



Chesterfield County, Virginia Internal Audit

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GREG L. AKERS
Director

DATE: September 1, 2017

TO: Dr. James F. Lane
School Superintendent

FROM: Greg L. Akers
Director of Internal Audit

SUBJECT: School Instruction Administrative Support

The Office of Internal Audit completed an audit of School Instruction Administrative Support, and the final report is attached.

We would like to thank Dr. Thomas Taylor, Chief Academic Officer, Dr. John Gordon, Chief of Schools, and their staff for their cooperation and assistance during this audit.

Attachment

Copy: Dr. Thomas Taylor, Chief Academic Officer
Dr. John Gordon, Chief of Schools
Donald Fairheart, Chief of Staff
Chris Sorensen, Chief Finance Officer
Dr. Joseph P. Casey, County Administrator
Audit and Finance Committee



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School Instruction Administrative Support

September 1, 2017

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Highlights

Internal Audit Report to the Board of Supervisors/School Board

Why We Did This Review

Internal Audit conducted this review as part of our FY17 audit plan approved by the County Administrator, School Superintendent, and Audit and Finance Committee.

The audit focused on reviewing administrative support staff in Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS) Division of School Leadership and Support Services and Division of Student Learning and Organizational Development. Our primary objectives were to:

- Analyze administrative support staffing levels and organization of school departments
- Assess whether administrative support staff have well defined goals and objectives, and the resources to accomplish those goals and objectives.
- Evaluate how individual employee goals and objectives relate to organizational guiding principles.
- Identify resource reallocation opportunities for organizational realignment.

What We Recommend

- Evaluate the benefits of the revised structure and opportunities for improvement. There should be a specific consideration for the placement of the Department of Technology Services within the organization.
- Establish work volume measures and management tracking to best allocate resources.
- Develop pooled long-term project list that can be assigned to staff with availability.
- Update and maintain detailed procedures.
- Enhance efficiency by automating employee time reporting.



For more information, please contact Greg L. Akers, at 804-748-1240 or akersg@chesterfield.gov

School Instruction Administrative Support



What We Found

CCPS presented their realignment plan at the February 2017 School Board meeting. The proposed plan places instructional departments under two divisions:

- School Leadership and Support Services, led by the Chief of Schools
- Student Learning and Organizational Development, led by the Chief Academic Officer

We compared the proposed organization of CCPS instruction departments to certain similar school systems. The proposed realignment places more organizational focus on student learning and support. It also made CCPS structure more consistent with similar school systems except for the placement of Technology within the instruction divisions. The placement of technology in the organizational structure should reflect the need to safeguard sensitive data, level of operational dependence, importance in the classroom, and support of future goals.

School Instruction has 32 administrative support staff spread across 7 departments with offices located in the Career and Technical Center @ Hull. We produced a questionnaire and conducted individual in-person interviews with a sample of 12 administrative support team members. The questionnaire was based off of CCPS's guiding principles for employees.

Administrative support staff generally do not have direct engagement with students, however, they feel connected through their supervisors' interaction with students. Administrative staff engage more with non-instructional school staff than instructional staff and community members. These engagement levels are in line with expectations.

Participants generally responded that, even though they have heavy workloads, they have the time and resources needed to accomplish their goals. We did not note any particular performance measures for management to track work volume and progress.

Documented policies are accessible and up-to-date, however, the quality of detailed procedure documentation varied. There is reliance on experienced staff to explain undocumented procedures.

The most common duties among administrative support staff are timekeeping and ordering/purchasing. Many administrative support staff individually serve their department or area and do not have the opportunity for collaboration and learning from colleagues.

Most participants believe their job descriptions are generally accurate, but several expressed that their job description and the job description of their fellow colleagues do not include all significant responsibilities and functions. All participants felt valued by their supervisors for their improvements and accomplishments, and their suggestions are welcomed. Several participants made a point to express that CCPS was an enjoyable place to work and they were happy in their jobs. Performance reviews accurately identify employees' strengths and accomplishments, however, several participants indicated that their reviews do not include relevant or achievable goals.

