

OFFICE OF AUDITOR GENERAL



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Audit Report



Chancery SMS– Grading & Scheduling Index

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Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Executive Summary

OBJECTIVE

To evaluate the system and operating control environment for the Chancery Student Management System related to the scheduling and grading modules and processes.

BACKGROUND

The Chancery Student Management System (Chancery) was implemented July 2006. The system maintains data supporting attendance, behavior, secondary scheduling/grading, registration, enrollment and program management. Generally, the data contained in Chancery is entered at the various school locations. The school information is then consolidated in Chancery to compile District related reporting. In February 2009, the Office of Accountability starting utilizing Chancery data in Datacacion software to provide enhanced visibility for student related information and management of graduation tracking. This tool is completely dependent on the consistency and accuracy of Chancery information. Consistent procedures must exist across schools to realize the benefits of automated reporting in Chancery and Datacacion to allow effective and accurate data tracking and analysis.

SCOPE

To identify the operating controls in place to support accuracy of data and proper monitoring of students' grading and scheduling. This audit will evaluate:

- Chancery controls that enable grading and scheduling activities,
- Policies and procedures established for grades and scheduling,
- Compliance with State regulatory requirements,
- Accuracy and timeliness of associated data, and
- Monitoring to support District objectives.

We will make inquiries of key personnel to understand current processes and control activities for clarification and relevance.



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Executive Summary

CONCLUSION

Changes in executive sponsorship for Chancery SMS have caused a lack of clear ownership and development of the system. IM&T has maintained the system, however true user ownership of the various modules must be established to reap the benefits of this system. A cross-functional steering committee is critical to setting business priorities and development to fully utilize this investment. Currently, the system is utilized across the district without adequate standards guidance and data oversight. The Office of Accountability is in a position to lead and partner with a cross-functional team to obtain buy-in and reinforce ownership from the various users of the system. This critical partnership will allow a more meaningful data analysis once the users of the system take on added responsibility for data entry. Additional investment in formal process development, automation, training and reporting will allow operating areas to improve data quality and operating performance.



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Summary of Recommendations

Rec#	Recommendations
1	<i>Create a Steering Committee and ensure that all stakeholders are included. Develop performance standards articulating user expectations and define service delivery to be adopted by the Steering Committee for the Chancery application.</i>
2	<i>Align and Designate Chancery system ownership for modules, operating processes and the resulting data to ensure consistent application. The assignment of ownership must be collaborative to ensure all appropriate department requirements are aligned and considered for decision-making.</i>
3	<i>Consider establishing a Board policy regarding expectations on a district-wide grading methodology for students.</i>
4	<i>Develop district-wide grading standards & operating procedures (for elementary, secondary, midterm). Enhance operating procedures to include the method of calculating a weighted and unweighted GPA, compiling class rank, determining honor roll, management of exceptions and oversight to ensure accuracy and completeness within the system. If the ASAP manual is determined not to be the appropriate venue for this information consider creating desk procedures to serve as a user manual for operating procedures.</i>
5	<i>Migrate School Without Walls grading from a stand-alone operating system to the Chancery student management system.</i>
6	<i>Create a process for Chancery Help Desk requests to ensure timely response, communication and resolution of issue to user.</i>
7	<i>Determine underutilized functionality & develop a cross functional team to review and evaluate Chancery components to determine their value and feasibility of operating and implementation.</i>
8	<i>Develop standards, automate, provide training and enforce utilization of automated GPA calculations, class rank, honor roll, and course catalog standards. Implement a process to resolve concerns relating to automation in these areas.</i>



