.	\$14.60	N/A	\$10.78
French Fries 6-4.5 lb. Bags	\$9.72	N/A	\$10.76

Although the review team applauds many of the district’s efforts to purchase competitively, they did not always get the best prices.

Recommendation:

The district should investigate procedures for purchasing through the state’s Distribution and Support Services program those items where savings are identifiable. Savings would be dependent on quantities purchased, but based on some of the above comparisons they could be significant.

Debt Service

The district’s bonded borrowing capacity according to N.J.S.A. 18A:24-19 is 4% of the average of the last three years’ equalized valuation of taxable property. The district’s bonded borrowing capacity at June 30, 2000 was \$218,772,478. Total long-term debt in the amount of \$22,537,934 is detailed in the table below.

Woodbridge Township School District				
Long-Term Debt @ 6/30/00				
	Balance 6/30/99	Issued	Retired	Balance 6/30/00
Loans Payable	\$5,727,793	\$0	\$480,461	\$5,247,331
Capital Leases	\$5,600,076	\$867,443	\$980,071	\$5,487,448
Compensated Absences	\$11,652,517	\$860,458	\$709,820	\$11,803,155
Totals	\$22,980,386	\$1,727,901	\$2,170,353	\$22,537,934

Although the district had no outstanding bonds, they did have \$5,247,331 outstanding as a result of loans from the NJ Economic Development Authority issued in 1993. These loans were used to replace roofs and fire alarms in some of the schools, to remove underground storage tanks, and to install intercom systems in the schools. In addition, the district had \$5,487,448 outstanding as a result of capital leases to acquire computers, school buses, and a lighting retrofit. The district also had outstanding debt of \$11,803,155 that represented the cumulative amount payable to staff at retirement for unused sick days.

Long-term debt allows districts to raise substantial funds for the construction of facilities or the purchase of equipment that can serve the needs of the district over a period of several years. Excessive long-term debt, however, can be a drain on a district’s resources, as larger percentages of current year revenues are needed to satisfy the debt. The district retired \$2,170,353 of long-term debt during 1999-00, which represented only 1.78% of total expenditures. The table below compares the long-term debt of the Woodbridge Township School District to districts of similar size and economic status.

Comparison of Long-Term Debt @ June 30, 2000				
	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Loans Payable	\$5,247,331	\$0	\$0	\$572,802
Bonds Payable	\$0	\$35,493,000	\$9,780,000	\$21,504,000
Capital Leases	\$5,487,448	\$1,489,568	\$14,550,034	\$1,314,432
Compensated Absences	\$11,732,461	\$4,272,217	\$2,248,911	\$20,764,368
Total Long-Term Debt	\$22,467,240	\$41,254,785	\$26,578,945	\$44,155,602
Retired During 99-00	\$2,170,353	\$2,920,768	\$2,385,561	\$4,455,087
% of Total Expenditures	1.78%	4.63%	3.24%	3.93%

Total long-term debt of the district compares favorably with the three districts in our comparative sample; however, compensated absences payable are much higher in Woodbridge than in two of the comparative districts. The third comparative district, in contrast, has almost twice the outstanding debt for compensated absences. This debt may cause financial hardship on the district, particularly in light of new governmental accounting standards that may change the way this debt is to be recorded. The review team makes some recommendations regarding limitations to compensated absences in the collective bargaining section of this report.

Fixed Assets

Guidelines established under N.J.S.A. 18:4-14 and documented in the NJ Department of Education’s GAAP Technical Manual require districts to maintain physical accountability over fixed assets and record them on the balance sheet in the general fixed assets account group. Fixed assets should be recorded at original cost; however, when establishing fixed assets for the first time a professional appraisal company may be used to serve as an independent basis for determining an estimated historical cost. All additions, donations, disposals, and improvements should then be updated in the fixed assets account group periodically. The schedule of fixed assets from the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) is shown below.

Woodbridge Township School District - Fixed Assets					
	Balance	Expenditures from		Less	Balance
	6/30/99	General Fund	Special Revenue	Disposals	6/30/00
Site Improvements	\$23,425,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,425,500
Buildings & Building Improvements	\$26,459,250	\$1,097,782	\$0	\$0	\$27,557,033
Machinery and Equipment	\$10,567,671	\$543,579	\$149,474	\$23,468	\$11,237,255
Construction in Progress	\$7,476,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,476,200
Total General Fixed Assets	\$67,928,621	\$1,641,361	\$149,474	\$23,468	\$69,695,987

The district’s current business office software includes a module that identifies fixed assets at the time of purchase and automatically updates the general fixed assets group. Dispositions of equipment should also be updated in the general fixed assets group, but do not have the same automatic mechanism as purchases. The team review found a few instances where discarded equipment was still listed in the general fixed asset group.

Recommendation:

The district should review its procedures for the disposal of equipment to ensure that the general fixed asset group is properly updated. This would provide potential cost savings in insurance premiums, limit exposure in the event of loss, and allow for more informed decisions on future purchases.

Grants

In the absence of a grants coordinator, the majority of grant applications and administration are processed through the assistant superintendent for instruction and the supervisor for basic skills.

Additionally, other grants, both public and private are distributed among various members of staff to whom they apply. The table below lists the grants awarded to the district over the last three years, along with amounts that went unexpended and had to be returned.

	1997-98		1998-99		1999-00	
	Amount Awarded	Returned to Grantor	Amount Awarded	Returned to Grantor	Amount Awarded	Returned to Grantor
Federal Grants:						
Title I, Part A	\$446,054	\$280	\$450,981	\$0	\$447,854	\$363
IDEA Part B, Basic Regular	\$892,060	\$4,276	\$1,087,962	\$0	\$1,225,228	\$1,222
IDEA Part B, Preschool Handicapped	\$102,300	\$254	\$107,089	\$0	\$91,829	\$247
Title VI	\$48,273	\$235	\$55,471	\$24	\$59,424	\$2,593
Title IV - Drug Free Schools	\$128,605	\$3,750	\$146,600	\$78	\$111,540	\$5,804
Title II - IKE Mathematics/Science	\$35,813	\$2,974	\$37,130	\$4,009	\$39,921	\$7,560
Vocational Educ. - Funds Spending	\$32,343	\$40	\$29,274	\$0	\$33,613	\$19
Vocational Educ. - Learn & Serve	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	\$0	\$38,000	\$0
Vocational Educ. - School to Careers	\$0	\$0	\$37,178	\$0	\$15,520	\$0
Emergency Immigration Aid	\$45,014	\$0	\$81,488	\$3,102	\$95,571	\$1,363
NJCATE	\$37,178	\$0	\$20,235	\$0	\$21,044	\$0
Adult Basic Education	\$42,114	\$43	\$45,978	\$0	\$45,520	\$0
Special Education Medicaid Initiative	\$15,888	\$0	\$23,060	\$0	\$33,635	\$0
	\$1,825,642	\$11,852	\$2,157,446	\$7,212	\$2,258,699	\$19,171
State Grants:						
DEPA	\$146,070	\$0	\$500,808	\$0	\$387,508	\$0
Distance Learning	\$487,754	\$0	\$508,790	\$0	\$536,151	\$0
Instructional Supplemental Aid	\$366,401	\$0	\$461,100	\$0	\$463,389	\$0
NJ Non-Public Aid:						
Textbook Aid	\$89,794	\$0	\$89,130	\$0	\$87,602	\$0
Auxiliary Services:						
Compensatory Education	\$202,031	\$3,395	\$219,950	\$27,487	\$227,988	\$32,883
English as a Second Language	\$45,865	\$1,146	\$69,912	\$2,548	\$56,057	\$23,720
Handicapped Services:						
Examination & Classification	\$103,670	\$10,722	\$98,760	\$10,531	\$115,786	\$7,952
Supplemental Instruction	\$54,926	\$6,773	\$62,450	\$9,781	\$66,212	\$14,296
Corrective Speech	\$144,753	\$13,600	\$157,885	\$1,568	\$176,003	\$23,294
Nursing Services	\$118,812	\$0	\$124,014	\$0	\$121,904	\$0
State Department of Education:						
High School Equivalency	\$10,069	\$0	\$10,150	\$0	\$15,000	\$0
Thrust II	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$1,820,145	\$35,636	\$2,302,949	\$51,915	\$2,253,600	\$102,145

The district's grants were administered in a satisfactory manner. There are many reasons for unexpended grants, many of which are out of the control of the district. For example, funds for non-public aid are disbursed based on the need for the relevant services in the non-public schools. When these schools do not expend the funds, they must be returned. Less than 1% of federal grant funds and approximately 3.5% of state grant funds had to be returned. Under the circumstances described above, the review team found this to be an acceptable amount.

The various types and uses of these grants are listed below.

Federal Grants

Application for consolidated grants under the Improving America's School Act, are administered by the supervisor for basic skills. They include:

- Title I - Part A, Basic, which is also administered by the basic skills supervisor;
- Title II – IKE Math/Science, which is administered by the math supervisor;
- Title IV – Drug Free Schools; and
- Title VI – Innovative Education Program Strategies, which are administered by the assistant superintendent for instruction.

Funds received under the IDEA portion of this grant are administered by the assistant superintendent for special services and are discussed in the special education section of this report.

Vocational Education grants are administered by the supervisor for business education under the Funds Spending, Learn and Serve America, and School to Careers programs.

Emergency Immigration Aid funding is administered by the basic skills supervisor for the ESL program.

The mathematics supervisor administers NJCATE. The district works in conjunction with Middlesex County College to provide training to mathematics teachers in the district.

The supervisor of adult education administers adult basic grants.

State Grants

Demonstrably Effective Program Aid is provided to schools with a concentration of low-income pupils. In Woodbridge the principals at Ross Street, Woodbine Avenue, Port Reading, and Lafayette Estates Elementary Schools administer these grants.

Distance Learning Aid is allocated based on estimated resident enrollment. It is administered by the assistant superintendent for instruction and is used to fund the district technology plan.

Instructional Supplemental Aid is administered by the basic skills supervisor and is used to supplement that program.

Private Grants

The district receives private grants that are administered as follows:

The \$10,000 **Pillsbury** grant is used to run the “Yearn to Learn” program at Colonia High School.

The **Eco Labs** grant, which funds the “Quest for Excellence in Education” program, and the **Woodbridge Township Education Foundation’s Mini Grants** are administered by the assistant superintendent for instruction and provide \$1,000 grants to individual teachers to fund their own individual projects.

The Geraldine Dodge Foundation grant funds the “Schools Attuned” program at the Menlo Park Terrace Elementary School. This program attempts to identify neuro-developmental variations in students and develop teaching methods that will enhance their performance.

Recommendation:

The review team found no serious problems with the administration of grants in the district. From time to time, the district should utilize the web sites of the New Jersey Department of Education and the United States Department of Education for current information on available grants. These web sites provide excellent sources of information for schools to determine those additional grants for which they may qualify.

SERVICE CONTRACTS

Legal fees

An analysis of the district’s legal expenses over the past two years, 1998-99 and 1999-00 revealed expenditures totaling \$65,202 and \$192,841, respectively. This \$127,639 or 196% increase in 1999-00 from 1998-99 resulted in large part from the negotiation of labor contracts. A review of the vendor analysis records for school year 1999-00 was conducted. Most legal fees were paid for legal consultations, litigation, review of board agenda, policy and contracts, labor matters and attendance at board meetings, as needed.

The Woodbridge Township School District has utilized the legal services of the same law firm for the past two years. There is no written agreement for services between the board and the attorney, or with the law firm. The attorney is appointed annually by board resolution. The district is presently paying counsel a retainer fee of \$3,750 a month or \$45,000 a year. The retainer fee covers forty hours of general legal services per month. The attorney/law firm is compensated at the rate of \$110 per hour for all additional legal services in excess of 40 hours. In addition, the firm is reimbursed for out of pocket costs, such as postage, delivery, photocopying, etc. In school year 1999-00, the district reimbursed approximately \$5,600 for out of pocket costs to counsel.

The team reviewed the monthly invoices associated with the district’s 1999-00 legal fees. These showed that the monthly billing statements reference services provided but omit important detailed information such as the date each listed service was rendered and the amount of time expended on tasks identified. Also missing is a list of all out of pocket costs.

Under current district procedures, direct access to the board attorney is limited to administrators such as the school superintendent, business administrator, school principals and board members.

Following are the comparisons of the hourly rates, retainer fees, and total legal expenditures for attorney services in the comparison school districts for 1999-00.

Comparative Expenditures: Legal Services				
	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
Hourly Rate	\$110	\$75/\$100	\$125	*
Retainer Fees	\$45,000	\$0	\$80,000	*
Total Legal Expense 1999-00	\$192,841	\$127,203	\$343,519	*

*Unavailable at the time of this review.

In both 1998-99 and 1999-00, the Woodbridge Township School District spent considerably less for legal services than Edison did, but more than Clifton.

An historical review of the Woodbridge Township School District legal fees is also informative. A Local Government Budget Review of the Toms River Regional School District, published in August, 2000, listed Woodbridge as a comparison district, providing legal fees for the three school years 1995-96 through 1997-98. Based on that information, a five-year history of the district's legal expenditures is set forth in the chart below.

Woodbridge Township Legal Expenditures, Historical Perspective			
School Year	Hourly Rate	Retainer Fee	Total Legal Expenses
1995-96	\$110	\$45,000	\$89,983
1996-97	\$110	\$45,000	\$93,951
1997-98	\$110	\$45,000	\$82,736
1998-99	\$110	\$45,000	\$65,202
1999-00	\$110	\$45,000	\$192,841

As the above chart shows, the district has been able to maintain a stable hourly rate and retainer fee for all five years, and did, in fact, realize a savings in total legal expenses in 1998-99 when it changed to a new legal service provider. However, in the second year of services with this provider, district legal fees climbed to their highest level in at least five years, at a cost more than two times any of the previous five years' total legal expenses.

Recommendations:

LGBR recommends that the district publish a request for proposals for the purpose of promoting competitive legal fees from different law firms.

In an effort to better analyze and contain legal expenditures, the district should begin by requiring more detailed billing from its provider. At a minimum, this would include: the date on which each listed service was performed; the charge for each service identified; time spent on individual services, such as telephone calls and conferences; and specific identification of all out of pocket costs. The district could then see exactly how its legal dollars are spent and take steps to reduce costs where possible. This could include

restricting access to the attorney, or seeking preliminary advice from the Department of Education and/or the legal assistance division of professional educational associations to which the district already belongs.

Auditor Fees

The district expended a total of \$52,313 in 1999-00 for audit fees. The audit fee is included as part of the general administration cost, which is recorded in the “other purchased professional services” accounting category. The district’s chief accountant prepared most of the schedules in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The board has annually approved the renewal of services with the same audit firm for more than six years. District officials are very satisfied with the service and do not seek proposals from others for auditor service.