Training opportunities are generally rated favorably for basic skills and new technology, Experienced administrative support staff expressed a desire for more advanced training opportunities.

Management concurred with 10 of 10 recommendations to be implemented by June 30, 2018.

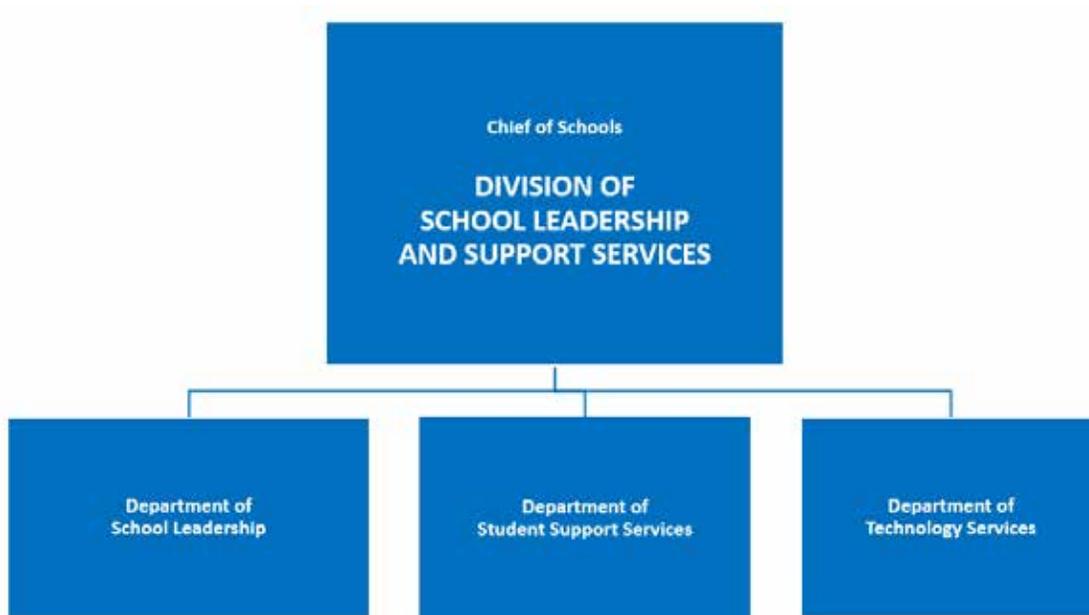
We appreciate the cooperation received from management and staff while conducting this audit.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This School Instruction Administrative Support audit was a regularly scheduled audit on the FY17 audit plan approved by the County Administrator, School Superintendent, and Audit and Finance Committee. In November 2016, an outside firm reported on their evaluation of CCPS Administration organizational division and department structure. That report recommended leadership structure changes that CCPS considered for their reorganization plan presented at the February 2017 School Board meeting. Our audit focuses on administrative support staffing in the instructional divisions and departments.