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Summary of Recommendations

Rec#	Recommendations
9	<i>Establish a process for handling student transfers in Chancery. Identify communication and process expectations between schools and Placement Centers to better accommodate student transfers including timeliness. Investigate best practices for transfers both manually and within this system.</i>
10	<i>Determine the feasibility of utilizing Chancery for grading, elementary scheduling and report cards. At a minimum, establish standard protocols for elementary report cards.</i>
11	<i>Develop and implement district-wide report card and retention standards at the elementary and secondary level. Establish and implement a formalized reconciliation process to ensure all students receive a report card from the Chancery system.</i>
12	<i>Establish operating responsibility for the Registrar function and related operating guidance. Ensure the knowledge transfer is adequate to support existing Registrar functions and District operating needs.</i>
13	<i>Consider additional automation in the course catalog process. Such as carrying over each year grading table properties for courses. Identify the reasons that schools are not utilizing the course catalog standards, determine the legitimacy of those reasons and drive towards a common process.</i>
14	<i>Review the access of personnel that can change any grades and associated information to align accountability for changes. Ensure that such changes are auditable on the system.</i> <i>Establish a process for changes to grades and related information with defined approvals as necessary. Considerations should also include standard forms for changes and supporting documentation.</i>
15	<i>Develop a cross functional team to evaluate current Chancery transcripts and make appropriate changes as needed. Include in the team guidance counselors, registrars and Principals from schools utilizing the transcript effectively, as well as schools that are modifying the transcripts. Consider removing the ability to produce a transcript in Word.</i>



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Summary of Recommendations

Rec#	Recommendations
16	<i>Establish a data verification team to cleanse historical data. Include clear deadlines for verification, a correction process and exception reporting.</i>
17	<i>Assemble a team to identify reports that would be beneficial to fully utilize Chancery reporting capabilities. Implement the selected reporting to improve operations.</i>



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #1

Oversight

Chancery Steering Committee

The Chancery Student Management System does not have a steering committee with all key stakeholders to ensure system development priorities are set and managed. IM&T provides infrastructure support, however this role is performed without service level performance expectations from system stakeholders.

Key players that were instrumental in the selection of the software are no longer with the District. [REDACTED] Originally, Chancery was scheduled to be implemented in multiple phases. It was communicated that Phase 2 was scheduled to include Central Office reporting, state reporting and training initiatives. Unfortunately, only Phase 1 was completed. [REDACTED] Current functionality should also be evaluated against the needs of the District to determine if significant benefits can be achieved with additional investment in system functionality.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Create a Steering Committee and ensure that all stakeholders are included. Develop performance standards articulating user expectations and define service delivery to be adopted by the Steering Committee for the Chancery application.

Management Responses: Office of Accountability has taken the lead to coordinate the appropriate functional resources that require a voice in the configuration of Chancery. We will include IM&T, Youth and Family, Special Education, and Teaching & Learning. We recognize that cross-functional coordination is critical to the success of this system and any future development. We also recognize that Accountability requirements for state reporting must be considered when any configuration changes take place.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: February 28, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #2

Chancery Ownership and Functionality

Ownership and oversight for specific data and associated processes are not formalized in Chancery. Although Registrars and Counselors have regular meetings to solve problems and standardize activities, there are still many opportunities to standardize practices and system requirements. Various school Registrars, Counselors, and Accountability staff rely on Chancery for data and reporting, however they create manual reports outside of the system to achieve their objectives due to inconsistencies in how system information is maintained. When inconsistencies are noted in system data, a formalized process does not exist across all system users to correct the data in the system. This concern exists for student information, transcripts, GPA's, Honor roll and class ranks. The Office of Accountability is charged with providing data oversight, but cannot fully focus data quality improvement without the ability to structure and align operating processes.

We also noted that there is functionality in the system that is not utilized, such as honor roll designation, class ranking and GPA calculations. These are manually performed by some Guidance Counselors and the calculation and process varies amongst the schools.

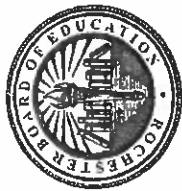
RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Align and Designate Chancery system ownership for modules, operating processes and the resulting data to ensure consistent application. The assignment of ownership must be collaborative to ensure all appropriate department requirements are aligned and considered for decision-making.

