TRANSMITTAL LETTER

April 29, 2002

The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable William R. Ratliff
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the 77th Legislature
Commissioner Felipe T. Alanis, Ph.D.

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Laredo Independent School District (LISD).

This review is intended to help LISD hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that more of every education dollar goes directly into the classroom, with the teachers and children, where it belongs. To aid in this task, I contracted with Resource Consultants, Inc.

I have made a number of recommendations to improve LISD's efficiency. I have also highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations - model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers, and staff. This report outlines 101 detailed recommendations that could save LISD more than $17.1 million over the next five years, while reinvesting more than $4 million to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach more than $13 million over the next five years-savings that the district can redirect into the classroom.

I am grateful for the cooperation of LISD's board, staff, parents, and community members. I commend them for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities for our most precious resource in LISD - our children.

I am also pleased to announce that the report is available on my Window on State Government Web site at http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/laredo/.

Sincerely,

Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

What Is TSPR?

The Texas School Performance Review (TSPR), a program of the Texas Comptroller's office, is the nation's first state-level vehicle designed to improve the management and finances of public school districts.

Since its creation in 1991, TSPR has conducted in-depth, on-site management reviews of more than 60 Texas school districts serving more than 1.4 million students, or 35 percent of the state's 4 million public school students. Including Laredo, more than $650 million in five-year net savings have been identified in the 71 reviews released to date.

These reviews diagnose districts' administrative, organizational, and financial problems and recommend ways to cut costs, increase revenues, reduce overhead, streamline operations, and improve the delivery of educational services. TSPR's overall goal is to ensure that every possible education dollar is directed to the classroom.

A TSPR review is more than a traditional financial audit. Instead, TSPR examines the entire scope of district operations, including organization and management, educational service delivery, personnel management, community involvement, facilities use and management, financial management, asset and risk management, purchasing and warehousing functions, computers and technology, food services, transportation, and safety and security.

Reviews can be requested or districts can be selected for a review. A cross-section of Texas school districts—large and small, wealthy and poor, urban and rural—are selected so that a wide variety of other districts can apply TSPR's recommendations to their own circumstances. Priority is given to districts with poor academic or financial performance, and/or where the greatest number of students will benefit from an audit.

More than 90 percent of all recommendations are being voluntarily implemented to date in the 45 districts that have had more than one year to implement TSPR recommendations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

TSPR examined Laredo ISD operations and heard from employees, school board members, teachers, students, parents, and community and business leaders. Following are the major proposals TSPR has developed to help the district address various issues:

Major Proposals

Accelerate Improvements in Student Performance

- **Create curriculum guides for all LISD courses and subjects.** LISD does not have curriculum guides to support most of the courses offered in grades 9-12. The district does have academic standards that provide a broad overview of minimum standards in the core areas of language arts, math, science, social studies and technology. Creating curriculum guides for all high school subjects that are linked to the academic standards would help the district standardize course offerings and improve student performance.

- **Increase student preparation, participation and scores for the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT I) and the American College Testing Program Assessment (ACT).** The percent of students taking the SAT or ACT is lower than Region 1 and the state. Further, only 5 percent of students scored at or above TEA's criterion as compared to 10.8 percent for the region and 27.3 percent for the state. LISD's average SAT score is 860 as compared to 990 for the state and LISD's average ACT score is 17.6 as compared to 20.3 for the state. Increasing district efforts to encourage participation, preparation and subsequent pass rates for students taking the SAT and ACT tests would foster improvements in the academic skills deemed important to a student's success in college.

- **Develop and adopt a board policy for management of curriculum.** LISD does not have a specific board approved policy providing districtwide direction for curriculum management. The district has six policies related to curriculum design, but lacks a central policy that would ensure consistency and provide staff direction for improved management and delivery of curriculum. Development of a central curriculum policy will enable the district to better direct and manage its curriculum.

Ensure that board members understand their policy-making role

- **Develop operating procedures and a self-monitoring system for the board.** LISD board members have become increasingly involved in the district's daily operations. Examples of board member involvement includes creating a new Quality Assurance committee that is directed and chaired by a board member to routinely monitor detailed activities of departments, control staff appointments and raises and question and give advice on internal operational decisions. By creating board operating procedures that each board member agrees to, board members will more fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

- **Replace standing committees with a Committee of the Whole.** The LISD board is not using its four standing committees effectively and often reviews some of the same information in both its standing committees and regular board meetings, resulting in duplicative efforts. By replacing standing committees with a Committee of the Whole, the superintendent and his executive leadership team can conduct district business more efficiently and reduce duplicate information requests among committees.

Reorganize the District's Management Structure

- **Restructure LISD's organization.** LISD's organizational structure suffers from unclear lines of authority and accountability. Many aspects of the district's operations are not assigned to report to a specific position, creating gaps and overlapping responsibilities. The superintendent's span of control is too large with direct supervision of 13 professional staff and three secretarial staff. By logically grouping functions and ensuring all districtwide programs are appropriately coordinated, LISD can increase the effectiveness and accountability of central administration.

- **Centralize the district's grant-writing operations.** The district's grant writing is not coordinated. While some departments have been very successful in securing grants, there is no measure of how successful the district as a whole has been in meeting its funding needs. Centralizing this function would help the district more effectively secure and manage grants.

- **Reorganize the Information Technology (IT) Department and create a new chief information officer position for the district.** The district has invested heavily in its technology infrastructure

but does not have a management structure that provides for proper oversight and support for the overall system. Implementing a number of specific technology-related recommendations will balance personnel resources, remove overlapping responsibilities and help the IT Department position itself to support the district's present and future technology needs.

- **Designate a cafeteria manager at each campus.** The Child Nutrition Program's supervisory structure for satellite operations does not provide effective management of cashiers and servers. With the exception of the Cigarroa Middle/High School and Martin High School campuses, cafeterias are not supervised by cafeteria managers. A cafeteria manager at each campus would provide the district more effective oversight of its food services operation.

- **Clarify responsibilities and ensure accountability for all personnel in charge of safety or security-related functions.** The administrative units responsible for safety and security are in a state of flux organizationally, and responsibilities have not been clarified. A reorganization, the second in less than five years, has separated some of the primary safety responsibilities from those of security placing them in different administrative units altogether. It is critical to clarify roles and responsibilities quickly and ensure that the entire organization is informed of the changes.

Improve Operating Efficiencies

- **Revise campus level staffing guidelines.** LISD uses staffing allocation models as a baseline for assigning administrative and teaching personnel, but added positions between 2000-01 and 2001-02 when enrollment increased by only nine students. By applying industry standard staffing guidelines, the district can not only save nearly $7.8 million over the next five years, but also can equitably and efficiently distribute staff to each school.

- **Adjust custodial staffing.** The district's custodial staffing formula of 13,000 square feet per custodian is considerably less than the 20,000 square feet per custodian standard recommended by the Association of School Board Officials, but custodians perform other duties such as daytime monitoring, grounds keeping and guarding school crossings. By adhering to the district's own custodial staffing formula, the district could reduce custodial positions by 41 and save more than $600,000 annually.

- **Establish a meals per labor hour standard.** The district does not use a Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH) standard to measure the

productivity of its food service operations. By implementing a MPLH standard that meets industry guidelines, LISD could reduce labor costs and potentially save more than $191,000 each year.

- **Purchase custodial and instructional supplies on a just-in-time basis.** Custodial and instructional supplies are purchased in bulk and warehoused for up to six months. By using a just-in-time system, the district can consolidate warehouses and efficiently provide supplies to campuses, saving an estimated $137,000 annually.

- **Purchase buses based on student transportation needs.** The Transportation Department's policy is to purchase buses with capacity in excess of the transportation needs of the district; the bus fleet is operating at 43.9 percent capacity. By implementing a policy to purchase smaller buses that can be used on routes with a lower ridership, the district could realize savings of $226,000 over the next five years.

- **Implement staggered bell times at district campuses.** LISD's Transportation Department has the highest operating costs per mile of its peer group. By implementing a staggered bell schedule at its elementary, middle and high schools, buses could run multiple routes and save over $66,000 each year.

Exemplary Programs and Practices in the
Laredo Independent School District

TSPR identified numerous best practices in the Laredo ISD . Through commendations in each chapter, the report highlights model programs, operations and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers and staff. Other school districts throughout Texas are encouraged to examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet local needs.

LISD provides opportunities for students to explore their interests in communications, fine arts, health and science. With help from a committee of parents, gifted and talented teachers and regular teachers, principals and central administrators, LISD maintains two magnet schools offering varied curricula in science and fine arts and provides Advanced Placement courses for students, which increases their chances of going to college.

- **LISD's efforts have increased scholarship funding for students.** To encourage students to enroll in college, LISD has developed strong partnerships with higher education and local businesses to increase the amount of money available for student scholarships from $1.2 million in 1996 to $3.3 million in 2001.

- **Energy management and conservation program has produced significant savings during the first year of operation.** LISD began a comprehensive energy conservation program in September 1998 including a comprehensive lighting retrofit, the addition or replacement of approximately 162 heating, ventilation and air conditioning units, the installation of a building automation system for districtwide control of mechanical and electrical equipment and a pilot water conservation project. First year energy savings totaled $669,859.

- **Improved financial reporting has provided LISD with multiple awards.** LISD's Finance Department has emphasized and improved its reporting processes, and as a consequence, has received national recognition including the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports for the fiscal years ending August 31, 1997, August 31, 1998 and August 31, 1999.

- **LISD's process for identifying, selecting and writing technology grants has increased funding for technology improvements.** As a result of technology grants, all of LISD's schools are fiber optically wired, and an extensive server network has been installed.

- **Awarding prizes to students has improved participation in the district's breakfast program.** The Child Nutrition Program increased student participation in the district's breakfast program by periodically awarding prizes to students who eat breakfast at school. The prizes, such as stuffed animals, are distributed to students by attaching a winning number or color to the bottom of a breakfast tray.

- **Use of the LISD's Web site has improved the purchasing process.** The Purchasing Department efficiently uses the district's Web site in the bid process. In 2001-02, LISD began placing bid invitations and requests for proposals (RFPs) on its Web site, instead of mailing out the RFPs to the 8,000 potential vendors. The district expects its use of the Web site to reduce the costs of printing and postage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary Overview
Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation (Exhibit 4)

In October 2001, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander began a review of three Webb County school districts including the Laredo Independent School District (LISD), Webb Consolidated ISD and Mirando City ISD. Based upon more than six months of work, this report identifies LISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 101 recommendations could result in net savings of more than $13 million over the next five years.

Improving The Texas School Performance Review

Soon after taking office in January 1999, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander consulted school district officials, parents and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports to make TSPR more valuable to the state's school districts. With the perspective of a former teacher and school board president, the Comptroller has vowed to use TSPR to increase local school districts' accountability to the communities they serve.

Recognizing that only 52 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to drive more of every education dollar directly into the classroom. Comptroller Rylander also has ordered TSPR staff to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically with all the state's school districts and with anyone else who requests such information. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as a clearinghouse of the best ideas in Texas public education.

Under Comptroller Rylander's approach, consultants and the TSPR team will work with districts to:

- Ensure students and teachers receive the support and resources necessary to succeed;
- Identify innovative ways to address the district's core management challenges;
- Ensure administrative duties are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a way that fosters education;
- Develop strategies to ensure the district's processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;
- Challenge any process, procedure, program or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and

- Put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages Test": government should do no job if a business in the Yellow Pages can do that job better and at a lower cost.

Finally, Comptroller Rylander has opened her door to Texans who share her optimism about the potential for public education. Suggestions to improve Texas schools or the school reviews are welcome at any time. The Comptroller believes public schools deserve all the attention and assistance they can get.

For more information, contact TSPR by calling toll-free 1-800-531-5441, extension 5-3676, or see the Comptroller's Website at www.window.state.tx.us.

TSPR In Laredo ISD

In 1995 and 1996 the Comptroller's office received requests for a Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) of the Laredo Independent School District (LISD) from then representative and former Secretary of State Henry Cuellar and the district's superintendent following a TSPR review of the United ISD in Laredo.

Comptroller Rylander selected Laredo for a review in July 2001 and began onsite work in October 2001. The Comptroller's office selected Resource Consultants, Inc. (RCI, Inc.), a Delaware, Maryland-based consulting firm with an office in Austin, to assist the agency with the review at a cost of $190,000. The review team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held three public forums at each of the three high schools on November 5, 6 and 7, 2001 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted three focus group sessions with teachers, principals, parents and community members. To ensure that all stakeholder groups had input, TSPR sent surveys to students, parents, teachers, campus and central administrators and support staff.

A total of 304 respondents answered surveys. Forty-five administrative and support staff;27 principals and assistant principals; 48 teachers; 50 parents and 134 students completed written surveys as part of the review. Details from the surveys and public forums appear in **Appendices A** through **F**.

The review team also consulted two databases of comparative educational information maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)-the

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

LISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The selected peer districts were Eagle Pass, Edgewood, Edinburg, Harlandale and United ISD. TSPR also compared LISD to district averages in TEA's Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1), to which Laredo ISD belongs, and to the state as a whole.

During its six-month review, TSPR developed 101 recommendations to improve operations and save taxpayers more than $17.1million by 2006-07. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach more than $13 million by 2006-07.

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 4**. Many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct impact but would improve the district's overall operations.

Laredo ISD

LISD is among the 40 largest school districts in the state, serving a population of more than 22,500 students in 30 schools: 21 elementary schools, four middle schools, three high schools and two magnet schools. LISD's students are 98.9 percent Hispanic, 0.9 percent Anglo, 0.1 percent African American and 0.1 percent Other. More than 91 percent of the district's students are economically disadvantaged. The ethnicity of teachers includes 92.5 percent Hispanic, 7.0 percent Anglo, 0.4 percent African American and 0.2 percent Other.

