

A Study of Organizational Culture, Structure and Staffing of the Wake County Public School System

Superintendent Anthony Tata wants to assure that the organizational structure of the Wake County Public School System is the most efficient, economical, and effective in being able to execute the vision, mission, and priorities of the Superintendent and Board of Education, and efficiently deliver services and support of student learning at the school sites.

BROAD Alumni Services commissioned a study, at no cost to WCPSS, to review the district's operating culture, alignment, effectiveness, and efficiency of the current organizational structure, as it faces the challenges of limited resources to support the FY 2012 and FY 2013 needs.

The two (2) Goals of the study

1. Evaluate the organizational culture and operating ethos of the Wake County Public School System central office and its readiness to meet the expectations/ standards of the superintendent, needs of the schools and stakeholders, and the challenges the district is facing;
2. Evaluate the current central office organizational structure in light of its efficiency and effectiveness in its delivery of services, its alignment with the board, district and superintendent priorities, and its match with superintendent's executive style and prerogatives; Specifically,

- Compare the district organizational structure in comparison to the best organizational structures/ practices of selected, bench-marked districts;
- Identify any and all redundancies in certificated, professional staffing/assignments of the current, central office organizational structure in place at the divisional, department and office levels, seeking recommendations for cost savings, efficiencies and effectiveness where possible;
- Identify ways to streamline the organization and to assure more effective and efficient operations and support to schools;
- Recommend an effective and efficient central office organizational structure to assure the district is best prepared to meet the challenges it faces.

There were a few, specific objectives pinpointed for closer analysis

- Design and staff a Department/or Office focusing on Transformation, Innovation, and Growth Planning.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research/Evaluation component of the Wake County Public School System.
 - Evaluate the professional staffing levels in the Technology Services Department

Benchmarking

- In order to establish a comparative baseline for the ways other districts have designed their organizational structures and their level of staffing, and to use as benchmarks for this study, the consultant did a nationwide scan of districts
- Please refer to **Appendix: 1** for the BROAD URBAN PRIZE AWARDEES Organization Charts.
- A second scan was conducted of 12 districts with enrollments and complexity similar to WCPSS.
- Please refer to **Appendix: 2** for the Referent Districts Organization Charts

Referent Districts

- 1 Orange County (FL) Schools 175,000
- 2 Palm Beach County (FL) Schools 170,000
- 3 Fairfax County (VA) Schools 165,000
- 4 Dallas (TX) Unified School District 160,000
160,000
- **PRIME REFERENT DISTRICTS:**
- 5 Duval County (FL) Schools 155,000
- 6 Gwinnett County (GA) Schools* 155,000
- 7 **WCPSS** **143,289**
- 8 Montgomery County (MD) Schools
141,000

Prime Referent Districts (cont.)

- 9 .San Diego Unified (CA)School District 132,000
- 10 .Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC)Schools
131,000
- 11 .Prince Georges County Schools (MD)
131,000
- 12. Fairbanks Cypress Schools (TX) 110,000

Interview Schedule

- Seventy-six (76) interviews were conducted with staff and board members during two visits for six and one half-days in late March.
- The professionalism and courtesies of the staff extended were of the highest levels