The review team conducted a comparative review of auditor fees paid by the Woodbridge, Clifton, and Edison school districts. Of the three school districts, the Woodbridge Township Board of Education consistently paid more for audit services than Edison, but less than Clifton in school years 1998-99 and 1999-00. A comparison of the basic rates paid for auditing service fees by these districts in the 1998-99 and 1999-00 school year are contained in the following table:

Comparison: Audit Expenditures, School Year 1998-99 and 1999-00				
	Woodbridge	Clifton	Edison	Toms River
1998-99	\$45,919	\$62,785	\$37,683	*
1999-00	\$52,313	\$63,560	\$40,710	*

*Unavailable at the time of this review.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that the district publish a request for proposals for its audit services. In so doing, the district can expect to receive the most competitive audit fees. Additionally, the documents generated thereby can serve as a formal written agreement outlining the services to be provided as well as the duties and responsibilities of each party.

INSURANCE

Property & Casualty Insurance

Insurance premiums for the Woodbridge Township School District covering the 1999-00 school year cost the district \$1,085,554 (excluding health). The district’s broker of record for property and casualty, workers’ compensation, automobile, and general liability insurance has served the district for approximately five years. The agency is a public entity broker specializing in business, schools, and governmental markets. Company officials advised the team that on behalf of the district, they continuously shop the market and compare premiums for competitive pricing.

District officials advised the team that the selection of brokers and/or consultants for all insurance coverage is handled through a request for proposal (RFP) published approximately every three years. The district has no written contract with the broker. The broker was re-appointed by the board at the annual reorganization meeting.

Board Policy #814 regarding insurance brokers and/or consultants conveys the district's intent to carry appropriate insurance coverage at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers. The policy further states that "professional insurance consultant services for employee benefits and for property/casualty and workers' compensation coverage will be provided to the board without compensation to the broker of record which shall be compensated only by means of commissions paid directly by the respective insurance companies." Accordingly, both district and insurance agency officials advised the team that the broker of record for property and casualty insurance receives approximately nine percent in commissions. The respective insurance companies pay this compensation directly to the broker.

Insurance coverage for the district's property is maintained through various insurers. This includes an umbrella excess catastrophic policy that increases the limits of coverage provided by the primary carriers. As reported by the district, the most recent property valuation was done approximately five years ago. Brokerage officials advised the team that they have made a recommendation to the district to obtain a current and official property appraisal. However, they further added that all district policies automatically provide for property value increases. The district currently has blanket policy protection in the amount of \$163,000,000 per loss on all buildings.

Automobile/Fleet Insurance

All district-owned busses and business vehicles are covered under the automobile policy. The broker advised the team that an auto fleet inventory is done on an annual basis, and that the district is prudent about reporting any additions or deletions to the fleet in a timely manner. The policy, nonetheless, provides for excess vehicle protection until any new additions are reported to the insurance company.

The district also utilizes outside contractors for student transportation. Current certificates of insurance from these service providers are kept on file.

The chart below illustrates policy descriptions and premium costs for the School District of Woodbridge Township in FY 2000.

Description	Coverage	Deductible	Premium
Frontier Insurance Company:			
Property-Blanket Real & Personal	\$163,013,066	\$5,000	\$67,126
EDP-Blanket Hardware/Media/Extra Exp.	\$877,000	Theft \$1,000	\$0
Valuable Papers and Records	\$250,000	\$1,000	\$0
Crime-Pubic Employee Dishonesty	\$250,000	\$1,000	\$0
-Disappearance and Destruction	\$100,000	\$1,000	\$0
-Depositor's Forgery	\$100,000	\$1,000	\$0
Comprehensive General Liability	\$5,000,000	\$15,000	\$79,731
Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000	\$100 Comp.	\$83,541
		\$250 Collision	
Boiler & Machinery – Frontier Ins. Co.	\$25,000,000	\$5,000	\$3,811
Umbrella Liability – Frontier Ins. Co.:	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$38,985
Comprehensive Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0
Employer's Liability	\$1,000,000	\$1,000	\$0
Errors & Omissions - Frontier Ins. Co.	\$1,000,000	\$15,000	\$19,933
Student Accident	\$0	\$0	\$76,980
Public Official Bonds:	\$0	\$0	\$1,700
Board Secretary/Business Administrator	\$250,000	\$0	\$0
Treasurer of School Moneys	\$250,000	\$0	\$0
Total			\$371,807

Workers' Compensation

The district's workers' compensation policy for the 1999-00 school year was with a new carrier and in the second year of coverage at the time of the review. Prior to the 1998-99 school year, coverage was provided through a joint insurance fund (JIF). The total cost to the district of \$713,747 in straight premium. This policy assumed the liability for open claims from the previous insurer.

Brokerage officials advised the team that as a result of the change in carriers, the district would not be eligible for an experience modification rating by the current insurer for three years. The claims experience rating, i.e., the degree of utilization of workers' compensation benefits, determines the rating.

Accordingly, the current insurer will not rate the district until the close of FY 2001. Until that time, the insurance company assumes that the district maintains an acceptable average rating of 1.0 (referred to as unity). If the district sustains that favorable rating, or scores even lower, at the end of the three-year period, premiums can be reasonably maintained. However, if the rating exceeds a 1.0, the district can expect possible increased premiums resulting from above-average utilization of workers' compensation benefits. To further reduce costs, the district has established an early return-to-work program for janitors, bus drivers, and food service employees.

Currently, the district's insurance specialist handles all claims (approximately 2,500 employees). This includes the administration of the auditing activities associated with workers' compensation, as well as claims reporting, investigating, and follow-up. The insurance specialist is new to the district and maintains a one-person department with many functions. The team reviewed written documentation from the insurance carrier's risk management official commending the efficiency and pro-active approach to safety maintained by the district through this office.

Safety Program

At the time of the review, district officials informed the team that they had not yet established a formal safety committee. However, they advised that they were currently in the process of doing so. The broker of record further advised the team that a Loss Control Program was prepared and submitted to the district with a strong recommendation for implementation. The board has adopted a safety and loss control policy (#424) and a school safety policy (#705) that set forth the district's commitment to provide a safe and healthy environment for students and employees.

Recommendation:

The team commends district officials and urges them to continue requesting proposals from agents and/or brokers in their effort to obtain the best possible pricing.

Although the district maintains school safety and safety and loss control policies, the team suggests that school officials follow through with the establishment of a formal loss control program. In the interest of ensuring a safe and healthy environment, and keeping costs to a minimum, the team suggests the issue of safety be addressed promptly.

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

Overview

The maintenance of aging educational facilities has become a nationwide issue as turn of the century school buildings reach the end of their effective "life-span" and funds for replacement buildings are in short supply. The State of New Jersey has taken a major step toward easing this burden with the enactment of the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, but it will be many years before the majority of school districts in the state realize substantial relief through these state funds. In older communities where there is little in the way of unbuilt land for new construction, the inevitable questions remain regarding cost-effective methods of maintaining inadequate infrastructures while providing a relatively sound, safe and energy efficient school environment for students. Efficiencies and cost-cutting measures must necessarily consider the health and safety of students and staff while maintaining acceptable spending levels.

The Woodbridge Township School District facilities consist of approximately 1,617,522 square feet of space in facilities that include 25 school buildings, administrative offices and sports stadiums.

Woodbridge Township - School Facilities Profile

School	Year Constructed/ Addition	Square Footage	Acreage
Woodbridge Senior HS	1956/64/69	179,987	43.1
JFK Senior HS	1964	147,977	13.7
Colonia Senior HS	1967	163,896	27.8
Stadiums	1949/70	14,917	17.6
Administration	1876	27,174	1.6
Avenel Middle School	1964	118,668	18.3
Colonia Middle School	1960/68	97,377	23.1
Fords Middle School	1960	94,448	23.7
Iselin Middle School	1960/68	102,038	20.2
Woodbridge Middle School	1910/24/26/32/62/70	82,988	3.8
Mawbey Street Elementary	1962	27,967	4.2
Outlook Avenue Elementary	1922/48/62/65	25,512	2.3
Avenel Street Elementary	1912/22/28/27/48/68	42,973	3.9
Port Reading Elementary	1962	31,088	8.7
Ross Street Elementary	1920/30	47,511	1.7
Ford Avenue Elementary	1924/26	25,581	1.7
Indiana Avenue Elementary	1956/68	50,709	12.2
Menlo Park Terrace Elem.	1957/64	31,569	10.0
Claremont Avenue Elem.	1957/68	30,515	10.4
Oak Ridge Heights Elem.	1959/64/68	33,616	6.2
Lynn Crest Elementary	1959/64	37,999	22.4
Woodbine Avenue Elem.	1960/64/68	33,897	7.1
Kennedy Park Elementary	1960/68	33,897	14.5
Lafayette Estates Elementary	1960	30,442	12.3
Benjamin Avenue Elem.	1964	29,051	5.9
Pennsylvania Avenue Elem.	1964	29,665	7.9
Glen Cove Elementary	1969	47,433	8.7

As indicated in the table above, the Woodbridge Township School District has not funded a building construction project for over 30 years. Local taxpayers have defeated new building construction plans when proposed through referendum.

Upgrades to facilities have been funded through the use of general expenditure accounts, capital leases and loans through the State of New Jersey Economic Development Administration. These upgrades have included projects such as roofing repairs, lighting retrofits, door replacements, etc. Reportedly, in some recent years budgeted funds for planned school maintenance have been transferred to cover over budget expenditures in other areas, such as special education costs.

Recommendation:

District officials should endeavor to utilize the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act to secure funding for needed construction and/or capital improvements. District officials should also consider establishing a Capital Reserve account for

appropriate school facility expenditures. Funds placed in the Capital Reserve Account are restricted to capital outlay expenditures and transfers of such funds are limited by state statute.

The overall condition of the school facilities at the time of this review was acceptable in most schools given the age and heavy usage of the buildings. The lighting retrofits not only increased efficiency, but improved the appearance of the halls and classrooms and enhanced student environment.

Maintenance Operations

The supervisor of buildings and grounds manages the maintenance and custodial operations. The coverage of absences in the janitorial staff at the various buildings is the responsibility of the head rover janitor. Four secretaries and clerks perform office duties for the department. The remainder of the maintenance department includes five carpenters, three electricians, four painters and two plumbers.

The supervisor manages the district's schools and grounds and reports to the school business administrator. The supervisor has the responsibility for the provision of maintenance, repair, renovation, utilities and day to day buildings and custodial services.

Custodial Operations

Woodbridge Township employs 89 full-time janitors and ten rovers to clean the district facilities. Rovers are assigned to buildings to cover absences, and to assure that work orders are completed in an expeditious manner. Janitorial staff is responsible for the cleanliness of the school facilities as well as the maintenance of the school grounds. Supervision of the janitorial staff is the responsibility of the building principals in concert with the supervisor of buildings and grounds.

Cost of Operations

One of the tools used in the review process for identifying potential cost savings in the area of operational costs within the school district involves the following:

1. Perform a square footage analysis for the district and compare the cost per square foot against regional benchmarks and other school districts reviewed by Local Government Budget Review teams. For regional benchmarking, the review team utilizes the *American School and University [ASU]*, a national publication for facilities, purchasing and business administration. The *ASU* performs annual maintenance and operations surveys of school districts around the country. It provides reports on the cost to operate schools [including payroll, outside contract labor, gas, electric, heating fuel, equipment and supplies, etc.] on a regional level. Region 2 includes New York and New Jersey.
2. Identify and analyze budget lines and accounts that appear to be high in relationship to regional benchmarks and/or similar school districts.
3. Provide areas for cost savings based upon programs and/or efficiencies identified in other school districts or municipalities that may be applicable in the district of review.

The following table summarizes the Woodbridge Township School District's cleaning, maintenance, grounds and utility costs per square foot for the 1999-00 school year:

CATEGORY	EXPENSE (\$)	EXPENSE (\$) SF	EXPENSE (\$) SF
	WOODBIDGE TWP.	WOODBIDGE TWP.	99-00 ASU
CLEANING			
Salaries	\$3,817,771	2.36	2.14
Supplies	\$179,031	0.11	0.08
Contracts	\$45,804	0.03	0.00
Subtotal - Cleaning	\$4,042,606	2.50	2.22
MAINTENANCE			
Maintenance Salaries	\$1,205,034	0.74	0.58
Supplies	\$368,798	0.23	0.32
Contracts	\$747,519	0.46	0.30
Misc.	\$173,062	0.11	0.31
Subtotal - Maintenance	\$2,494,413	1.54	1.51
Total Clean/Maint	\$6,537,019	4.04	3.73
GROUNDS			
Supplies	\$18,270	0.01	0.07
Contracts	\$0	0.00	0.00
Subtotal- Grounds	\$18,270	0.01	0.07
UTILITIES			
Utilities	\$1,187,424	0.73	1.04
Water/Sewer	\$215,873	0.13	0.24
Other Fuel	\$0	0.00	0.27
Subtotal- Utilities	\$1,403,297	0.87	1.55
Total Grounds/Util.	\$1,421,567	0.88	1.62
TOTAL Maint/Oper.	\$7,958,586	4.92	5.35
INSURANCE	\$70,937	0.04	0.11
GRAND TOTAL	\$8,029,523	4.96	5.46

Source: 1999-00 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

The overall costs for plant operations for the Woodbridge Township School District are 10% lower than the average costs determined by the ASU survey for the New York/New Jersey Region. While the cleaning and maintenance costs appear to be slightly higher than the ASU average, the review team recognizes that the age of the buildings has a direct impact on monies spent in these areas. In all categories of this analysis, Woodbridge Township demonstrates cost effective management.

Janitorial and Maintenance Staffing

Janitorial staffing in the Woodbridge Township School District during the 1999-00 school year was reported to the review team as a total of 89 regular positions and ten rovers. The LGBR team analysis for custodial staffing allows one position in each of the larger school and administrative buildings for porter services and basic boiler maintenance. This allowance recognizes the need for personnel in the larger buildings to make small repairs, maintain landscaping, and deliver packages, etc., through the school day.

With 13 porter positions allocated from the total of 89, 76 workers are available to clean the buildings in the district. The ASU 1999-00 national median average for square footage maintained per custodian was 21,156. The total square footage of 1,617,522, as provided by district administrators, divided by 21,156 square feet per position equals 76 cleaning positions required in the district, meeting the recommended number of cleaning positions as identified by the ASU survey.

The district employs 14 full-time tradesmen. The ASU survey includes recommended square footages for skilled crafts and trades and the national average for 1999-00 is 87,500 square feet per tradesmen. The total square footage of district owned property in Woodbridge Township is approximately 1,617,522, for an average requirement of 19 tradesmen. Utilizing this analysis, Woodbridge Township appears to be under-staffed in the area of building maintenance. However, the district also utilizes the roover and janitorial staff to perform maintenance, thereby offsetting the apparent lack of skilled trades personnel.

Cost of Operations

An additional tool utilized in the review process is the NJDOE Comparative Spending Guide. This guide compares the per pupil costs of school districts in the state with comparably sized districts (socio-economic district factor groups - DFG). Utilizing data for the three most recent years, the Woodbridge Township School District cost per pupil for operations and maintenance of plant ranked 5th (low to high) out of 95 comparable districts in 1998-99 and 8th of 95 in 1999-00. Salaries and benefits for operations and maintenance of plant ranked 29th of the 95 in 1998-99 and 34th of 95 in school year 1999-00.