LISD's Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) passing rate has improved by more than 30 percent during the last five years, however, LISD's overall 2000-01 TAAS passing rate of 71.3 percent is still 10.8 percentage points lower than the statewide average of 82.1 percent. In 2000-01, the TEA rated the district as Academically Acceptable, with four exemplary and no low-performing schools.

Exhibit 1 details the demographic characteristics of LISD and its peer school districts.

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Exhibit 1
Demographic Characteristics of LISD
and Peer School Districts
2000-01

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District	Student Enrollment	Racial/Ethnic Percentage				Percent Economically Disadvantaged
		Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	
Eagle Pass	12,515	0.1%	97.0%	1.5%	1.5%	89.8%
Edgewood	12,983	1.6%	97.0%	1.1%	0.3%	92.6%
Harlandale	14,468	0.4%	94.0%	5.4%	0.2%	90.6%
Edinburg	22,005	0.2%	96.3%	3.1%	0.4%	84.2%
Laredo	**22,556**	**0.1%**	**98.9%**	**0.9%**	**0.1%**	**91.1%**
United	27,558	0.2%	96.2%	3.0%	0.5%	73.2%
Region 1	**302,528**	**0.2%**	**95.6%**	**3.8%**	**0.3%**	**82.7%**
State	**4,059,619**	**14.4%**	**40.6%**	**42.0%**	**3.0%**	**49.3%**

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2000-01.

LISD served 22,547 students during 2000-01, a decrease of 1.9 percent over the last five years **(Exhibit 2)**. District officials expect enrollment to remain stable.

Exhibit 2
SAISD Student Enrollment History

School Year	Actual Student Enrollment	Percent Change from 1996-97
1996-97	22,987	NA
1997-98	22,651	(1.5%)
1998-99	22,601	(1.7%)
1999-2000	22,524	(2.0%)
2000-01	22,547	(1.9%)

Source: TEA Multi-year AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01.

In addition, the district has more than 3,000 full-time employees; slightly more than 41 percent are teachers. The district's 2001-02 budget is

approximately $143.7million, an increase of 4.9 percent over the 2000-01 annual budget of $136.9 million. LISD spent 54 cents of every dollar on instruction in 2000-01, which is higher than the 52-cent state average.

LISD is a property-poor district, ranking within the lowest 5 percent of school districts in the state. LISD's 2001 tax rate is $1.426 per $100 value; $1.323 for Maintenance and Operations and $0.103 for debt service. In 2000-2001, LISD's property value was $57,520 per student, compared to the state average of $215,232 per student.

While TSPR found many exemplary programs and practices being carried out by dedicated and hardworking employees of the district, the district is facing a number of challenges including:

- accelerating improvements in student performance;
- ensuring that board members understand their policy-making role;
- reorganizing the district's management structure; and
- improving operating efficiencies.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Accelerate Improvements in Student Performance

Create curriculum guides for all LISD courses and subjects. LISD does not have curriculum guides to support most of the courses offered in grades 9-12. The district does have academic standards that provide a broad overview of minimum standards in the core areas of language arts, math, science, social studies and technology. Creating curriculum guides for all high school subjects that are linked to the academic standards would help the district standardize course offerings and improve student performance.

Increase student preparation, participation and scores for the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT I) and the American College Testing Program Assessment (ACT). The percent of students taking the SAT or ACT is lower than Region 1 and the state. Further, only 5 percent of students scored at or above TEA's criterion as compared to 10.8 percent for the region and 27.3 percent for the state. LISD's average SAT score is 860 as compared to 990 for the state and LISD's average ACT score is 17.6 as compared to 20.3 for the state. Increasing district efforts to encourage participation, preparation and subsequent pass rates of students on the SAT and ACT tests would foster improvements in the academic skills deemed important to a student's success in college.

Monitor and evaluate programs to improve TAAS scores of special education students. LISD does not evaluate special education programs

designed to improve TAAS scores for effectiveness. Staff is aware of the discrepancies between the performance of special education students and other students and has launched several programs directed at improving performance but does not have a process for continually evaluating these programs. A monitoring and evaluation program will enable the district to identify programs that are not working and redirect funds from unsuccessful programs to other programs which are succeeding to improve academic achievement.

Develop and adopt a board policy for management of curriculum. LISD does not have a specific board approved policy providing districtwide direction for curriculum management. The district has six policies related to curriculum design, but lacks a central policy that would ensure consistency and provide staff direction for improved management and delivery of curriculum. Development of a central curriculum policy will enable the district to better direct and manage its curriculum.

Ensure that board members understand their policy-making role

Develop operating procedures and a self-monitoring system for the board. LISD board members have become increasingly involved in the district's daily operations. Examples of board member involvement includes creating a new Quality Assurance committee that is directed and chaired by a board member to routinely monitor detailed activities of departments, control staff appointments and raises, and question and give advice on internal operational decisions. By creating board operating procedures that each board member agrees to, board members will more fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

Replace standing committees with a Committee of the Whole. The LISD board is not using its four standing committees effectively and often reviews some of the same information in both its standing committees and regular board meetings, resulting in duplicative efforts. In addition, the board also considers agenda items like organizational issues without first referring them to the appropriate standing committee. By replacing standing committees with a Committee of the Whole, the superintendent and his executive leadership team can conduct district business more efficiently and reduce duplicate information requests among committees.

Reorganize the District's Management Structure

Restructure LISD's organization.LISD's organizational structure suffers from unclear lines of authority and accountability. Many aspects of the district's operations are not assigned to report to a specific position, creating gaps and overlapping responsibilities. The superintendent's span of control is too large with direct supervision of 13 professional staff and

three classified staff. By logically grouping functions and ensuring all districtwide programs are appropriately coordinated, LISD can increase the effectiveness and accountability of central administration.

Centralize the district's grant-writing operations. The district's grant writing is not coordinated. While some departments have been very successful in securing grants, there is no measure of how successful the district as a whole has been in meeting its funding needs. Centralizing this function would help the district more effectively secure and manage grants.

Reorganize the Information Technology (IT) Department and create a new chief information officer position for the district. The district has invested heavily in its technology infrastructure but does not have a management structure that provides for proper oversight and support for the overall system. Implementing a number of specific recommendations will balance personnel resources, remove overlapping responsibilities and help the IT Department position itself to support the district's present and future technology needs.

Consolidate management of the custodial staff. There is no central oversight of the custodial operations, which are spread among 59 separate facilities. While principals manage custodial operations on each campus, there is no consistent performance evaluation system in place for custodians. By centralizing the management of the custodial operations under a single management position, the district can more closely monitor performance of the custodial staff and establish better accountability for supplies and related resources.

Designate a cafeteria manager at each campus. LISD operates a central kitchen that prepares food for all campuses except for Cigarroa Middle/High School and Martin High School campuses. The Child Nutrition Program's supervisory structure for satellite operations does not provide effective management of cashiers and servers. With the exception of the Cigarroa Middle/High School and Martin High School campuses, cafeterias are not supervised by cafeteria managers. Instead, cashiers at all campuses report to the Child Nutrition Program's Reporting Department manager and cafeteria servers report to the program's Quantity and Quality Department manager. A cafeteria manager at each campus would provide the district more effective oversight of its food services operation.

Clarify responsibilities and ensure accountability for all personnel in charge of safety or security-related functions. The administrative units responsible for safety and security are in a state of flux organizationally, and responsibilities have not been clarified. A reorganization, the second in less than five years, has separated some of the primary safety

responsibilities from those of security placing them in different administrative units altogether. It is critical to clarify roles and responsibilities quickly and ensure that the entire organization is informed of the changes.

Improve Operating Efficiencies

Revise campus level staffing guidelines. The level of administrative staffing in LISD schools exceeds established standards. LISD uses staffing allocation models as a baseline for assigning administrative and teaching personnel, but when applying industry standard staffing guidelines, the district could save more than $7.8 million over the next five years. Also the district can also equitably and efficiently distribute staff to each school.

Adjust custodial staffing. The district's custodial staffing formula of 13,000 square feet per custodian is considerably less than the 20,000 square feet per custodian standard recommended by the Association of School Board Officials but custodians perform other duties such as daytime monitoring, grounds keeping and guarding school crossings. Yet the district is not adhering to its own lower guidelines. By adhering to the district's custodial staffing formula, the district could reduce custodial positions by 41 and save more than $600,000 annually.

Establish a meals per labor hour standard. The district does not use a Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH) standard to measure the productivity of its food service operations. By implementing a MPLH standard that meets industry guidelines, LISD could reduce labor costs and potentially save more than $191,000 each year.

Purchase custodial and instructional supplies on a just-in-time basis. Custodial and instructional supplies are purchased in bulk and warehoused for up to six months before inventories are depleted and reordered. By using a just-in-time system, the district can consolidate warehouses and efficiently provide supplies to campuses. By eliminating leased warehouse space and the corresponding warehouse staff, LISD could save an estimated $137,000 annually.

Purchase buses based on student transportation needs. The Transportation Department's policy is to purchase buses with capacity in excess of the transportation needs of the district; the bus fleet is operating at 43.9 percent capacity. By implementing a policy to purchase smaller buses that can be used on routes with a lower ridership, the district could realize savings of $226,000 over the next five years.

Implement staggered bell times at district campuses. LISD's Transportation Department has the second highest operating costs per mile of its peer group for regular education students. By implementing a staggered bell schedule at its elementary, middle and high schools, buses could run multiple routes and save over $66,000 each year.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" in LISD. Through commendations in each chapter, the report highlights LISD's model programs, operations and services provided by LISD administrators, teachers and staff. Other school districts throughout Texas are encouraged to examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet their local needs. TSPR's commendations include the following:

LISD provides opportunities for students to explore their interests in communications, fine arts, health and science. LISD maintains two magnet schools offering varied curricula in science and fine arts. Advanced Placement courses are available for both gifted and talented students and regular students, which increases their chances of going to college. A committee of parents, gifted and talented teachers and regular teachers, principals and central administrators evaluate and suggest modifications to program offerings at the magnet schools, ultimately improving the quality of the education offered to enrolled students.

LISD's efforts have increased scholarship funding for students. To encourage students to enroll in college, LISD has developed strong partnerships with higher education and local businesses and is dramatically increasing the amount of money available for student scholarships. In addition, the Scholarships and Special Projects Department has succeeded in increasing the amount of scholarship money available to students from $1.3 million in 1996 to $3.3 million in 2001.

Energy management and conservation program has produced significant savings during the first year of operation. The Energy Management Department began a comprehensive energy conservation program in September 1998 with the final retrofit completed in June 2000. The program included a comprehensive lighting retrofit, the addition or replacement of approximately 162 heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units, the installation of a building automation system for districtwide control of mechanical and electrical equipment and a pilot water conservation project. First year energy savings totaled $669,859.

Sale of Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA) credits have increased revenue to the district. LISD has aggressively searched for other school districts as potential partners under the state's current school finance system. One option under this system allows school districts with property wealth exceeding the equalized wealth level of $300,000 per student to purchase weighted average daily attendance (WADA) credits from property poor school districts like LISD. Under this option, the property poor school district receives payments for WADA credits sold to property wealthy school districts to reduce the wealthy district's property wealth per student. Laredo ISD partnered with Deer Park ISD in 2000-01, resulting in an additional $2.6 million in revenues. For 2001-02, LISD has contracts with four districts for an estimated $4 million in additional revenues.

Improved financial reporting has provided LISD with multiple awards. LISD's Finance Department has emphasized and improved its reporting processes, and as a consequence, has repeatedly received national recognition. LISD received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000
and also received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports for the fiscal years ending August 31, 1997, August 31, 1998 and August 31, 1999.

LISD's process for identifying, selecting and writing grants has increased funding for technology improvements. As a result of technology grants, all of LISD's schools are fiber optically wired, and an extensive server network has been installed. While the district has no full time grant writer, the chief financial officer, the administrative assistant for Instructional Technology and the director of Information Technology have worked well together to identify and obtain the funding required to continuously improve LISD's information technology infrastructure.

Long-range planning has helped to improve the district's transportation facility needs. The Transportation Department has had severely limited available space for parking and maintaining buses, housing parts and administrative offices. A new facility funded by a 1999 bond issue will be built on land already owned by the district and be used in conjunction with the Transportation Department's existing facility. This facility will help increase the space necessary to meet the Transportation Department's needs.

Awarding prizes to students has improved participation in the district's breakfast program. The Child Nutrition Program increased student participation in the district's breakfast program by periodically

awarding prizes to students who eat breakfast at school. The staff purchases stuffed animals and other items and raffles these prizes off to the students who participate in the breakfast meal program. The prizes are distributed to students by attaching a winning number or color to the bottom of one breakfast tray. The cafeteria servers or cashiers then announce the winning tray and the student claims their prize.

Use of the LISD's Web site has improved the purchasing process. The purchasing Department efficiently uses the district's Web site in the bid process. In 2001-02, LISD began placing bid invitations and requests for proposals (RFPs) on its Web site. The department submits the information to the district's Web site administrator, and bidders may download the RFP. The department continues to mail RFPs to vendors upon request, but expects its use of the Web site to reduce the costs of printing and postage for mailings to 8,000 potential vendors.

The district's safety program and accident prevention plan have reduced LISD workers' compensation claims. LISD has designated a safety representative for each campus and department and holds monthly meetings of safety representatives. Monthly safety training, monthly facility audits/inspections, detailed quarterly analyses and completion of monthly safety checklists have also reduced claims. In 1998, the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission designated LISD as an extra-hazardous employer because the district's record of injuries was higher than the expected claims rate. By June 2000, LISD completed six months of monitor status for the Hazardous Employer Program and was removed from the program due to its improved performance.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many TSPR's recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that the district could use to improve classroom instruction. The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums. Proposed investments of additional funds usually are related to increased efficiencies or savings, or improved productivity and effectiveness.

