

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**  
**PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

**Subject**

The Casa Grande Union High School District serves the city of Casa Grande and the surrounding communities of Arizona City, Toltec, Stanfield, and Sacaton. In FY 2008, the District served 3,497 students in grades 9 through 12.

**Our Conclusion**

Casa Grande UHSD had higher administrative, transportation, and plant operation and maintenance costs than the comparable districts. The District's performance pay goals did not promote improved performance, and the District paid some employees incorrect amounts of Proposition 301 monies. The District's classroom dollar percentage was below the comparable districts' and state averages. Casa Grande UHSD needs to make changes to its English Language Learner program to comply with the state model.

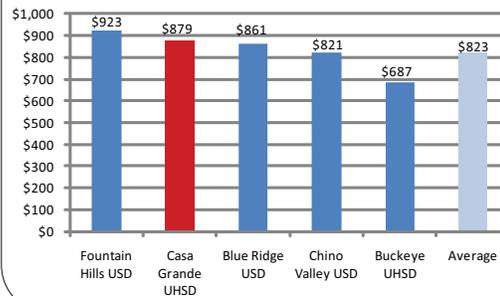


2009

**Administrative costs slightly higher than comparable districts'**

—The District's administrative costs were 7 percent higher than the comparable districts' primarily because it had more administrative positions.

Administrative Costs Per Pupil  
 Fiscal Year 2008



**Recommendation**—The District should review its administrative positions to determine how costs can be reduced.

**Other administrative issues—**

Besides higher costs, the District:

- Made improper payments to local restaurants totaling almost \$8,900 for meals of employees and board members not on travel status, and for nonemployees.
- Did not follow its credit card policies, which resulted in 14 of the 30 credit card users exceeding their annual spending limits.
- Did not have required approvals for any of the 235 credit card transactions auditors reviewed.
- Lacked adequate controls over its cash handling and access to its accounting system.

**Recommendations**—The District should:

- Discontinue paying for meals for employees and board members who are not on travel status and for nonemployees.
- Enforce its credit card policies.
- Improve its cash controls and access controls to its accounting system.

**High transportation costs**

—Casa Grande subsidized its transportation program by \$677,000 and had much higher costs than the comparable districts.

Transportation Costs  
 Fiscal Year 2008

	Per rider	Per mile
Casa Grande UHSD	\$1,747	\$3.34
Comparable districts	\$909	\$2.67

Over the last 5 years, district spending increased 124 percent, although miles driven increased only 3 percent. The increased costs are partly due to providing transportation to its evening high school and shuttling students during the day to off-site programs and classes. However, the District also employs bus assistants on 11 of its 27 regular education routes, while the comparable districts rarely use bus assistants for regular education routes.

Further, the District's insufficient oversight of its vendor likely also increased its costs. The District did not sufficiently review vendor billings to ensure they were appropriate, and did not analyze costs or establish and monitor performance measures.

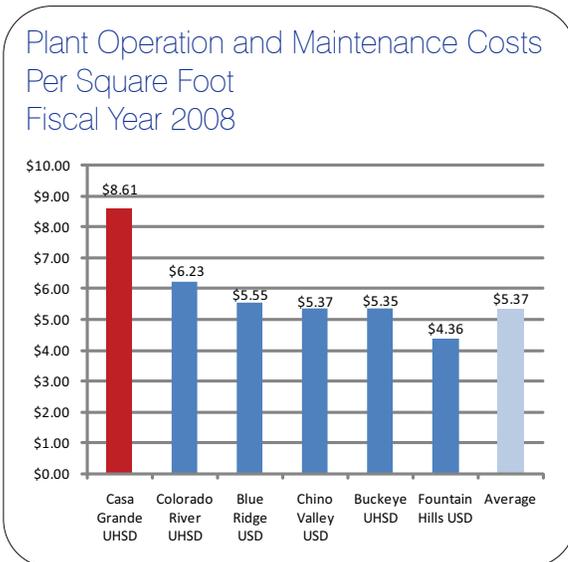
Finally, the District did not ensure its vendor complied with state requirements for: (1) bus driver qualifications relating to criminal charges and drug tests, and (2) bus safety standards.

**Recommendations**—The District should:

- Review costs of special programs and services and the need for bus assistants to determine if costs can be reduced.
- Review its vendor billings.
- Review both driver and bus files to ensure all requirements are met and documented.

**Higher plant costs due to many more employees**

—Casa Grande UHSD’s plant operation and maintenance costs were 60 percent higher than comparable districts’ primarily because it employed more plant employees, especially security guards.



**Recommendation**—The District should review staffing levels and monitor its costs.

**Proposition 301 goals did not promote improved performance**

—A major component of Proposition 301 funding is performance pay. However, the majority of the District’s performance pay was based on activities that were already expected of employees. For example, one goal was that a teacher had to

receive a satisfactory performance evaluation. This goal required the bare minimum of teachers instead of promoting improved performance.

**Recommendation**—The District should establish meaningful performance goals for activities or achievements that the District does not already require.

**Classroom dollar percentage far below comparable district and state averages**

—Casa Grande UHSD spent 52.8 percent of its dollars in the classroom. Although this percentage is far below the comparable districts’ average of 58.1 percent and both the state and national averages, the District managed to spend a similar number of dollars in the classroom. The District was able to do this because it received more funding per pupil, primarily from state transportation aid, a maintenance and operations override, and federal grants.

**Recommendation**—The District should review noninstructional spending to determine if savings can be achieved.

**Changes to English Language Learner (ELL) program needed**

—English language learners are students whose native language is not English and who are not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English.

In FY 2008, Casa Grande UHSD identified 219 students (6 percent of total students) as ELL. However, the District tested some, but not all students who should have been tested, and some of the testing data was inaccurate. The District also did not provide all of its ELL students with English language development (ELD) instruction.

**Recommendation**—The District should ensure that all students with primary home languages other than English are tested, that testing data is accurate, and that all ELL students receive ELD instruction.