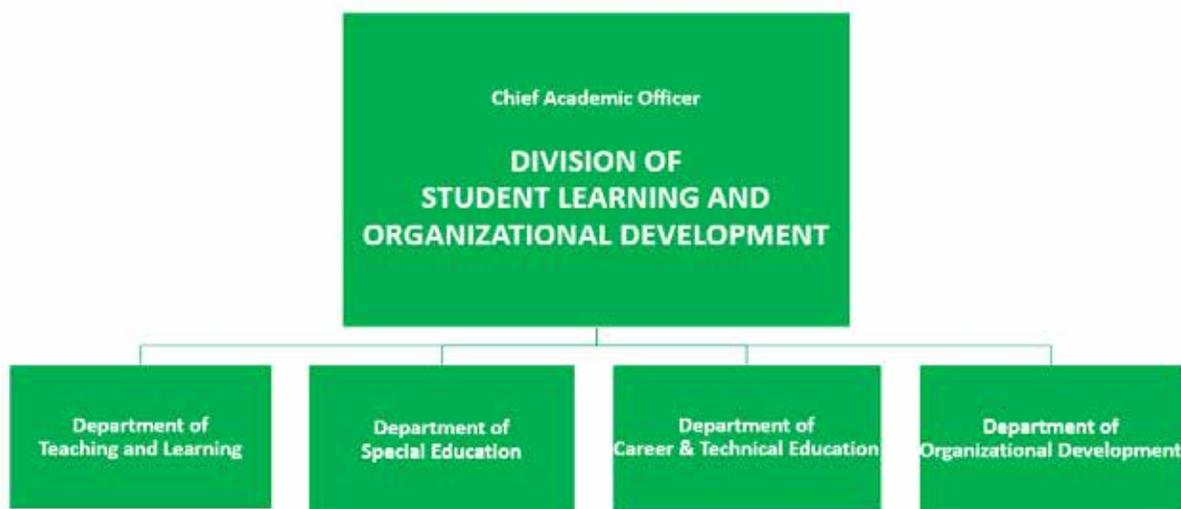
School instruction consists of the **Division of School Leadership and Support Services** and the **Division of Student Learning and Organizational Development**, which report to the Chief of Schools and the Chief Academic Officer, respectively. The Chief of Schools and the Chief Academic Officer report directly to the School Superintendent. There are 32 administrative support positions across 7 departments in these two divisions, primarily located at the Career and Technical Center @ Hull.



Department of School Leadership – Consists of the directors of elementary, middle school and high school leadership. The 62 school principals report to the directors.

Department of Student Support Services – Houses coordinators and specialists for early childhood services, alternative programs, ESL, counseling, social work, psychological services, and student health.

Department of Technology Services – Coordinators and specialists lead CCPS’s efforts to provide anywhere access to innovative teaching and learning through online education and by maintaining one of the largest managed networks in central Virginia.



Department of Teaching and Learning – Manages curriculum and assessments that are used countywide in the schools. The department includes curriculum coordinators and specialists for all school content areas, such as language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, literacy, world languages, health/PE/family life education, arts, online learning, and gifted education.

Department of Special Education – Helps lead the CCPS mission of high levels of achievement for all students with supportive instructional and related services to meet the diverse needs of individual students with disabilities. Department coordinators and specialists address the needs of each student through research-based specialized instruction and services.

Department of Career and Technical Education – Offers a growing number of skills-related courses in order to meet the ever-changing workforce needs and high student interest. Courses at the two CCPS technical centers culminate with a certificate of competence in the field studied and, in many cases, with industry certification or licensure and college credits through dual enrollment.

Department of Organizational Development – Provides education and professional growth opportunities to enhance learning at all levels for CCPS employees. Professional development is delivered online, through individual courses and workshops, internally in schools and departments, and through numerous other venues during the school year.

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives of the audit were to:

- Analyze administrative support staffing levels and organization of school departments
- Assess whether administrative support staff have well defined goals and objectives, and the resources to accomplish those goals and objectives.
- Evaluate how individual employee goals and objectives relate to organizational guiding principles.
- Identify resource reallocation opportunities for organizational realignment.

SCOPE

The scope of our audit primarily covered the current operating environment, school instruction organization structure, and the proposed realignment. We considered the guiding principles for employees from the CCPS comprehensive plan, the roles of the administrative support staff, and how they serve students, teachers, school staff, and community members.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Chris Meade, Senior Auditor, performed the audit work. Chesterfield County Internal Audit is a department within the organization of Chesterfield County/Schools.

METHODOLOGY

Our methodology included the following:

- Research current and proposed organization of school instruction departments and personnel.
- Interview a sample of administrative support staff about position responsibilities, performance, resources, team collaboration, communication, work capacity, and customer service.
- Obtain understanding of management goals and future staffing plan.

INTERNAL CONTROL CONCLUSION

According to Government Auditing Standards, internal controls, in the broadest sense, encompass the agency's plan, policies, procedures, methods, and processes adopted by management to meet its mission, goals, and objectives. Internal controls include the processes for planning, organizing, directing, and controlling program operations. It also includes systems for measuring, reporting, and monitoring program performance. An effective control structure is one that provides reasonable assurance regarding:

- Efficiency and effectiveness of operations;
- Accurate financial reporting; and
- Compliance with laws and regulations.