TSPR recommended 101 ways to save LISD more than $17.1 million in gross savings over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities will cost the district more than $4 million during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of more than $13 million by 2006-07.

Exhibit 3
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Laredo Independent School District

Year	Total
2002-03 Initial Annual Net Savings	$1,533,365
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	$2,858,038
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	$2,935,789
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	$2,935,789
2006-07 Additional Annual Net Savings	$2,935,789
One Time Net (Costs) Savings	($123,744)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2001-2006	**$13,075,026**

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 4**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

TSPR recommends the LISD board ask district administrators to review the recommendations, develop an implementation plan and monitor its progress. As always, TSPR staff is available to help implement proposals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exhibit 4
Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

	Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1 District Organization and Management								
1	Ensure each board member completes the required hours of overall training and provide the board with specific and targeted continuing education opportunities. p. 32	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
2	Replace standing committees with a Committee of the Whole and train board members on using the Committee of the Whole effectively. p. 36	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($9,500)
3	Require the board president to review and approve each proposed agenda item. p. 37	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
4	Develop operating procedures for the board and a self-	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	monitoring system to ensure all board members fulfill their roles and responsibilities. p. 38							
5	Provide comprehensive materials to the board to enable board members to prepare adequately for board meetings. p. 41	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
6	Apply administrative staffing guidelines for elementary, middle and high schools to reflect differences in enrollment. p. 52	$867,006	$1,734,012	$1,734,012	$1,734,012	$1,734,012	$7,803,054	$0
7	Restructure LISD's organization to functionally align responsibilities of staff, reduce the number of staff directly reporting to the superintendent and clearly assign accountability and specific lines of authority. p. 57	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
8	Develop a plan and timeline for producing the district annual report and monitor progress towards its preparation. p.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	59						
	Chapter 1 Total	**$867,006**	**$1,734,012**	**$1,734,012**	**$1,734,012**	**$1,734,012**	**$7,803,054**	**($9,500)**

Chapter 2 Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

9	Develop and adopt a board policy to provide direction for the management of curriculum. p. 79	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
10	Create and implement a schedule for curriculum guide development and update for all high school courses. p. 80	$0	($46,500)	($49,500)	($49,500)	($49,500)	($195,000)	$0
11	Implement strategies to improve student scores on Advanced Placement examinations. p. 83	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
12	Include and implement specific strategies to improve student pass rates for high school end-of-course examinations in campus and district improvement plans. p. 85	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
13	Increase student participation and pass rates for college entrance examinations. p.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	87							
14	Increase the number of students tested on TAAS. p. 89	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
15	Ensure that all LISD Gifted and Talented professional staff members have the required training. p. 93	($20,250)	($20,250)	($20,250)	($20,250)	($20,250)	($101,250)	$0
16	Create an assessment system for the district's magnet school program to measure the academic success of attending students. p. 96	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
17	Improve tracking and oversight activities and set a goal of increasing Medicaid reimbursements by 5 percent annually. p. 100	$20,418	$20,418	$20,418	$20,418	$20,418	$102,090	$0
18	Monitor and evaluate programs designed to improve TAAS scores of special education students. p. 102	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
19	Create a comprehensive program to address ESL students' needs and focus instruction to	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	improve student performance. p. 106							
20	Reduce the number of LEP students exempted from TAAS. p. 107	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
21	Coordinate supplemental program administration efforts to improve funding and student services for at-risk students. p. 113	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
22	Create a long-range plan for future CATE programs including a broad-based task force of business and community members. p. 120	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
23	Improve awareness and effectiveness of the Early College Start program. p. 123	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
24	Create an assessment and improvement plan using state standards for the district's library program. p. 126	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
25	Ensure that technical support staff is trained to support the library	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	software and hardware. p. 127						
	Chapter 2 Total	**$168**	**($46,332)**	**($49,332)**	**($49,332)**	**($49,332)**	**($194,160)**	**$0**

Chapter 3--Community Involvement

26	Centralize the grant writing process. p. 133	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
27	Eliminate the position of photographer. p. 135	$39,511	$39,511	$39,511	$39,511	$39,511	$197,555	$0
28	Eliminate one graphic designer position and transfer the remaining graphic designer to the print shop. p. 136	$23,095	$23,095	$23,095	$23,095	$23,095	$115,475	$0
29	Evaluate the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and staffing of mailroom operations and determine whether the district should continue its operation. p. 137	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
30	Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the Printing Department. p. 139	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
31	Produce a newsletter for the community in English and Spanish. p. 141	($35,000)	($35,000)	($35,000)	($35,000)	($35,000)	($175,000)	$0
32	Form parental involvement teams and share	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	model techniques and practices used in successful schools across the district. p. 146						
	Chapter 3 Total	**$27,606**	**$27,606**	**$27,606**	**$27,606**	**$27,606**	**$138,030**	**$0**

Chapter 4--Personnel Management

33	Reclassify the vacant clerk position to that of a compliance officer and immediately comply with federal employment regulations. p. 154	($10,933)	($10,933)	($10,933)	($10,933)	($10,933)	($54,665)	$0
34	Ensure that active personnel files are maintained in compliance with state and federal laws in a secure location and that all required documentation is contained in every file. p. 156	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
35	Develop a system for tracking grievances filed by employees or parents according to class, category and resolution. p. 157	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
36	Develop a comprehensive procedures manual for Human Resources operations. p. 158	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

37	Provide training opportunities for all Human Resources staff and encourage membership in the local chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management. p. 159	($2,461)	($2,461)	($2,461)	($2,461)	($2,461)	($12,305)	$0
38	Acquire a Spanish version of the attendance system, distribute written, user-friendly instructions in English and Spanish to all staff and enforce the use of the automated system. p. 160	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($2,500)
39	Develop a report that reflects each recruiting activity, its cost and the number of resulting hires from each activity. p. 163	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
40	Develop an exit interview process for all employees to identify potential sources of job dissatisfaction. p. 165	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
41	Develop a process to ensure that the list of available substitutes is	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	current and re-evaluate the substitute recruitment needs of each school. p. 165						
42	Revise the employment process to accommodate the needs of the applicant and use technology to make application materials more accessible. p. 166	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
43	Conduct an intensive campaign to assist and encourage all teaching staff to attain certification. p. 169	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
44	Develop job descriptions that clearly identify the job requirements for every position in the district. p. 170	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
45	Require all performance-related documents to be properly filed in employee personnel files, and develop a tracking system to ensure performance appraisals are conducted. p. 171	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

46	Develop an improved and uniform employee appraisal tool for performance evaluation of all employees, based on the PDAS appraisal system and the employee's job description. p. 172	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 4 Total	**($13,394)**	**($13,394)**	**($13,394)**	**($13,394)**	**($13,394)**	**($66,970)**	**($2,500)**
Chapter 5--Facilities Use and Management								
47	Prepare a comprehensive set of specification standards for use in LISD's Capital Improvement Plan bond program. p. 184	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
48	Establish firm schedules for each project and prepare reports that clearly indicate the status of each construction project. P. 187	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
49	Establish a facilities planning committee to create a long-range facilities master plan and update it annually. p. 190	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
50	Prepare monthly status reports to track interest earnings and	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	adjust projections based on current interest rate trends. p. 191							
51	Prepare a maintenance improvement plan to increase satisfaction with facilities maintenance. p. 196	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
52	Implement an automated method to transmit work order requests to the Maintenance and Operations Department's service center. p. 198	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
53	Develop a comprehensive procedures manual for the Maintenance and Operations Department. p. 199	($2,000)	($500)	($500)	($500)	($500)	($4,000)	$0
54	Centralize custodial operations, including staff, under the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks. p. 202	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
55	Apply district staffing formulas for custodial positions. p. 205	$325,374	$635,254	$635,254	$635,254	$635,254	$2,866,390	$0
	Chapter 5 Total	**$323,374**	**$634,754**	**$634,754**	**$634,754**	**$634,754**	**$2,862,390**	**$0**

Chapter 6--Asset and Risk Management

#								
56	Consolidate campus, student activity and homemaking accounts. p. 217	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$30,000	$0
57	Expand direct deposit marketing efforts and encourage all employees to use direct deposit. p. 218	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
58	Prepare updated quarterly cash forecasts in addition to the annual cash forecast prepared during the budget process. p. 218	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
59	Conduct periodic unannounced inventory audits and perform quarterly reconciliations of the fixed asset subsidiary ledger to the general ledger. p. 227	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 6 Total	**$6,000**	**$6,000**	**$6,000**	**$6,000**	**$6,000**	**$30,000**	**$0**

Chapter 7--Financial Management

#								
60	Designate an employee outside of internal audit as the district's records management officer. p. 243	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
61	Adopt a formal	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of audit recommendations made to LISD. p. 244							
62	Review the internal audit charter and revise if necessary. p. 245	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
63	Ensure that the new management information system provides for electronic interfacing of human resources and payroll information. p. 250	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 7 Total	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Chapter 8--Purchasing and Warehouse Services								
64	Develop an implementation plan to use the accounting system's improved online requisitioning capabilities. p. 257	$36,559	$36,559	$36,559	$36,559	$36,559	$182,795	$0
65	Increase the use of purchasing cooperatives when purchasing custodial and instructional supplies. p. 259	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
66	Create procedures for textbook	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	accountability including conducting periodic textbook verifications. p. 261							
67	Develop procedures to phase-in the purchase of custodial and instructional supplies on a just-in-time basis. p. 264	$0	$0	$137,251	$137,251	$137,251	$411,753	$0
	Chapter 8 Total	**$36,559**	**$36,559**	**$173,810**	**$173,810**	**$173,810**	**$594,548**	**$0**
Chapter 9--Food Service								
68	Designate a cafeteria manager at each campus to provide a more effective supervisory structure for Child Nutrition Program staff located at campus cafeterias. p. 275	($39,771)	($39,771)	($39,771)	($39,771)	($39,771)	($198,855)	$0
69	Obtain additional feedback from students, teachers and administrators about the quality, taste, variety and quantity of menu items served. p. 276	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
70	Monitor kitchens' absentee rates and implement corrective action plans including disciplinary action	($7,040)	($7,040)	($7,040)	($7,040)	($7,040)	($35,200)	$0

	for those with excessive absences and an incentive program to encourage attendance. p. 277							
71	Establish meals-per-labor-hour standards to evaluate productivity and guide staffing levels at each campus. p. 279	$191,412	$191,412	$191,412	$191,412	$191,412	$957,060	$0
72	Immediately implement a point-of-sale system at all campuses. p. 281	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($63,000)
73	Monitor the Child Nutrition Program's energy management practices. p. 282	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
74	Expand menu items and the nutrition, education and promotion plan. p. 284	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
75	Develop a process to ensure that the Child Nutrition Program fund balance does not exceed three months of operating expenditures after the central kitchen is completed. p. 286	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 9 Total	**$144,601**	**$144,601**	**$144,601**	**$144,601**	**$144,601**	**$723,005**	**($63,000)**

	Chapter 10--Transportation							
76	Eliminate the Transportation Department security guard position. p. 292	$22,878	$22,878	$22,878	$22,878	$22,878	$114,390	$0
77	Hire permanent, part-time drivers to drive the routes of absent full-time drivers. p. 293	($15,139)	($15,139)	($15,139)	($15,139)	($15,139)	($75,695)	$0
78	Implement staggered bell times at district campuses. p. 297	$66,655	$66,655	$66,655	$66,655	$66,655	$333,275	$0
79	Charge user departments a rate that reflects actual transportation costs. p. 300	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
80	Implement a policy of purchasing buses based on student transportation needs. p. 301	$79,100	$79,100	$22,600	$22,600	$22,600	$226,000	$0
81	Purchase and implement an automated vehicle maintenance information system. p. 303	($510)	($510)	($510)	($510)	($510)	($2,550)	($5,600)
82	Consolidate all district vehicle maintenance into the Transportation Department. p. 304	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
83	Provide ASE certification training to all	($225)	($225)	($225)	($225)	($225)	($1,125)	$0

	LISD mechanics. p. 305						
	Chapter 10 Total	**$152,759**	**$152,759**	**$96,259**	**$96,259**	**$96,259**	**$594,295**	**($5,600)**