HIGHLIGHTS

- Almost universally, the interviewees believe that the WCPSS is a very good, if not a great system, and are very proud to be a part of it.
- The interviewees believe the prime focus is on the children. Those who were interviewed stated that the staff is dedicated, caring about its students, committed to the community, hardworking and professional.
- Many of the interviewees expressed the feeling that central services serve in an appropriate and exemplary support capacity to the schools.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Board members expressed a belief that they are unified in their commitment to higher levels of performance of staff, schools, and students, and will make innovations in the best interests of students.
- There is great concern that the budget constraints combined with the continued growth in the district will hold back its progress.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Board members agree upon their new mission and focus on improving student/school performance.
- They see the need for their new superintendent to be their leader and they, as a board, need to work effectively, especially during times of change to bring about higher levels of performance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Board members question if there is the proper alignment of staff and resources to focus on student achievement.
- The majority of Board members see the need for the Superintendent to have the loyalty of and confidence in a selected person to assure all aspects of the programs are being implemented while the Superintendent is highly visible and external to the office.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Due to the history of growth and subsequent changes to accommodate the growth in Wake County for nearly a decade, the stakeholders are more accustomed to changes than most communities and stakeholders who have not experienced such growth and changes.
- This does not mean that the community and stakeholders are ready for and like the types of changes that may be needed in the next few years.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Some interviewees acknowledge breakdowns and gaps in communications and coordination. It is viewed that decisions have been made at the central office that had inconsistent avenues of communication and offered with little or no rationale for the decisions to the school sites.
- There is a gap in the area of accountability between the Division of Instruction and the Area Superintendents
- The role and functions of the Area Superintendents need clarity.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Area Superintendents are spread thinly and under-resourced for the complex roles they are expected to play.
- A major weakness in WCPSS structure is in the lack of an identified individual who has the responsibility, authority, and accountability for student performance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The staffing levels are lean in all of the departments in the divisions, as compared to referent districts: each position is discreet and without redundancy.
- Most of the cutbacks in central office staffing that could be absorbed have occurred due to the RIFS the past two years and not the filling of vacant positions.

Division of Administrative Services:

- The Administrative Services Division is administered by the Chief Business Officer who coordinates/supervises and integrates the work of four Departments:
 1. The Budget Department;
 2. The Finance Department;
 3. The Human Resources Department; and,
 4. The Technology Services Department

Division of Administrative Services: Finance

- The Department of Finance is organized in a traditional, functional fashion with discreet departments and offices.
- The staffing levels are appropriate for finance and budget functions and compare favorably to staffing levels in the same departments/offices in referent districts. The staff members possess excellent qualifications for their positions.

Division of Administrative Services: Finance

- The staffing levels in each Department/Office are needed for the very specific roles that each person plays in assuring the areas of finance and budget are managed and processed accurately and in a timely fashion.
- There are no redundancies or duplication of efforts in the staffing in each office. The routines and systems are well established in each Office.

Division of Administrative Services: HR

- The organizational structure of the Division of Human Resources is rational and the functions clearly defined. There are discreet teams focused on all aspects of Human Resources work; there appears to be strong communications and collaboration among the teams.
- There is somewhat of a delicate balance between the centralized role that HR plays in staff recruitment, interviewing and selection and the autonomy that the principals enjoy in these areas. There is a need for the leadership team to determine if centralizing more aspects of the selection process for teachers and assistant principals, and principals will ensure greater equity, equality, quality and diversity.

Division of Administrative Services: HR

- The staffing levels in the HR department are lean for a system of this size and its numbers of employees.
- The system has grown, but staffing in the HR Department has not kept pace; but, in fact, has been reduced.

Specific Objective: Evaluate the professional staffing levels in the Technology Services Department

- The staff members in Technology Services are very focused and tactical in their orientation and approach to their respective assignments. The Department is designed and set up in traditional, discreet offices as found in most referent school district technology departments.
- The staffing levels in this Department are lean: Additional cutbacks of staff would cripple the services.
- Interviewees cite a lack of leadership in the area of instructional technology at the Central Office level to help and lead the schools. There are technology redundancies reported across the district regarding applications due to the autonomy at the school levels.

Specific Objective: Evaluate the professional staffing levels in the Technology Services Department

- This Department and technology, especially on the instructional side, need visionary and effective day-to-day leadership.
- The need for filling the vacant position of Assistant Superintendent, as soon as possible, is very important

Division of Auxiliary Services:

- There are four direct reports to the Chief Facilities and Operations Officer:
 1. Department of Nutrition Services;
 2. Department of Transportation;
 3. Department of Facilities; and,
 4. The Senior Director for Growth and Planning.

Division of Auxiliary Services:

- The Department of Nutrition Services operates an effective enterprise operation and is recognized nationally for its efforts.
- The budget cutbacks have affected all of the Offices within Maintenance and Operations.
- The staffing levels are lean. Changes in the levels of services will have a long-term negative effect on the facilities.

Division of Auxiliary Services:

- The contracting processes in the district are reported to be lengthy and cumbersome. There is a need to reduce the amount of time for reviews through the organization and the number of days to process (it is noted that the length of time to process change orders and to pay contractors has improved). A review should be conducted to determine ways to streamline the process.
- The organization of custodial supervision is in a transition. There is a need to evaluate the proposed design and the one area where it has been implemented to determine if the changeover should be pursued.