The review team also compares Woodbridge Township with three districts that are similar in terms of type, size and socio-economic factors. The complete comparison is included in a separate section of this review and is also based on information from the NJDOE Comparative Spending Guide. The school districts that were used for detailed comparison with Woodbridge were Clifton City, Edison Township, and Toms River Regional.

Based on the comparison of per pupil expenditures for selected cost factors for the 1999-00 school year for the three districts, Woodbridge Township's per pupil costs for operations and maintenance were 8% below the average, and 5% below the average for salaries and benefits.

Woodbridge Township has approached the maintenance and custodial services for the district in a methodical manner, improving efficiency in all areas. The district is to be commended for its businesslike guardianship of the educational facilities.

PERSONNEL

In public education the teaching and learning process is conducted within a service type of institution. Consequently, over three-fourths of total expenditures are for salaries and fringe benefits. The personnel function, including the recruitment, selection, in-service training, and

retention of certificated and non-certificated staff, is a crucial aspect of offering students a quality education. The review team examined the Woodbridge Township School District policy and administrative procedures regarding personnel.

Policy #402 - Employment of Non-Certificated Personnel provides the following direction:

The board recognizes that it is vital to the successful operation of the district that all positions in the district created by the board are filled with qualified and competent personnel.

The board shall approve the employment, fix the compensation and establish the term of employment for each person employed by this district. Such approval shall be given only to those candidates for employment recommended by the superintendent. When any recommended candidate has been rejected by the board, the superintendent shall make an alternate recommendation.

- A. All applicants for non-certified positions shall be made through the office of the director of Personnel Services on forms provided by the board of education.
- B. Each applicant should show evidence of good health, good character, knowledge, ability and skills to carry on the work in the area in which employment is sought.
- C. Each applicant should demonstrate sufficient maturity to deal with pupils and other employees.
- D. Preference will be given to candidates for non-certified employment who are residents of this school district.
- E. The employment of non-certified employees prior to approval by the board is authorized when their employment is required to maintain continuity of services in the district. Retroactive employment shall be recommended to the board at the next meeting.
- F. The administration may administer such screening tests as may bear upon the candidate's ability to perform the tasks for which he/she is being considered.
- G. The administration shall seek such recommendations from former employers and others who may be of assistance in assessing the candidate's qualifications. Such records shall be retained confidentially and for official use only.
- H. The administration is authorized to conduct police checks of any applicant according to guidelines established by the New Jersey Department of Education. Policy adopted 12/21/78.

Policy #422 - Procedures for Hiring Non-Certified Personnel

All persons seeking employment in a non-certified position with the Woodbridge School District must be appointed as a substitute employee prior to permanent employment.

The board of education shall appoint individuals to serve as substitute employees in each of the non-certified employment categories. The names of the substitute personnel and the positions in which they may substitute shall be approved by vote of the full board of education at a public meeting.

In order to be fair in its hiring practices, the Woodbridge Township Board of Education shall follow a set of procedures whereby all substitute non-certified personnel shall be treated in an equitable manner.

The appointment of all employees to non-certified permanent positions shall, wherever possible, be made from the substitute list. Policy adopted 12/20/90.

Recommendation:

With regard to the hiring of non-certified personnel, the Woodbridge Township Board of Education should consider whether its stated preference for local residents and its requirement of prior appointment as a substitute best serve the interests of the school district.

Policy #305 - Selection of Non-Administrative Personnel

- A. The superintendent shall recommend to the personnel committee of the board of education for appointment of continuous employment all certified and non-certified employees of the district (*with exceptions noted*).
- B. If the personnel committee of the board of education disapproves a nomination, it shall so state to the full board, but the superintendent shall have the right to recommend said candidate to the board.
- C. If the board of education disapproves a nomination, it shall be the duty of the superintendent to nominate other qualified candidates until a selection is made.
- D. It shall be the duty of the superintendent to nominate only those candidates who meet the qualifications established by law, the New Jersey Department of Education and by the board for the position for which the nomination is made.
- E.etc. Policy Revised on 10/08/87 and 9/21/89.

Policy #304 - Selection of Administrative Personnel

The goals of the district state that, “The Woodbridge Township School District should provide a competent staff and a system that maintains high levels of skills and performance.”

A major factor in maintaining a high level of performance on the part of the district employees is effective supervision. Therefore, the process for securing administrative personnel must be designed to insure the greatest possible chance of securing the most qualified individual for each position and doing so in such a way as to indicate support and confidence in the person hired. No action shall be taken in the selection of certified

personnel for supervisory or administrative position until notice has been posted in all of the schools of the township setting forth the duties of the position to be created or vacancy to be filled. To insure this level of competence and confidence, the superintendent shall prepare guidelines for the selection of administrative personnel by means of an interviewing committee, and members of the board of education shall have the right to submit written questions to be asked by members of the interviewing committee.

After all members of the administrative interviewing committee have completed questioning the candidate, any board member present at the interviews may ask questions of the candidate prior to the interviewing process beginning for the next candidate being interviewed by the administration. At the completion of the interviewing process, the interviewing committee will arrive at a decision concerning a candidate to be recommended to the superintendent of schools.

The personnel committee of the board of education, at its discretion, may choose to interview the recommended candidate of the superintendent for the positions of vice principal, and principal, director, or assistant superintendent of schools before the full board of education is required to vote on the recommendation.

A vote of the full board of education shall be taken on the candidate recommended by the superintendent. If the first candidate is not acceptable to the board, candidates recommended by the interviewing committee and approved by the superintendent in successive order shall be voted on by the board of education. If no candidate is acceptable to the board of education, the interviewing processshall be repeated.

Since it is the district's desire to have the best possible pool of candidates for each position and, since in-service professional growth activity should be related to the specific needs of the employee, individuals working for the district who applied for and were not considered successful candidates by the personnel interviewing committee shall receive, if requested, an explanation of the areas that appear to need improvement.

Administrative Regulation #3040 - Selection of Administrative Personnel

The following procedures shall be utilized in the selection of administrative personnel.

- A. Each administrative position shall have a job description approved by the board of education.(*The five elements are listed.*)
- B. The superintendent shall recommend to the personnel committee of the board of education the names of persons for appointment to all administrative position in the district.(*The exceptions are noted.*)
- C. The superintendent shall only nominate those candidates who meet the position qualifications established by law, NJDOE, and local board.
- D. The announcement of openings for certificated personnel shall follow the agreed upon procedures included in the contracts currently in force or board of education policy at the time of the vacancy.

- E. Prior to the announcement of the vacancy, the assistant superintendent for personnel shall submit for approval the following items to the personnel committee of the board of education:
 - 1. A listing of the criteria that are deemed to be appropriate for that position at the time. These criteria shall be limited to items included in the job description and related policies;
 - 2. A listing of the administrators who will serve on the screening and interviewing committees;
 - 3. A listing of the candidates and a listing of those to be interviewed.
- F. Applications received in response to the announcement of vacancy shall be reviewed by the administrative screening committee according to the criteria previously established and approved.
- G. All qualified candidates meeting the criteria may be invited for a personal interview.
- H. The questions selected by each committee participant shall be chosen prior to committee members receiving a list of candidates to be interviewed. Board members wishing to have specific questions asked should submit them to the assistant superintendent for personnel prior to the interview for inclusion on the list prepared for the interview.
- I. The members of the interviewing committee shall be given a copy of the candidate's application immediately prior to the interview. Members of the personnel committee of the board of education and other members of the board of education selected by the chairperson of the personnel committee, not to exceed four in number, will also be given copies of the candidates' application and all other pertinent information. The board of education shall be notified, in writing, at least five days in advance of the date, time and place of the interviews. The board members may be present at the interview, and shall limit their participation to observation of the interaction, listening, asking questions and analyzing candidate responses to the questions asked.
- J. After each interview, the interviewing committee will rate each candidate on a form provided by the assistant superintendent.
- K. Following all interviews, the interviewing committee will discuss their reaction to and impressions of each of the candidates. The committee members shall then agree upon the most qualified candidate whom they wish to recommend to the superintendent of schools and the alternate candidates they can recommend. (Reference Policy #304; Revised July, 2000.)

Recruitment

The district has a history of purchasing personnel advertisements, as needed, either weekly or biweekly in the Star Ledger for classroom teacher and certified support staff vacancies. The review team found no evidence of newspaper advertisements of vacancies for administrative and supervisory personnel. The negotiated agreements of the respective parties require the posting of vacancies internally within the school district.

Recommendation:

In examining the various district personnel policies and administrative procedures, it is evident that the procedures and practices have developed over the past 25 years or more. The review team suggests that the age and content of some of the personnel policies and practices warrant upgrading with implementation of more modern concepts. The frequent practice of limiting recruitment to the posting of vacancies within the school district severely restricts the potential pool of qualified candidates for administrative and supervisory positions. For example, local candidates have been employed in over 95% of the existing administrative and supervisory positions in Woodbridge. Some key leadership vacancies reportedly were filled during calendar years 1999 and 2000 from a “pool” of only one local candidate each.

The board of education should consider adopting policy statements that make it clear that “outside” candidates are encouraged to apply for district administrative and supervisory vacancies. In addition to meeting the requirements of the local negotiating agreements, recruitment practices should include appropriate advertisements in at least one newspaper of wide circulation. Other inexpensive forums for recruitment, such as college placement offices and Internet sites should also be utilized. Sufficient time should be allowed for candidates, both internal and external, to learn about vacancies and to submit applications with supporting materials/references.

In the early 1900’s, it was common for citizen standing committees to administer the various public institutions. Today, school district personnel recruitment and selection are generally acknowledged as administrative functions to be performed by certified personnel. The board of education has employed professional managers at both the school and district levels. The board of education needs to have confidence in the validity of the criteria and the thoroughness of the processes. However, the board should consider examining the reasons for the depth of involvement by the board’s personnel committee in the selection process for administrative personnel from vice principal to assistant superintendent. Obviously, the full board of education makes the final employment decisions by either accepting or rejecting the superintendent’s recommendations.

Teacher Assignments

With 24 school buildings and a number of relatively small elementary schools, it is to be expected that some teachers need to be shared between buildings. The review team found about 100 teachers who travel from school to school. There were a few instances when two teachers of the same subject/skill were assigned for a small portion of the day in a building. It is obvious that the time spent in travel between buildings reduces staff instructional time and should be mitigated or avoided when possible.

Recommendation:

School officials should examine the schedules of teachers who are shared in two or more buildings. Since instructional salaries constitute such a large portion of the school budget, it is particularly important that teacher instructional time be used effectively. Reductions in travel between schools can result in significant cost savings for the district.

TRANSPORTATION

A fundamental, and often controversial, component of school district budgets is the appropriation for providing a safe and efficient means for students to travel to and from school. The escalating costs associated with the transportation of New Jersey's public and private school students has received increasing attention from the media, state and local officials, and taxpaying residents. There are numerous factors that can affect transportation expenditures including management's knowledge of transportation, employee salaries and benefits, terms of negotiated agreements, privatization, competition for services, quality of route and vehicle specifications, geography, and board policies. The LGBR review process examines the level of service provided to the students in the district as well as the costs of such services.

The State of New Jersey provides aid to qualifying school districts under the provisions of State Statute 18A:39-1 through 25, which stipulates that elementary school pupils who live more than 2 miles from their public school, or secondary pupils who live more than two and one half miles from their public school, are entitled to transportation to and from school. In addition, the statute grants students attending a remote school other than a public school, operated not for profit, located not more than 20 miles from the pupil's residence, transportation within the requirements of the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.), Title 6A:27A-2.1 through 2.5. State statute requirements include restricting the cost of non-public transportation to a stated yearly amount (1998-99 - \$702, 1999-00 - \$707, 2000-01 - \$710). If transportation cannot be provided for this amount or less, parents are reimbursed the legislated amount.

There are several terms utilized to differentiate between students whose transportation to and from school is an expense recognized as necessary and, therefore, qualifying for state aid and those students whose services are provided for reasons of safety or other local conditions or policies. Students who reside a qualifying distance from the school are said to live "remote from the school house" or are termed "eligible" referring to state aid requirements.

"Courtesy" busing is defined as transportation of students who reside two miles or less from the school for elementary grades and two and one half miles or less for the secondary grades. Under state guidelines, this transportation is unaided if provided. The term "courtesy" busing is used interchangeably by school districts with "safety" busing, "hazardous" busing and "ineligible" students, again referring to state aid qualifications.

Woodbridge Township is located in Middlesex County and is New Jersey's fifth largest municipality, encompassing approximately 27 square miles. The township consists of the

communities of Avenel, Colonia, Fords, Hopelawn, Iselin, Keasbey, Menlo Park Terrace, Port Reading, Sewaren and Woodbridge. The school district serves pre-kindergarten through 12th grades at 24 school locations.

District Operations Overview

Supervision of the district transportation department in Woodbridge is combined with food service. A staff of three provides clerical support for transportation. In addition to the coordinator, the district employs a transportation specialist. The remainder of the department includes 32 full-time (eight hours a day) bus drivers, 18 part-time (5 1/2 hour) drivers, 30 bus attendants, five garage mechanics and varying numbers of substitute drivers.

Service for regular to and from transportation is provided by both contracted service and in-district operations. Special education routes, which were not performed by in-house staff, had been out-sourced through joint transportation agreements with the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission (MCESC). However, these services were not utilized after 1999-00 due to increasing costs.

School Vehicles

At the time of this review, the district owned or leased 63 school buses, ranging in size from 16 passenger vans to full size 54 passenger buses. Vehicles are lease-purchased, as needed, and the specifications utilized encourage competitive bids.

Bus Routes

In an effort to control costs the district has combined district and private operations. Woodbridge Township solicits route bids on a regular basis. The bid specifications utilized are well written and the routes are effectively tiered.

The strategy of “tiering” bus routes is one of the methods utilized to increase efficiency and save transportation monies. Transportation efficiency in a public school district can be defined as “equal or improved services for fewer dollars.” When runs are combined or tiered, each vehicle is assigned to a group of runs, thereby, utilizing the vehicle for as many hours during the day as is possible, without compromising instructional time. The basic principal of this efficiency is:

Yearly vehicle operational costs, i.e., lease or amortized cost, repair parts and labor, and insurance expense are stable, regardless of how many trips the vehicle is assigned to during the course of the year. (Excluding fuel, driver salaries, benefits, etc.)

When these operational costs are applied to Vehicle A for Year 1 at \$15,000 and that vehicle is assigned to only an elementary school run throughout the school year, then the operational costs for that bus run become \$15,000. Assuming that the bus was a 54-passenger vehicle and that it held a full student load, the operational per pupil cost would be \$277.78. The same vehicle assigned to runs for a high school, middle school and elementary school in the morning and afternoon produces a per run cost of \$5,000 or \$92.60 per pupil.