Based on the results and findings of the audit test work, auditors concluded that internal controls were in place and there were minimal findings to question their ability to assist management in meeting its mission, goals, and objectives. Recommendations specific to improving these controls can be found in detail further in the audit report.

CLOSING

We would like to thank School Instruction and the administrative support staff for their cooperation and assistance during the course of this audit.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Organization Structure

(Point Sheet C-1.1)

CRITERIA:

School administration leadership is grouped into several functional areas. These areas should be organized to effectively address the mission, priorities, and challenges of the school system to support student learning and outcomes.

The placement of technology in the organizational structure should reflect the need to safeguard sensitive data, level of operational dependence, importance in the classroom, and support of future goals.

CONDITION(S):

In November 2016, an outside firm reported on their evaluation of CCPS Administration organizational structure and functions. That report recommended leadership structure changes that CCPS incorporated into their reorganization plan presented at the February 2017 School Board meeting.

We compared the organization of CCPS instruction related departments to certain similar school systems (Henrico County, Prince William County, Loudoun County). The other school systems had two or more instruction focused direct reports to the Superintendent while CCPS had only one (Chief Academic Officer). The proposed realignment places instructional departments under two divisions:

- School Leadership and Support Services, led by the Chief of Schools
- Student Learning and Organizational Development, led by the Chief Academic Officer

These instruction divisions also acquired the Organizational Development and Technology departments from Human Resources and Administrative Services. We noted that Organizational Development for two of the three benchmarked school systems was located within the instruction departments. However, none of the comparable school systems located their Technology department within the instruction divisions. Two of the three had Technology separate as a direct report to the Superintendent.

CAUSE(S):

CCPS has been actively evaluating and updating their organizational structure.

EFFECTS(S):

The proposed realignment places more organizational focus on student learning and support.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Organization Structure

(Point Sheet C-1.1, Continued)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. We recommend that after a period of time CCPS evaluate the benefits of the revised structure and consider opportunities for improvement. There should be a specific consideration for the Department of Technology Services' placement within the instruction divisions. (Our September 1, 2017 audit report for School Central Office Administrative Support mirrored the objectives and methodology of this report. This recommendation was also included in that report for School Central Office.)

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE(S):

1. *Concur. Chief of Staff, Chief of Schools, and Chief Academic Officer are responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. They will assess effectiveness of Technology Department reporting to Instruction.*

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2)

CRITERIA:

Best practices for administrative support staff include documenting current position goals and objectives, measuring performance and work capacity, providing access to necessary knowledge and resources, encouraging job satisfaction and career development, and fostering collaboration, effective communication, and excellent customer service.

CCPS has established five guiding principles describing behaviors, practices, processes and priorities that schools and individual employees operate and maintain high standards for:

- Student Engagement
- Community of Learners
- Quality Service and Operations
- Community Investment
- Safe, Supportive and Nurturing Learning Environments

CONDITION(S):

There are 32 administrative support positions across 7 departments in the Division of School Leadership and Support Services and the Division of Student Learning and Organizational Development, primarily located at the Career and Technical Center @ Hull. We conducted in-person interviews with a sample of 12 administrative support staff, across the 7 departments. Our survey included both opened ended and multiple choice questions. Our observations from the interviews are summarized below, followed by the overall results for each question:

- Administrative support staff generally do not have direct engagement with students, however, they feel connected through their supervisors' interaction with students. Administrative support staff engage more with non-instructional school staff than instructional staff and community members. Supervisors engage more with instructional school employees than non-instructional employees, but also regularly engage with community members and students. These engagement levels are in line with expectations.
- All participants felt valued by their supervisors for their improvements and accomplishments, and their suggestions are welcomed. Several participants made a point to express that CCPS was an enjoyable place to work and they were happy in their jobs.
- Participants generally responded that, even though they have heavy workloads, they have the time and resources needed to accomplish their goals. We did not note any particular performance measures for management to track work volume and progress.
- Documented policies are accessible and up-to-date, however, the quality of detailed procedure documentation varied. There is reliance on experienced staff to explain undocumented procedures.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