Management Responses: With the implementation of the Cross-functional Steering Committee, communications have commenced to establish the appropriate system design, ownership and data consistency of the various modules in the system.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer; Annmarie Lehner, Technology Officer

Due Date: June 30, 2010 – Ongoing



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #3

Operating Guidance

Board Policy

Board policies exist for numerous district functions to provide guidance on the Board's expectations for district operations. There is no Board Policy regarding expectations on how students are graded, nor are there Superintendent Regulations to govern the calculations and methodology that should be used for student grading throughout the district. Board policies provide guidance on attendance and homework, but do not articulate expectations related to grading. As a result, schools are individually determining grading practices and a lack of consistency exists across the district. Without this guidance, student transcripts and grade point averages vary based on the originating school and how they interpret grades. The Board should consider adopting policy regarding the high level definition for grading requirements. Non-standard grading requirements affect accuracy, comparability, reporting and operational efficiency since some manual calculations are performed.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Consider establishing a Board policy regarding expectations on a district-wide grading methodology for students.

Management Responses: This recommendation will be forwarded by OAG to the Chairperson of the Policy Committee for consideration in the Committee priorities.

Responsibility: Board of Education Policy Committee

Due Date: Completed



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #4

District-wide Grading Standards & Operating Procedures

District operating practices through Administrative Guidelines for Academic Standards and Assessment Policy/Academic Intervention Services (ASAP) manual are not detailed enough to provide comprehensive grading guidance. District practices defined in the ASAP manual provide significant guidance, but do not define the methodology for GPA calculations, weighted grades, class rank, honor roll, and exceptions to standard grading. Graduation requirements for regent diplomas as defined in ASAP are not standard throughout the District and total credits to graduate range from 22-26.5. Midterm grades are at the teacher's discretion, regarding whether they are included in the third marking period grade and appear in Chancery for informational purposes.

A committee is in the process of updating the existing ASAP policy. Operating procedures should include the method of calculating a weighted and unweighted GPA, compiling class rank, determining honor roll, management of exceptions and oversight to ensure accuracy and completeness within the system. Non-standard grading requirements affect accuracy, comparability, reporting and operational efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Develop district-wide grading standards & operating procedures (for elementary, secondary, midterm). Enhance operating procedures to include the method of calculating a weighted and unweighted GPA, compiling class rank, determining honor roll, management of exceptions and oversight to ensure accuracy and completeness within the system. If the ASAP manual is determined not to be the appropriate venue for this information consider creating desk procedures to serve as a user manual for operating procedures.

Management Responses: The Office of Accountability has taken the lead in coordinating with the Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and other significant contributors to update and establish grading standards and operating procedures. We will ensure that the standards align with external reporting requirements.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer; Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

Due Date: December 31, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #5

Separate Grading System for School Without Walls

School Without Walls uses a separate system for grading. School Without Walls (SWW) uses a Foxpro system for grading and reporting, but would like to migrate to Chancery. The SWW's system was written several years ago and is currently supported informally by a retired District employee living in Colorado. The System hardware is old and a significant risk of failure exists with a stand-alone system. All student assessments are written in free form text, which is unlike all other secondary schools in the district.

Chancery should be used for SWW. Efforts should be made to promptly migrate SWW to the Chancery system. This change will allow all secondary schools to be on the district student management system, as well as eliminate the added business expense of maintaining a stand-alone system.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Migrate School Without Walls grading from a stand-alone operating system to the Chancery student management system.

Management Responses: We have started working with the leadership at School Without Walls to transition their students to Chancery. We have established a plan to transition the School Without Walls students to the Chancery system. Work has commenced to start the transition for the 2010 – 2011 school year.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: August 31, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #6

Service Delivery Standards

Chancery system issues are called into the IM&T Help Desk and logged into tracking software. Depending on the nature of the issue it may be resolved by IM&T or the concern will be assigned to Office of Accountability Chancery Functional Advocates. Our review of the logged concerns noted items that were in excess of 60 days old. Issues ranged from inability to print student schedules, duplicate incident entered and functionality questions. There should be a process in place for Chancery ticket resolution which includes expected resolution timeline, prioritization and communication with the requestor. There needs to be a proactive process in place to ensure timely resolution and communication to users. If ticket resolution is untimely, Chancery users can experience difficulties and delays in performing daily job functions.

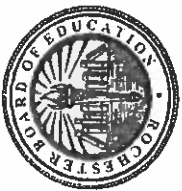
RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Create a process for Chancery Help Desk requests to ensure timely response, communication and resolution of issue to user.