Division of Auxiliary Services:

- There is a need to reconcile the tension between the authority of central office regarding supervision of custodial services and the autonomy that the principals have in this area.
- The allocations of custodians per square feet in a building are within national, recommended norms.
- The recent staffing re-organization (3/11) of the Office of Facilities Design and Construction was thoughtful and consolidates all of the needed functions.
- The recent reorganization of the Department of Maintenance and Operations seems appropriate.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- One of the prime issues is the need to align structure and resources in order best to support primary mission of improving student achievement.
- There is no direct reporting relationship between the Chief Academic Officer and the Area Superintendents.
- Those holding these positions report that they do work together and collaborate, but have expressed that *“There needs to be a better alignment between CAO and area superintendents.”* This sentiment was echoed frequently by many interviewees.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- There is a critical need to provide more direct supervision to the school sites and principals on a daily basis.
- The referent school districts demonstrate a range in their organization and groupings of schools. Some districts have the supervisor responsible for all levels (elementary, middle, and high schools) to assure vertical articulation and often the schools are geographically linked.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- Some of the referent districts prefer to have supervisors who are grade level specific to be responsible for the supervision of the schools/principals and array their schools in the traditional levels of elementary, middle, secondary and special schools.
- In the referent group of districts, the average ratio of supervisor to principal/schools on the elementary level is 1:17-19 and 1:12-14 at the secondary school level.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- In the current organizational structure, each of the five Area (Assistant) Superintendents is responsible for @ 28 prek-12 schools with the lowest ratio of supervision being the Chief Area Superintendent who supervises @20 schools.
- There is a need to determine the adequacy of the support to the secondary schools under this current structure of Area Superintendents responsible for elementary, middle and high schools. The current span of control is simply too broad for the Area Superintendents to be effective instructional leaders for all of the principals at all three levels of the schools.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- Of the core referent group, the vast majority of the districts have the individuals who supervise the schools report to a position of Deputy or Associate Superintendent or a Chief Academic Officer (the title varies).
- Having someone responsible solely for all aspects of the educational program, the operations and functioning of the schools and related support services, may provide a higher level of accountability at the schools site regarding fidelity of the implementation of programs and accountability.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- There is an expressed concern that there is limited capacity by the Area Superintendents to assist high schools, particularly. Some interviewees believe that the former model of having an Associate Superintendent for Secondary schools was more effective.
- The limited amount of time by the Area Superintendents that they are able to spend in the schools and with the principals brings into sharp question the type of impact they can have with the schools.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- There is a clear need to bring some laser-like focus to the role of the Area Assistant Superintendent and provide clear expectations for those who serve in the role.
- Placing a great deal of focus on the role of each Area, (Assistant) Superintendent to be the “face” of each of the respective areas is an important consideration as the Superintendent’s role evolves and becomes more of a CEO.
- The Board and Superintendent could explore the model of encouraging and approving specific initiatives and innovations as proposed by each area as a way to be somewhat decentralized, differentiated, and more identified with the communities and area.

Division of Schools: Chief Area and Area (Assistant) Superintendents

- There is a critical need to re-establish the sixth area to represent the Western region of the county.
- It would be helpful to resource the areas by having someone who is directly responsible for leading and advocating for the high schools and evaluating the principals.
- 9 out of 10 referent districts have the Area Superintendents reporting to the Deputy so as to best integrate design and implementation of the academic programs and accountability for performance in located with one person, the Deputy.

Division of Instructional Services:

- The Chief Academic Officer has nine direct reports:
- Assistant Superintendent for Evaluation and Research
- Assistant Superintendent for Support Services,
- Six Senior Directors
- Director of k-12 Curriculum

Division of Instructional Services:

- The work of this Division serves as the backbone for the design of the educational program, the infrastructure of educational support services to students and staff, and the component of reporting regarding the effectiveness/progress of the educational program of WCPSS.
- Those who were interviewed respect the work of the staff in the Division and the quality of the educational program.
- The staffing is lean in all of the Offices in this Division. There are no redundancies or overlaps in the jobs held by the staff. All of the positions are needed for the district to continue to support the education program.