- The most common duties among administrative support staff are timekeeping and ordering/purchasing.
- Performance reviews accurately identify employees' strengths and accomplishments. Several participants indicated that their reviews do not include relevant or achievable goals.
- Most participants believe their job descriptions are generally accurate, but several expressed that their job description and the job description of their fellow colleagues do not include all significant responsibilities and functions.
- Many administrative support staff individually serve their department or area and do not have the opportunity for collaboration and learning from colleagues.
- Training opportunities are generally rated favorably for basic skills and new technology. Experienced administrative support staff expressed a desire for more advanced training opportunities.
- The current administrative support staff resource allocation seems appropriate based on the responsibilities of the departments located within school instruction.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

Overall results for each question:

1. What is your title?

1 Program Tech I, 2 Secretaries, 5 Administrative Secretaries, 1 Administrative Assistant, and 3 Administrative Assistant Seniors

2. What department do you work for?

All seven departments were represented.

3. How many years have you been employed by Chesterfield County?

The average years of service was 13.67 years, ranging from less than 1 year to 31 years.

4. How many years have you been working in your current position with CCPS?

The average years in current position was 5.83 years, ranging from less than 1 year to 21 years.

5. How many people do you report to?

The average number of direct reports was 3, with only one person reporting to more than 5 people (7).

6. Do you report to more or less people than other administrative support staff?

The majority of staff thought they reported to the same number of people as their fellow administrative support staff.

7. What type of work do you do?

The most common answers were answering phone calls/emails, scheduling, timekeeping, and budgeting.

8. What technology do you use in your work?

The most common answers were Google and Microsoft Office Suites, OneSolution (financial), and Synergy (student database).

9. How do you communicate with colleagues?

Most staff use email and face to face communication. Some also use phone, text message, and formally scheduled meetings.

10. What percentage of your work comes from outside your office?

The average response was 57.5%, ranging from 10% to 90%.

11. What percentage of your work is given to you by your supervisors?

The average response was 42.5%, ranging from 10% to 90%.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

Multiple Choice Questions	Average Responses				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Daily
12. How often are you responsible for budgeting?			X		
13. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for budgeting?			X		
14. How often are you responsible for payroll/timekeeping?				X	
15. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for payroll/timekeeping?				X	
16. How often are you responsible for ordering/purchasing?				X	
17. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for ordering/purchasing?				X	
18. How often are you responsible for billing?	X				
19. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for billing?	X				
20. How often are you responsible for grant processing/drawdown?		X			
21. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for grant processing/drawdown?		X			
22. How often are you responsible for general ledger reconciliation?			X		
23. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for general ledger reconciliation?			X		
24. How often are you responsible for cash/check/credit card receipts?	X				
25. How often are other administrative support staff responsible for cash/check/credit card receipts?		X			
26. How often do you engage with students?		X			
27. How often do you engage with instructional school employees, including principals?				X	

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

Multiple Choice Questions	Average Responses				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Daily
28. How often do you engage with non-instructional school employees?					X
29. How often do you engage with community members or parents?			X		
30. How often do other administrative support staff engage with students?	X				
31. How often do other administrative support staff engage with instructional school employees, including principals?				X	
32. How often do other administrative support staff engage with non-instructional school employees?					X
33. How often do other administrative support staff engage with community members or parents?				X	
34. How often do the supervisors in your department engage with students?				X	
35. How often do the supervisors in your department engage with instructional school employees, including principals?				X	
36. How often do the supervisors in your department engage with non-instructional school employees?			X		
37. How often do the supervisors in your department engage with community members or parents?				X	
38. How often do you assist with work for other administrative support staff or in other departments?		X			
39. How often do other administrative support staff assist with your work?		X			