Management Responses: We are working with Information Management & Technology Department to evaluate our current process and establish an internal procedure to address Chancery Help Desk related calls and close them in the system in a timely manner.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: June 30, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #7

Functionality

Underutilization of Chancery

Chancery is underutilized and some system functionality is not configured for use. Academically relevant Chancery system capabilities are not configured. Variability in processes, performance measurement and data ownership result in manual inefficiencies and underutilized system resources. There are functionalities in the systems that are not utilized for example honor roll designation, class ranking or GPA calculations. These are manually performed by some Guidance Counselors and the calculations and processes may vary amongst the schools.

Chancery is a student management system established to record district-wide student information. The system has capabilities that the District has not put into operation such as class ranking, designating honor roll and identifying course prerequisites. Currently these activities are manually performed by Guidance Counselors. Counselors enter course requests for students and it is their responsibility to ensure that students have met enrollment requirements. Automation in the Chancery system would facilitate timely reporting and consistency amongst the schools. It will also reduce the human errors that occur in manual processes. The compilation of class ranking or honor rolls should not vary by school. Automating course prerequisites will provide efficiencies for Guidance Counselors and minimize scheduling errors.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Determine underutilized functionality & develop a cross functional team to review and evaluate Chancery components to determine their value and feasibility of operating and implementation.

Management Responses: The Steering Committee has started to evaluate the current system requests/requirements and the related processes for implementing system changes. We are also ensuring that impacts to the cross-functional system users are considered. Improvements have started, but this will be an ongoing process.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: June 30, 2010 – Ongoing



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #8

Utilize Chancery Capabilities

The process for tracking student academics and graduation targets is manual and varies in consistency. OAG noted there was a lack of standardization amongst the guidance counselors in the means to identify academic concerns and manual tracking of the credits in lieu of the system. There is substantial reliance on paper files to track graduation information rather than utilizing and ensuring Chancery accuracy. Chancery calculates the GPA; however not all schools rely on it and they manually calculate them at the schools.

The course catalog and the number of points for grades are standardized in the system and should eliminate judgment. The manual process allows a lack of consistency from other interpretations. Exceptions include the following:

- Guidance counselors *manually* determine the class ranking. When class ranking is determined outside of the system, there is no standard process or template with which to construct the class ranking. Each school will individually rank their students and identify honor roll candidates.
- OAG was advised rankings are not 100% consistent on how they are calculated even though the Regents level courses are standard.
- Schools are not consistent in how they calculate some courses such as Pre-Calc. One school may manually add additional weight to a class and view it as an honors course, or when an eighth grader is taking a higher level course.

The information in Chancery should be accurate and provide required information for students. Manual records should be minimized and not serve as a primary tracking tool. The system should be utilized to perform the functions intended to receive the maximum results. Allowing the system to perform intended functions will limit the manual intervention and inconsistencies. If the source information is correct and accurate then the system can perform the mechanics of currently manual functions.



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

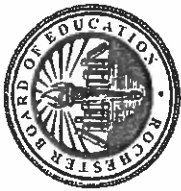
RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Develop standards, automate, provide training and enforce utilization of automated GPA calculations, class rank, honor roll, and course catalog standards. Implement a process to resolve concerns relating to automation in these areas.

Management Responses: Office of Accountability has been performing relevant data analysis to identify inconsistencies in school related data. We will provide guidance and training on these areas as concerns are identified. Updating and implementing the ASAP manual with the Teaching and Learning Department will facilitate school based standards and data consistency. Ultimately the schools must make the changes in their data once inconsistencies are brought to their attention.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: December 31, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #9

Standard Process for Student Transfers

Schools have not been provided a standard or effective process to accommodate student transfers. Internal and external student transfers are difficult to accommodate in Chancery. For internal transfers and class changes, the effective start date for the new class must be back dated as if the student originated in the class. When this occurs, All attendance data and any grades earned in the previous class must be moved from the prior class to the new class, as if they were earned in the current class. Even though this practice is misleading, no other process has been defined to adequately address this concern.

