Columbus City Schools
Office of Internal Audit

School Building Readiness

Audit Report

Report Date: January 26, 2023

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Executive Summary

The Columbus City Schools (District) Office of Internal Audit (OIA) recently completed an audit of the School Buildings Readiness of summer activities for the beginning of school. Summer activities relating to building readiness is overseen by the School Building Readiness Committee. This general audit evaluated objectives selected by OIA to assess the activities surrounding the school building readiness processes.

OIA initiated this audit, based on feedback from the A&A Committee and we expanded our scope to additional areas/departments not reviewed during last year's engagement.

As part of this year's engagement, OIA identified readiness components for each area reviewed, interviewed department leadership (Business & Operations), tested compliance with updating and testing of Department COOP Plans, tested successful completion and submission of Custodial Services Building Readiness Checklist and reviewed various information relating to the readiness of each office/department(s) below:

School Building Readiness Committee.
Safety & Security.
Transportation.
Food Services.
Buildings & Grounds.
Capital Improvements.
Custodial Services.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* established by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Our audit included such procedures as we deemed necessary to provide reasonable assurance regarding the audit objectives. Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. The internal audit function helps an organization accomplish its objectives through a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.

OIA reported four issues and developed ten associated recommendations. OIA rated the risk associated with the three issues as follows:

High	Moderate	Low
1	2	1

During the course of the audit, we made Business & Operations management aware of our issues and recommendations for improvement. Good discussion took place regarding the recommendations. OIA appreciates the cooperation extended to us and the assistance of all staff we interacted with as we performed our audit.

The OIA issues noted during the audit are classified as follows:

Risk Ratings, defined:

1 – High/unacceptable risk requiring immediate corrective action;

2 – Moderate/undesirable risk requiring future corrective action; and

3 – Low/minor risk that management should assess for potential corrective action.

Issues	Risk Rating		
	1	2	3
Objective 1: To determine if the extent of the District's building readiness will contribute to the strategic priorities of the District by providing a foundation of support that enables the organization to produce its targeted student outcomes.			
Issue 1 – Monitoring of Work Orders (Famis).		X	
Objective 2: To determine if bottlenecks are identified and action is taken by management to minimize impact:			
Issue 2 - The School Building Readiness Committee has not formally identified a purpose, goals, identified critical operations, performance metrics, or an assessment tool (survey) over the readiness of school buildings.			X
Issue 3 - The School Building Readiness Committee does not maintain a schedule/log to track, record, monitor, and report on issues related to the readiness of District buildings prior to the opening day of school.		X	
Objective 3: To determine if the District is compliant with required and recommended guidance from authoritative organizations and selected policies and procedures.			
Issue 4 - (Non-Compliance) Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Plans and Preparation could be improved.	X		

Background

Below is a brief description of the responsibilities, readiness scope, and readiness components reviewed for the School Building Readiness Committee, The Office of Safety & Security, The Office of Transportation, The Office of Food Services, The Office of Buildings & Grounds, The Office of Capital Improvements, and The Office of Custodial Services:

School Building Readiness Committee – The Committee is made up of the Senior Executive Director of Business & Operations that serves as the committee's chair. The Deputy Superintendent, Area Superintendents (All Regions), Director of Capital Improvements, Director of Custodial Services, Director of Food Services, Director of Safety & Security, and Interim Director of Buildings & Grounds. It has been in existence for about 11 years.

Safety & Security – The Safety & Security (S&S) staff serves as a source of information, assistance and guidance to students, parents, teachers, and staff as well as a link to support services within the community.   In addition to student safety, S&S staff works closely with local law enforcement and emergency management officials in developing and maintaining action plans for potential emergencies. The department's ultimate goal is to ensure school safety.

The Office of Safety and Security consists of the Director, two Assistant Directors, Secretary, three Accident & Safety Investigators, Compliance Investigator, and 139 (General Fund) men and women who provide professional safety and security services to over 46,453 diverse students within the Columbus City School District. The department is dedicated to ensuring a safe, secure and effective learning environment for students, staff and community.

Safety & Security Readiness Scope:
The Office of Safety and Security's Readiness Efforts will focus on ensuring that district buildings are safe and ready to receive students and staff on the opening day of school, safety systems are functional and emergency operation plans are updated and functional.

Safety & Security Readiness Components:
- School Safety & Security Summit;
- School staffing plans;
- Training of staff;
- Operation of school cameras (needed repairs);
- Emergency plans completed by school leadership;
- Building Access Cards;
- Department COOP Plans updated and on file with S&S; and
- Visitor management (Raptor).