The successful preparation of “tiered” bus runs requires bell schedules sufficiently spaced to allow buses to pick up a full load of students in between trips to the schools. The bell schedules in Woodbridge Township are aligned sufficiently to accommodate both the academic day and the successful “tiering” of the bus runs.

Joint Transportation Agreements

The utilization of commissions and cooperatives is recommended as a source of efficiencies. Specializing in combining the transportation needs of several districts into cost effective routes, these consortiums play an ever-increasing role in pupil transportation in the state. The majority of these commissions and cooperatives write specifications, generate route packages, and handle the bid process for contracted route services. These agencies charge the districts a management fee ranging from 4% to 10% of the transportation costs. Just as privatization should not always be viewed as a quick fix for all district transportation problems, cooperative services are not always the most cost-effective method for attaining routes. In order for both of these to be effective, care must be taken in both the presentation of the information and supervision of the final product.

Woodbridge Township discontinued joint agreements with the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission beginning in the 2000-01 school year due to the increasing costs associated with these services. In addition to saving the \$72,000 in administrative fees paid during the 1999-00 school year, the district was able to reduce the cost of many of the special needs routes through the bid process.

LGBR commends the district for recognizing the need to reduce costs in the area of special needs routes and bidding those services in-house.

Bus Drivers

The negotiated agreement between the Woodbridge Township Board of Education and the Woodbridge Township Education Association covers the bus drivers, bus attendants and mechanic positions in the district. Basic provisions and recommendations in the agreement are discussed under a separate section of this review.

The work year for drivers is 190 days, which includes two days for dry runs of their assigned routes, 180 school days, and eight paid holidays which are compensated in the last pay of the school year.

Bus attendants are also eligible for the eight paid holidays. In the collective bargaining agreement section of this report, the review team recommends that the district renegotiate paid holidays for bus drivers and bus attendants for potential savings of \$70,600.

Courtesy Busing

Courtesy busing is defined as transportation provided for students who do not meet the state profile for eligible students to and from school. As stated earlier in this review section, pupil

transportation is governed by statute and school districts are provided with state aid for students who reside “remote” from the school. Districts that choose to transport students as a courtesy do not receive aid for these students.

School Year	Courtesy Students	Regular Students
1998-99	3,967	3,665
1999-00	3,715	2,992
2000-01	3,287	3,381

Some courtesy busing is necessary in Woodbridge Township due to a lack of sidewalks along congested roadways, which create hazardous conditions for walking students. Through discussions with administrators of the district, an unofficial percentage of 60% is being used to identify hazard students for this analysis. Therefore, 40% of the total is considered courtesy, or 1,486 students during the 1999-00 school year.

Although there is no provision under current state law to provide aid for districts that bus courtesy students, N.J.A.C. 6A:27-1.3 (a) 1. states that “District boards of education may elect to charge parents for all or part of the cost of this service in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1.3.” The law also requires that students may not be excluded from this service due to an inability to pay. In such cases, the criteria used to determine financial hardship is to be the same as the statewide eligibility standards utilized for free and reduced price school lunches.

Recommendation:

District officials should consider instituting a subscription-busing program for those students considered courtesy under the provisions outlined above. Given the 1,486 students identified as courtesy in 1999-00, and reducing this number by 16%, the district percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, 1,248 students would take part in the subscription-busing program. Charging a minimal amount of \$200 per student would allow the district to realize annual revenue of \$249,600.

Revenue Enhancement: \$249,600

Non-Public Transportation

Students attending private or non-public schools are entitled to transportation under the same statute and guidelines that govern public school student transportation, i.e., elementary school pupils who live more than two miles from their school or secondary pupils who live more than two and one half miles from their school are entitled to state aided transportation. However, such transportation must meet other requirements. One of these requirements limits the cost of transportation for non-public students to a mandated amount, which is determined by the state each year. When the costs of transportation exceed this amount, the district must reimburse the parents for providing their own transportation to and from the non-public school. Reimbursement to parents is restricted to the statutory amount.

In addition, parents requesting non-public transportation for their children must file applications with the district by set deadlines, meet distance requirements, and have their children enrolled in a not for profit non-public school.

During the year of review (1999-00), Woodbridge Township provided transportation to 967 non-public students and paid aid-in-lieu of transportation to the parents of 429 students.

Recommendation:

District officials should consider assessing applications for non-public school transportation to determine if the number of families reimbursed for transportation can be minimized. Options should be explored to expedite reduction of these expenditures, such as seeking joint transportation agreements with adjoining districts, utilizing the Middlesex County ESC, constructing routes and preparing specifications to solicit bids.

Driver Work Day and Overtime

The district currently employs 32 “eight hour a day” bus drivers and 18 “five and one half hour a day” drivers. After reviewing the 1999-00 and 2000-01 route assignments, the LGBR team believes that the district can reduce these hours to actual time worked and make substantial savings in the area of driver payroll. A recommendation for renegotiating the collective bargaining agreement for potential savings of \$372,000 can be found in that section of this report.

During the 1999-00 school year, overtime expenditures for bus drivers totaled \$225,645. Expenditures for bus attendant overtime totaled \$29,663. According to the transportation coordinator, these costs represented all payments to employees for “premium” hours, or those hours paid at time and one half the hourly rate for athletic or field trips, or other additional assignments as needed.

Recommendations have been made in the collective bargaining agreement section of this review to:

- a. eliminate the 8 hour and 5 ½ hour driver positions and pay only for time actually worked; and
- b. raise the hours necessary for overtime for bus attendants from 35 hours per week to 40 hours per week.

Potential savings of \$125,250 can be attained by altering the bus driver and bus attendant workday and week, thus establishing additional hours available for extra work assignments that could be paid at regular hourly rates.

FOOD SERVICE

The review of the district's food service program included interviews with the food service director and other personnel, observations of the operations at the kitchens and cafeterias, and an analysis of various documents pertaining to the food service operation including the 1999-00 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The district has eight production kitchens. Three are located in the high schools, and five are located in the middle schools. The production kitchens at JFK High School and Avenel Middle School also prepare meals for eight satellite kitchens each. These satellite kitchens are located at the elementary schools. Staff from the JFK and Avenel kitchens rotates to the satellite kitchens on a staggered lunch schedule.

The Woodbridge School District receives state and/or federal reimbursements for food service costs and collects fees from students for the cost of meals. Accordingly, N.J.S.A. 18A:7F, the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996, requires that the district report the entire food service operation in an enterprise fund. Enterprise funds are used to account for operations that are financed and conducted in a manner similar to a private business enterprise with the intent that the cost of providing the goods or services may be financed through user charges. In the case of Woodbridge, the board has had to transfer contributions to cover food service operating losses for the last three years. The table below shows revenues and expenditures for the food service operation in detail.

Woodbridge School District			
3-Year Comparison of Food Service Enterprise Fund			
	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98
Operating Revenues:			
Daily Sales-Reimbursable program	\$703,702	\$656,570	\$638,896
Daily Sales - Non-Reimbursable Program	\$433,384	\$445,942	\$425,763
Total Operating Revenues	\$1,137,087	\$1,102,512	\$1,064,659
Non-operating Revenues:			
State School Lunch Program	\$42,699	\$40,286	\$39,081
National School Lunch Program	\$568,815	\$526,005	\$499,151
Food Distribution Program Commodities	\$71,706	\$62,725	\$106,578
Interest Revenue	\$19,755	\$11,812	\$4,346
Other	\$95,158	\$63,437	\$53,813
Total Non-Operating Revenues	\$798,134	\$704,265	\$702,970
Total Revenues	\$1,935,220	\$1,806,777	\$1,767,629
Operating Expenses:			
Salaries	\$1,457,587	\$1,428,737	\$1,350,345
Employee Benefits	\$346,174	\$334,804	\$211,697
Supplies and Materials	\$57,986	\$52,015	\$55,746
Miscellaneous	\$30,944	\$23,890	\$25,074
Depreciation	\$20,765	\$17,859	\$13,447
Cost of Sales	\$772,456	\$702,821	\$747,275
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,685,911	\$2,560,125	\$2,403,585
Loss Before Board Contribution	(\$750,691)	(\$753,349)	(\$635,956)
Board Contribution	\$712,928	\$753,349	\$659,645
Net Loss After Board Contribution	(\$37,762)	\$0	\$23,689

Source: Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Section F-2.

The NJ Department of Education Comparative Spending Guide provides data regarding the profitability of food service operations throughout the state. During 1999-00, of the 95 school districts K-12 with enrollments in excess of 3,500 students, only 33 had deficits in their food service operations. Of those 33 districts, Woodbridge ranked 27th. Only six of the 95 school districts had larger per pupil deficits than Woodbridge in their food service operations.

Payroll, cost of goods sold, and supplies and materials are the main cost components of a food service program. The review team conducted an analysis of these costs in relation to total sales and compared them to market standards, including those of privatized food service operations. For comparison purposes, USDA commodities received by the program and employee benefits paid by the district have been excluded. The following table illustrates that analysis.

Woodbridge Township School District			
Cost Comparison to Market Standards			
		% of	
		Total	Market
	1999-00	Income	Rate
Total Revenue*	\$1,863,514	100%	100%
Net Food Cost*	\$700,750	38%	39%-45%
Labor Costs**	\$1,457,587	78%	40%-45%
Supplies and Materials	\$57,986	3%	4%-5%
Miscellaneous	\$30,944	2%	0.2%-0.5%
Total Costs and Expenses	\$2,247,267	121%	
Board Subsidy	\$712,928	38%	
* Excluding USDA Commodities. **Excluding Employee Benefits.			

As indicated by the chart, costs for food and supplies were well within market standards. Prices for food items and supplies were reviewed in the purchasing section of this report. Although some of the prices offered through the state's Distribution and Support Services program would provide moderate savings, they would not significantly impact bottom line profit and loss. Inventory levels ranged from 8%-22% of total revenues and averaged 13% for the year. This is well within the industry standard of 25%.

Labor costs, on the other hand, exceeded the market rate and were the primary cause of the food service program's operating deficit. The two components of labor costs are productivity and hourly rate. Productivity, defined as meals served per hour worked, was lower than industry standards. The table below illustrates this calculation.

**Woodbridge School District
Food Service Productivity**

Total Lunches Served:		
Secondary Schools	435,175	
# Days in Service	172	
Average Daily Served		2,530
Elementary Schools	238,130	
# Days in Service	160	
Average Daily Served		1,488
A La Carte Sales:	\$368,268	
# Days in Service	172	
Average Daily Sales	\$2,141	
Average Meal Price	\$3.50	
Average Daily Served		612
Total Daily Meals Served/		4,630/
Average Daily Attendance		11,626
=Average Daily Participation		=39.8%
 Daily Hours:		
8 managers @ 8 hours	64	
8 Asst. Mgr. @ 7 hours	56	
34 Cafeteria Wkrs. @ 6 hours	204	
4 Administrative @ 8 hours	32	
Total Daily Hours		356
 Meals Served per Hour		13.0
Industry Standard		15.0

If daily hours are held constant, an increase in the participation rate to approximately 46% would bring productivity levels to industry standards. Additionally, the number and size of schools being served directly effect productivity. The district has eight production kitchens. Three are located in the high schools, and five are located in the middle schools. The production kitchens at JFK High School and Avenel Middle School also prepare meals for eight satellite kitchens each. These satellite kitchens are located at the elementary schools. Staff from the JFK and Avenel kitchens rotates to the satellite kitchens on a staggered lunch schedule. Any change to the food service program should take into account the possibility of reconfiguring staff to include part-time cafeteria workers at some of the satellite locations.

Hourly rates are the primary factor in the high labor costs of the food service program in the district. The district employs eight cafeteria managers, eight assistants, and 30 general cafeteria workers. Cafeteria managers work eight hours per day at an average rate of approximately \$21/hour, assistant managers work seven hours per day at an average rate of approximately \$20/hour, and general cafeteria workers work six hours per day at an average rate of approximately \$15/hour. Rates of \$10-\$12/hour for general cafeteria workers are much closer to industry norms. In addition, the district paid \$346,174 in benefits to cafeteria workers during the year.

Recommendations:

In order for the food service program to become self-sustaining, the district should consider reducing labor costs. There are basically two ways the district can achieve these reductions: 1) privatization; or 2) modification of the food service program through negotiations and staff reconfiguration. Privatization, preferable for ensuring maximum cost savings, can be accomplished either within one year, or over a period of years by specifying that the private company will hire new employees only.

Primary Recommendation

Privatization:

The district could issue requests for proposals to contract with a private firm to manage its food service program. The fees to run a food service program vary from district to district, but can be negotiated based on some level of profitability or cost reduction. Cafeteria workers become employees of the management company and salaries are subject to market conditions. Food service industry standards for labor costs range from 40% to 45% of total income. At the high end of that range, the district food service labor costs in 1999-00 should have been approximately \$840,000, resulting in a reduction of \$964,761 in salaries and benefits. In addition, large food service companies may achieve significant savings through their ability to purchase food in bulk quantities.

Cost Savings: \$964,761

Secondary Recommendation

Contract Negotiations and Staff Reconfiguration:

District officials should consider renegotiating the hourly rates of cafeteria workers to bring them closer to current market rates. The district could choose to negotiate a lower starting rate for new employees, without imposing a burden on current employees. The district presently pays an hourly rate approximately 30% higher than the current market rate. As indicated in the collective bargaining section of this report, the district could save \$400,000 through negotiating market wage rates.

The review team recommends reconfiguring staffing levels to include a mix of part-time employees. This would not only improve productivity by providing flexibility in scheduling at the large number of schools, but would reduce the cost of benefits. This reconfiguration can also be negotiated to affect future hires. At \$346,174 for 1999-00, benefits averaged approximately \$6,900 per employee. Reconfiguring half of the full-time staff to part-time positions would reduce benefit costs by approximately \$172,500.

Cost Savings: \$172,500

The review team does not see a need for assistant managers at each location. Through attrition, if so chosen, the district could convert these positions to part-time general cafeteria workers, which would reduce labor costs and benefits as well as provide for scheduling flexibility.

Cost Savings: \$138,600

The district's student participation rate at 38% is quite low. In order to increase student participation, district officials should consider offering more choices of meals a day, operating on a three-week menu cycle, reducing repeat menu entries and conducting periodic informal surveys of student preferences. If the district could increase the participation rate by 10%, there would be revenue enhancement of \$113,000.

Revenue Enhancement: \$113,000

In summary, combined food service negotiated and actual cost savings and revenue enhancements would total \$824,100.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Policies & Procedures

The Woodbridge Township School District is governed by an elected board of education composed of nine members, who serve staggered three-year terms. Five members present constitute a quorum. The board holds committee meetings on agenda items in preparation for the regular monthly public meeting. The superintendent prepares an agenda of the items of business to come before the board at each regular meeting. The agenda, together with related reports, are provided each board member prior to the meeting.