For transfers from other districts, historical transcript information is interpreted by Placement. This process can be backlogged at times. When the student arrives at a school, Registrars and Guidance Counselors will attempt to accommodate the student by creating a schedule based on the information that is available to them. The creation of a relevant schedule can be challenging for a bilingual student when their incoming transcript has not been converted to District courses.

Considering there are thousands of transfers a year, a transfer process should be well defined, streamlined and seamless. The District should establish a method to accurately account for student transitions. Our records should reflect actual student movement. The transfer of timely information and communication with the schools is essential in a smooth student transition.

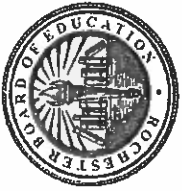
RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Establish a process for handling student transfers in Chancery. Identify communication and process expectations between schools and Placement Centers to better accommodate student transfers including timeliness. Investigate best practices for transfers both manually and within this system.

Management Responses: We are working with the vendor (Pearson) to address this problem. A district-wide process will be created to determine a consistent method of handling student transfers.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: December 31, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #10

Report Cards

Chancery Utilization for Elementary Schools

Elementary schools do not use Chancery for grading or scheduling. Chancery functionality for elementary schools was in the original scope of the Chancery project but it was never implemented. If Chancery is implemented at the elementary level, business process redesign for report card reporting would be necessary. Currently, elementary report cards are created and maintained at the school level. Report cards as an operating process are not entirely standardized amongst schools or within a school. One reason for some of the variability is that there is a free form non-standard text field in elementary report cards. This decision should be reevaluated to ensure a certain level of consistency within report cards. Report cards that are hand written appear sloppy; can contain white out and/or spelling errors which is a poor image for the district to portray.

Similar to the secondary schools, Chancery should be used for elementary scheduling and grading. Report cards should be standardized within the District. Regardless of the school a student attends, the report card provided to parents should be similar. In order to utilize Chancery for grading, district report card methodology would need to be restructured and standardized. This practice would reduce the reliance and storage required for paper files. The District has a transient population and the report cards should not vary amongst schools. Chancery is the student information warehouse and should contain all student data.

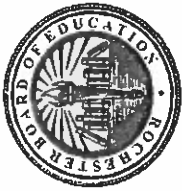
RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Determine the feasibility of utilizing Chancery for grading, elementary scheduling and report cards. At a minimum, establish standard protocols for elementary report cards.

Management Responses: We have started to evaluate standards in these areas. We are also anticipating state related requirements that will facilitate changes to a standard model across schools. We will establish a consistent format; however these standards will require enforcement at the school level from the Zone Chiefs.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer; Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

Due Date: June 30, 2011



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #11

Report Card Retention

There are no report card retention policies or processes to ensure that all students have received a report card. There is no standard protocol for saving report cards on a network location or an alternate location where the information is backed up and retrievable. Report cards can be rerun at any time by the Functional Advocate. The Functional Advocate sends the report cards to the individual buildings for their records and academic tracking purposes.

There is no detailed reconciliation at a student level to ensure that each student receives a report card. An offline manual reconciliation is performed to estimate if a reasonable number of report cards were produced. This is determined by evaluating the number of pages that were generated and not the number of records produced. There is no system reporting that identifies the actual number of report cards produced. As a result, a student may not receive a report card. There should be a formal reconciliation performed to ensure that all students have a report card generated. There should also be clear retention policies that allow the easy retrieval of prior report cards.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Develop and implement district-wide report card and retention standards at the elementary and secondary level. Establish and implement a formalized reconciliation process to ensure all students receive a report card from the Chancery system.

Management Responses: Recent departmental changes allow schools with access at the building level for producing report cards. As a result, each building is in a position to ensure that all report cards are created in Chancery. Previously this access was not available. Using the Chancery system for report cards will address the document retention concerns, since the system is backed up by IM&T.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: Completed



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #12

Registrars

Process knowledge and continued support for the Registrar responsibilities require continuity. Grading and Scheduling process knowledge has resided primarily with one individual. Training of Registrars in Chancery has been a responsibility of this position. The transition of this position may not include the continued responsibility of training the Registrars. While Registrars report to their respective Principals, they do not have a Managing Director to facilitate their agenda and common problems.