Transportation – is responsible for providing transportation services for students who reside within the District boundaries, approximately 137 square miles.

Transportation Readiness Scope:
The Office of Transportation Readiness Efforts will focus on the inspection and repair of school's buses to service the students of Columbus City Schools and Charter Non-public to-and-from school in a safe and timely manner. Implementing new routing software installation & Notification Software, hiring and training drivers, and timely driver physicals.

Transportation Readiness Components:
- Routing software installation;

- State inspected and repaired School Buses;
- Preventative maintenance;
- Students not getting picked up (ODE Fines);
- Metrics;
- High School Students must OPT-IN for transportation services (Notification); and
- Driver Physicals (T-8's).

Food Services – Is responsible for the acquisition of and/or production of nutritious, appetizing meals for students and staff, while meeting all governmental and District regulations.

Food Services Readiness Scope:
The Office of Food Services Readiness will focus on the training of staff, equipment checks, and updating procedure manuals.

Food Service Readiness Components:
- Training of staff;
- Equipment checks; and
- Supply chain disruptions.

Buildings & Grounds (B&G) – Is responsible for maintaining a functional, warm, safe, and comfortable learning environment for students, staff and the community.

B&G maintains the District's approximately 10 million square feet of 134 school buildings and support facilities. The B&G's staff of 100 is comprised of Carpentry, Controls/HVAC, Customer Service, Electrical/Electronics, Energy Maintenance, upkeep and repair the District's schools, offices, and other facilities management, environmental health & safety, landscape, paint/preventative maintenance (PM), plumbing, and warehouse services.

- Maintenance, upkeep, and repair the District's schools, offices, and other facilities;
- Grounds maintenance and support including athletic fields;
- Utilize a comprehensive preventative maintenance program to address daily B&G and long-term facility issues;
- Support the District's electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and mechanical systems;
- Follow the District's energy and environmental health and safety policies and guidelines; and
- Maintain grounds, mowing, fertilizing, watering, and mulching including the athletic fields and snow removal.

B&G Customer Service is responsible for receiving District building repair and maintenance service requests. Annually, B&G processes an average of 26,000 maintenance service requests for District customers.

Buildings & Grounds Readiness Scope:
The Office of Buildings & Grounds Readiness focuses on completing work orders that affect building operations. The work tends to be related to major system repairs to ensure the efficient operations during the school year that promotes a conducive learning environment.

- Work orders at schools (any impacting opening day).
- Reconnecting and flushing drinking fountains.
- Preventative maintenance (HVAC).

Purpose of table: To show the number of Work Orders by status generated between 5/1/22 and 8/31/22.

Exhibit 1 – Work Orders Generated between 5/1/22 through 8/31/22

STATUS	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
BACK LOGGED	6	26	0	3	35
CLOSED	3,088	2,624	2,414	3,017	11,143
CLOSED REVIEWED	48	0	19	7	74
DECLINED	4	2	25	5	36
DEFERRED	5	20	36	9	70
IN PROGRESS	33	65	59	131	288
ON HOLD	173	126	68	132	499
OPEN	485	904	781	1,373	3,543
WORK COMPLETE	19	19	78	9	125
TOTALS	3,861	3,786	3,480	4,686	15,813

Source: Famis (5/1/22 – 8/31/22)

Purpose of table: To show the average number of days for Closed work orders.

Exhibit 2 – Average number of days for Closed work orders.

PRIORITY	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
PRIORITY 1 (Emergency – Same Day)	12.59	9.35	9.72	5.24	9.52
PRIORITY 2 (Corrective – 2 Days)	16.50	15.84	12.64	8.75	13.26
PRIORITY 3 (Reactive – 30 Days)	19.73	23.82	16.47	9.51	17.23
TOTALS	17.60	20.86	15.05	8.82	15.33

Source: Famis (5/1/22 – 8/31/22) Note: Data does not include preventative maintenance (PM) work orders.

Purpose of table: To show the average number of days for Open Work Orders.

Exhibit 3 – Average number of days for Open work orders.

	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
PRIORITY 1 (Emergency – Same Day)	106	77	49	11	47
PRIORITY 2 (Corrective – 2 Days)	108	77	45	12	40
PRIORITY 3 (Reactive – 30 Days)	108	76	45	11	40
TOTALS	**108**	**76**	**45**	**11**	**41**

Source: Famis (5/1/22 – 8/31/22) Note: Data does not include preventative maintenance (PM) work orders.