The organization of the board includes standing committees that are named annually. The committees are:

Policy and Planning	Finance
Transportation	Buildings and Grounds
Curriculum	Cafeteria
Personnel	Athletics and Extracurricular

Each committee consists of at least three members and one member is designated as chairperson. Committees gather pertinent facts relating to their assigned jurisdictions and submit recommendations to the full board. Key central office administrators, including the superintendent, assistant superintendent(s) and the business administrator serve as professional resources to the various committees. At the regular monthly board meeting, the agenda items are organized under each board committee and the chairperson makes the motion for board approval of the items in the committee report. The board may also create ad hoc committees as the need and circumstances warrant.

The board of education is generous in the time allotted for recognition of both staff and students at regular board meetings. The board usually has several resolutions honoring the academic, leadership or athletic achievements of selected students. The designated staff and students present at the meeting are requested to come forward for recognition and handshakes with school officials.

The district has a nepotism policy that was adopted in 1991 and revised in 1992. The policy states in part that no person, who is a member of the immediate family of a board of education member or administrator, shall be placed in nomination for any vacant permanent position. Nor shall any person be considered for employment in any permanent position in which he/she would come under the direct or indirect supervision of any member of his/her family. A board member or administrator who has such a relationship with any employee of the district shall declare such relationship immediately. The board minutes confirm that Woodbridge board members with such relationships refrain from voting on pertinent issues.

The minutes of the March 16, 2000 board meeting indicate that, with respect to negotiations of the Woodbridge Township Education Association (WTEA) contract commencing July 1, 2000, eight of nine board members had a conflict due either to past endorsements by the WTEA or the employment of relatives by the school district. Reportedly, the School Ethics Commission has noted specifically in an advisory opinion, A03-98, that when only one board member is able to participate in negotiations without a conflict, one board member does not make a negotiations committee. Therefore, the School Ethics Commission has advised boards to invoke the Doctrine of Necessity in order to allow the other board members to participate in negotiations. The board invoked the Doctrine of Necessity at this meeting and appointed a negotiations committee composed of three regular members and a fourth position to be filled on a rotating basis by the remaining members of the board.

Seven board members agreed to be interviewed by the review team. The review team attended some board meetings and examined the board policies, minutes, financial records and other documents. The board allows audience participation at periodic intervals during meetings. It is evident that school officials have endeavored to offer good quality instruction at reasonable cost. Concerns have been expressed regarding the age and condition of school buildings, maintenance of reasonable class sizes, continuation of curricular offerings, continual voter defeats of school budgets, the level of local property taxes, etc. However, as documented in the collective bargaining section of this report, the district has a significant number of expensive provisions in the respective negotiated employee agreements. As indicated in the personnel section of this report, district officials do not advertise vacancies or recruit outside candidates for administrative and supervisory vacancies. There is also a perception that the successful local candidates for key positions frequently have either board or township “connections”. The degree of involvement in the employment process by the board’s personnel committee tends to reinforce that perception.

Recommendation:

The Woodbridge Board of Education should consider evaluating the role and function of the various standing committees with reference to policy making versus administrative

functions. The board should also consider modification of any practices or policies, which may tend to limit, on the basis of geography, local social or political affiliations, or other extraneous matters, the employment and retention of the best-qualified persons for district vacancies.

The superintendent, as chief administrative officer of the school system, is responsible to the board of education. He/she has general supervision over the schools of the township under rules prescribed by the state board of education and the adopted policies of the local board of education. He/she has a seat on the board and the right to speak on all educational matters, but not the right to vote. Specific duties are set forth in statute, state administrative code and the district job description.

Board Member/Superintendent Expenses

An analysis of board member expenses for the 1999-00 school year was conducted. Most of the expenses were for membership dues (\$1,587), food (\$2,300), travel expenses (\$773), lodging (\$3,920) and miscellaneous (\$204). Board members were reimbursed for costs to attend conferences and workshops related to their responsibilities as board members, provided that the board approves such expenses. The board does not issue credit cards or cellular phones to its members. The board has a written policy for board member or employee expense reimbursements; however, the policy does not specify the limits of reimbursement for such activities. The board also paid for the annual retirement and award dinners. Over all, the board expenses appear to be reasonable and are administered properly.

Recommendations:

- 1. It is a good practice to have a policy for expense reimbursement. The board of education policy should include language appropriate to payment of legitimate expenses incurred by board members and district staff. Further, board policy should set limits for travel, lodging and meal expenses.**
- 2. School officials should consider whether the employees and/or the various unions should contribute to staff retirement and awards dinners.**

III. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ISSUES

An area that frequently presents significant opportunities for savings is negotiated contracts. While they represent opportunities for savings, the savings and contract improvements are most likely to occur incrementally through a well-conceived process of redeveloping compensation packages to be equitable and comprehensive. For this reason, we present those issues subject to collective bargaining agreements separately in this section.

Employee Composition

LGBR performed a thorough review of negotiated agreements between the district and its individual employees, service providers, and recognized collective bargaining units in an effort to identify areas of potential cost savings.

Four collective bargaining units are recognized by the Woodbridge Township Board of Education: the Woodbridge Township Education Association (WTEA); the Woodbridge Township Administrators Association (WTAA); the Woodbridge Township Custodial Supervisors Association (WTCSA); and the four tradesmen’s unions who bargain collectively as one unit. The tradesmen’s unit consists of: Local #1005, Painter employees; Local #1006, Carpenter employees; Local #9, Plumber employees; and Local #1158, Electrical employees.

The following chart lists the employees represented by each bargaining unit, and identifies the term of the contract currently in effect. This review targets school year 1999-00, i.e., FY 2000. Since that time the board has entered into a new contract with the WTEA. For purposes of this comparison, the former WTEA contract is cited herein, with reference to the new contract chiefly to the extent that its conditions impact on cost savings in the district.

Unit	Employees Represented	Contract Period
Woodbridge Education Association	All certified personnel, all Clerks and Secretaries, all Teacher Aides, Teacher Assistants (identified as Paraprofessionals under the 2000-03 contract) and Bus Attendants; and all Janitorial, Attendance, Transportation and Cafeteria personnel.*	July 1, 1996 thru June 30, 2000 Currently: July 1, 2000 thru June 30, 2003
Woodbridge School Administrators Assoc.	Directors, Associate Directors, Staff Directors, Principals, Vice-Principals, Supervisors, Coordinators and Dept. Heads	July 1, 1997 thru June 30, 1999
Woodbridge Custodial Supervisors Assoc.	All Supervising Janitorial personnel.	July 1, 1999 thru June 30, 2002
Tradesmen:	All Painter employees (Local #1005); all Carpenter employees (Local #1006); all Plumber employees (Local #9); and all Electrical employees (Local #1158).	July 1, 1999 thru June 30, 2003

*The WTEA contract is divided into five sections: one-common provisions; two-non-supervisory, certified staff; four-custodial, cafeteria, transportation & attendance personnel; four-secretaries; and five-paraprofessionals, clerical aides, health aides & bus attendants.

The superintendent's contract is negotiated individually, as are those of the assistant superintendent and the business administrator/board secretary.

Several confidential secretaries, who are not a part of the collective bargaining unit, nevertheless follow the provisions of the WTEA contract with regard to the terms and conditions of their employment.

Leave to Association Representatives

The Woodbridge Township Education Association is the largest bargaining unit in the district and the district grants the WTEA president an unpaid leave of absence "for the purpose of performing duties for the association." Under this agreement, the association pays the president's full salary, and the board pays for full family health benefits coverage.

All other association presidents/representatives are regular full-time employees and are not provided with a leave of absence.

Workweek and Overtime

Work hours vary under the different labor contracts as do overtime provisions. Generally, work hours are not specified, and overtime does not apply under district agreements with administrative and managerial employees. An exception to this general rule appears in the custodial supervisors' contract.

Tradesmen

Tradesmen work an eight-hour day for a 40-hour workweek. Tradesmen are paid overtime pay at time and one-half for ". . .work required before and/or after regular shifts and on Saturdays." Overtime is paid at double time for work performed on Sundays or on any of the 14 holidays provided these employees.

WTEA

The WTEA contract provides different workweek hours for the four different groups of workers it covers. Non-supervisory, certified personnel work 6 hours 35 minutes in the elementary schools, and 6 hours 50 minutes in the middle and high schools. Overtime is not applicable.

Both 10 and 12-month janitorial/custodial, cafeteria, transportation and attendance personnel have a 40-hour workweek. Work in excess of eight hours per day or 40 hours per week is compensated as overtime at time and one-half. Double time is paid for work on a seventh consecutive day and on Sundays. Double time, plus "holiday pay" is paid for work on recognized holidays. In effect, double time plus holiday pay equates to triple pay as the employee is paid his/her regular paid holiday plus double time.

Alternatively, by agreement of the employer and employee, janitorial/custodial, cafeteria, transportation and attendance personnel may use compensatory time off as repayment for overtime work. The rate in this case is one and one-half hours compensatory time for each hour of overtime worked.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that compensation for work performed on recognized holidays by 10 and 12-month janitorial/custodial, cafeteria, transportation and attendance personnel be negotiated to a maximum of double time pay.

Reduction of the current contractual workday and workweek to reflect actual time worked by Woodbridge Township School District bus drivers and bus attendants would result in significant savings by freeing additional hours available for extra work assignments at the regular hourly pay rate. Savings could be realized in current payroll costs and also in overtime expenditures, as described below.

The 2000-03 WTEA contract guarantees 32 bus drivers an eight-hour workday. The remaining drivers are provided compensation for no fewer than five and one-half hours per day, unless agreed to by the driver. If, however, the 32 drivers currently paid for an eight-hour day were reduced to actual time worked, this would equate to a five and one-half hour workday, a saving of two and one-half work hours per day. The average hourly rate for bus drivers in the Woodbridge Township School District is \$20. Given 32 drivers contracted for 190 days per year at the average hourly rate of \$20, the district could realize payroll savings of \$304,000 annually by negotiating payment for actual time worked.

Applying this same reasoning to the workday of the district's 18 drivers currently paid for a five and one-half hour day, the actual workday would average four and one-half hours, a saving of 1 hour per day. At the average district driver's \$20 per hour pay rate over 190 contracted days for 18 drivers, the district could realize a saving of \$68,400 annually.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that the district negotiate bus driver pay for actual time worked, yielding potential savings in: A) salary, and B) overtime.

A. Potential Salary Cost Savings: \$372,000

Were contract provisions renegotiated to reflect a five and one-half hour workday as suggested above, two and one-half hours per day would become available for extra work at the driver's regular hourly rate. Assuming that 20 of the 32 drivers were eligible for extra work, the district would have an additional 9,000 hours available before overtime applied. (Two and one-half hours, 180 days per year, multiplied by 20 drivers.) The \$10 per-hour saving realized by paying 9,000 hours at the regular \$20 per hour, instead of the overtime rate of \$30 per hour, would be \$90,000.

Under this same reasoning, the workday of the district's 18 drivers currently paid for a five and one-half hour day, would average four and one-half hours. If 10 of these drivers were eligible for extra work assignments, 1,800 hours would become available at the regular hourly rate of \$20 per hour, for a saving of \$18,000.

B. Potential Overtime Cost Savings: \$108,000

Full-time 10 and 12-month secretaries work a 35 hour workweek and receive overtime pay at time and one-half for work in excess of seven hours per day or 35 hours per week. Again, by agreement, compensatory time may be taken in lieu of overtime pay at the rate of one and one-half time.

The final section of the WTEA contract covers paraprofessionals, bus attendants, health aides, and in the 2000-03 contract, clerical aides also. These are 10-month employees who follow the school calendar. Full-time paraprofessionals work a six and one-half hour workday; clerical aides, health aides and part-time paraprofessionals work a three-hour day; and bus attendants work four hours per day. All are paid an hourly wage. Overtime, at time and one-half, is earned for work performed in excess of seven hours in one day, or 35 hours in one week, with double time being paid for work on Sundays and holidays.

Employers in New Jersey are required to pay overtime at the rate of one and one-half times an employee's regular salary rate for work in excess of 40 hours per week. N.J.S.A. 34:11-56.a.4. Only district secretaries, paraprofessionals, bus attendants, health aides and clerical aides are paid overtime at time and one-half for work in excess of seven hours per day or 35 hours per week. All other contractual overtime paid by the board adheres to an eight-hour day/40-hour workweek, in line with the statutory standard. In school year 1999-00, the board expended a total of \$522,605 in overtime pay. This amount includes \$71,273 paid to secretaries, paraprofessionals, bus attendants and health aides. Based on district records, it is impossible to determine what percentage of this sum was paid for that portion of overtime earned prior to an eight-hour day or 40-hour week. Nevertheless, this 35 to 40-hour time period represents an area of potential cost savings. Estimating conservatively that 50% of the \$71,273 overtime pay figure represents time worked in excess of seven hours per day/35 hours per week, but less than eight hours per day/40 hours per week, the board has the potential to realize \$35,636 in cost savings under a uniform eight-hour day/40-hour workweek overtime provision.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that the district discuss with bargaining unit representatives the desirability of bringing overtime payment for all district workers in line with New Jersey's statutory provisions by uniformly limiting overtime payments to time worked in excess of eight hours per day/40 hours per week.

Potential Cost Savings: \$35,636

Paid Personal Leave Days

All full-time district employees receive three days personal leave per year. Although unused personal days cannot be accrued as such, all agreements provide for the annual conversion of unused personal leave days to accumulated sick leave.

Vacation and Holiday Leave (including payment for unused vacation leave)

All 12-month, full-time employees of the Woodbridge Township School District are provided with annual vacation and holiday leave. During the first year of employment, vacation leave is prorated, based on the date of hire. Unless noted otherwise below, employees are entitled to 10

days vacation leave following their first year of employment in the district. The amount of leave subsequently increases with the increase in the number of years' service in the district. The agreed-upon maximum vacation leave allotment for 12-month employees ranges from 15 to 25 days per year. Generally, vacation leave may be carried over for a maximum of one year with no provision for payment of unused vacation leave. Unlike other employees, however, the superintendent, assistant superintendent, business administrator/board secretary, tradesmen and secretaries receive *per diem* payment for unused vacation leave remaining after the one-year carryover.

In 1999-00, holiday leave provisions for 12-month employees varied from 14 to 20 days.

Tradesmen

Responding to budgetary constraints in the mid-nineties, district tradesmen agreed to a maximum of 15 days annual vacation leave after 10 years employment in the district for those employees hired July 1, 1996 and after. Those tradesmen hired prior to July 1, 1996 receive a maximum of 20 days, which is reached after 15 years service. The tradesmen's contract provides for carryover of vacation leave under "extraordinary circumstances". Should these circumstances prevail into the following year, the employee may request payment for the unused vacation leave days "at his/her regular rate of pay". In school year 1999-00, the district paid \$903 in unused vacation leave to tradesmen. Since it is impossible to separate out from this figure the amount of vacation leave paid under the above clause and the amount of then current-year vacation leave paid to tradesmen leaving employment with the district, we have used a 50% figure, or \$451 in potential savings to be realized by the elimination of this contract provision.

