

Operational Efficiencies could save CCSD tens of millions a year

A new Efficiency Study estimates the Clark County School District (CCSD) could save up to \$34 million after the first year and up to \$79 million annually within the next five years through identified operational efficiencies.

The study was commissioned by Superintendent Jhone Ebert with the support of the CCSD Board of School Trustees and is the first of its kind in CCSD since 2011. The report was conducted by Gibson Consulting Group.

The Efficiency Study is intended to provide transparency and credibility for the Board of Trustees, employees, families, taxpayers, and community partners, demonstrating that CCSD is maximizing every dollar amid rising operational costs. Updates on the implementation of the Efficiency Study will be provided regularly to the Board of Trustees and the community.

The report breaks down potential efficiencies into two categories:

1. Educational efficiencies to accelerate student growth
2. Operational savings to help fund the work required to transform our schools into the Destination District

Educational Efficiencies

- The report identified four key educational focus areas:
 - Strengthening the implementation of high-quality, grade-level instruction in literacy and mathematics.
 - Restructuring special education to increase time in general education classrooms.
 - Implementing a unified framework for English language learners.
 - Reducing reliance on outside vendors by building site-based pathways for credit recovery for high school students.

The report identified Operational Savings across six key areas:

- **Software and Licensing (Up to \$11.25 million in savings by 2031):** Implement a Software Asset Management program to streamline software purchases and prevent overlapping services.
- **Transportation Routing (Up to \$18 million in savings by 2031):** Transition to an "opt-in" model for families to eliminate empty bus seats and safely transition some eligible special education students to general education routes with their peers.
- **Preventive Maintenance (Up to \$20 million in savings by 2031):** Accelerate the shift from costly "reactive" repairs to proactive maintenance.
- **Updated Construction Design (Up to \$10 million in savings by 2031):** Update the 2016 Construction Design Manual to build higher-performing, longer-lasting facilities.
- **Energy Performance Benchmarking (Up to \$11.9 million in savings by 2031):** Monitor and optimize energy and water use to identify leaks, efficiently tune HVAC systems, and prevent overuse.
- **Indirect Cost Recovery (Up to \$8.5 million by 2031):** Recover indirect administrative costs from major federal grants (e.g., Food Service and Title programs) at industry-standard rates to return money to the General Fund.

Why did the District decide to do this study now, and what did it cost?

CCSD last completed a comprehensive study of this nature in 2011. Since that time, CCSD has experienced significant shifts in enrollment, regulatory requirements, and operating conditions.

The 2026 one-time independent study cost approximately \$1.4 million, which is consistent with the rigorous scale, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement required for a district of CCSD's size (the fifth-largest in the nation). The identified recurring operational savings will significantly exceed the study's one-time cost.

How is the 2026 efficiency study different from the 2011 efficiency study?

The 2011 report focused mostly on potential operational savings. The report outlined \$226.6 million in potential savings (offset by reinvesting \$60.5 million in necessary upgrades). In all, the report contained 92 specific recommendations. Only one of the operational recommendations overlapped with the 2026 study: A focus on preventative

maintenance. The 2011 study benchmarked CCSD against three peer districts (Houston Independent School District, Broward County Public Schools, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools).

Following a transition of the CCSD superintendent who commissioned the 2011 report, several rounds of major districtwide budget cuts, and state legislation to transform schools into decentralized “precincts,” the implementation of the 2011 report was not monitored.

The 2026 report reviewed possible educational and operational optimizations. The report identified fewer opportunities but ones that were more feasible in a shorter period of time. The stated purpose of the 2026 study was to identify 10 to 12 major opportunities that:

- 1) significantly improve student achievement, and/or
- 2) provide \$10 million or more of annually recurring General Fund cost savings.

The 2026 study also expanded the comparison to five peer districts (Los Angeles Unified School District, Broward County Public Schools, Houston Independent School District, Dallas Independent School District, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools).

What was the timeline of the study, and what are the next steps?

The study was structured across two defined phases over the 2025-2026 school year:

- **Phase I (Assessment and Analysis):** Focused on data review, stakeholder engagement, and benchmarking CCSD against comparable large districts.
- **Phase II (Implementation Planning):** Focused on translating findings into actionable recommendations, outlining feasibility, and looking at implementation goals.
- **Next Steps:** The final report was presented to the Board of School Trustees on Wednesday, June 3, 2026. Recommendations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with initial structural savings targeted for the 2027-2028 school year.

Why has CCSD been reserving open seats on buses for students who aren't using transportation?

CCSD's transportation strategy has historically focused on reserving a seat for every eligible student to ensure maximum access and eliminate attendance barriers. While eliminating these barriers remains CCSD's primary focus, we are confident that we can optimize our transportation system without compromising student access.

Why does CCSD Food Service have more than 100% of its annual operating expenditures in reserve?

CCSD Food Service operates as a federally funded enterprise program and is responsible for providing uninterrupted meal service across the nation's fifth-largest school district.

Over the past several years, reserve balances have been influenced by multiple factors, including operational efficiencies, increased federal reimbursement rates, and temporary federal and state stabilization funding provided during and following the COVID-19 pandemic to support continuity of meal service operations during an unprecedented period of disruption and uncertainty.

The Food Service program directly absorbs a substantial portion of its operating costs, including food, labor, transportation, warehouse operations, utilities, equipment, and facility-related expenses.

Reserve balances are restricted to Food Service program purposes and cannot be used for unrelated District operations.

Does this mean Food Service will focus on improving the quality and variety of food?

CCSD Food Service continuously evaluates opportunities to improve menu offerings, product variety, and the overall student dining experience while balancing operational, nutritional, and financial requirements.

As one of the nation's largest school meal programs, the District must operate within federal nutrition standards, large-scale production and distribution requirements, staffing considerations, procurement regulations, and limited meal service timeframes

at school sites. Despite these operational constraints, the department regularly reviews student participation trends, product performance, vendor offerings, and feedback from students and school communities when making menu decisions.

Can CCSD use the savings from the Efficiency Study to immediately save the jobs of employees whose positions were eliminated due to the loss of federal pandemic relief money and enrollment decline?

Not immediately. The savings identified in the study are projected efficiencies realized over time, not a pool of liquid cash available today.

Many of these recommendations require initial implementation phases — such as updating software tracking, shifting to opt-in bus routing, or modifying construction guidelines — which will produce recurring savings over the next several years.

How will the savings be utilized?

CCSD's explicit intent is to accelerate academic achievement and direct general fund savings back toward classrooms and students.

Over time, savings from operational efficiencies will help protect classroom investments, reduce pressure on school-level budgets, support student services, and cushion the District against external-revenue challenges that impact staffing.

What are "Indirect Cost Recoveries" and how do they help the General Fund?

When CCSD operates major grants — such as federal Title programs or federally funded Food Services — central office staff must perform administrative tasks to support them (e.g., HR processing, payroll, and legal compliance).

"Indirect Cost Recovery" allows the District to bill these large grants for their fair share of administrative overhead at standard, industry-approved rates. By recovering these costs accurately, CCSD can safely return up to \$8.5 million annually by 2031 back into the General Fund to support general classroom instruction.