Chapter 11--Computers and Technology

84	Reorganize the Network Administrator Section into four areas and hire 10 more specialists. p. 314	($482,334)	($482,334)	($482,334)	($482,334)	($482,334)	($2,411,670)	$0
85	Assign campus trainers to the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology and reduce the number of trainers from 31 to 20, organized in four geographic areas. p. 316	$431,508	$431,508	$431,508	$431,508	$431,508	$2,157,540	$0
86	Create a chief information officer position that reports directly to the superintendent and serves as a member of his cabinet. p. 319	($78,806)	($94,567)	($94,567)	($94,567)	($94,567)	($457,074)	$0
87	Create a Software Systems Section, eliminate three positions and require users to use online menus to select reports. p. 320	$55,378	$166,133	$166,133	$166,133	$166,133	$719,910	$0
88	Eliminate the operations	$0	$97,793	$97,793	$97,793	$97,793	$391,172	$0

	manager position and four operator positions; create a video teleconferencing technical manager position; and consolidate all responsibilities under the network administrator. p. 323								
89	Delay implementation of SAGE Millennium, and any other major software packages until detailed implementation and test plans are developed and resourced. p. 327	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
90	Write detailed procedures for key undocumented IT processes. p. 328	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($16,944)
91	Develop a technology architecture plan that provides for server replacement and consolidation. p. 334	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
92	Revise computer standards and implement a strategy of leasing and purchasing computers to make additional computers available to	$99,300	$99,300	$99,300	$99,300	$99,300	$496,500	$0

	students. p. 336							
93	Create a single technology help desk jointly staffed and supported by commercial help desk software. p. 339	($32,789)	($32,789)	($32,789)	($32,789)	($32,789)	($163,945)	$0
94	Acquire adequate tools, hand-held test equipment, workbenches, cabinets and computers to aid the IT Department's technicians. p. 340	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($26,200)
95	Establish a network response time monitoring program that records response times at peak and non-peak hours for both Internet and LISD network transactions. p. 342	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 11 Total	**($7,743)**	**$185,044**	**$185,044**	**$185,044**	**$185,044**	**$732,433**	**($43,144)**
Chapter 12--Safety and Security								
96	Publish a combined student code of conduct and parent/student handbook annually. p. 353	($3,571)	($3,571)	($3,571)	($3,571)	($3,571)	($17,855)	$0
97	Clarify responsibilities and ensure accountability for all personnel	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	responsible for safety and security. p. 358							
98	Create an on-going, community-wide safety committee to tap resources, review safety and crisis management procedures regularly and share input about related community concerns. p. 359	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
99	Carry out and evaluate several relevant disaster simulations with roles and responsibilities outlined for key school and community participants. p. 360	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
100	Analyze security staffing patterns and re-deploy guards to provide 24-hour security in high-risk schools. p. 361	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
101	Establish a districtwide policy for controlling building keys and alarm codes. p. 361	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 12 Total	**($3,571)**	**($3,571)**	**($3,571)**	**($3,571)**	**($3,571)**	**($17,855)**	**$0**
	TOTAL SAVINGS	**$2,264,194**	**$3,649,628**	**$3,730,379**	**$3,730,379**	**$3,730,379**	**$17,104,959**	**$0**

	TOTAL COSTS	($730,829)	($791,590)	($794,590)	($794,590)	($794,590)	($3,906,189)	($123,744)
	NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	$1,533,365	$2,858,038	$2,935,789	$2,935,789	$2,935,789	$13,198,770	($123,744)

5 Year Savings	$17,104,959
5 Year Costs	($4,029,933)
Grand Total	$13,075,026

Chapter 1
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report reviews the organization and management of the Laredo Independent School District (LISD) in four sections.

A. Governance
B. District Management
C. Planning, School Management and Site-Based Decision-Making
D. Policies and Procedures

A. GOVERNANCE

Section 11.151 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) provides for an elected board of trustees to administer the district. District residents elect school board members either at large or from single-member districts.

As a legal agent of the state of Texas, the board derives its legal status from the Texas Constitution and state laws. School boards must operate in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, regulations interpreting statutes and controlling court decisions. Under Section 11.151 of the TEC, each board must:

- Govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district;
- Adopt such rules, regulations and bylaws as the board may deem proper;
- Approve a district-developed plan for site-based decision-making and provide for its needs;
- Select tax officials, as appropriate to the district's need;
- Prepare and adopt a budget for the next succeeding fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- Have district fiscal accounts audited at district expense by a Texas certified or public accountant holding a permit from the Texas State of Board of Public Accountancy following the close of each fiscal year;
- Publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including campus performance objectives and the progress of each campus toward those objectives;
- Receive bequests and donations or other money coming legally into its hands in the name of the district;
- Select depository for district funds;
- Order elections, canvass the returns, declare results and issue certificates of election as required by law;

- Dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the school district;
- Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district; and
- Hold all powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to the Texas Education Agency or the State Board of Education.

LISD's Board of Trustees consists of seven members. Trustees are elected to three-year terms on a rotating basis. In 1999, LISD citizens voted to elect their school board members in single member districts. Members from districts one and four have terms that expire in 2002; members from districts three, five and six have terms that expire in 2003 and members from districts two and seven have terms that expire in 2004. The current board is listed in **Exhibit 1-1**.

Exhibit 1-1
LISD Board of Trustees
2001-02

Laredo School Board Members	Title	Term Expires	Full Years of Service as of 5/2001	Occupation
Carmen Trevino	President	2002	2 Years	Attorney
John Montalvo	Vice President	2003	2 Years	Recruiter/Home Visitor
Jorge Rodriguez	Secretary	2004	1 Year	Sales
Dennis Cantu	Member	2003	11 Years	Physician
Jesus Guerra	Member	2004	First Year	Retired
Viola Moore	Member	2003	3 Years	Retired
Jose Valdez	Member	2002	4 Years	Builder

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office, October 2001.

Board meetings are held monthly on the first Thursday following the tenth of each month. Regular meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the LISD boardroom, located at 1620 Houston Street. The public is welcome to attend allmeetings, and citizens wishing to address the board must complete an audience participation request form, stating briefly the subject they wish to address. Each citizen's comments are limited to three minutes, and citizens cannot combine minutes with other individuals who wish to speak on the same subject. Citizens cannot comment on individual personnel or individual students in public sessions. The board will not

deliberate, discuss or make decisions on public comments unrelated to items on the meeting agenda.

The board secretary keeps the board minutes. The board secretary, along with other board members, reviews the official minutes of all meetings for accuracy and completeness prior to approval. LISD makes both audio and videotapes of open meetings.

The board secretary prepares a certified agenda, listing topics discussed in closed session and keeps this information on file in the superintendent's office. Neither audio nor videotapes are made during closed sessions.

FINDING

To improve communication, each board member is provided a fax machine and notebook computer with individual e-mail addresses to use at their respective homes. The notebook computer provides access to the Texas Association of School Board's (TASB) online policy service and the LISD Web site and allows the superintendent, administrators and constituents to electronically communicate with board members when necessary. Board members report that these new electronic tools have significantly improved their communications.

COMMENDATION

Installing fax machines in the homes of board members and providing notebook computers with e-mail and online access contributes to open communications among the board, superintendent and his cabinet and the community.

FINDING

Some LISD board members are not meeting continuing education requirements and are not taking advantage of continuing education opportunities. **Exhibit 1-2** presents an overview of the minimum annual continuing education requirements prescribed by the Texas Administrative Code and required by Board Policy BBD (LEGAL), for new, as well as experienced board members.

Exhibit 1-2
Overview of Continuing Education Requirements
For School Board Members

Type of Continuing Education	First Year Board Member	Experienced Board Member

Local district orientation	Required within 60 days of election or appointment	Not required
Orientation to the Texas Education Code	3 hours	Not required
Update to the Texas Education Code	Incorporated into orientation to the Texas Education Code	After legislative session: of sufficient length to address major changes
Team-building session/Assessment of continuing education needs of the board-superintendent team	At least 3 hours	At least 3 hours
Additional continuing education, based on assessed need and framework for school board development	At least 10 hours	At least 5 hours
Total Minimum Number of Hours	**16 hours, plus local district orientation**	**8 hours, plus update**

Source: Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 61, Rule 61.1.

Several members of the board attended team-building sessions conducted in the district during September 2000, and a number of board members attended TASB training in 2000 and 2001. A sample of specific training by board member is shown in **Exhibit 1-3**.

Exhibit 1-3
Sample of Training Attended by LISD Board Members
September 1999 through August 2001

Training Session	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
TEC Update	X	X	X				
Team Building	X	X	X				X
Intro to Parliamentary Procedures	X						
Developing a Shared Vision for Governance	X					X	
Conflict Management	X						

Topic							
Approaches to Districtwide Planning	X						
Board's Role in Hiring and Firing Personnel	X				X		
Achieving Excellence	X						
School Trustees Ethics	X						
Effective SB Meetings	X						
Special Education For the Uninitiated		X	X				
Effective Meeting Management		X	X				
Building Champions	X	X	X		X		
The Leadership Invitation		X	X				
The Competitive Edge	X	X	X		X		
Renovations vs. Building New		X			X		
Fall Legal Seminar							X

Source: Region 1 and LISD Superintendent's Office, November 2001.

Exhibit 1-4 presents the total continuing education hours accrued by each board member by reporting period.

Exhibit 1-4
Continuing Education Hours Attended by Board Members

Laredo School Board Members	Entry Date as Board Member	Reporting Period 9/1/99 - 8/31/00	Reporting Period 9/1/00 - 8/31/01	Total
A	May 1999	31	18.25	49.25
B	May 2000	0	13.75	13.75
C	May 2000	0	15.0	15.0
D	June 1999	0	0	0
E	May 2001	N/A	0	0
F	May 1998	3	8.5	11.5
G	January 1997	0	8.0	8.0
Total Hours		**34**	**63.5**	**97.5**

Source: Superintendent's Office, December 2001.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-5**, three board members did not meet the minimum number of continuing education hours recommended by TASB and required by district policy for each of the two reporting periods, September 1999 through August 2000 and September 2000 to August 2001.

Exhibit 1-5
Continuing Education Hours Required and Met/Not Met by Board Members

Laredo School Board Members	Number of Hours Required 9/1/99 - 8/31/00	Number Reported Hours 9/1/99 - 8/31/00	Met/Not Met	Number of Hours Required 9/1/00 - 8/31/01	Number Reported Hours 9/1/00 - 8/31/01	Met/Not Met
A	16, plus local update	31	Met	8, plus local update	49.25	Met
B	N/A	N/A	N/A	16, plus local update	13.75	Not Met
C	N/A	N/A	N/A	16, plus local update	15.0	Not Met
D	8, plus local update	0	Not Met	8, plus local update	0	Not Met
E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
F	8, plus local update	3	Not Met	8, plus local update	11.5	Met
G	8, plus local update	0	Not Met	8, plus local update	8.0	Met

Source: Superintendent's Office and Texas Association of School Boards Board Member Continuing Education Reports, December 2001.

Note: Board member E was not a board member during this reporting period.

One of the seven board members accrued almost half of the board's accumulated continuing education hours. One tenured board member did not report any training during the reporting periods September 1999 through August 2000 and September 2000 through August 2001.

During interviews conducted by TSPR, several board members suggested that specific training on developing board policy, procurement and financial analysis is needed.

Recommendation 1:

Ensure each board member completes the required hours of overall training and provide the board with specific and targeted continuing education opportunities.

Each year, the superintendent and board president should survey individual board members to obtain input about the types of continuing education training they would like to attend to improve their effectiveness as board members. The administration should search out training tailored to address specific training requests.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president requests input from individual board members about specific continuing education training they wish to attend.	May 2002
2.	The board president directs the superintendent to summarize board members' training requests and collect information on specific workshops or seminars from a variety of sources.	June - July 2002
3.	Each quarter, the superintendent informs the board president of specific training opportunities relevant to board members' requests as they become available.	August 2002 and quarterly thereafter
4.	The board president sends quarterly e-mail correspondence to each board member listing relevant training opportunities, and provides each member an update of their continuing education hours to ensure that minimum hours are being met.	August 2002 and quarterly thereafter
5.	Board members attend training sessions of interest to them and to meet training requirements.	August 2002 and quarterly thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

LISD budgeted $5,419 for board training and travel during 2001-02. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources in 2002-03.

FINDING

The LISD board is not using its four standing committees effectively. The standing committees are Finance and Audit; Curriculum, Technology and Higher Education; Safety and Athletics; and Construction. Each standing committee has three to five board members. Standing committees have separate meetings as often as once a month. In addition to the regular monthly board meetings, the district frequently holds special called meetings.

The board reviews in detail some of the same information in both its standing committees and in regular board meetings, resulting in redundant and inefficient use of board and staff members' time. The board also considers some important agenda items such as organizational issues without first referring them to the appropriate standing committee. The types and number of board and committee meetings held from June 2000 through May 2001 are shown in **Exhibit 1-6**.

Exhibit 1-6
LISD Board and Committee Meetings
June 2000 through May 2001

Date of Meeting	Committee or Board Meeting Type
June 28, 2000	Special called meeting
June 28, 20001	Board workshop
July 11, 2000	Budget workshop
July 13, 2000	Public hearing
July 13, 2000	Regular board meeting
July 27, 2000	Special called meeting
August 9, 2000	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
August 15, 2000	Finance Committee meeting
August 16, 2000	Special called meeting
August 17, 2000	Regular board meeting
August 23, 2000	Special called meeting
August 30, 2000	Special called meeting

September 6, 2000	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
September 12, 2000	Finance Committee meeting
September 14, 2000	Regular board meeting
September 26, 2000	Facilities/Construction Committee meeting
October 3, 2000	Board workshop
October 4, 2000	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
October 10, 2000	Finance Committee meeting
October 12, 2000	Regular board meeting
October 24, 2000	Special called meeting
November 8, 2000	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
November 14, 2000	Finance Committee meeting
November 14, 2000	Board workshop
November 16, 2000	Regular board meeting
November 29. 2000	Board workshop
December 5, 2000	Special called meeting
December 12, 2000	Finance Committee meeting
December 13, 2000	Board workshop
December 14, 2000	Regular board meeting
December 14, 2000	Public Hearing
December 19, 2000	Regular board meeting (reposted)
January 9, 2001	Finance Committee meeting
January 18, 2001	Regular Board meeting
February 1, 2001	Special called meeting
February 1, 2001	Board workshop
February 13 2001	Special called meeting
February 20, 2001	Finance Committee meeting
February 21, 2001	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
February 22, 2001	Regular board meeting
February 26, 2001	Board workshop
February 28, 2001	Special called meeting

March 6, 2001	Special called meeting
March 20, 2001	Finance Committee meeting
March 22, 2001	Regular Board meeting
March 29, 2001	Special Call meeting
April 4, 2001	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
April 10, 2001	Finance Committee meeting
April 12, 2001	Regular board meeting
April 23, 2001	Special called meeting
May 8, 2001	Special called meeting
May 9, 2001	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
May 9, 2001	Special called meeting
May 15, 2001	Finance Committee meeting
May 15, 2001	Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting
May 17, 2001	Regular Board meeting
May 24, 2001	Board workshop - construction and facilities
May 24, 2001	Special called meeting
May 30, 2001	Special called meeting

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office, November 2001.