Purpose of table: To show the number of Open work orders.

Exhibit 4 – Number of Open work orders and percentage of total work orders.

	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
PRIORITY 1 (Emergency – Same Day)	32 (8%)	20 (9%)	23 (13%)	70 (21%)	145 (13%)
PRIORITY 2 (Corrective – 2 Days)	61 (9%)	34 (9%)	48 (14%)	198 (25%)	341 (16%)
PRIORITY 3 (Reactive – 30 Days)	162 (12%)	319 (19%)	314 (22%)	804 (36%)	1,599 (24%)
TOTALS	**255 (10%)**	**373 (17%)**	**385 (20%)**	**1,072 (32%)**	**4,596 (21%)**

Source: Famis (5/1/22 – 8/31/22) Note: Data does not include preventative maintenance (PM) work orders.

Capital Improvements – Is responsible for handling the implementation of capital improvements including, but not limited to, special construction programs, capital projects program and major repair/small renovation projects that are needed to maintain the effectiveness of the facilities. This office oversees the design and construction of projects.

Capital Improvements Readiness Scope: The Office of Capital Improvements Readiness efforts will focus on major system repairs to ensure the efficient operations during the school year and conducive and supportive learning environment.

Capital Improvements Readiness Components:
- HVAC at schools without air conditioning.
- Summer Projects i.e. concrete, asphalt.

Custodial Services – Is responsible to follow all federal, state and locally-mandated guidelines in the cleanliness, safety and performance of classrooms and workspaces. Our custodial personnel monitor building systems (mechanical, electrical and plumbing), and boilers.

Custodial Services Readiness Scope: The Readiness effort will focus on detailed cleaning to ensure the efficient operations during the school year and a conducive and supportive learning environment.

Custodial Services Readiness Components:
- Routinely scheduled work at schools;
- Special projects at schools;
- Creating work orders at school;
- Lighting – All ballast replaced as necessary. All lamps burning (no flickering or blackened lamps). Lens replaced as necessary (no cracked or missing lens). Ceiling tiles – All ceiling tiles in place. No sign of water damage. No warped or discolored tiles;
- Electrical – No broken outlets or switches. Exterior lighting in place and operational; and
- Plumbing – All toilets and sink fixtures operational.

Results of the District Readiness Audit - Issues and Recommendations:

Issue 1 – Monitoring of Work Order Metrics (Risk Rating: Moderate)

We looked at the time period May 1, 2022 through August 31, 2022. Our testing involved work orders (Famis) that were closed and work orders that were open. Work orders are generally prioritized into Priority 1, 2, and 3 categories and management asserted the expected time of response is same day, within 2 days, and within 30 days respectively. However, the Famis system does not capture response time. Management currently does not track or monitor response time and average day of completion metrics.

Closed work orders during our audit scope period

The following table shows the average number of days to close a work order (Priority 1 - 3):

PRIORITY	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
PRIORITY 1 (Emergency – Same Day)	12.59	9.35	9.72	5.24	9.52
PRIORITY 2 (Corrective – 2 Days)	16.50	15.84	12.64	8.75	13.26
PRIORITY 3 (Reactive – 30 Days)	19.73	23.82	16.47	9.51	17.23

Open work orders as of August 31, 2022

We found that 145, Priority 1 work orders in Famis were open since May 2022 (see table below for data).

PRIORITY	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
PRIORITY 1 (Emergency – Same Day)	32	20	23	70	145
TOTALS	725	1,162	1,047	1,662	4,596

Best practices of organizations track the completion of work orders and identify root causes that are preventing the work to be completed timely. Some of these root causes could be too small of an inventory of parts, insufficient staff to complete work, funding to purchase items for the repair, etc…

Without completing these work orders in a timely manner, problems could become more significant. For instance, if a roof is leaking, mold could develop; if HVAC is not working, instruction may be missed by having to close school; if cameras are not working, security coverage may not be sufficient.

Recommendation

1. Management should utilize existing data to monitor the work order completion and closure process.

2. Management should identify any systemic issues preventing the work orders from being completed timely, especially work orders classified as Priority 1 and 2.