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

Yes/No Questions	Average Responses		
	No	Somewhat	Yes
40. Are there additional team members in your department with similar duties and responsibilities?		X	
41. Do you have access to the training needed to perform your duties?			X
42. Do other administrative support staff have access to the training needed to perform their duties?			X
43. Are the documented policies and procedures applicable to your duties readily available?			X
44. Are you aware of the stated goals and responsibilities for your position?			X
45. Are you aware of the stated goals and responsibilities for the other administrative support staff positions?		X	
46. Do you have the time and resources needed to accomplish those goals?			X
47. Do other administrative support staff have the time and resources needed to accomplish their goals?			X
48. Does your job description accurately identify the work that you perform?			X
49. Do the job descriptions of other administrative support staff accurately identify the work that they perform?		X	
50. Does your performance review accurately identify your strengths and accomplishments?			X
51. Does your performance review outline goals for improvement?		X	
52. Do you feel valued by your supervisors for your improvements and accomplishments?			X
53. Do other administrative support staff feel valued by their supervisors for their improvements and accomplishments?			X
54. Are your suggestions for improvement valued and welcomed?			X
55. Are other administrative support staff's suggestions for improvement valued and welcomed?			X

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

RECOMMENDATION(S)

We recommend that CCPS consider:

2. Establishing work volume measures and management tracking to best allocate resources for seasonal and other workload fluctuations.¹
3. Developing a pooled list for long term projects that can be assigned to staff with availability across instruction divisions.¹
4. Updating and maintaining detailed administrative support procedures for periodic review.
5. Opportunities to enhance administrative support staff efficiency by automating employee time reporting.^{1,2}
6. Opportunities to organize ordering and purchasing duties to increase efficiency.¹
7. Using the annual review process to ensure that employees have achievable goals for improvement and that job descriptions include all significant duties and responsibilities.¹
8. Opportunities for networking and cross training between areas for staff members serving their departments individually.
9. Offering more advanced training for experienced administrative support staff geared toward career development.¹
10. Continuing to evaluate the allocation of administrative support resources as the organizational realignment matures.¹

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE(S):

2. *Concur. Chief Financial Officer is responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. The division is currently recruiting a Business Process Manager to review administrative processes. This position will review work volume measures and workflow tracking in order to determine if processes can be improved. Additionally, the division recently participated in a business review process with the County to review how processes utilizing OneSolution can be improved.*
3. *Concur. Chief Financial Officer is responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. The division is currently recruiting a Business Process Manager to review administrative processes. This position will review work volume measures and workflow tracking in order to determine if processes can be improved. Additionally, the division recently participated in a business review process with the County to review how processes utilizing OneSolution can be improved.*
4. *Concur. Chief of Schools is responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. Administrative support staff with supervision from School Administration will develop and maintain updated administrative support procedures.*
5. *Concur. Chief Financial Officer is responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. There is a related open audit report related to reporting time and attendance for all employees through electronic means. School Payroll Audit Recommendation #2 (December 2016).*

¹ Our September 1, 2017, audit report for School Central Office Administrative Support mirrored the objectives and methodology of this report. These recommendations were also included in that report for School Central Office

² There is a related open audit recommendation for school employees to directly report time and attendance electronically (School Payroll – Audit Recommendation #2 – December 2016).

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES

Administrative Support Staffing

(Point Sheet C-1.2, Continued)

6. *Concur. Chief of Schools and Chief Academic Officer are responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. Will examine to see if there are efficiencies to be gained through combined purchasing, while also operating within guidelines of grants and other assigned funding categories.*
7. *Concur. Chief of Schools and Chief Academic Officer are responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. Will assess job descriptions as we conduct performances appraisals annually.*
8. *Concur. Director of Organizational Development is responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. Training opportunities and networking events are provided through the Department of Organizational Development and the Chesterfield administrative professionals employee organization.*
9. *Concur. Director of Organizational Development is responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. Will offer enhanced training opportunities and networking events are provided through the Department of Organizational Development and the Chesterfield administrative professionals employee organization.*
10. *Concur. Chief of Staff, Chief of Schools, and Chief Academic Officer are responsible for implementing by June 30, 2018. The division will continue to review the effectiveness of the reorganization and will make changes, if necessary, to improve efficiency and reduce costs as the realignment matures.*