Regular board meetings routinely average three to five hours in length. Board members review each item on the agenda, even if a standing committee has previously reviewed and made a recommendation on an agenda item. Because of the length of regular board meetings, a number of additional special called meetings have been required to conduct district business. As shown in **Exhibit 1-7**, the board averaged almost five board and committee meetings each month from June 2000 to May 2001.

Exhibit 1-7
Type and Number of LISD Board and Committee Meetings Held
June 2000-May 2001

Type of Board or Committee Meeting	Number of Meetings Held
Regular board meeting	11

Special called meeting	18
Board/Budget workshop	9
Finance Committee	10
Curriculum and Technology Committee	8
Facilities/Construction	1
Public hearing	2
Total	**59**

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office, November 2001.

Texas Education Code 11.061 authorizes school boards to create committees to facilitate their operations; the creation of committees is detailed in the district's Board Policy BDB (LEGAL) and BDB (Local). Such board committees must comply with the state's Open Meetings Act. LISD board policy stipulates that board committees must be advisory in nature, serving as fact-finding groups to make recommendations to the board as a whole.

Standing committees and briefing committees should serve as work sessions for board members and the superintendent's cabinet. Appropriately configured committees allow the board to interact openly with the superintendent and administrative team. Accordingly, questions about administrative and operational issues and their effect on school district policy can be discussed in considerable detail and resolved by standing committees without prolonging regular board meetings. The superintendent and cabinet should also use the committees to help train board members in the details of district finance, budgeting, curriculum development and other critical distric t functions.

Some districts are effectively using other methods to meet their governance structure. For example, Dallas Independent School District (DISD) dismantled its standing committee structure during 1999-2000 and replaced it with five basic committees recommended by the Carver *Policy Governance Model*®: the Audit Committee, Governance and Policy Committee, Public Input Committee, Education Committee, and the Committee of the Whole. All but the Committee of the Whole serve as briefing committees to the board. The Audit Committee monitors all operations and administrative functions; the Governance and Policy Committee continuously updates and revises board policy and related governance issues. The Public Input Committee develops creative strategies to obtain representative input on issues from the general public; the Education Committee reviews and discusses curriculum and

instructional issues, and the Committee of the Whole reviews and approves all action items recommended by the working committees.

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) uses a Committee of the Whole rather than permanent board committees or standing committees. HISD's board determined that one Committee of the Whole was an efficient way for all board members to become knowledgeable about district operations and administration and to interact with the district's executive leadership team. Board members review all agenda action items with the executive leadership team in the Committee of the Whole meeting, where each board member has the opportunity to ask questions before the regular board meeting. The superintendent and executive team provide supporting documentation and information as required, and the board issues no directives through the Committee of the Whole. HISD forms ad hoc committees to address specific issues as necessary.

Because it is not effectively using existing standing committees, the LISD board routinely questions information and materials provided by the cabinet during regular board meetings, thereby prolonging them. In the September 12, 2001 board meeting, for example, the board voted to review each item on the consent agenda, including those items previously reviewed by a standing committee.

Recommendation 2:

Replace standing committees with a Committee of the Whole and train board members on using the Committee of the Whole effectively.

Replacing standing committees with a Committee of the Whole will allow the superintendent and his executive leadership team to conduct the business of the district more efficiently by reducing duplicate information requests among committees. Board membersshould use the Committee of the Whole to resolve administrative and operative issues and clarify policy issues in advance of regular board meetings. The board can establish additional briefing committees or ad hoc committees as needed to address specific issues, such as facility construction. Elimination of standing committees will not require that the board to revise its Board Policy DBD (LEGAL).

The board should be trained on the Carver *Policy Governance Model*® and how to manage the Committee of the Whole effectively. The Committee of the Whole will be the place for all board members to interact with the superintendent and his cabinet about items that will appear on the regular meeting agenda.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The president of the board directs the superintendent to prepare a board action item to eliminate all committees and replace them with a Committee of the Whole.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent revises the policy and presents it to the board for approval.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent schedules board training on using the Committee of the Whole.	July 2002
4.	Board members and cabinet members attend training on standing committees.	August - September 2002
5.	The board begins to use its Committee of the Whole to enhance the board meeting process.	October 2002 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to provide training to the board on how to manage the Committee of the Whole effectively is estimated to cost $9,500. This is based on the vendor coming to the district for a one-day training session for all board members. The cost includes the vendor fee of $8,500 and estimated expenses of $1,000.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Replace standing committees with a Committee of the Whole and train board members on using the Committee of the Whole effectively.	($9,500)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

The process used to place items on the board agenda is not effective. Agenda items come from a variety of sources including suggestions from board members, the superintendent or members of the superintendent's cabinet.

Individual board members submit to the superintendent's office or board president in advance of a board meeting any item they want on the agenda, sometimes without discussing the item with the superintendent or board president. Board members may submit items up until the day the agenda is prepared, which is on the Friday before the Thursday board meeting.

Sometimes members place items on the agenda, however, even after the Friday deadline.

Without previous review by the board president and superintendent, board items can be duplicative. In reviewing board tapes and minutes, the review team found that items are frequently tabled because the board does not have the information it needs from district staff. Board members can place items on the agenda that are inappropriate. For example, the November 15, 2001 LISD board agenda included a resolution supporting the city of Laredo on the construction of a fifth bridge between Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. A review by the superintendent and president could eliminate agenda items that have nothing to do with educating students.

LISD Board Policy BE (LOCAL) states that the superintendent, in consultation with the board president, is responsible for preparing the agenda for board meetings. Before finalizing the agenda, the superintendent is to consult with the board president to ensure that the agenda and topics meet with the president's approval.

In Kingsville ISD, the superintendent sends out a weekly message every Friday afternoon to all board members. A board packet and financial information are included with the message before any board meeting. Board members have the opportunity to read their packets and may call the superintendent before the Tuesday night meeting if they have questions about specific agenda items. The superintendent and board president must approve all items before the items are put on the agenda.

Recommendation 3:

Require the board president to review and approve each proposed agenda item.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board president clarify the board agenda process with the board.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent and board president review each proposed agenda item before finalizing the board agenda.	June 2002 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD board members have become increasingly involved in the daily operations of the district, which could potentially violate their statutory authority as board members. Individual LISD board members interact directly with LISD staff, question administrative decisions andmicromanage district affairs. Interviews conducted with LISD employees and community leaders alike highlighted this issue. The review team learned of examples of board members directing the organization of the safety office, creating a new district Quality Assurance committee, controlling staff appointments and salary increases and giving individuals advice on internal operational decisions.

In reviewing board minutes and taped board meetings and attending a full board meeting, the review team observed that individual board members were delving into district operations and management in inappropriate ways. **Exhibit 1-8** presents specific examples of LISD board members' micromanagement.

Exhibit 1-8
Specific Examples of LISD Board Micromanagement

Area	Type of Activity
Personnel	• Recommending a specific individual for promotion to the position of a director • Recommending a certain salary level and job classification for a director • Changing the recommendation of a division hiring committee • Creating a new department of Safety and Occupational Health • Requiring the Safety director to report directly to the superintendent
Administration	• Creating a district committee for Quality Assurance, directed and chaired by a board member • An individual board member questioning activities of the board and superintendent, while the member was speaking in a public forum

Source: TSPR interviews, focus groups and review of collected data, November 2001.

Several boards around the country have used an external facilitator to help them focus on school district goals and objectives. This process can begin

with a steering committee of the superintendent, board president, another board member and perhaps another senior staff member. Typically, this committee selects and meets with one or more facilitators who lead a series of workshops for the board and senior staffers focused on building trust and eliminating excessive micromanagement.

Recommendation 4:

Develop operating procedures for the board and a self-monitoring system to ensure all board members fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

To ensure board members are committed to their roles and responsibilities, operating procedures should be established and each board member should agree to them. In addition, the board should create a monitoring system to ensure that board actions are consistent with agreed-upon operating procedures. When they are not, the board attorney should notify the board, and the minutes should reflect such notification.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president creates an ad hoc committee of board members who will draft board operating procedures.	June 2002
2.	The ad hoc committee submits the operating procedures, including a monitoring plan, to the full board for input and adoption.	July 2002
3.	The board adopts the proposed procedures with modification as appropriate.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In its analysis of a sample of board packets, the review team learned that board members are not provided sufficient information. **Exhibit 1-9** summarizes typical executive-level reports included in each of the board's agenda packets reviewed.

Exhibit 1-9
Executive-Level Reports Included in Board Agenda Packets

- *Total Monthly Cash Disbursements for the Month of October 2001 -*

Report includes amount of payments to vendors, payments to payroll liabilities, bank transfers between accounts, and total cash disbursements.

- *Accounts Payable Report* - Report includes the date, number of checks, and amount of computer checks disbursements.
- *Gifts and Bequests for the Period Ending October 31, 2001* - Report provides a year-to-date summary of monetary and fixed asset donations, and the gifts donated for the month by donor, campus, gift description, and amount.
- *Investment Report as of October 31, 2001 (Unaudited)* - Report includes investment portfolio totals by fund, with grand totals listed at book value and market value, as well as the percentage of the portfolio in cash, Lone Star, LOGIC, and MBIA.
- *Tax Office October 2001 Collection Report-* Report presents current tax collections, delinquent tax collections and adjustments for the current month and year-to-date.
- *Budgeted Tax Revenues vs. Actual Tax Revenues* -Report shows budgeted and actual tax revenues for year-to-date and current month, as well as percentage of collections.
- *Local Current Year Property Tax Revenues* - Report consists of a bar graph depicting the percentage of taxes collected for 1999, 2000 and 2001, as well as historical data from 1997 through 2001.
- *Tax Levy and Collections Table* - Report shows a historical trend line of tax levies and collections from 1966 through 2000.
- *Summary of Delinquent Property Tax Revenues* - Report shows a bar graph and historical trend in delinquent tax collections.
- *LISD Successor-in Interest for Delinquent Taxes Monthly and Year to Date* - Reports show monthly and year-to-date collections and distributions for the district.

Source: LISD Board of Trustees, Regular Meeting Board Packet Agenda, November 15, 2001.

Exhibit 1-9 also shows that financial information is routinely provided to the board in the form of interim financial reports, tax collection reports and investment portfolio reports. Although the majority of board members are satisfied with the executive-level reports highlighted above, the review team learned that agenda materials prepared for the board do not contain enough information about the management and operations of LISD to allow board members to make informed decisions.

LISD uses a summary form for each agenda item (**Exhibit 1-10**). The summary form enables staff members preparing agenda items to brief board members on the highlights of the informational materials that are distributed to the board.

Exhibit 1-10
LISD Board Agenda Summary Form

AGENDA ITEM

Purpose: ____Action ____ Discussion

Committee Meeting Date:

Board Meeting Date:

Subject: Finance

Resource Personnel:

Goal and Objective:

Recommendation:

Rationale:

Evaluation Method and Time Line:

Fiscal Impact and Cost/Funding Source:

Compliance with Board Policy:

Prepared by:

Approved by:
          Paul Cruz, Ph.D., Superintendent

Source: LISD Board of Trustees, Regular Meeting Board Packet Agenda, November 15, 2001.

An analysis of the supporting materials given to the board for regular board meetings found that these supporting materials were not always comprehensive. In some instances, board members did not receive supporting materials. In such cases, the board must ask for additional information to adequately prepare for its meetings or make decisions without the appropriate information.

An agenda item in the November 15, 2001 board meeting was the consideration for approval of the school resource officers (SRO) grants program with Webb County and the city of Laredo. A related item was the consideration for approval of the expansion of the SRO program and the development of the grant for more personnel. Board members did not receive summary forms or any information in their packets on these two items, and no information was provided that estimated the program's

financial impact. During the board meeting, additional information was handed out to board members on the agenda items being considered. The board was forced to take action because of the grant's deadline, but the fiscal impact on the district was unclear to board members.

Board agenda packets do not contain monthly summaries of education-related program performance data such as the number of students participating in specific educational programs, comparisons of funding of specific programs between years, anticipated funding in subsequent years and actual-versus-planned program performance. Some board members said they want to see more performance reporting data and information on student discipline.

Recommendation 5:

Provide comprehensive materials to the board to enable board members to prepare adequately for board meetings.

The superintendent should ensure that each summary form for each agenda item is completed before it is inserted in the board member meeting packets. Additional supporting materials should be included to help board members make informed decisions.

The board must work with the superintendent and his cabinet to improve reports so board members have pertinent data. The format should take into account the information needs of specific board members and include comparative summary-level reports prepared by the superintendent's cabinet. **Exhibit 1-11** presents examples of summary-level executive management reports that will be helpful to the board.

Exhibit 1-11
Examples of Summary-Level Executive Management Reports

Report Title	Sample Contents
Budget Control	• Summary of departmental budgets by function, with columns for prior-year actual amounts, adopted budget, revised budget, projected balance at year-end and related variances. • Departmental performance measures, including the status of performance measures for the month. • Summary section highlighting operational or administrative issues affecting performance goals.