Tradesmen are entitled to 14 paid holidays per year.

Custodial Supervisors

Custodial supervisors reach a maximum of 20 vacation days after 15 years service in the district. Their agreement with the district does not provide for payment of unused vacation leave. All custodial supervisors receive 15 paid holidays per year: 14 common holidays, plus their individual birthday.

WTEA

Under the WTEA agreement, each of the four different worker categories has a separate provision for vacation and holiday leave. At part 2 of the agreement, non-supervisory certified personnel receive vacation and holiday leave subject to the annual school calendar of scheduled holidays and vacation periods adopted by the board.

All WTEA 12-month part 3 workers, which covers janitorial/custodial, cafeteria, transportation and attendance personnel now receive 16 paid holidays. Compared to the previous contract, this represents a reduction of one-day holiday leave for janitorial/custodial workers, and the addition of one day for 12-month cafeteria, transportation and attendance workers.

Vacation leave has also changed under part 3 of the 2000-03 WTEA agreement. Beginning with 10 days vacation leave in their first full year of employment, all 12-month part 3 personnel

“whose initial hire date was prior to September 1, 2000, are eligible for five weeks (25 days) vacation after 20 years service in the district.” Those part 3 workers hired after this date will be entitled to a maximum of four weeks (20 days) vacation after 15 years employment in the district. This clause provides an immediate five-day increase in the maximum vacation leave entitlement for all janitorial workers with 21 or more years service in the district. The benefit of eventually bringing all part 3, 21-year employees to a uniform maximum 20 days vacation leave will not take effect until school year 2020-21. By contrast, janitorial/custodial work, an area that is already high in overtime pay, immediately loses experienced worker hours.

Part 4 of the 2000-03 WTEA contract, applicable to secretaries, reduced both holiday and vacation leave, but only for those 12-month secretaries hired September 1, 2000 and after. Under this most recent contract, newly hired 12-month secretaries receive 19 holidays, as compared to 20 holidays under the previous contract. Also applicable only to those hired September 1, 2000 and after, vacation leave will be reduced from a maximum of five weeks (25 days) after 20 years service, to a maximum of four weeks (20 days) after 15 years service. The holiday provision adds additional secretarial work-hours in the 2000-01 school year. The larger impact of the vacation provision, however, will have no effect until the 2016-17 school year, and still will not affect those secretaries hired prior to September 1, 2000.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that the board and worker representatives negotiate to reduce the number of “grandfather” provisions that result in the possibility of 20 or 30-year “phase out” periods since a proliferation of such clauses can result in increasingly more complex, and, therefore, more costly, contract negotiations. Multiple grandfather clauses also make computation of individual benefits more difficult and labor intensive, thereby increasing the possibility of error and subsequent litigation.

Twelve-month secretaries, like the tradesmen above, may receive payment for unused vacation leave under “extraordinary circumstances” following a one-year carryover of the unused time. Payment under these circumstances is made at the individual’s “regular rate of pay.” In school year 1999-00, the board paid \$11,701 in vacation leave to district secretaries. As with the tradesmen, since this figure could also contain then current vacation leave payment to secretaries leaving the district, we have chosen to use a 50% figure, or \$5,850 in potential savings to be realized by the elimination of this contract provision.

Paraprofessionals, clerical aides, health aides, and bus attendants, addressed under part 5 of the WTEA contract, follow the annual school calendar adopted by the board.

Under parts three and five of the WTEA contract, the following 10-month employees are paid an hourly wage:

- transportation workers;
- paraprofessionals; and
- cafeteria workers;
- clerical and health aides.

With the exception of clerical and health aides, these 10-month, hourly-rate employees are paid two different “holiday pays” at the close of the school year: “holiday pay” for eight paid holidays per year; and a summer “holiday pay” of \$700. Despite the fact that these workers are paid on an hourly basis, no work is scheduled or required in return for this payment. The district paid \$279,206 in “holiday pay” under this provision at the close of the 1999-00 school year: \$113,404 to paraprofessionals; \$91,079 to transportation workers; and \$47,723 to cafeteria workers.

Most commonly in various enterprises, hourly employees are not paid for holidays or other non-working hours.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the district and WTEA negotiate the elimination of summer “holiday pay” to the extent that payment is made other than in remuneration for hours worked.

Potential Cost Savings: \$279,206

WTSAA and Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and BS/BA

Holiday leave for 12-month administrators under the WTSAA agreement consists of all “non-work days scheduled for teachers during the school year, plus Labor Day and July 4th.” Directors, associate directors and staff directors are the exception to this general holiday schedule, as they are required to work one-half the vacation days during Christmas and Easter vacations. Contract provisions for the superintendent, assistant superintendent and business administrator/board secretary follow this exception also.

Twenty days annual holiday leave is provided under the WTSAA contract, and under the individual contracts for the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and board secretary/business administrator.

Like the secretaries and tradesmen above, the individual employment contracts between the board and the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business administrator/board secretary specifically provide for the payment of unused vacation days at the individual’s *per diem* salary rate. One year’s vacation leave may be carried over for use in future years or for payment upon expiration of the current agreement. The district paid \$7,020 in unused vacation days to these administrators in school year 1999-00.

It is widely recognized that vacation leave is provided for the purpose of rest and relaxation, not as a source of duplicate compensation. With the exception of a limited carryover allowance, all employees should be encouraged to use and to enjoy the vacation leave time provided.

Recommendations:

The district should encourage all employees to use the full annual vacation leave provided to them by contract.

LGBR recommends that, in the course of future contract negotiations, the district seek elimination of all vacation leave “cash out” provisions, such as those provided for tradesmen, secretaries and discretionary administrative employees.

Potential Cost Savings: \$13,321

Sick Leave and Supplemental Compensation

All district employment agreements provide 12 days of cumulative sick leave annually to full-time employees. In addition, all employees are entitled to 20 annual non-cumulative days leave without pay “for personal illness.” The WTEA, WTCSA and tradesmen’s agreements specify that use of these additional 20 non-cumulative personal illness days requires “petition by the employee to the Office for Personnel Services” and is limited to absence caused by one of the following: childbirth; hospitalization or other confinement to a medical facility; and a serious injury or illness, which is supported by medical verification.

In school year 1999-00, 58 district employees used their full 20 non-cumulative sick leave days. This equates to 1,160 additional sick days. Based on each employee’s daily rate of pay, the district expended \$221,018 under this benefit that year. In order to begin use of non-cumulative sick leave, employees first have to exhaust their current annual sick leave allotment and also their previously accumulated sick leave.

While the benefit of 20 annual non-cumulative sick leave days can provide much needed relief in a time of catastrophic illness, the annually renewable nature of this benefit can make it particularly costly to the district.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that the Woodbridge Township school officials reconsider the current benefit providing 32 annual sick leave days to all full-time employees. By negotiating termination of the contracted 20 annual non-cumulative sick leave days, all full-time employees would continue to receive the 12 days annual cumulative sick leave.

Potential Cost Savings: \$221,018

At the time of retirement, the district agrees to pay employees “supplemental compensation” for their accumulated unused sick leave. The rates of pay applicable at retirement under this incentive, and any caps imposed on maximum payment vary under the different agreements as explained below.

Tradesmen

Upon retirement, eligible tradesmen receive one of two pay rates for accumulated sick leave, depending on their date of hire.

For those hired prior to July 1, 1993, the rate of pay depends on the number of sick leave days accumulated, and is calculated in the same manner as under the WTEA 1996-2000 agreement, i.e., from 15% to 100% of daily pay, depending on the number of sick days accumulated.

For those hired “on or after July 1, 1993” the rate of pay for accumulated sick days is based on “the rate of pay in effect for that employee in the year in which the sick days were accumulated . . . [with those] days accumulated at the highest salary . . . deducted first.”

Under both pay rates, the amount of daily pay for accumulated sick leave is capped at \$175, and the total amount payable under this benefit is capped at \$15,000.

WTEA

The agreement between the Woodbridge Township School District and the WTEA contains a supplemental compensation provision common to all work groups covered by that contract. Under the 2000-03 contract, payment of accumulated sick leave to eligible retiring employees is subject to several different pay rates and two total payment caps depending on the employee’s date of hire and date of retirement.

For those employees who retire in the 2000-01 school year, the supplemental compensation pay rate depends on the date of hire.

- A. The pay rate for employees retiring in 2000-01, but hired before July 1, 1991, depends on the number of sick leave days accumulated. The pay rate ranges from 15% of an employee’s daily salary rate for employees who retire with up to 99 days accumulated sick leave, to 100% of an employee’s daily salary rate for employees who retire with 300 or more days.
- B. The pay rate for employees retiring in 2000-01, but hired on or after July 1, 1991 is “based upon the rate of pay in effect for that employee in the year in which the sick days were accumulated. . . . [with those] days accumulated at the highest salary . . . deducted first.”

Under both the above WTEA contract provisions, the amount of daily pay for accumulated sick leave is capped at \$175, and total payment for all retirees through the 2000-01 school year is capped at \$52,500.

Employees retiring under the WTEA contract in the 2001-02 school year and after are entitled to supplemental compensation at a fixed-dollar, *per diem* pay rate calculated according to the number of sick days accumulated. These amounts range from \$75 for a retiring employee with fewer than 50 accumulated sick days, to \$150 for an employee with 150 or more accumulated sick days. This daily pay rate is subject to limitation in that it cannot exceed the employee’s daily pay rate at the time of retirement. Total payment of this benefit for all employees retiring in 2001-02 and after, is capped at \$30,000.

WTSAA and Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, BA/BS

Employees eligible for supplemental compensation at retirement are currently subject to the same payment provisions as those contained in the 1996-2000 WTEA agreement, including a \$175 daily pay cap and a total payment cap of \$52,500. However, it is important to note that, where the rate of pay and total payment available have been reduced under the 2000-03 WTEA agreement, at the time of this review, the district and the WTSAA had yet to reach agreement on the terms of the new contract.

WTCSA

Supplement compensation payment provisions for custodial supervisors are identical to those in the 1996-2000 WTEA agreement, with the same \$175 daily pay cap and \$52,500 total payment cap.

The district is commended for progress made in lowering the supplemental compensation cap under the WTEA contract from \$52,500 in 2000-01, to \$30,000 in 2002 and after. Nevertheless, work remains to bring these figures in line with the \$15,000 cap agreed to by the tradesmen, which is consistent with the cap provided by the state to its employees.

As of July, 2000, the district's sick leave projection figures showed a total of approximately \$3,507,755 payable by the district for that portion of accumulated sick leave valued in excess of \$15,000. This figure takes into account the caps imposed under the different bargaining agreements, including the \$30,000 cap that will go into effect under the WTEA agreement beginning in 2002-03.

To those employees who began their retirement in fiscal year 2000, the board paid or owed a total of \$1,983,974. This figure includes \$1,142,134 in excess of the uniform \$15,000 supplemental compensation cap recommended by LGBR.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that the district work together with the WTEA, WTSAA, WTCSA and those employees under individual contract to the district in an effort to reduce the cap on supplemental compensation for unused sick leave at retirement, limiting payment to no more than \$15,000.

Potential Cost Savings: \$1,142,134

Professional Development

The Woodbridge Township Board of Education places a high value on professional development for district personnel. By providing tuition reimbursement for approved courses, offering in-service workshops relevant to employee assignments, and supporting the work of the Professional Development Committee, the district has committed itself to the continuing professional development of its employees. The following chart shows tuition reimbursement figures for non-supervisory certified personnel under the WTEA contract and administrative personnel under the WTSAA contract for the three school years 1997-98 through 2000-01. In order to receive tuition reimbursement, employees must receive approval for the course; show how the course is related to his/her assignment; complete the course successfully; and file with the district, official transcripts for all reimbursable courses.

Annual Tuition Reimbursement Schedule

School Year	Non-Supervisory Certified Personnel	WTSAA	Paraprofessionals
1997-98	\$754	\$704	\$492
1998-99	\$780	\$704	\$510
1999-00	\$811	*	\$530
2000-01	\$827	*	\$541
2001-02	\$846	*	\$553

*Figures not available due to ongoing contract negotiations at time of review.

In the superintendent, assistant superintendent and business administrator/board secretary's contracts, the board agrees to pay for educational expenses relevant to a number of local, state and national activities, programs, seminars, courses, meetings and visitations "that promote the professional growth" of the individual.

Board expenditures for reimbursement of tuition during the 1999-00 school year amounted to \$84,374.

LGBR commends the Woodbridge Township Board of Education for its support of relevant employee professional development and reasonable tuition reimbursement schedules.

Salaries

Woodbridge Township Education Association - Salary Guides 1999-00

Work Unit	Job Title/Description	Salary Range Minimum-Maximum*	Number of Levels
Non Supr., Certified Staff	Teachers	\$39,000**-\$64,000	17
Janitorial, Cafeteria, Transport. & Attendance	12-month Employees		
	Janitors/Custodians	\$24,5000-\$35,000	4
	Food Service Utility	\$29,492-\$42,131	4
	Attendance Counselor	\$33,621-\$48,030	4
	Audio Visual Repair	\$33,031-\$47,187	4
	Mechanic	\$31,558-\$45,083	4
	Chief Mechanic	\$35,391-\$50,559	4
	Bus Driver Group Leader/ Service Manager	\$38,635-\$55,193	4
	10-month employees		
	Bus Drivers	\$15.23-\$21.75/hr.	4
	Cafeteria I-General Employees	\$11.13-\$15.90/hr.	4
	Cafeteria II-Cafeteria Driver	\$12.19-\$17.42/hr.	4
	Cafeteria III-Middle School Asst. Mgr.	\$13.36-\$19.08/hr.	4
	Cafeteria IV-Baker	\$13.64-\$19.48/hr.	4
	Cafeteria V-M. S. Mgr.; H.S. Asst. Mgr.	\$13.92-\$19.88/hr.	4
	Cafeteria V-H.S. Mgr.	\$14.58-\$20.83/hr.	4
Clerks & Secretaries***	Substitute Acquisition Clerk	\$14,549	N/A
	Clerk/10-mo.	\$21,805-\$32,195	5
	Secretary/10-mo.	\$23,274-\$35,549	5
	Clerk/12-mo.	\$26,165-\$38,637	5
	Bd. Clerk/12-mo.	\$26,620-\$39,162	5
	Secretary/12-mo.	\$28,040-\$40,420	5
	Chief Clerk-E	\$29,425-\$42,361	5
	Chief Clerk-F	\$30,581-\$43,445	5
	Chief Clerk-G	\$32,875-\$46,703	5
	Chief Clerk-J	\$38,894-\$51,048	5
	Admin. Sec. Grade 1	\$47,275-\$53,418	3
	Admin. Sec. Grade 2	\$40,972-\$46,372	3
Teacher Aides, Teacher Assistants & Bus Attendants	Teacher Aides and Teacher Assistants	\$10.87-\$15.52/hr.	4
	Bus Attendants	\$9.27-\$13.24/hr.	4

*Salaries listed do not include adjustments for differentials or for supermaximums.