There have been recurring monthly Registrar meetings and a significant reliance on the current Functional Advocate position in Office of Accountability to respond to questions and troubleshoot problems across all schools. It is not clear how these responsibilities will exist in the future; however there is a need for an individual to be responsible for the registrar function district-wide. Detailed operating procedures do not exist to ensure daily responsibilities are addressed and appropriate oversight and direction from a system perspective will occur.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Establish operating responsibility for the Registrar function and related operating guidance. Ensure the knowledge transfer is adequate to support existing Registrar functions and District operating needs.

Management Responses: The Registrar function has transitioned and monthly meetings have been established to ensure that operating guidance is occurring as needed.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: Completed



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #13

Class Offering Automation

Class offerings are established annually at each school. Our discussions with registrars noted that it is labor intensive to set up courses manually. For each course, the registrar is required to select standard course characteristics, such as sending to the course to the transcript and calculating the course in the student's GPA. In the event that a registrar erroneously forgets to select the send to transcript indicator, the student's transcript could omit a required course. The Chancery system should be configured to automatically default these critical fields to ensure courses are included in the transcript and GPA. In the event that a course should not be included, it would be easier to edit the field, since this is a less common selection. In our testing, there was an input error that would have eliminated a course from student grade point averages. We brought the error to the registrar's attention and it was immediately corrected. Courses should include standardization and automation to streamline the process and ensure consistency. Allowing each school to establish a separate catalog could allow one school to consider a course more heavily than another in graduation requirements. The manual process is also prone to human error as evidenced by our testing.

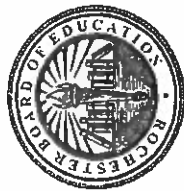
RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Consider additional automation in the course offering process. Such as carrying over each year grading table properties for courses. Identify the reasons that schools are not utilizing the course catalog standards, determine the legitimacy of those reasons and drive towards a common process.

Management Responses: We will evaluate the feasibility of establishing procedures that will allow certain course numbers to roll over for the next school year. We will look for ways to simplify the process for determining course offerings within schools an reduce manual intervention.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: September 30, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #14

Chancery Access

There appears to be a large number of district Personnel that can effect changes to grading. OAG observed a relatively large group (140+) of administrators and three IM&T personnel that can alter grades of other teachers within their schools, override credits earned, and transfer a student's grades and attendance from one class to another. Three IM&T personnel can also modify grades in prior marking periods, and override calculated grades. OAG was advised that only Registrars are able to change grades, however access provided does not support this assumption. In addition, when considering other information obtained regarding transcripts and GPA's, OAG noted that there was noticeable reliance on correction of grades and GPA's outside of the system thereby raising the risk associated with responsibility for grade data and changes to it within and outside the system.

OAG determined that the Data Steward role that should have view only access to production data also was granted update capability. When brought to IM&T's attention, OAG was informed that a ticket had been submitted to the vendor in September 2008 regarding this bug. Production and test Chancery systems are indistinguishable when logged into them and there is no banner or system signage to distinguish between them that could increase an unintentional update. Changes to any grades should go through an approval process and sufficient documentation should exist to substantiate all grade changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Review the access of personnel that can change any grades and associated information to align accountability for changes.

Establish a process for changes to grades and related information with defined approvals as necessary. Considerations should also include standard forms for changes and supporting documentation.

Management Responses: Office of Accountability will create a process to document the standard information required to change grades and standard forms. This will ensure that consistent information will be maintained to support grade changes. We are limited in our ability to address the system issue until the vendor is able to perform a change.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: June 30, 2010



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #15

Transcripts

The current Chancery transcript as produced by the system is not consistently utilized. We noted that schools save the Chancery transcript into a Word document; then they overwrite the information to reflect their manual records. There are remaining data issues based on incomplete cleanup. There are inaccuracies with credits; grade points not being properly assigned to courses and GPA's that differ from school calculated numbers. The current transcript does not reflect prior schools attended and shows all grades under the current school. Per discussion at the schools, there are still issues with historical grades not being correct in Chancery. OAG also noted the GPA's on the transcript do not agree to the historical information in the system or to manual calculations sampled.