3. Management should take action to minimize the significance of the above systematic issues.

Management Response:

Buildings and Grounds (B&G) would like to clarify that the Priority 1/2/3/ levels are response targets, not completion targets. For example, if a Priority 1 work order was entered for a hot building, B&G will respond by triaging the issue as soon as possible. Oftentimes there are short term repairs that are done, like resetting the equipment, that brings immediate relief but is not a permanent fix. In this case the permanent fix is figuring out what caused the equipment to need reset. Similarly, for roof leaks, a short-term repair is often installed that requires follow up later.

Furthermore, B&G would like to clarify that Capital Improvements and Safety & Security also use FAMIS for work order tracking.

B&G does have a system in place for monitoring work order completion. The supervisors meet periodically with technicians to review the assigned work orders and ensure that the ones that are completed are closed out. They also review comments to ensure that customers are receiving accurate information.

Management will implement a requirement that work orders are reviewed monthly for completion and quality commenting.

Implementation Date: *2/1/23*

Process Owner: Jeff Roe, Interim Director Buildings & Grounds

Issue 2 – The School Building Readiness Committee has not formally identified a purpose, goals, identified critical operations, performance metrics, or an assessment tool (survey) over the readiness of school buildings. (Risk Rating: Low)

During the review, OIA requested a written purpose statement, goals, performance metrics, and an assessment tool (survey) of the School Readiness Committee. The Committee was unable to provide any of the requested items.

The Committee was focused on the work to be completed and did not spend time creating governance, goals, or metrics for the Committee.

Every board, committee, council and club needs to have a clear purpose or objective to be able to conduct business in an efficient manner. Having a clear purpose helps the group stay on target when daily operations, different personalities and agendas steer them in a different direction.

Performance metrics enable the School Readiness Committee to monitor and measure actual performance against pre-established benchmarks to identify performance gaps and deficiencies. Identifying opportunities for improvement can then prompt mitigation measures that, when implemented, will help the Committee to meet established goals and objectives.

In the absence of monitoring Committee performance, management cannot identify opportunities for improvement or timely implement mitigation measures to ensure that Committee continues to operate at the highest level.

Recommendation

4. The School Building Readiness Committee should establish a purpose statement, goals, identify critical operations and performance metrics. Periodic monitoring of the metrics and assessment tools (surveys) should be done to ensure the success of the Committee.

Management Response:
Each year at the first School Building Readiness meeting the team is informed of the purpose of the committee. The purpose of the committee is to receive individual department progress updates that address any issues that will cause school not to open on the first day of the new school year. The committee focus on ensuring district buildings and grounds are safe and ready to receive students and staff on the first day of the school year.

The School Readiness team will meet prior to the end of this school year to establish and formally document the purpose and goals of the School Readiness Committee.

Implementation Date: 5/30/2023

Process Owner: Maurice Oldham, Sr. Executive Director (Business & Operations)

Issue 3 – The School Building Readiness Committee does not maintain a schedule/log to track, record, monitor, and report on issues related to the readiness of District buildings prior to the opening day of school. (Risk Rating: Moderate)

To carry out our audit objectives related to school building readiness, OIA requested the School Building Readiness Committee minutes or any means of tracking critical issues. The Committee was unable to provide minutes or any other means of tracking critical issues taken up by the Committee.

Based on inquiry with the Committee Chair, in prior years the Committee utilized a Google Doc to track, record, and report on critical issues related to the readiness of District buildings. This past summer of 2022, OIA learned the Committee decided not to track, record, report on critical issues identified and discussed at weekly meetings.

Attendance and observation of Committee meeting, OIA noted proper and appropriate discussion regarding building readiness.

Without a process in place for tracking, recording, and reporting on "Hot Button" critical issues the Committee cannot determine the overall success of the Committee. Additionally, without compiling and reporting on critical elements of significant issues

identified, it is not possible to identify trends or anomalies that may warrant further scrutiny and possible corrective action.

Recommendation

5. The School Building Readiness Committee should reconsider identifying significant "Hot Button" issues for tracking and monitoring. Each issue should be identified and an appropriate metric should be identified for assessment and analysis.

Management Response:
The School Readiness Committee will collaborate with CCS Information Technology Department to re-implement the school readiness issue tracker to be used during the summer of 2023.

Implementation Date: *5/30/23*

Process Owner: Maurice Oldham, Sr. Executive Director (Business & Operations)

Issue 4 – (Non-Compliance) Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Plans and Preparation could be improved. (Risk Rating: High)

During our review, OIA noted six significant departments that did not submit an updated COOP Plan. There is not a Continuity of Management team that could address COOP or Business Impact Analysis activities throughout the District.