Division of Instructional Services

- The span of control for the Chief Academic Officer (1:9) is wider than that of the other Chiefs.
- By comparison, the other Divisions have span of control as follows: Auxiliary Services 1: 4; Chief Area Superintendent 1:5; Communications 1:3; and Administrative Services 1:4. The span of control for the assistant superintendents in the Division of Instruction is 1: 4 and 1:3. The span of control for the Assistant Superintendent in Auxiliary Services is 1:3; for the Assistant Superintendent in Human Resources it is 1:4; for the Assistant Superintendent for Technology Services it is 1:4.

Division of Instructional Services

- There is a need to re-think the reporting structure of the offices in the Division and the spans of control.

Division of Instructional Services

- The District, and the staff, suffers from not having one person, other than the Superintendent, who is identified as responsible on a daily basis for all of the initiatives in the educational program, and for assuring progress is being made with the program and educational agenda each day in the schools, and ultimately, who is accountable for improving performance.

Specific Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research/Evaluation component of the Wake County Public School System.

- The Department of Evaluation and Research is misnamed and that creates some mis-perceptions as to its role and functions.
- The Testing Office is one focused on mechanics of test administration. It has nothing to do with evaluation or research. The staffing in this office is appropriate for the work and size of the district.

Specific Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research/Evaluation component of the Wake County Public School System

- The Grants and Compliance Reporting Office has nothing to do with Evaluation and Research. It is a two person Office.
- The Office of School Accountability focuses its attention on the analysis of the state testing data and reconciliation of test results. It does analysis of all student achievement data, does training for staff for managing data and using it at schools.
- The size of the staff in this Office is lean for the size of the district and scope of testing that is required. The role of this office is identical to such offices found in all school districts.

Specific Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research/Evaluation component of the Wake County Public School System

- The Office of Program Accountability is responsible for program evaluations, impact or implementation studies.
- This Office provides consulting services to new projects in the district. The agenda is set by senior directors and C&I and student support.
- This Office does applied evaluations and research. The primary way this mission is accomplished is through evaluations of WCPSS programs. The work of this Office is chartered by Board Policy. Board Policy 5600, as recommended by Curriculum Audit Recommendation 5, encourages all programs to be evaluated, and considers the Evaluation and Research Department (E&R) a clearinghouse for evaluation activity.

Specific Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research/Evaluation component of the Wake County Public School System

- WCPSS is remarkable in that it has an active function to evaluate its programs.
- Its body of work is impressive.
- Some, but not all districts have a similar Office of Program Accountability.
- More often than not, districts have programs that proliferate and rarely undergo evaluation, unless required by its fund source.
- The effectiveness of the use of the evaluation reports in monitoring and modifying, or even eliminating programs is beyond the scope of this study.

Chief of Staff:

- The Chief of Staff is pulled in many directions due to her many reporting responsibilities.
- The need for the position in WCPSS is acute and consideration is needed as to ways to reduce her level of responsibilities.
- It is a full-time responsibility to staff the committees of the Board, to provide the many informational tools requested by the Board, to facilitate the flow of communications among and between the Board members and Superintendent, as well as to have responsibility for the organization and direction of the staff in the Superintendent's/Board Office and the Offices of the Internal Auditor, Due Process, and Security.
- The supervision/coordination of the staff for organizational and staff development complicates the role.

Chief of Staff:

- In WCPSS, having the Internal Auditor report through the Chief of Staff to the Board as well as for administrative coordination is appropriate and complies with prevailing research regarding the reporting relationship role of the Internal Auditor and necessary firewalls between the Internal Auditor and staff.
- Having the Office of Due Process, reporting to the Chief of Staff and bridging the administrative and Board role in this area of student/staff hearings is also appropriate and well designed.

Chief of Staff:

- In referent districts, the Office of Security Services does not report to the Chief of Staff.
- Such coordination and close association with the Board and Superintendent has been important and has worked well in WCPSS, as reported. Therefore, maintaining its reporting relationship to the Chief of Staff should continue.