Chancery calculates the GPA; however not all schools rely on or agree with the calculation. As a result, they manually recalculate the number. The lack of operating guidance and standards creates and allows varying opinions regarding how a course is handled when it is repeated. Some schools average both grades, while others only include the last grade earned. The information in Chancery should be accurate and reflect actual student grades. Transcripts should not be altered. Source data should be corrected to properly reflect the student's academic records and provide meaningful reporting. Overwriting reported information without updating the source data will never rectify the problem and require continued adjustments to historical data.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES (1 of 2)

Develop a cross functional team to evaluate current Chancery transcripts and make appropriate changes as needed. Include in the team guidance counselors, registrars and Principals from schools utilizing the transcript effectively, as well as schools that are modifying the transcripts. Consider removing the ability to produce a transcript in Word.

Management Responses: We have worked with appropriate departments to create a standard transcript in the system. This new functionality is currently being implemented across the schools. We are unable to remove the Word document functionality, since it is included in the system.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: Completed



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #16

Data Verification and Reporting

Inaccurate Historical Data from SIS System

Due to the historical SIS system and prior operating practices, historical grading and components are not accurate for some students. A single page transcript did not exist in the old SIS system; however labels were produced annually and affixed to student's cumulative files to summarize final report cards and produce transcripts. OAG was made informed that corrections were made to the labels using white out. This was evidenced on cumulative files. Consequently, there was a significant clean up effort after conversion from SIS to Chancery by Guidance Counselors to correct historical errors and corrections. Based on our testing, we observed converted extraneous credits that had not been removed from Chancery, numbers included in the grade point averages that should not have received credit and GPA's that could not be substantiated.

Student information in Chancery should be current and accurate. This data feeds the data warehouse, state reporting, transcripts, class ranking, and grade point averages for each student [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We were informed that guidance counselors make efforts to correct final transcript information when sending to schools. Efforts should be made to validate the system data.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Establish a data verification team to cleanse historical data. Include clear deadlines for verification, a correction process and exception reporting.

Management Responses: Through the use of Datacat, considerable data cleansing has already started. School administrators currently have better visibility to identify and correct errors or irregularities. We are performing training, as needed at school to facilitate this data cleansing effort.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer

Due Date: Ongoing



Chancery SMS – Grading & Scheduling Observations, Recommendations and Action Plans

OBSERVATION #17

Chancery Reports

Significant opportunities exist to enhance the utilization of Chancery in order to gain operating efficiencies and school functionality. Reporting should exist to quickly identify the errors in creating the course catalog that will result in missing data on transcripts. If a marking period is missing a grade, Chancery does not calculate a final grade. However simple reporting does not exist to quickly alert the teachers that a grade is missing and system screens do not flag nor highlight students with missing grades. The system should be able to address these concerns.

For scheduling, the only way a Registrar knows that all students were scheduled is by reviewing a “LOAD” page. There is no report that would identify the total number of student requests, seats available and the number of students scheduled. Similarly, there is no formal reporting to verify that all student report cards were produced. There were multiple complaints at the schools that the conflict matrix was too complicated and does not serve their needs for visibility. Communications with parents could be enhanced by increasing the frequency of notification not through report cards but through voice response system notifications when performance does not meet defined targets. This could minimize the amount of manual letters, postage, and teachers’ use of time for student achievement.

Evaluate opportunities in which exception reporting would be a beneficial tool. The system has the capability to provide class ranking, identify honor roll students and ensure prerequisite courses are taken. Automation in the Chancery system would facilitate timely reporting and consistency amongst the schools. Exception reporting should be established and utilized to improve operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS and MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Assemble a team to identify reports that would be beneficial to fully utilize Chancery reporting capabilities. Implement the selected reporting to improve operations.

Management Responses: The Chancery Steering Committee that has been established will identify reporting required to address the needs of the various system users. This will be an ongoing effort to meet the needs of users.

Responsibility: Jeanette Silvers, Chief Accountability Officer **Due Date:** Ongoing