Financial Management	• Revenue and expenditure data showing columns for current and prior-year actual amounts for similar periods. • Notes explaining significant variances. • Bar graphs and pie charts depicting comparative revenue and expenditure information. • Administrative cost ratios, cost per student, transportation costs per mile, food and labor cost per meal, and other data, compared to prior years. • Monthly reconciliation of fund balance, including specific items increasing or decreasing fund balance. • Summary of monthly grant activity, including number and dollar value of grants submitted, number and dollar value of grants awarded and the ratio of grants awarded to grants submitted-all compared to prior years. • Notes explaining significant variances.
Education Program Performance/Student Discipline	• Comparative data related to performance such as annual graduation rates, dropout rates and TAAS scores by school. • Comparative funding of specific education programs between fiscal years (Compensatory Education, Gifted and Talented and Vocational Education). • Actual vs. planned performance, with accompanying notes explaining significant variances between planned and actual performance. • Monthly incidents by school, by ethnicity and gender compared to the same month the previous year. • Monthly hearings and related disposition by school, by ethnicity and gender compared to the same month in the previous year. • Monthly referrals to alternative education settings by school, by ethnicity and gender compared to the same month in the previous year.

Source: TSPR.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board identifies critical management information desired by board members and designates the type, format and content of executive management reports.	June 2002
2.	The superintendent, in conjunction with the cabinet, develops draft executive-level reports for the board's review and comment.	July - August 2002
3.	The board suggests appropriate revisions, and the cabinet finalizes the reporting formats.	September 2002 - November 2002
4.	The superintendent submits monthly executive-level management reports to the board.	December 2002 and monthly thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT (PART 1)

A superintendent and senior administrators or cabinet members typically manage Texas school districts. As specified by Section 11.201 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), the superintendent is responsible for:

- Planning, operation, supervision and evaluation of the educational programs, services and facilities of the district and for annual performance appraisals of the staff;
- Assigning and evaluating all district personnel;
- Terminating or suspending staff members or the non-renewal of staff members' term contracts;
- Day-to-day management of district operations;
- Preparing district budgets;
- Preparing policy recommendations for the board and implementing adopted policies;
- Developing appropriate administrative regulations to implement board policies;
- Providing leadership in improving student performance; and
- Organizing the district's central administration.

The LISD superintendent has been with the district for the past three years and is the chief executive officer of the district.

The district is divided geographically into four quadrants that align the district into "feeder" groups. Students within a feeder group attend a certain group of elementary schools, based on the attendance zone boundaries. Students are then promoted to one of four middle schools and subsequently to one of three high schools. The district believes this vertical team arrangement has strengthened the district's ability to prepare students for middle and high schools, because each team of elementary, middle and high school principals meets and participates in planning and site-based decision-making.

The superintendent's cabinet is the district's executive leadership team, which is responsible for day-to-day operations and administration. The cabinet consists of the chief financial officer, the director of Communications, the executive director for Human Resources, the administrative assistant for Academics-Problem Solving, the administrative assistant for Academics-Communication, the administrative assistant for Academics-Wellness and the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology.

Exhibit 1-12 presents LISD's organization.

Exhibit 1-12
LISD Organization
2001-02

		Administrative Assistant for Operations		
Administrative Assistant for Academics - Texbooks	Administrative Assistant for Academics - Wellness	Director of Governmental and Community Relations	Administrative Assistant for Custodians and Texbooks	Director of Safety and Occupational Health
Administrative Assistant for Academics - Problem Solving	Administrative Assistant for Academics - Technology	Chief Financial Officer	Director of Communications	Executive Director of Human Resources

Executive Assistant (vacant)	Superintendent	Executive Secretary (2) Clerk (1)
Internal Auditor	Board of Trustees	

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office, January 2002.

The superintendent meets with the cabinet every Monday. In addition, principals are invited to the cabinet meeting on a rotating basis; each principal will attend a cabinet meeting three or four times a year. Other district staff attend cabinet meetings at the superintendent's invitation when particular agenda items require their presence. Cabinet meetings typically last two to three hours and include extensive discussions of the district's administration and operations, the superintendent's directives, status reports and planning for monthly board meetings.

The superintendent reviews district goals and objectives with each of his staff regularly and requires feedback on their progress in accomplishing each task assigned.

FINDING

LISD uses an outside law firm to advise administrators and campus personnel on contractual matters, employee grievances, student discipline hearings, board policy, employment matters, workers' compensation, open records and open meetings issues and special education.

The law firm's designated representative also attends all regular and special meetings of the board and committee meetings when requested to do so by the board president, committee chairman or superintendent. In addition, the law firm also collects delinquent taxes for the district.

Exhibit 1-13 summarizes the legal fees that LISD paid to outside counsel for 2000-01. The rate for the hourly fee is $90 per hour for attorneys and $60 per hour for paralegals, which is less than the customary rate for legal counsel.

Exhibit 1-13
Legal Fees Paid to Outside Counsel

Date	Amount
10/19/00	$5,891
11/20/00	$4,681
12/11/00	$6,237
2/01/01	$3,164
2/23/01	$2,484
3/22/01	$3,253
4/19/01	$4,212
5/25/01	$4,914
6/18/01	$11,205
7/23/01	$10,971
9/04/01	$3,807
9/20/01	$5,454
Total	**$66,273**

Source: LISD Finance Department, November 2001.

LISD's legal fees were $66,273 for 2000-01, the lowest among peer districts (**Exhibit 1-14**).

Exhibit 1-14
Comparison of Legal Fees Paid to Outside Counsel
2000-01

Date	Amount
Laredo	$66,273
Eagle Pass	$99,175
Edinburg	$211,964
United	$267,660
Edgewood	$338,692
Harlandale	$366,000

Source: TSPR survey, December 2001.

The district's contract for legal services allows billing only for actual time spent, with no monthly fixed retainer for legal counsel. No incidentals other than the court reporter are allowed under the terms of the contract. Only board members, the superintendent or his designee can call the attorney, and all legal requests must be coordinated first through the superintendent's office. The attorney under contract also provides two annual seminars to the school district on education law, which helps eliminate unnecessary legal expenses. The district efficiently uses its legal counsel's time.

COMMENDATION

LISD contracts for outside legal counsel and effectively controls the costs of legal fees and expenses.

FINDING

LISD is overstaffed. The level of administrative staffing for the positions of assistant principal/curriculum specialists, counselors and secretary/clerks exceeds the standards established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

SACS accredits more than 12,000 public and private institutions, from pre-kindergarten through the university level, in 11 states in the Southeastern United States (including Texas) and in Latin America. SACS is one of only six such regional accrediting organizations in the United States recognized by the U. S. Department of Education. Member institutions are accredited through one of SACS' three commissions, the

Commission on Colleges, the Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools and the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools.

Based on research and best practices in effective schools, the SACS standards were developed by a team of professionals that obtained input from representatives throughout the southern states. The standards present a common core of expectations that help to develop and maintain quality schools.

LISD uses staffing allocation models as a baseline for assigning school administrative and teaching personnel but has some positions that are filled regardless of student enrollment at the school.

The district provides for a minimum of one principal and 0.5 curriculum specialists for each school; a minimum of one librarian and at least 0.5 library aide/clerks; and a minimum of one principal's secretary and one attendance clerk at each school in the district. **Exhibit 1-15** shows selected LISD staffing formulas for 2001-02. The LISD standards were implemented in 1998-99 and have been revised annually based upon the needs of the schools.

Exhibit 1-15
Selected LISD Staffing Formulas 2001-02

Position	Ratio	District Comments
Leadership Team • Principal • Curriculum Specialist • Assistant Principal	400:1	Minimum 1 principal and .5 curriculum specialist (schools with less than 300 students would have a full time principal and share a curriculum specialist).
Counselor	500:1 Elementary and high school 400:1 Middle school	Minimum .5 (schools with less than 300 students would share a counselor). Minimum 1 per grade level at high school.
Librarian	750:1	Minimum 1 librarian and 1 library aide/clerk (1.5 FTE).
Elementary Secretary/Clerk	300:1	Minimum 1 principal's secretary and 1 attendance clerk.
Middle School Secretary/Clerk	185:1	Minimum 1 principal's secretary and 1 attendance

						clerk.
High School Secretary/Clerk/Receptionist	170:1				Minimum 1 principal's secretary and 1 attendance clerk.	

Source: LISD Board Meeting Book, December 13, 2001.

Exhibit 1-16 through **1-18** show the existing administrative staffing for LISD elementary, middle and high schools. Registrars, bookkeepers and telephone operators are not included in the staffing count for secretaries or clerks.

Exhibit 1-16
LISD School Staffing
Selected Administrative Positions for Elementary Schools 2001-02

School	Enrollment	Principal	Assistant Principal Curriculum Specialist	Counselor	Librarian	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretary or Clerk
Bruni	503	1	1	1	1	1	2
Buenos Aires	643	1	1	1	1	1	2
Daiches	637	1	1	1	1	1	2
Dovalina	602	1	1	1	1	1	2
Farias	1,000	1	2	2	1	1	4
Hachar	474	1	1	1	1	1	2
Heights	316	1	1	0	1	1	2
Kawas	584	1	1	1	1	1	2
Leyendecker	719	1	1	2	1	1	3
Ligarde	616	1	1	1	1	1	2
MacDonnell	465	1	1	1	1	1	2
Martin	688	1	1	2	1	1	2
Milton	931	1	2	2	1	1	3
Sanchez/Ochoa	688	1	1	2	1	1	5
Pierce	1,005	1	2	2	1	1	3
Ryan	967	1	2	2	1	1	3

School	Enrollment	Principal	Assistant Principal Curriculum Specialist	Counselor	Librarian	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretary or Clerk
Santa Maria	409	1	0	1	1	1	2
Santo Nino	915	1	2	2	1	1	3
Tarver	558	1	1	1	1	1	2
Zachry	707	1	1	1	1	1	2

Source: LISD Human Resources and Finance Departments, December 2001.

Exhibit 1-17
LISD School Staffing
Selected Administrative Positions for Middle Schools
2001-02

School	Enrollment	Principal	Assistant Principal Curriculum Specialist	Counselor	Librarian	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretary or Clerk
Christen	1,585	1	3	3	1	2	8
Cigarroa	1,403	1	3	4	1	2	7
Lamar	1,313	1	3	4	1	2	8
Memorial	638	1	2	2	1	1	4

Source: LISD Human Resources and Finance Departments, December 2001.

Exhibit 1-18
LISD School Staffing
Selected Administrative Positions for High Schools
2001-02

School	Enrollment	Principal	Assistant Principal Curriculum Specialist	Counselor	Librarian	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretary or Clerk
Cigarroa	1,457	1	4	5	1	2	7
Martin	1,929	1	5	5	2	3	13
Nixon	2,312	1	5	5	2	2	11

SACS recommends personnel requirements for elementary schools, based on enrollment, in its *Checklist of Standards for the Accreditation of Elementary Schools 2001-02*. The standards for elementary schools are presented in **Exhibit 1-19**.

Exhibit 1-19
SACS Personnel Requirements for Elementary Schools

Enrollment	Principal, Headmaster, President	Professional Admin. Supv. Assistant	Library or Media Specialist	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretary or Clerk
1 - 263	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.5
264 - 439	1.0	0	1.0	0	1.0
440 - 659	1.0	0	1.0	0.5	1.0
660 - 879	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
880 - 1,099	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
1,100 - 1,319	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
1,320+	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0

Source: SACS Checklist of Standards for the Accreditation of Elementary Schools, 2001-2002 School Year.

Although SACS recommends staffing guidelines for counselors or other personnel providing guidance services for elementary schools as shown in **Exhibit 1-20**, the TEC Section 33.002 requires school districts with 500 or more enrolled elementary students to employ a certified counselor for each 500 students. The TEC provision requires LISD to have 27 counselors, which matches the number of the district employees.

Exhibit 1-20
SACS Counselor Requirements
For Elementary Schools

Enrollment	Counselor

1 - 499	0.5
500 - 749	1.0
750 - 999	1.5
1,000 - 1,249	2.0
1,250 - 1,499	2.5
1,500+	3.0

Source: SACS Checklist of Standards for the Accreditation of Elementary Schools, 2001-2002 School Year.

SACS also recommends personnel requirements for middle schools, based on enrollment, in its *Checklist of Standards for the Accreditation of Middle Schools, 2001-2002 School Year.* The standards for middle schools are presented in **Exhibit 1-21**.

Exhibit 1-21
SACS Personnel Requirements for Middle Schools

Membership	Principal	Admin. Assistant	Guidance Counselor	Library or Media Specialist	Library Aide or Media Assistant	Secretary or Clerk
1 - 249	1.0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5
250 - 499	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	1.0
500 - 749	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
750 - 999	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
1,000 - 1,249	1.0	1.5	2.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
1,250 - 1,499	1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
1,500+	1.0	(A)	(A)	(A)	1.0	2.0

Source: SACS Checklist of Standards for the Accreditation of Middle Schools, 2001-2002 School Year.

(A) SACS recommends adding one position for each additional 250 students over 1,500.

SACS further recommends personnel requirements for high schools, based on enrollment, in its *Standards Checklist for Member Schools and Peer Review Teams, Accreditation Standards 2000*. The standards for high schools are presented in **Exhibit 1-22**.

Exhibit 1-22
SACS Personnel Requirements for High Schools

Membership	Principal or Headmaster	Admin, or Supv. Assistant	Guidance Professional	Librarian or Media Specialist	Library or Media Aide	Secretary or Clerk
1 - 249	1.0	0	1.0	1.0	0	1.0
250 - 499	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	2.0
500 - 749	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	3.0
750 - 999	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.5
1,000 - 1,249	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.0	4.0
1,250 - 1,499	1.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	1.0	4.5
1,500 - Up	1.0	(A)	(A)	(A)	1.0	4.5

Source: SACS Checklist for Member Schools and Peer Review Teams, Accreditation Standards 2000.

(A) SACS recommends adding one position for each additional 250 students over 1,500.

