

CONCLUSION: A review of the operations programs for nine Mississippi school districts in FY 2023 showed opportunities for districts to strengthen their programs and increase efficiency. For example, six districts (67%) did not have a formal preventative maintenance program. Without such a program, districts risk unexpected and potentially costly issues with their facilities and equipment. There was also wide variance in the performance of districts in key areas such as custodial cost per square foot and maintenance cost per square foot, suggesting that districts have room for improvement.



BACKGROUND

In FY 2026, PEER received funding to contract with Level Data (formerly GlimpseK12) to conduct a comparative review of nine school districts. This report focuses on one of six non-instructional areas of review—operations (Volume V). Other non-instructional reports include:

- Finance and Supply Chain (Volume I);
- Human Resources (Volume II);
- Information Technology (Volume III);
- Nutrition (Volume IV); and,
- Transportation (Volume VI).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Of the nine districts in this cohort, three (33%) did not utilize an electronic maintenance work order system.**
Such systems could increase efficiency and enhance decision making.
- **Six districts (67%) did not have a formal preventative maintenance program.**
Without such a program, districts risk unexpected and potentially costly issues with their facilities and equipment.
- **Six districts (67%) did not participate in an energy management program.**
An energy management program that involves principals and facility leaders could lead to savings and environmental sustainability.
- **Four districts (44%) did not conduct a formal facilities assessment each year.**
Such assessments are intended to ensure building safety and can assist administrators in prioritizing repairs and upgrades.

Variance in District Performance

Districts reported a wide range of costs and performance associate with custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping services. For example:

- Custodial cost per square foot ranged from \$0.34 in Harrison to \$3.48 in Humphreys.
- Maintenance cost per square foot ranged from \$0.37 in Rankin to \$16.36 in Humphreys.
- The average number of days to complete a work order ranged from 3 days in Humphreys to 23 days in Harrison.

These wide variances suggest that districts have opportunities to improve their performance on the key indicators in this report, which could result in improved efficiencies, cost savings, and/or improved service levels.

Issues with Missing Data

The conclusions of this report were inhibited by district's inability to provide the requested data. For example, four of the nine districts in this cohort were unable to provide the data needed to determine the average number of days to complete a maintenance work order. When a district is unable to report data for key performance measures, district administrators' ability to monitor and manage operations areas for efficiency and effectiveness is diminished.

Cost Savings

Based on FY 2023 data reported, seven districts in this cohort could realize annual projected potential cost savings of up to approximately **\$9 million** by bringing costs associated with their custodial, maintenance, and/or groundskeeping functions more in line with those of state and regional peers.

See Exhibit 13 on page 33 for projected potential cost savings by district.

While the reported data suggests the potential for cost savings for these districts, each district's administration should carefully review the data and recommendations in light of the particular circumstances of the district.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICTS

1. In FY 2027, each district's superintendent, in consultation with the district's operations personnel, should review the information from this report and implement the relevant recommendations to increase efficiency, improve service levels, and/or achieve cost savings. Such recommendations include, but are not limited to:
 - a. implementing an electronic work order system;
 - b. conducting formal annual facility assessments;
 - c. implementing an energy management program; and,
 - d. implementing a formal preventative maintenance program.
2. For districts that were unable to provide certain information during this review pertaining to their operations, relevant district personnel should begin collecting and monitoring this data on an ongoing basis.
3. If feasible, districts should begin tracking custodial, maintenance, and groundskeeping costs separately.
4. District personnel should provide an annual report to the district superintendent regarding the status of the district's operations using the measures included in this review.