**Although the starting teacher's salary is listed at \$39,000, the "starting rates" for teachers in the first three years in the district are as follows:

Year 1 – Eighty-five percent of the first year salary identified on the salary schedule under which the teacher was hired, exclusive of differential.

Year 2 – Ninety percent of the same first year salary identified on the salary schedule under which the teacher was hired, exclusive of differential.

Year 3 – Ninety-five percent of the same first year salary identified on the salary schedule under which the teacher was hired, exclusive of differential.

***Secretarial titles were reorganized in the 2000-03 agreement, eliminating the title of "clerk." The starting rate for newly hired clerks/secretaries is five percent less than the appropriate step for the position to which they are appointed.

Under the salary provisions of the WTEA contract above, level movement generally takes place annually. Secretaries, for whom movement between salary levels occurs every three years, are an exception.

For the most part, salaries increase by approximately the same amount between levels, although a few variations do exist.

The 17-level 1999-00 teachers' salary schedule, which moves from level Q, the lowest salary, to level A, the highest, provides teachers with a \$1,000 increment between steps every year, with the following exceptions. A \$2,000 increase is provided between each level from level F (11 years' salary credit) through level B (15 years' salary credit), and a \$6,000 increase is provided when entering the final salary level, i.e., when moving from level B to level A. Interestingly, because of the "starting rate" percentages in the teachers' salaries, a new teacher hired on September 1, 1997 would see a \$6,850 increase in salary at the start of his/her fourth teaching year; i.e., from a \$35,150 salary in year three to \$42,000 in year four. Excluding the effect of any differentials, this is the highest salary increase on the teacher salary schedule.

School report cards for the district list the Woodbridge 1998-99 median teacher salary at \$62,250, as compared to the state median of \$50,976; district teachers had a median of 18 years experience, as compared to the statewide median of 15 years experience.

Secretaries

Under a "grandfather clause", the board continues to pay to those secretaries hired prior to July 1, 1997, a "computer use differential" of two and one-half percent of their annual salary. These are often employees whom the district has trained on modern technological equipment at district expense. In-house computer training has provided these employees with marketable technological skills needed to advance within, or outside of, the district's employ. Having paid training costs for these employees to obtain computer expertise, logic fails as to why the district should then pay these same employees an annual differential to utilize skills that are often a condition of employment for new, lower-paid employees hired into secretarial positions.

Recommendation:

In fiscal year 2000, the district's budgeted payroll for secretarial salaries was approximately \$4,000,000. Estimating conservatively that 50% of the district's secretarial employees were hired prior to July 1, 1997, the district could save \$50,000 annually by negotiating the elimination of the grandfather clause extending this two and one-half percent differential.

Potential Cost Savings: \$50,000

Cafeteria Workers

As discussed above in the food service section of this report, labor costs were the primary cause of the food service program's operating deficit. The district's hourly pay rates, in turn, are the chief component of the food service program's high labor costs.

Given that hourly rates paid by the district for general cafeteria workers are approximately 30% above industry norm, there should be room for the negotiation of potential savings. Having paid food service labor costs of \$1,457,587 in fiscal year 2000, the district could save approximately \$400,000 by reducing its cafeteria workers' wages to the industry norm. It is important to note

that the \$1,457,587 figure does not take into account \$346,174 in benefits provided to cafeteria workers that year. That is, even if the district opts to keep an in-house food services operation, and regardless of whether it reconfigures food service staffing and management, the possibility of a negotiated \$400,000 reduction exists apart from any other action on the board's part.

Recommendation:

District officials should consider negotiating the hourly pay rates of cafeteria workers to bring them closer to current market rates, which were approximately 30% lower than the district's 1999-00 pay rate.

Tradesmen's Contract

Work Unit	Job Title	Salary Range Minimum-Maximum	Number of Levels*
- Local #1005	Painters	\$28.22/hr.	N/A
	Painter Foreman	\$30.15/hr.	N/A
- Local #1006	Carpenters	\$29.24/hr.	N/A
	Carpenter Foreman	\$31.20/hr.	N/A
- Local #9	Plumbers	\$31.42/hr.	N/A
	Plumber Foreman	\$33.36/hr.	N/A
- Local #1158	Electricians	\$34.22/hr.	N/A
	Electrician Foreman	\$36.19/hr.	N/A

Woodbridge Township Custodial Supervisors Association

Work Unit	Job Title	Salary Range Minimum-Maximum	Number of Levels
Custodial Supervisors	Custodial Supervisor Elementary School	\$37,100*	N/A
	Custodial Supervisor M.S.; Bldg.#2 & #16; Administration Bldg.	\$40,100*	N/A
	Custodial Supervisor High School	\$42,100*	N/A

*Custodial Supervisors hired from out-of-district are paid according to the following schedule:

- First year: 70% of the salary in effect during his/her year of hire.
- Second year: 80% of the salary in effect during his/her second year of employment.
- Third year: 90% of the salary in effect during his/her third year of employment.

Woodbridge Township School Administrators Association

Work Unit	Job Title	Salary Range* Minimum-Maximum	Number of Levels
Administrator	Director	\$104,852-\$109,149	2
	Associate Director	\$100,984-\$105,281	2
	Staff Director	\$92,820-\$97,117	2
	High School Principal	\$98,836-\$103,133	2
	Middle School Principal	\$98,820-\$97,117	2
	Elementary Principal	\$81,647-\$85,944	2
	H. S. Vice Principal	\$81,217-\$85,514	2
	M. S. Vice Principal	\$79,928-\$84,225	2
	Dept. Head/Supervisor - 12 mo.	\$72,193-\$76,490	2
	Dept. Head/Supervisor - 10 mo.	\$66,177-\$71,334	2
	Coordinator – 12 mo.	\$72,193-\$76,490	2

*Salaries listed are for 1998-99, the last year for which a WTSAA contract was in effect at the time of this review.

Under the WTSAA agreement, two basic salary levels exist for each position, as listed above: the non-tenure salary level; and the tenure salary level. Other than the difference between the tenure/non tenure salary levels, annual increments are negotiated by position, irrespective of years of service in the district. Salary rates for appointees new to the district are calculated over the first three years employment in the same fashion as those of teachers, above, i.e., 85%, 90% and 95%. After the administrative employee’s third anniversary date of employment, he/she is paid on the guide.

School report cards for the district list Woodbridge’s 1998-99 median administrator salary at \$86,772, almost exactly that of the state median, \$86,805. District administrators had a median of 29 years experience, as compared to the statewide median of 26 years experience.

Differentials

WTEA and WTSAA

1999-00 Degree Differentials

Credits/Degree	WTEA Non-Supervisory, Certified Personnel	WTSAA*
BA+16	\$750	
BA+32	\$1,250	
MA	\$2,250	
MA+16	\$3,000	\$266
MA+32	\$3,500	\$530
Ph.D.	\$5,000	\$1,591

*1998-99 figures are the latest available under WTSAA.

Janitor/Custodial and Transportation Personnel

Twelve-month janitor/custodial and transportation personnel received the following differentials in 1999-00:

Janitors/custodial workers assigned to the night shift receive an hourly differential of forty cents (\$.40).

Mechanics certified to repair diesel engines receive a differential of \$1.15 per hour.

An assignment differential based upon an annual rate of \$5,000 is paid to “janitor/heavy equipment operator”, during such assignment.

An assignment differential based upon an annual rate of \$2,000 is paid to janitors during assignment to operation of a dump truck.

True assignment differentials provide additional pay for work requiring skills outside the job title or description, such as those at numbers two, three and four above. By contrast, assignment to a particular shift, such as at number one above, requires no additional job skills and involves no expansion on the job title or description for other janitors.

In fiscal year 2000, the Woodbridge Township Board of Education expended \$17,516 in differential payments to janitors/custodial workers on the night shift.

In reviewing the various differentials, LGBR commends the district for requiring possession of a valid Black Seal Fireman’s License by all newly hired janitors “at the first available opportunity”. The support of the board in arranging classes for licensing candidates adds to the reasonableness of this provision.

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends that future negotiations address the elimination of the shift assignment differential from the WTEA contract, making shift assignment a condition of employment, rather than a basis for additional employee compensation.

Potential Cost Savings: \$17,516

Teacher Aides, Teacher Assistants & Bus Attendants

An employee who “earns a certificate by completing an appropriate college level program” receives a differential of 10% over and above the regular hourly rate. Additionally, under the 2000-03 WTEA contract, paraprofessionals (formerly teacher aides and teacher assistants) receive a one dollar hourly differential for the time spent on assignments that require special skills, such as Braille or signing.

1999-00 Longevity/Supermaximum Payments

Longevity pay is broadly defined as payment for longevity in actual service, i.e., payment for time spent in service to an employer. Historically, LGBR has not supported longevity pay when payment is based on time-in-service only, that is, time to the exclusion of performance.

With the exception of tradesmen, all Woodbridge Township School District bargaining unit agreements provide for longevity payments to employees after a specified number of years' service in the district. In school year 1999-00, the Woodbridge Township Board of Education expended a total \$432,931 in employee longevity payments. It is important to note that under the contracts the district pays longevity payments, termed "supermaximums" irrespective of employee performance. Generally, the agreed-upon annual supermaximum figure is paid out as follows: ½ the annual figure in the 21st year of service; ½ the annual figure in the 22nd year of service; and 100% of the annual figure every year thereafter. Following is a list of the supermaximums provided by contract.

1999-00 Longevity/Supermaximum Payments

Bargaining Unit	Year 21 50%	Year 22 50%	Subsequent Years 100%
Tradesmen	N/A	N/A	N/A
WTEA	\$577	\$577	\$1,154
WTSCA	\$555	\$555	\$1,110
WTSAA	\$750	\$750	\$1,500

Recommendation:

LGBR recommends the board and the bargaining units negotiate the elimination of salary increments in the form of longevity pay based solely on length of time in employment, without reference to on-the-job performance.

Potential Cost Savings: \$432,931

HEALTH - DENTAL - PRESCRIPTION BENEFITS

Insurance Consultant

Since 1994, the Woodbridge Board of Education has utilized the services of an insurance consulting firm to represent the district in the market place. There is no written agreement with the firm. However, they have been re-appointed at the annual reorganization meeting since that time.

According to board policy #814, the district does not compensate insurance brokers and/or consultant services. They are paid commissions directly from the insurer. Both district officials and representatives of the consulting firm reported to the team that commissions over the last two years have been approximately 2.25%.

One of the services they provide is to seek proposals from competing healthcare providers approximately every three years. Due to the state of the market over the last two years, however, they have compared carriers annually to ensure maximum benefits to the district. During the policy renewal process each year, the consultant formally presents these comparisons to the board in a presentation with spreadsheets, graphs and charts. They also provide the district with an in-depth annual forecasting of costs for the upcoming year. In 1998, a well-timed forecast resulted in a change in carrier and a substantial saving to the district.

Additional services provided to the district include assistance during contract negotiations. The consultant prepares all necessary materials and sits at the negotiating table to discuss and explain the plans. In an effort to promote resolutions, they also assist with labor issues resulting from grievances by providing the appropriate interpretations of benefits.

Employee Eligibility

There are four collective bargaining units within the district: WTEA, WTSAA, WTCSA, and the Tradesmen (painter, carpenter, plumber, and electrical employees). The district previously paid 100% of the full cost of coverage for employees and their eligible dependents. However, effective July 1, 1997, new hires receive only single paid health benefits. After three years of employment with the district, coverage without contribution is available to eligible dependents. In addition, effective September 1, 2000, the agreement between the Board of Education and the Woodbridge Township Education Association (WTEA) provides only employee coverage in the PPO plan without contribution. This also includes the dental, prescription and optical plans. After completion of three years of employment, the district provides full coverage, without contribution, to the employee and eligible dependents in the Traditional Plan, as well as dental, prescription, and optical.

Health Insurance Plans

In FY 2000, the board spent approximately \$11,950,935 for healthcare benefits. The same private carrier provided coverage for the traditional plan, PPO, prescription, and dental (there's a separate carrier for the HMO product). The agreement between the carrier and the Woodbridge Township Board of Education is known as minimum premium, with a set maximum liability not to exceed \$12,025,501. This financial arrangement holds Woodbridge liable for their actual paid claims and expenses up to the maximum. The carrier and the Woodbridge BOE agree to these terms prior to each renewal period.

An advance premium deposit of \$1,000,000 is paid to the carrier at the beginning of each contract period. The insurance company places it in a 5% interest bearing reserve account. The monthly premiums are based on the sum of the premium rate per employee/retiree for each coverage type, multiplied by the number of employees/retirees covered as of the date on which the premium bill is prepared. If claims and expenses for particular months exceed the monthly CAP, the carrier deducts the excess from the \$1,000,000 advance payment in reserve.

At the end of each contract year, the carrier performs a financial settlement. According to the agreement, if the district's claims experience for the year is high, and exceeds the pre-determined maximum liability, the board is not liable to pay the deficit. The deficit is the difference between

the maximum liability and the actual amount of claims and expenses incurred. However, if the claims experience is low and the reserve maintains a balance at the end of the fiscal year, the district can either withdraw the money and any accrued interest, and/or apply it to the \$1,000,000 advance payment for the upcoming renewal year.

Relevant to deficits, however, it should be noted that the carrier usually recovers deficits through future renewals. Nevertheless, according to the agreement, if the Woodbridge BOE terminates their coverage with the carrier while sustaining a deficit, the district is not liable to pay the outstanding amount.

In FY 2000, there were approximately 1,465 active employees and 12 district paid retirees who participated in the district's health benefit plans. The district offered a traditional plan, a PPO, and an HMO. Alternatively, eligible employees may elect to waive the health insurance. Those who execute an appropriate waiver for the applicable school year receive a lump sum of \$2,000 for the family plan and \$1,200 for the single plan on July 1. The district insures compliance with IRS Section 125 regarding these waivers. The district estimates a saving of approximately \$400,000 per year from the waivers.

Additionally in FY 2000, there were approximately 195 retired and 42 COBRA self-pay participants. After the age of 65, retirees have the right to maintain the same coverage at their own expense. With the exception of the WTEA contract, the board pays the full cost of all insurance benefits for employees who retire under the NJ State Health Benefits Program after 20 years of service from the age of 55 until 65. A change in the most recent WTEA contract requires a less costly 25 years of service under this provision. This district advised the team of its intent to address this change from 20 to 25 years service in upcoming negotiations with the WTSAA, WTCSA and Tradesmen units.

In a healthcare budget projection presented to the district, the consultant advised that a 20% increase in claims during FY 2000 initiated a 24% increase in medical rates by the insurer for FY 2001. However, through negotiated plan design changes (increased deductible, increased out-of-pocket maximum) that took effect on January 1, 2001, the district was able to contain costs and reduce medical insurance rates by 3.7% for the current year, resulting in a saving.

The district is commended for an approximate savings of \$112,000 accomplished through negotiations that took effect on January 1, 2001 (increased deductible, increased out-of-pocket maximum).

The HMO plan covers a minimal number of employees (approximately 30). The budget forecast was based on the projected 12% increase of the current rate renewals.