Chief of Staff:

- Due to its shared reporting relationship between the Board and Superintendent, it is recommended that the Chief of Staff be removed from a line function of a Division, as depicted in the current WCPSS organization chart, and be depicted as a department and a staff function serving both the Board and Superintendent.

Division of Communications:

- The Chief supervises three Departments: the Print Shop, the Department of Community Services, and the Department of Communications.
- All school districts have an office of communications and community relations in their organization.
- The Division suffers from a perception that it is overstaffed. This is largely caused by the inclusion of the Department of Community Services and the Print Shop and their combined staffs totaling 27 people plus part time site coordinators in the Department of Community Services. It should be noted that only two of those staff are supported with local funds.

Division of Communications:

- Two Departments, the Print Shop and the Department of Community Services, are enterprise funds and provide high quality services at little or no cost to the district. In fact, these two centers generate revenue for the schools and district.
- My research demonstrates that the Department of Communications, when adjusted for the exclusion of the Department of Communications and the Print Shop, is not overstaffed at all.
- Referent districts have more staff than are found in the WCPSS Department of Communications.

Specific Objective: Design and staff a Division/ Department/or Office focusing on transformation, Innovation, Growth, Planning.

- The Superintendent believes that the WCPSS desires to have a consolidated and coordinated focus on strategic planning, innovative approaches to anticipated challenges so as to move proactively with problem solving, a driver of the efforts to transform the WCPSS in a holistic manner so it can reach the next level of performance, and high level attention to performance and accountability.
- There is a need for these functions to be appropriately resourced and organized in a way so as to offer support and leadership to the development and implementation of the Board's and Superintendent's vision.

Specific Objective: Design and staff a Division/ Department/or Office focusing on transformation, Innovation, Growth, Planning.

- The Division of Auxiliary Services has two senior directors and staff responsible for Long Term Planning as well as Growth and Planning. These staff work intimately with the Facilities functions and are focused on the county growth patterns, student population growth, and school use and planning.
- These offices and staff could either remain within the Division of Auxiliary Services or be consolidated within the new Department.

Specific Objective: Design and staff a Division/ Department/or Office focusing on transformation, Innovation, Growth, Planning.

- There are some offices and staff in the WCPSS organizational structure that have aspects of responsibility for these areas of planning and performance. In the Division of Instructional Services there is a Department of Evaluation and Research, which is comprised of four offices: Testing, Grants Development and Compliance, Program Accountability, and School Accountability.
- Three of these offices and their staff, Program Evaluation and Accountability, School Accountability as well as Grants Development could readily be relocated to be a part of a new Department. The fourth office, devoted to the mechanics of administering the testing program either could be a part of this new Department or remain as part of the Division of Instruction.

Specific Objective: Design and staff a Division/ Department/or Office focusing on transformation, Innovation, Growth, Planning.

- There has been a function of staff development, policy development, and Leadership development associated with the Office of the Chief of Staff. Those four staff members, their secretaries and their functions (should be revised) could also be a part of this new Department.
- 1. Senior Director for organizational planning, development and policy (1 current position now vacant under CoS)
- 2. Director for Leadership (1 current position now held by Director of TLA under CoS)
- 3. Senior administrators for professional development (2 current positions under CoS)
- 4. Office of Grants Administration (Senior Director and one staff member)

Specific Objective: Design and staff a Division/ Department/or Office focusing on transformation, Innovation, Growth, Planning.

- 5. Office of Program Accountability (Senior Director and 5 staff positions)
- 6. Office of School Accountability (Senior Director and 7 staff positions)
- 7. The staff members currently associated with the Department of E &R (receptionist and dissemination specialist)
- 8. Office of Testing (Senior Director and four staff positions) optional
- 9. Office of Growth & Planning (Senior Director and three offices: optional)
- 10. Senior Director of Long Range Planning:

Key Recommendations:

- Establish someone with clear responsibility, authority, and accountability for performance so as to assure better integration of the design and implementation of the educational program at the schools.
- Create a position of Deputy Superintendent and have a CAO and the Area Assistant Superintendents report to the Deputy.
- Eliminate the position of Chief Area Superintendent and re-establish an Area Assistant Superintendent for the western area.