The Office of Safety & Security requested in Jan. 2022 and July 2022, Departments to submit an updated COOP Plan for their department by August 22, 2022. There was no evidence of communication between the Office of Safety & Security and the Superintendent's Office regarding the Departments who did not submit a COOP.

During our review, we noted that District management has not established a Continuity of Management Team.

The District has established formal polices and one administrative guideline for the District's Continuity of Operations Plan.

Board of Education (BOE) policy (po8300) states in part:

"The Continuity of Organizational Operations Plan (COOP) provides the District with capability of conducting its essential operations under all threats and conditions with or without warning. Having a plan to recover from any type of disaster regardless of the severity and consequences of the emergency is critical to recovery of operations and can minimize the impact on the District's teaching and learning, personnel, facilities, technology, transportation, food service, and other functional resources…"

"…The Superintendent shall recommend the COOP for the Board of Education review and approval; however, the COOP shall be considered a confidential

document not subject to release under State public records laws and accordingly no copies shall be provided for the public review during the adoption process.

The Superintendent shall conduct an annual review of the COOP. The Superintendent shall ensure that all staff are informed about the COOP. <u>The Superintendent shall conduct training, including simulations, for designated staff in the implementation of the COOP."</u>

Board of Education (BOE) Administrative Guideline Manual (ag8300) states in part:

"Management and maintenance of the District's Continuity of Organizational Operations Plan (COOP) is a comprehensive task that depends on a multi-disciplinary team. The District's Continuity Management Team should be composed of the upper-level managers in the District administration that represent all key functional areas and representatives from key departmental and school site faculty and staff."

When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in March 2020, the Office of Safety & Security had a Third-Party vendor provide additional training for District management in May and June of 2020. At the completion of the training district office/departments were required to submit their COOP Plans.

<u>Recommendations</u>

7. The Office of Safety & Security should develop procedures for the annual review and approval of the COOP by the Board of Education; in accordance with BOE Policy. These procedures should include periodic reporting to the Superintendent's Office on those Departments who have and have not completed their COOP.

Management Response:
The Office of Safety and Security will develop a monitoring process for review and compliance of the COOP Plan in accordance with BOE Policy. The Office of Safety and Security will provide the Superintendent's Office with a compliance status report twice a year.

8. The Office of Safety & Security should develop procedures for annual training their staff could provide to District staff. This training could include simulations for designated staff in the implementation of the COOP; in accordance with BOE Policy. Evidence of this testing of the COOP should be submitted to the Office of Safety & Security.

Management Response:
The Office of Safety and Security will develop procedures and guidelines to provide timely training to district staff on the development, revisions and implementation of the COOP Plans per respective areas.

9. A communication strategy should be developed to educate staff on the COOP, the need for the COOP, ways to test the COOP, due date to have COOP plans submitted

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to Safety & Security staff, and the due date when project summary will be submitted to the Superintendent. This will help to comply with BOE Policy.

Management Response:
The Office of Safety and Security will research best practices on ways to test the COOP plans and effective communication. This will include established timelines for final submission to be in line with board policy.

10. A Continuity of Management team should be assembled that includes upper-level managers of District staff from across the District. This team should be focused on COOP and Business Impact Analysis activities.

Management Response:
The Office of Safety and Security will assemble a Continuity of Management team to include upper level management of the district. This team will be managed by the Office of Safety and Security.

Implementation Date: 9/1/23

Process Owner: Chris Baker, Director, Safety & Security

Audit Objectives

OIA established the following objectives for the audit:

- To determine if the extent of the District readiness will contribute to the strategic priorities of the District by providing a foundation of support that enables the organization to produce its targeted student outcomes;

- To determine if bottlenecks are identified and action is taken by management to minimize impact; and

- To determine if the District is compliant with required and recommended guidance from recognized authoritative organizations selected policies and procedures.

Audit Scope

The period from which transactions and other periodic activities were selected for examination were generally May 1 through August 31, 2022. However, OIA will select transactions and/or evidence of activities from other periods should audit results dictate such selection.

Methodologies

To accomplish the audit objectives, OIA generally used inquiry, observation, and document/record examination and the following tasks as they relate to those objectives:

- Reviewed various relevant authoritative literature;
- Reviewed relevant District Board of Education (BOE) policies and Administrative Guidelines;
- Reviewed prior relevant OIA audits;
- Reviewed department checklists;
- Performed walkthroughs of District school buildings;
- Interviewed selected Business and Operations management and staff; and
- Observation of the School Building Readiness Committee meetings.