In 1997, LISD commissioned a private consulting firm, Empirical Management Services of Houston, Texas, to conduct a management and performance review of the district. The review team recommended in a December 1997 report that the district establish standard staffing patterns based on SACS standards for its elementary, middle and high schools to serve as the basis for allocating personnel resources. The district chose not to use SACS standards but did develop its own standards, allocating a core number of administrative personnel to each campus as well as using student-to-staff ratios to determine administrative staffing.

Exhibit 1-23 compares a comparison of the district's actual staffing to SACS standards for high schools shows that LISD's high schools have 2.5 more full-time equivalent (FTE) employees working as assistant principals and curriculum specialists and two more FTEs working as counselors in the three high schools.

Exhibit 1-23
LISD High Schools
Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing
Assistant Principals/Curriculum Specialists and Counselors

School	Enrollment	Assistant Principal or Curriculum Specialist			Counselor		
		Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under	Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under
Cigarroa	1,457	2.5	4	1.5	3	5	2
Martin	1,929	3.5	5	1.5	4	5	1
Nixon	2,312	5.5	5	(0.5)	6	5	(1)
Totals	**5,698**	**11.5**	**14**	**2.5**	**13**	**15**	**2**

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards and Campus Organization Charts.

Exhibit 1-24 compares actual staffing to SACS standards for high schools and shows that LISD's high schools also have 17.5 more FTEs working as secretaries or clerks than the SACS standards.

Exhibit 1-24
LISD High Schools
Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing
Secretaries or Clerks

School	Enrollment	Secretaries or Clerks		
		Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under
Cigarroa	1,457	4.5	7	2.5
Martin	1,929	4.5	13	8.5
Nixon	2,312	4.5	11	6.5
Totals	**5,698**	**13.5**	**31**	**17.5**

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards and Campus Organization Charts.

Exhibit 1-25 compares actual staffing to SACS standards for middle schools and shows that LISD's four middle schools have three more FTEs working as assistant principals or curriculum specialists and two more FTEs working as counselors than the recommended standards.

Exhibit 1-25
LISD Middle Schools
Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing
Assistant Principals/Curriculum Specialists and Counselors

School	Enrollment	Assistant Principal or Curriculum Specialist			Counselor		
		Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under	Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under
Christen	1,585	3	3	0	4	3	(1)
Cigarroa	1,403	2	3	1	3	4	1
Lamar	1,313	2	3	1	3	4	1
Memorial	638	1	2	1	1	2	1
Total	**4,939**	**8**	**11**	**3**	**11**	**13**	**2**

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards and Campus Organization Charts.

Exhibit 1-26 compares actual staffing to SACS standards for middle schools and shows that LISD's middle schools also have 19.5 more secretaries or clerks than the standards recommend.

Exhibit 1-26
LISD Middle Schools
Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing
Secretaries or Clerks

School	Enrollment	Secretaries or Clerks		
		Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under
Christen	1,585	2	8	6
Cigarroa	1,403	2	7	5
Lamar	1,313	2	8	6

Memorial	638	1.5	4	2.5
Total	**4,939**	**7.5**	**27**	**19.5**

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards and Campus Organization Charts.

Chapter 1
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT (PART 2)

Exhibit 1-27 compares actual staffing to SACS standards for elementary schools and shows that LISD's elementary schools have 17 more FTEs working as assistant principals and curriculum specialists than the standards recommend.

Exhibit 1-27
LISD Elementary Schools
Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing
Assistant Principals/Curriculum Specialists and Counselors

School	Enrollment	Assistant Principal or Curriculum Specialist		
		Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under
Bruni	503	0	1	1
Buenos Aires	643	0	1	1
Daiches	637	0	1	1
Dovalina	602	0	1	1
Farias	1,000	1	2	1
Hachar	474	0	1	1
Heights	316	0	1	1
Kawas	584	0	1	1
Leyendecker	719	0.5	1	0.5
Ligarde	616	0	1	1
Macdonnell	465	0	1	1
Martin	688	0.5	1	0.5
Milton	931	1	2	1
Sanchez/Ochoa	688	0.5	1	0.5
Pierce	1,005	1	2	1
Ryan	967	1	2	1

School	Enrollment			
Santa Maria	409	0	0	0
Santo Nino	915	1	2	1
Tarver	558	0	1	1
Zachry	707	0.5	1	0.5
Totals	**13,427**	**7**	**24**	**17**

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards and Campus Organization Charts.

Exhibit 1-28 compares actual staffing to SACS standards for elementary schools and shows LISD's elementary schools also have 25.5 more FTEs working as secretaries and clerks than the SACS recommended standard.

Exhibit 1-28
LISD Elementary Schools
Comparison of SACS Standards to Actual Staffing
Secretaries and Clerks

School	Enrollment	Secretary or Clerk		
		Per SACS	Actual	Difference Over/Under
Bruni	503	1	2	1
Buenos Aires	643	1	2	1
Daiches	637	1	2	1
Dovalina	602	1	2	1
Farias	1,000	1.5	4	2.5
Hachar	474	1	2	1
Heights	316	1	2	1
Kawas	584	1	2	1
Leyendecker	719	1.5	3	1.5
Ligarde	616	1	2	1
McDonnell	465	1	2	1
Martin	688	1.5	2	0.5
Milton	931	1.5	3	1.5

Sanchez/Ochoa	688	1.5	5	3.5
Pierce	1,005	1.5	3	1.5
Ryan	967	1.5	3	1.5
Santa Maria	409	1	2	1
Santo Nino	915	1.5	3	1.5
Tarver	558	1	2	1
Zachry	707	1.5	2	0.5
Totals	**13,427**	**24.5**	**50**	**25.5**

Source: Compiled from SACS Standards and Campus Organization Charts.

Based upon SACS standards, the district is overstaffed by 22.5 assistant principal/curriculum specialists, four counselors and 62.5 secretary/clerk positions in its schools. **Exhibits 1-29** through
1-31 present calculations of the salaries and benefits for assistant principal/curriculum specialist, counselor and secretary/clerk positions.

Exhibit 1-29
Calculation of Salary and Benefits for High School and Middle School Assistant Principal/Curriculum Specialist and Counselor Positions

	High School Assistant Principal or Curriculum Specialist	**High School Counselor**	**Middle School Assistant Principal or Curriculum Specialist**	**Middle School Counselor**
	Admin./Sp. Assignment Pay Grade 6 220 days	Prof. Employee minimum plus $5,000 stipend	Admin./Sp. Assignment Pay Grade 6 220 days	Prof. Employee minimum plus $4,500 stipend
Salary	$51,161	$36,000	$51,161	$35,500
Fixed Benefit Rate	$2,280	$2,280	$2,280	$2,280
Variable Benefit Rate .083822	$4,288	$3,018	$4,288	$2,976

Total Minimum Salary, Plus Benefits	**$57,729**	**$41,298**	**$57,729**	**$40,756**

Exhibit 1-30
Calculation of Salary and Benefits for Elementary School
Assistant Principal/Curriculum Specialist and Counselor Positions

	Elementary School Assistant Principal or Curriculum Specialist	**Elementary School Counselor**
	Admin./Sp. Assignment Pay Grade 5 212 days	Prof. Employee minimum plus $4,000 stipend
Salary	$45,754	$35,000
Fixed Benefit Rate	$2,280	$2,280
Variable Benefit Rate .083822	$3,835	$2,934
Total Minimum Salary, Plus Benefits	**$51,869**	**$40,214**

Exhibit 1-31
Calculation of Salary and Benefits for Secretary and Clerk Positions

	Pay Grade 3 Minimum Level 187 Days	**Pay Grade 4 Minimum Level 220 Days**	**Pay Grade 5 Minimum Level 220 Days**

Salary	$11,751	$15,206	$16,727
Fixed Benefit Rate	$2,442	$2,442	$2,442
Variable Benefit Rate .083822	$985	$1,275	$1,402
Total Minimum Salary, Plus Benefits	**$15,178**	**$18,923**	**$20,571**

Source: LISD Para-professional Employee and Substitute Pay Plan 2001-02;
LISD Annual Budget 2001-02; Finance Department Budget Report HRR 6430A, December 2001.

Recommendation 6:

Apply administrative staffing guidelines for elementary, middle and high schools to reflect differences in enrollment.

This recommendation assumes that LISD will use SACS guidelines to develop baseline campus staffing to realign its current staffing for assistant principals, curriculum specialists, counselors, secretaries and clerks for elementary, middle and high schools. LISD must determine how the administrative staff reductions will be distributed across elementary, middle and high schools. Because of the large number of staff that should be eliminated, approximately half of the estimated reductions can be achieved in 2002-03, but the remaining reductions could not occur until 2003-04.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources reviews existing campus administrative staffing for elementary, middle and high schools and compares it to SACS standards to determine baseline needs for individual schools.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources revises minimum campus staffing allocations for elementary, middle and high schools that consider enrollment and the unique needs of each school.	July 2002
3.	The superintendent approves the new staffing allocation guidelines for elementary, middle and high schools.	August 2002

4.	The board approves the staffing allocations and freezes hiring for any overstaffed positions and transfers personnel appropriately pending full implementations in 2003-04.	September 2002
5.	The superintendent implements staffing guidelines for elementary, middle and high schools in 2003-04 budget process.	February 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

The calculation of the fiscal impact of this recommendation assumes that secretaries and clerks will be classified as pay group 3, using the minimum salary rate and 187 days to determine the base salary before benefits.

The minimum rate at pay grade 6 for 220 days is used to determine the base salaries before benefits for high school and middle school assistant principals and curriculum specialists. The minimum rate at pay grade 5 for 212 days is used to determine the base salary before benefits for elementary school assistant principals and curriculum specialists. The professional employee minimum of $31,000 plus the $5,000 counselor stipend is used to determine the base salary before benefits for high school counselors.

The professional employee minimum of $31,000 plus the $4,500 counselor stipend is used to determine the base salary before benefits for middle school counselors.

The professional employee minimum of $31,000 plus the $4,000 counselor stipend is used to determine the base salary before benefits for elementary school counselors.

Recognizing that LISD has a large at-risk student population estimated savings have been reduced by 25 percent in the below calculations. With the 25 percent allowance the district should be able to conservatively achieve the savings while not adversely impacting the district's at-risk students.

Staff reductions are anticipated to begin taking effect with attrition during 2002-03 with full implementation for 2003-04. Savings for 2002-03 are estimated to be one-half of annual savings.

Potential Fiscal Impact of Eliminating Assistant Principals and Curriculum Specialists				
	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
Existing asst. principals and	24.0	11.0	14.0	49

curriculum spec. positions				
SACS standard	7	8.0	11.5	26.5
Difference over SACS standard	17.0	3.0	2.5	22.5
Minimum salary plus benefits	$51,869	$57,729	$57,729	-
Annual savings	$881,773	$173,817	$144,323	$1,199,283

Potential Fiscal Impact of Eliminating Counselors

	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
Existing counselors	-	13	15	28
SACS standard	-	11	13	24
Difference over SACS standard	-	2	2	4
Minimum salary plus benefits	-	$40,756	$41,298	-
Annual savings	-	$81,512	$82,596	$164,108

Potential Fiscal Impact of Eliminating Secretaries and Clerks

	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
Existing secretary and clerk positions	50.0	27.0	31.0	108
SACS standard	24.5	7.5	13.5	45.5
Difference over SACS standard	25.5	19.5	17.5	62.5
Minimum salary plus benefits	$15,178	$15,178	$15,178	-
Annual savings	$387,039	$295,971	$265,615	$948,625
Total Annual Savings per SACS standards	$1,268,812	$550,670	$492,534	$2,312,016
Allowance for LISD high at-risk student population (25 percent)	($317,203)	($137,668)	($123,133)	($578,004)
Grand Total Annual Savings	**$951,609**	**$413,002**	**$369,401**	**$1,734,012**

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Apply administrative	$867,006	$1,734,012	$1,734,012	$1,734,012	$1,734,012

staffing guidelines for elementary, middle and high schools to reflect differences in enrollment.					

FINDING

The district has reorganized its staff frequently, and district staff report that organizational changes are instituted without a general defined goal. The organizational changes have increased the number and level of staff directly reporting to the superintendent, who supervises 13 professional staff and three classified staff. Normally for any organizational change, a specific benefit should be delineated. District officials, however, did not specify the purpose of the 2000-01 organizational changes, nor specify how the changes would help the district reach any specific district goal.

The organizational changes in 2000-01 moved certain functions from under the chief financial officer; assigned the position of Safety and Occupational Health director to report to the superintendentand created a new office of Safety and Occupational Health. The result of these changes remains unclear to district staff, who were unable to explain reporting relationships and clear job assignments during TSPR interviews.

LISD's organization charts are unconventional, and show citizens, the board and the superintendent at the base of the chart, and the Interdisciplinary Task Teams for Communications, Problem Solving, Wellness, Technology, Campus Principals, Operations, Finance, Community and Partnerships, Custodians and Text Books, and Human Resources at the top of the chart (**Exhibit 1-32**). The purpose of depicting the district in this manner is to show that the board and staff are responsive and driven by the needs of the schools and that the district administration and staff work together in teams to accomplish district goals and objectives.