Recommendation:

Although estimated renewal rates have increased by 12%, employee participation in the HMO is at a minimum. The team suggests, however, that the district compare rate increases of alternative HMO's to stabilize the annual expenditure.

In a further effort to contain costs, district representatives informed the team that new hires after September 1, 2000 choosing the traditional plan, have to pay the difference between that plan and the PPO. This applies to single as well as family coverage. The district adopted this course of action to encourage selection of the PPO and HMO. Although the district estimates that a 20% increase in PPO enrollment has occurred, traditional insurance still remains the plan of choice.

Dental Program

The dental program, part of the health care contract, likewise follows the criteria of eligibility. The district provides usual, customary and reasonable dental fees with no deductible for the individual employee and dependents. However, as of January 1, 1999 the plan imposed an annual deductible on coverage of all restorative dental procedures of \$100 for an individual and \$200 for a family. Additionally, the maximum annual limit on dental coverage is \$1,500 per person with a maximum lifetime orthodontic benefit of \$1,000. Dental costs remained stable due to a two-year rate guarantee with the insurer and a 2.5% rate reduction effective January, 2001 as a result of union negotiation.

The district is commended for negotiating the 2.5% rate reduction, which saved the board an estimated \$32,750 over two years.

Prescription Plan

The prescription plan for all employees and their dependents is also part of the health care contract and follows the same criteria of eligibility. Current co-payments for generic prescription drugs are \$1 and \$5 for brand name drugs. A mail order option is also in place without a co-payment.

Prescription plan rates for 2002, forecast to increase by 13%, were also reduced to 7% through negotiated plan design changes (increased co-pays) that took effect in January, 2001. Although claims were up within the district, the utilization of higher priced medication was a major contributing factor. This is a nationwide trend affecting almost every employer.

The district is commended for its success during labor negotiations in raising prescription co-pays. This provision resulted in savings to the district of approximately \$162,000.

Optical Plan

The optical plan is a freestanding program. The district pays 100% of the premium for the employee, with an option of 75% paid premium for a family plan. Utilizing participating providers, office visits are \$10 and glasses are \$15. There is an annual family allowance of \$100. There was no increase in cost for a period of two years from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2001. Significant plan design changes in the vision coverage reducing the frequency of frames from every 12 months to every 24 months produced a guaranteed 20% rate reduction through the 2002 fiscal year.

Again the district is commended for successfully negotiating a guaranteed 20% rate reduction and a plan design change that saved the board an estimated \$37,000.

Employee Assistance Plan

The board provides an employee assistance plan (EAP) for all employees. This is a direct contract between the district and the EAP provider. The cost to the district of approximately \$36,400 has remained the same for the two-year period from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2001. The renewal rate in 2002 is estimated at plus 10%.

Recommendation:

The increase of 10% adds approximately \$3,640 to the annual premium. School officials should consider negotiating directly with the EAP provider to again establish a rate guarantee for more than a year. Additionally, the team concurs with the consulting firm regarding their suggestion to seek proposals from other EAP organizations.

Budget Forecast

As referenced above, in January, 2001 the consulting firm presented the board with healthcare budget projections for FY 2002. The chart below illustrates the overall 15% estimated increase in health care costs to the district for board paid premiums. Projections were based on enrollment and the most current claims experience for medical and prescription.

Budgetary Forecast

Medical Plan (Traditional & PPO)	22%
Prescription Drug	7%
Dental	-2.5%
HMO	12%
Vision	-20%
EAP	10%

Cost Summary

Although NJ State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) has always been considered an alternative, both district officials and representatives of the consulting firm advised the team that the eligibility rules and the lack of flexibility regarding cost containment measures have not met the needs of the district.

Using the SHBP as a benchmark, an independent analysis was performed comparing the district's healthcare costs to the state plan over a two-year period. Equal coverage levels and the same enrollment figures were used in the calculations. The rates were adjusted in FY 2001 to reflect actual increases.

	SHBP	District's Carrier	Difference/Savings
FY 2000	\$7,139,472	\$6,514,709	\$624,763
FY 2001	\$7,402,935	\$7,305,288	\$97,647
Rate of Increase	5.3%	12.2%	

The analysis indicates that the district has been able to maintain lower healthcare costs through the private carrier. However, the FY 2000 increase in private carrier rates was considerably higher than the state increase. Additionally, as indicated in the previously illustrated budget forecast, an additional 22% increase in private carrier rates is anticipated in FY 2002.

The team commends the district for taking a pro-active position by working with the consulting firm to ensure that the district, as well as the employees, receives the most cost-efficient programs available. The team also commends the district for their success regarding the future savings already accomplished through labor negotiations.

Recommendations:

The team suggests that the district continue its assertive approach in obtaining the best insurance rates through analysis and negotiations with all competitive insurance carriers. For this reason, it is advised that the option of the SHBP be considered, given the lower rate of increases in healthcare costs compared to the 22% increase by the private carrier. As indicated in the analysis, the comparative savings to the district in FY 2001 diminished significantly due to the private carrier's 12.2 % rate increase.

Whether opting for a private carrier or SHBP, it is suggested that the district consider negotiating additional cost containment measures through employee cost sharing. Based on current private carrier enrollment and rates, a modest employee contribution of 10% for prescription, dental, and vision costs could result in an additional estimated saving of \$370,828.

Potential Cost Savings: \$370,828

Based on current SHBP rates, district enrollment requiring a 20% employee contribution of dependent costs would provide the district with saving of \$703,871.

Potential Cost Savings: \$703,871

IV. SHARED SERVICES

Tremendous potential for cost savings and operational efficiencies exists through the implementation of shared, cooperative services between local government entities. In every review, Local Government Budget Review strives to identify and quantify the existing and potential efficiencies available through the collaborative efforts of local officials in service delivery in an effort to highlight shared services already in place and opportunities for their implementation.

Township

In Woodbridge, there is an attitude of sharing and cooperation between township and school district officials. The township provides garbage pickup without charge to the school district. The township parks and recreation department frequently uses the public school buildings and fields. In turn, the township makes its 50 township parks available for scheduled school district extra curricular/athletic activities. Township officials surveyed student interests in planning the new community center. The new Colonia Middle School field house was constructed through mutual cooperation and contributions from the Colonia Girls' Softball League, the school district and the township. Township officials have also been active in the public school character education program.

The Woodbridge Township School District has entered into several Interlocal Services Agreements with the township. Under a \$1 lease agreement with the township for the use of the relatively new Port Reading Library, the district has converted this space into a school media center for an adjacent school. The school district has taken the initiative to establish a special education class in the space vacated by the relocation of the school library to the renovated Port Reading Library.

A number of years ago, the school district sold the former Evergreen School to the township for \$1. At present, one side of the building is used by the township as a senior citizen center and the other side is used by the school district for the community adult education program for both youth and adults. There is also a childcare program in the building. The school district has a separate agreement, whereby, the township provides nursing services to the full-time students enrolled in nonpublic schools that are located within the township.

The township and the school district also have entered into a joint purchasing agreement for competitive bidding and the purchasing of common goods and services, such as office supplies, copier paper, motor oils, antifreeze and surplus vehicle auction services. With notification in writing to the other party, either the school district or the township may act as agent for the purpose of securing the most competitive prices for the purchasing of supplies and other goods and services through the competitive bidding process. This shared services agreement was in place during the 2000-01 school year.

As part of the Woodbridge Tech 2000 Project, the township and the school district will be implementing a shared computer resources program with each of the 24 public schools and four school office buildings. Under this agreement, the township provides the school district with one

project manager and two assistant managers for the purpose of managing the shared computer resources program. The district has agreed to pay \$50 per hour for the project manager and \$30 per hour for each of the assistant project managers. The Tech 2000 project was described earlier in the Technology section of this report. The school district and the township are commended for these worthwhile agreements.

School District Consortia

Woodbridge has authorized the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission (MCESC) to provide nonpublic school technology services, pursuant to the requirements of the NJ Nonpublic Technology Initiative program for the period July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2005. MCESC also provides the textbook services for nonpublic schools and speech services to a preschool special education child who attends an out-of-district school. Woodbridge Township School District has an agreement with MCESC for coordinated transportation of special education, nonpublic, public and vocational school students to specific destinations.

Aside from sharing through an agreement with the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission, Woodbridge sends some students to Middlesex County Vocational School on a shared-time basis. Classified students from neighboring districts are also accepted into Woodbridge's special education classes, where space permits. This has resulted in additional revenue for the district and has allowed the continuation of some programs at a cost-effective level. For the 1999-2000 school year, the district collected \$99,152 in tuition.

In December, 1999, the district participated in a natural gas bid received on a cooperative basis by MCESC. Woodbridge paid MCESC a \$200 fee for bid specification preparation, transmittal and evaluation. Also, in October, 1999, the district participated in the Alliance for Competitive Energy Services (ACES) electric generation service purchases and sale agreement.

The district received \$15,520 for participation in the School-to-Careers and College Initiative Cadre III grant consortium with school districts in Middlesex County, with the Piscataway Township School District acting as the lead agency.

Woodbridge Township School District is a member of the "Edison Consortium" that is also composed of the school districts of Edison, Rahway and South Plainfield. The consortium provides, at various sites in the participating districts, adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and general education development (GED) for adults. The ESL program assists foreign-born residents improve skills in reading, speaking and writing the English language. The GED program prepares students for the GED tests for high school equivalency. The ABE program provides elementary level instruction for adults in writing, listening, speaking and arithmetic. The consortium ESL, ABE and GED programs were supported by federal and state funds totaling about \$250,000. On April 30, 2001, the districts were notified that there were not sufficient state/federal funds to finance the program offerings during the 2001-02 school year. At the time of the review team visit, efforts were being made to locate alternate sources of funding.

Recommendation:

The Woodbridge Township School District is commended for participating in the four-district consortium for adult education. With the elimination of the local adult enrichment and vocational courses in Woodbridge, the Edison Consortium should be invited to expand enrichment and vocational offerings in the four school districts on a tuition basis. A larger scale of operation could result in cost-effective operations that are not reliant on local property taxes.

REDI and REAP

In addition to savings to be realized by joining services, there are relatively new state programs designed to encourage and reward local governmental units and their taxpayers for regionalizing, sharing and joining services with other units of local government. P. L. 1999, Chapter 60 was signed into law by former Governor Whitman to provide aid to local units of government, including school districts, to study regionalization and shared and consolidated services. A school district that plans to study or implement a regional service agreement may apply for a grant and/or loan to study regional service or consolidation opportunities and to fund one-time start-up costs of regional or consolidated services by visiting the DOE Website at: <http://www.state.nj.us.njded/grants/redi.htm> or by calling the DOE at 609-633-2454.

In February, 2001, the Woodbridge Township Board of Education approved a joint application with Woodbridge Township for a Regional Efficiency Development Incentive (REDI) grant for \$95,639 to perform a feasibility study in shared voice telecommunications systems. The board also approved a joint REDI application with Woodbridge Township, all nine Woodbridge Fire Districts, all six Woodbridge Rescue Squads, the City of Perth Amboy and the Amboy Board of Education for \$90,000 to conduct a feasibility study in shared regional communications systems.

The Woodbridge Board of Education also adopted a resolution approving a joint application with Woodbridge Township for a grant to the Regional Efficiency Aid Program (REAP) for Tech 2000 in the interest of tax relief. The residential property tax relief will be based on the qualifying service agreements of the local units.

District school officials are commended for participating in the REDI and REAP programs and are encouraged to continue to explore additional areas where shared services would be cost effective for the school district and the municipality.

V. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REFORM

It is not uncommon for local officials to attribute high costs and increased taxes in part to “state mandates”. The fifth and final section of the report, Statutory and Regulatory Reform, identifies state mandates cited by local officials as impeding efficient and cost-effective operations. Issues raised in this section can often be addressed only through changes in statute, code, or procedural rules and regulations.

Seven board of education members, key central office administrators and 24 school principals were interviewed and given the opportunity to express their concerns regarding the various regulations that impact the public schools. District officials provided the following written summary of the most frequently expressed concerns.

State Financial Aid

Woodbridge Township school officials consistently expressed concerns about budget, state financial aid and relatively high property tax issues. Woodbridge citizens have passed only one annual school budget in approximately 30 years. The proposed school budget was defeated by a narrow margin in the 2001 election, despite the fact that there was a relatively small property tax increase. During past budget years, the district has been pressed to meet increasing special education expenditures, the costs of various state mandates such as World Languages and a steady increase in K-12 student enrollment. Necessary maintenance to the relatively old school buildings in Woodbridge has consistently been put off over the years due to budget shortfalls. A recent bond issue referendum on proposed school construction was also defeated by a large margin by local voters.

Woodbridge school officials do not understand why the school district receives much less state financial aid under the statutory formula than other districts of similar size and DFG. The state aid formula is determined by the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996 (CEIFA). There are a number of factors in calculating state financial aid to districts, including student enrollments and measures of wealth and, in particular, the income levels of district residents and property values within the district. In addition, the formula requires that state financial aid for a district can not grow by more than 10% per year. Regardless of the technicalities of the formula, Woodbridge school officials are seeking a change in the statute to provide more adequate and equitable state financial aid for school districts like Woodbridge Township.

Special Education Funding

Woodbridge Township school officials are concerned with significant increases in special education costs and the low level of funding for the mandated programs. The federal legislation had set 40% of the special education costs as the federal government obligation; however, only about one-third of that stipulated amount has been provided by the federal government. With limited state financial support for special education, increasing special education costs have a

significant impact on programs for regular students in local school budgets with maximum CAPs and on local property taxes. Many local school officials believe that mandated special education costs should be fully funded by the state and federal governments.

Redundant Reporting

School principals are quite sensitive about any duplicate requests for information originating within the NJ Department of Education (DOE). For example, the DOE required input on violence and vandalism is submitted electronically from each school. However, DOE requires that a second, separate report be submitted with regard to violence and vandalism involving special education students. Much of the information requested is considered redundant. Local school officials encourage state officials to consolidate and reduce time-consuming reporting requirements.

Testing

Local school officials are particularly concerned about the time requirements of state mandated testing. The tests occupy five days per year for elementary schools, four days for middle schools and three days per semester (total six days annually) for high school students. The significant loss of instructional time for students is considered an important issue. In addition, the tests dominate the curriculum to a degree, which is often perceived as not in the best interests of students.

ESL/Bilingual

Local school officials would like to have more flexible regulations for English as a Second Language and bilingual education. As indicated earlier in this report, Woodbridge Township has devoted considerable resources to provide for the needs of a large number of students in each program. With fewer restrictions, local school officials believe that the programs could become more efficient and cost-effective.

World Languages

There is a shortage of qualified teachers to implement the state-mandated world languages program, particularly at the elementary school level. The perception exists that state officials did not consider the supply of certified foreign language teachers in establishing the program. As a result of the state mandate, there are concerns about a likely retrenchment in the number of foreign language offerings in the secondary schools.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET REVIEW
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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