Key Recommendations:

- Fill the vacant position of Assistant Superintendent in the Department and Technology.
- Restructure the responsibilities of the two Assistant Superintendents in the Division of Instructional Services.
- Establish a new Department of Transformation, Innovation, Planning and Accountability.

Key Recommendations:

- Extract the Print Shop from the Division of Communications.
- Assign the Print Shop to either the Department of Finance in the Division of Support Services, similar to the assignment of the Warehouse, or to the Division of Facilities and the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities.
- It is recommended that the modified Division of Communications have its designation changed from Division to Department and the Department of Communications report directly to the Superintendent in a staff capacity.

Key Recommendations:

- Tightly define and focus the role of each Area (Assistant) Superintendent to be the “face” of each of the respective areas as the Superintendent’s role evolves and becomes more of a CEO.
- Integrate the Area Assistant Superintendents and the Division of Instructional Services in order to assure better integration of the design and implementation of the educational program at the schools and to establish clear responsibility, authority, and accountability.
- Create a position of an Assistant Superintendent for High Schools.

Key Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the roles and responsibilities of the Chief of Staff, serving in a dual report to Board and Superintendent, are narrowed and reflected on the organization chart.

EXHIBIT: Recommended Reorganization of the WCPSS

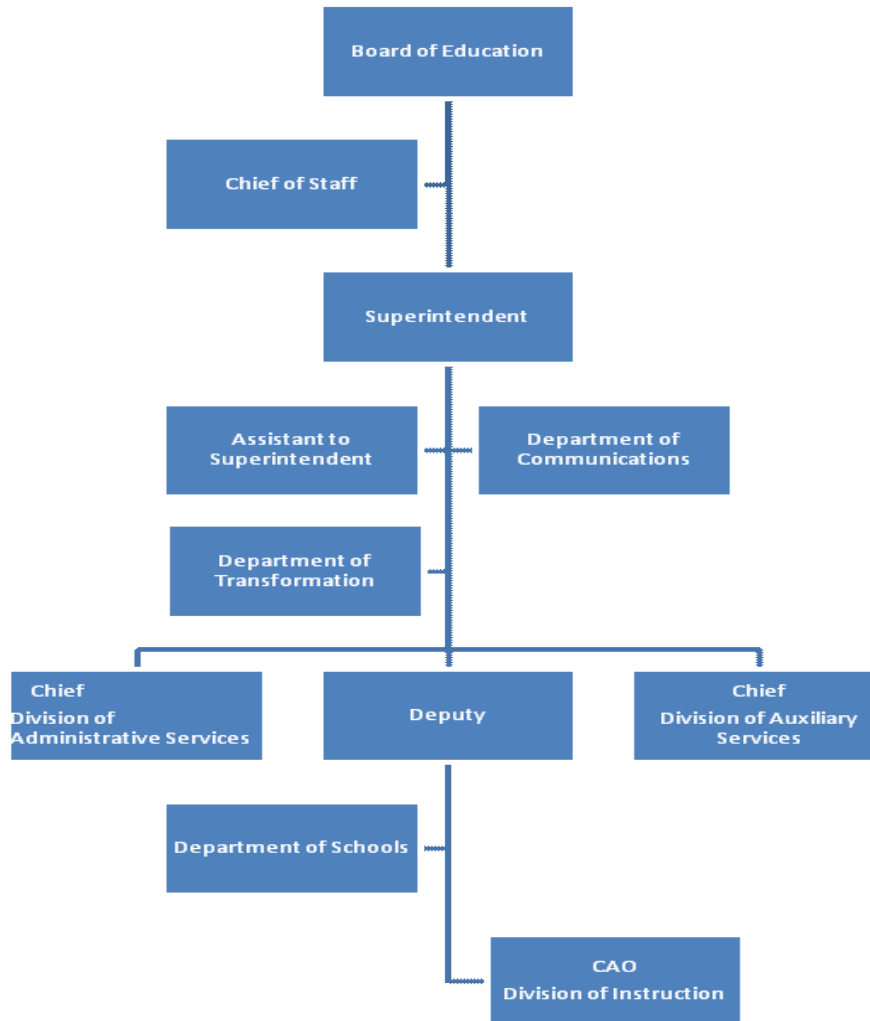


EXHIBIT: Proposed Revised Department of the Chief of Staff

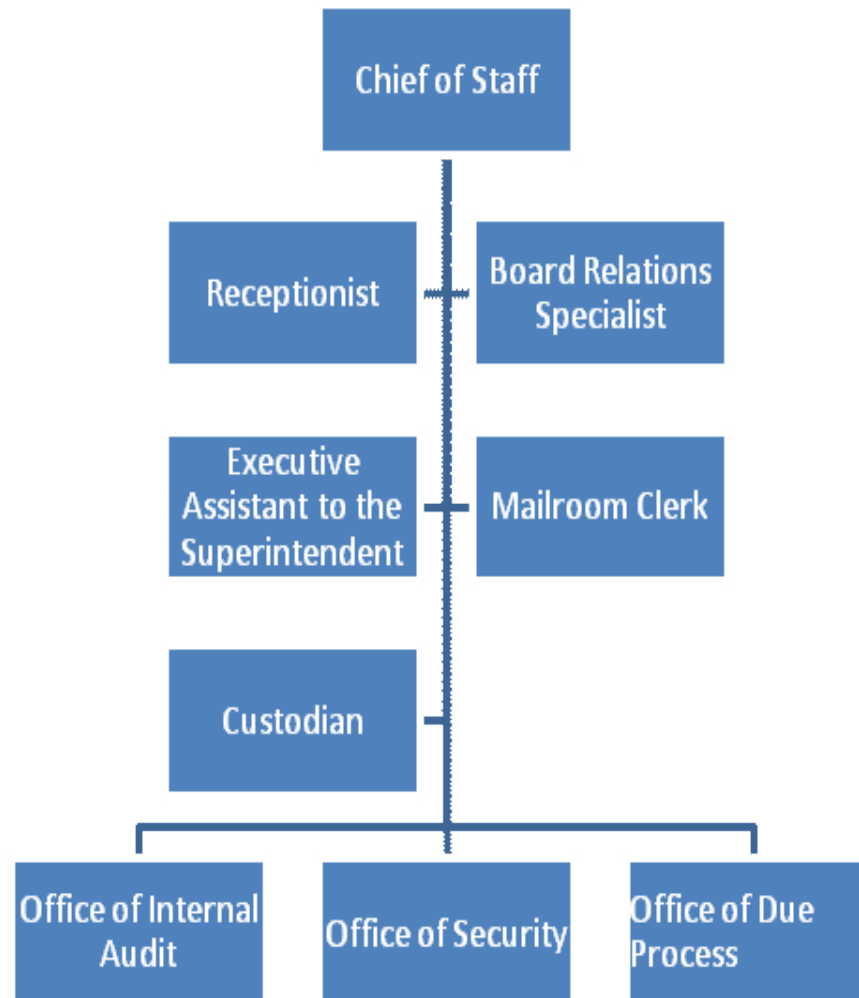


EXHIBIT: Proposed Staffing of a Department of Transformation

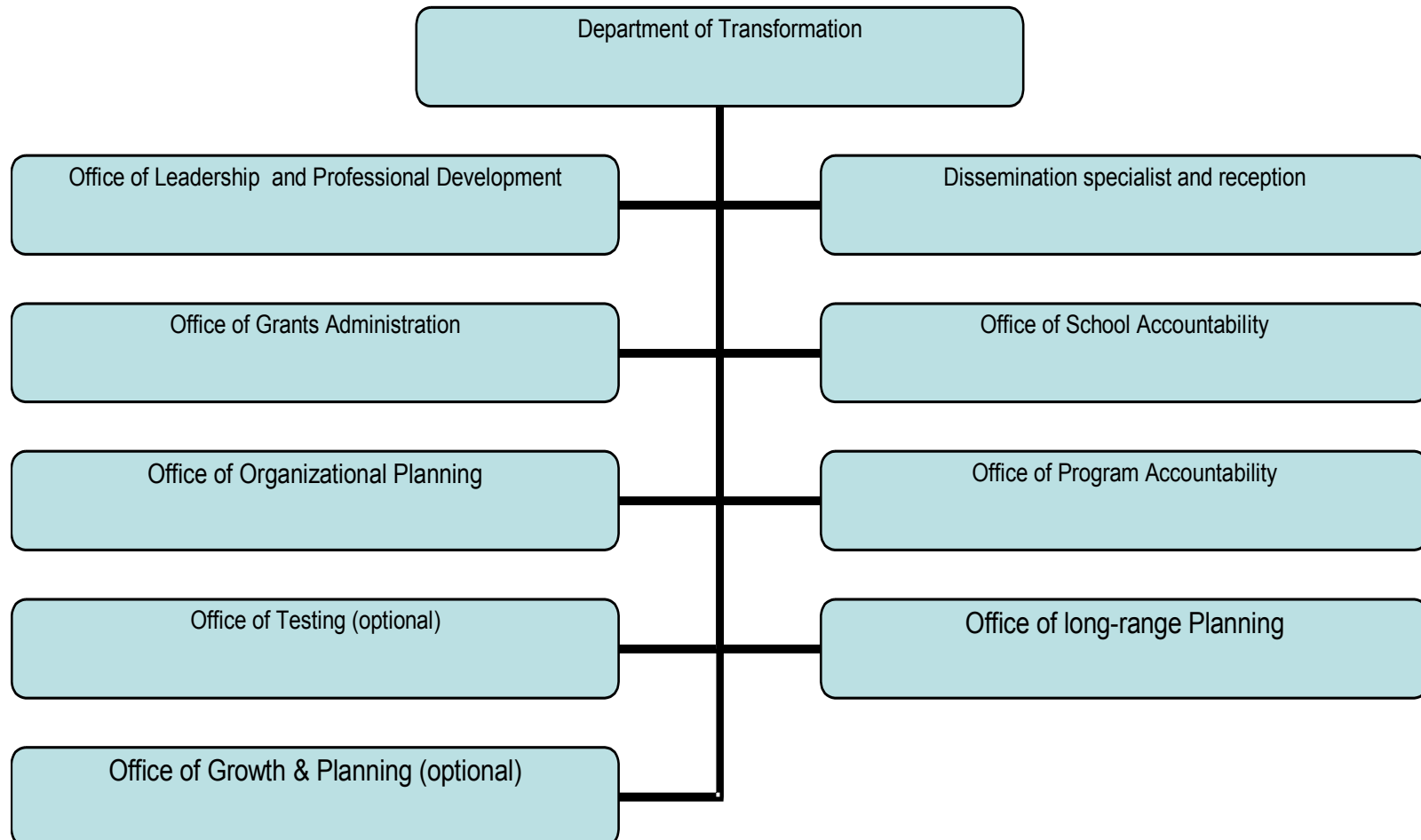


EXHIBIT: Organization of the revised Division of Instructional Services with Assistant Superintendents

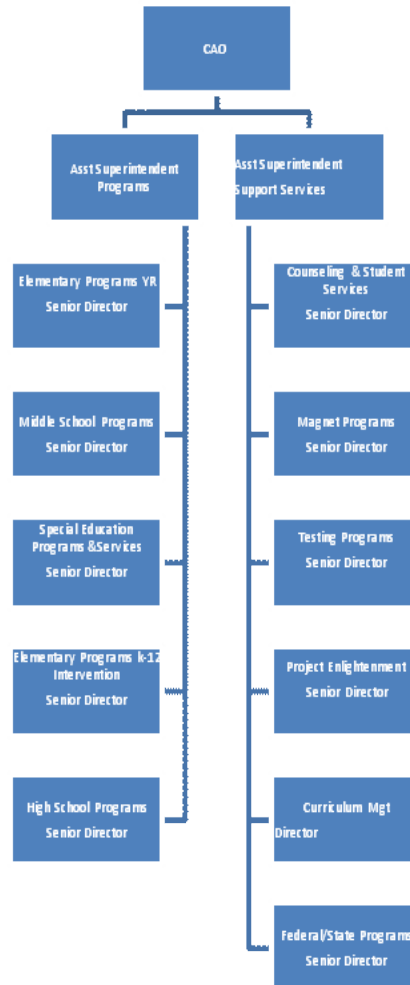


EXHIBIT: Proposed Organizational Structure with a Deputy Superintendent