Exhibit 1-32
LISD
Interdisciplinary Task Teams
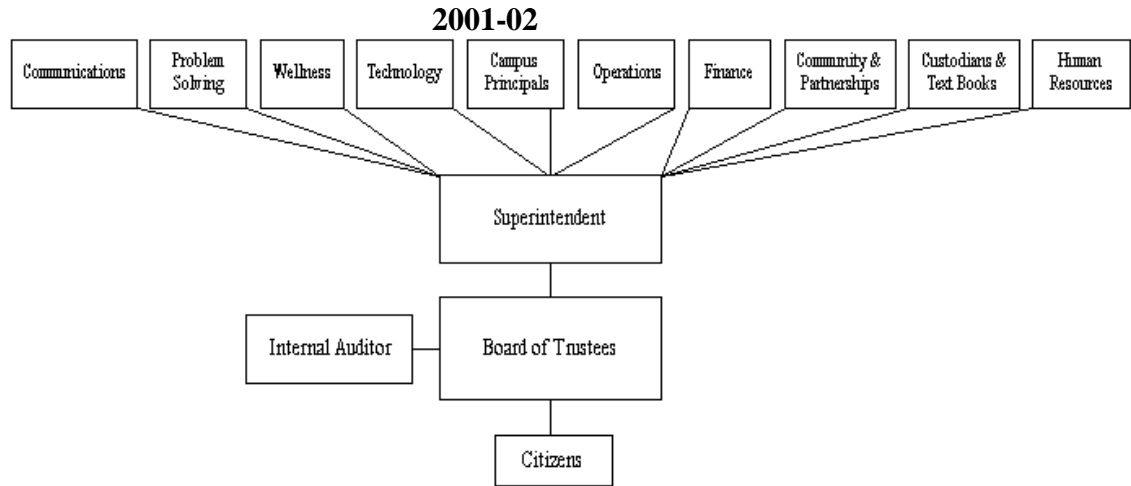
2001-02

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office, November 2001.

Exhibit 1-33 describes LISD's central administrative positions and their major responsibilities.

Exhibit 1-33
LISD Central Administrative Positions
2001-02

Position	Major Responsibilities
Superintendent of Schools	Education leader and chief executive officer.
Internal Auditor	Provides independent audit with direct reporting responsibilities to the board.
Chief Financial Officer	Directs and manages the operation of all financial and business affairs of the district including accounting, payroll, purchasing and procurement, and tax collection. Provides management of the district's Web site. Serves as the chief financial advisor to the superintendent and Board of Trustees.
Executive Assistant	Provides overall support to the superintendent. Position is vacant.
Executive Director for Human Resources	Leads and manages district human resource activities. Responsible for the development and implementation of human resource programs. Interprets and recommends personnel policies and regulations for the district.
Director for Governmental and	Directs governmental and community relations programs. Position is vacant.

Community Relations	
Director of Communications	Promotes positive relations between the school district and its internal and external constituencies. Prepares and provides information on the district's goals and objectives. Manages the district graphics and printing services.
AA for Academics - Technology	Plans, coordinates, implements and evaluates the instructional technology program of the district through Interdisciplinary Task Teams (ITTs).
AA for Academics - Communication	Plans, coordinates, implements and evaluates academic programs through ITTs including language arts, bilingual education, elementary music, reading and writing trainers. Provides evaluation of principals in conjunction with the superintendent.
AA for Academics - Problem Solving	Plans, coordinates, implements and evaluates academic programs through ITTs including project TEAMS, GT and AP, assessment and evaluation, math, and science. Provides sustained professional development in support of TEKS, instructional model, standards based material and performance assessment. Responsible for coordination of professional staff development. Responsible for facilitation of the strategic planning process and site-based decision making throughout the district. Provides evaluation of principals in conjunction with the superintendent.
AA for Academics - Wellness	Plans, coordinates, implements and evaluates academic programs through ITTs including guidance and counseling, scholarships, career and applied technology, athletics, safe and drug free programs, attendance, abstinence, discipline, Section 504, dropout, safety, health services, special education and PEP program. Provides evaluation of principals in conjunction with the superintendent.
AA for Operations	Oversees food services, operations, construction, transportation, and fixed assets. Position is vacant.
AA for Custodians and Textbooks	Oversees custodian and textbook services.
Director of Safety and Occupational Health	Monitors, conducts, coordinates and directs the district's safety emergency preparedness, loss prevention, occupational health and environmental programs in compliance with federal, state and local safety and occupational health regulations as well as industry

	standards.
Executive Secretary	Provides secretarial support to the superintendent and the board (two positions, one vacant).
Service Clerk	Provides clerical support to the superintendent.

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office and Staff interviews, November 2001.

The three administrative assistants for Academics - Wellness, Communication and Problem Solving - have individual responsibilities for programs and also have supervisory responsibility for principals within the four quadrants of the district. These three administrative assistants will be responsible for goal setting and the formative evaluation parts of the principals' evaluations during 2001-02, but the superintendent will complete the summative evaluation himself. The three Academic administrative assistants maintain heavy workloads and are challenged to keep up with their responsibilities.

Other organizational concerns include the following:

- In addition to their curricular and instructional responsibilities, the administrative assistants for Academics in the areas of Communications, Problem Solving and Wellness have other responsibilities that serve no curricular or instructional purpose. Along with many other duties related directly to academics, the administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness supervises a coordinator for Scholarships and Special programs, the hearings officer and the supervisor for elementary physical education. All three administrative assistants for Academics also respond to parent and community concerns from their respective quadrants, which is a time-consuming assignment.
- The level of responsibility and accountability assigned to positions classified as administrative assistants varies significantly. The three administrative assistants for Academics have much greater responsibilities and accountability than the other administrative assistants for Custodians and Textbooks, Technology and Operations.
- The titles used for administrative assistants do not indicate the level of their responsibilities and functions. Usually, "administrative assistant" refers to a clerical support position. The administrative assistants for Academics function as associate superintendents and are often referred to as such by district staff and community leaders.

- There are inefficiencies in some reporting responsibilities and lines of authority within the administrative assistant for Academics divisions. For example, the administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness, supervises both a director for Athletics and a supervisor for elementary physical education. The director for Athletics also supervises an assistant director for Athletics. The supervisor of Elementary Music serves as the full-time director of the VM Trevino Magnet School but also is responsible for this assignment. The assistant director for Federal Programs supervises social studies for the district.
- There is no overall director for staff development for the district. Trainers report to the administrative assistants for Academics - Communication and Problem Solving. The administrative assistant for Academics - Communication has professional district staff development as one of her many job assignments.
- The span of control for the superintendent is very large, and several board members expressed concern that the superintendent was not as effective as he might be if he delegated some of his responsibilities. It is difficult to effectively manage and provide oversight and assistance to seven cabinet members and nine other staff simultaneously.

The Finance, Operations, Technology, Custodians and Textbooks, and Safety and Occupational Health areas for LISD represent business and administrative functions that many districts consolidate within one function. For example, Corpus Christi ISD, with more than 39,000 students, consolidates its finance, business, technology and human resources functions in a single business and administrative area.

LISD's organizational structure emphasizes team rather than the traditional chain-of-command, but functionally it is hampered by unclear lines of authority and accountability. Other districts have successfully realigned their organizational structure to emphasize teamwork. Socorro ISD, a district with more than 26,000 students, has a relatively flat and effective organizational structure and successfully fosters a team environment among its staff. Six assistant superintendents and two support personnel report directly to the superintendent. Socorro ISD also ranks low in central administrative costs per students compared to its peers.

Recommendation 7:

Restructure LISD's organization to functionally align responsibilities of staff, reduce the number of staff directly reporting to the superintendent and clearly assign accountability and specific lines of authority.

The district should review the functional areas of each department, group similar functions and reflect direct reporting relationships with clear lines of authority to improve accountability. The district also should consider transferring some of the workload from the administrative assistants for Academics that is not directly related to academics. Given the nature of the work of these administrative assistants, specifically their frontline roles in representing the superintendent in any and all assignments related to curriculum and instruction, it is essential to assign the responsibility for non-academic tasks to other positions.

After reviewing and realigning the functional areas under each administrative assistant, the district should change the titles of each position to reflect the level of assigned responsibilities. A review of the duties of the three administrative assistants for Academics indicates that their responsibilities and duties match those of an assistant superintendent.

The job duties of the administrative assistant for Operations are more appropriate for a director or an executive director of Operations. The position responsible for custodians and textbooks should report to this person.

The district should consider appointing a chief information officer that reports directly to the superintendent. This organizational change is discussed in detail in chapter 11, Computers and Technology.

Organizational recommendations for safety and security are discussed in chapter 12, Safety and Security.

Other recommended organizational changes that the district should consider include:

- limiting the superintendent's direct reports to his cabinet;
- transferring responsibilities for all finance and business service functions including food service, purchasing and transportation to the chief financial officer/and change the position to associate superintendent for Finance and Business;
- transferring the position of director of Safety and Occupational Health to the management of the executive director for Operations; and
- creating an "extended cabinet" to provide direct access to the superintendent for managers and directors of critical functions below the executive level.

The proposed organizational chart for LISD is shown as **Exhibit 1-34**. Under the new structure, the superintendent has eight administrator positions reporting directly to him.

Exhibit 1-34
Proposed LISD Organization
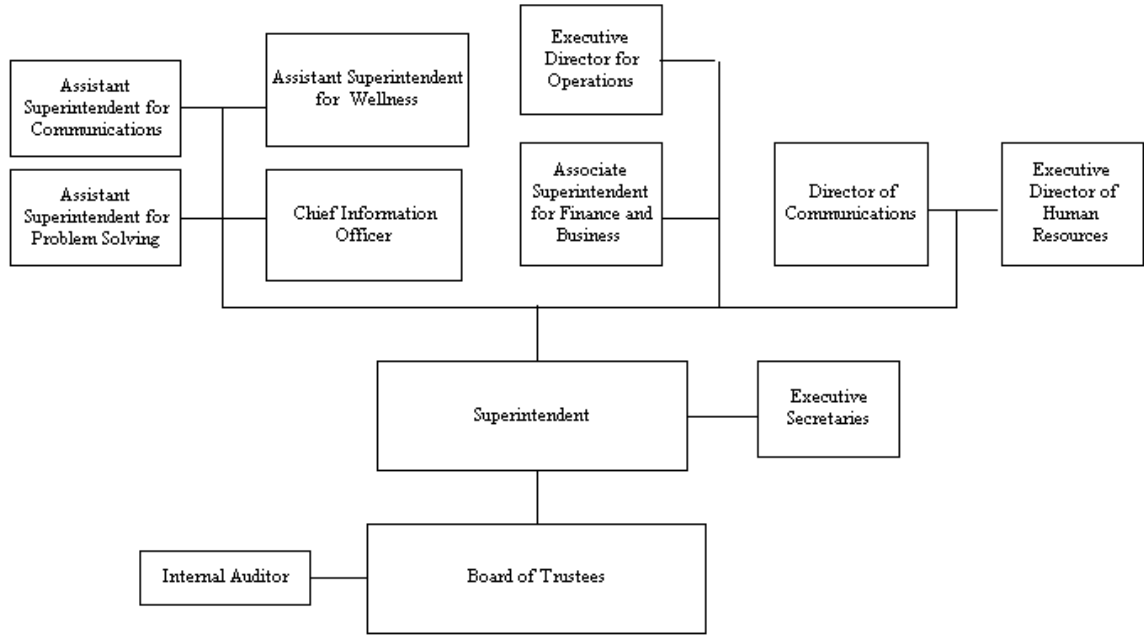
Source: TSPR.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent announces a reorganization of LISD for the end of the 2001-02 school year.	June 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the proposed organizational changes to the board for approval.	July 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources and the administrative team revise all job descriptions to reflect new responsibilities.	July - August 2002
4.	Staff assume new responsibilities and reporting relationships.	August 2002
5.	The superintendent implements the reorganization and forms the "extended" cabinet.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district failed to prepare an annual district report for 1999-2000 as required by law. Texas Education Code Chapter 39.053 requires each

district to publish an annual report describing the educational performance of the district and of each campus in the district. The report must cover student performance, descriptive district information, campus performance objectives and related progress and the district's performance ratings along with those of the individual campuses.

In addition, the annual report must include a statement of the number, rate and type of violent or criminal incidents that occurred on each campus, information concerning school violence prevention and intervention policies and procedures and the findings that result from evaluations conducted under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 and its subsequent amendments. Supplemental information to be provided in the report is to be determined by the board. The board is also required to hold a public hearing and to widely disseminate the report within the district.

The responsibility for preparing the annual report lies with the director of Communications. The director of Communication's position was vacant from July 25, 2000 until February 5, 2001, during which time the report should have been prepared and published. The Office of Communications goals and objectives state that the department was to:

"Write, edit and coordinate the distribution of the 1999-00 Annual Report to the community regarding important highlights. This publication will also be written in Spanish to provide greater access to the community."

The target publication date was December 2000. During 2000-01, the district provided information during board meetings on district educational performance, including TAAS results and district and campus ratings, district safety and an update on the district safety plan. However, the full requirements for the annual report were not met, including holding a public hearing on the report.

Recommendation 8:

Develop a plan and timeline for producing the district annual report and monitor progress towards its preparation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Communications develops a plan and timeline for producing the district annual report.	May 2002
2.	The director of Communications monitors progress of the annual report preparation and reports monthly to the superintendent.	June 2002 and ongoing

3.	The board and superintendent publish the district annual report, hold a public hearing on it and distribute the approved report to the community.	January 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

C. PLANNING, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Planning is essential to effective school district management. Proper planning establishes a mission and identifies goals and objectives, sets priorities, identifies ways to complete the mission and determines performance measures and benchmarks to achieve goals and objectives. In its purest sense, planning anticipates the effect of decisions, indicates possible financial consequences of alternatives, focuses on educational programs and methods of support and links student achievement to the cost of education.

The superintendent is primarily responsible for LISD's planning effort. The superintendent and cabinet members establish district goals and review them with the board. The superintendent brings LISD stakeholders together on an ongoing basis to review the goals and objectives, provide constructive input and review the district's progress toward achieving the goals of the strategic plan. Through its strategic planning process, LISD solicits community input, refines its district vision and mission, establishes new goals and objectives as necessary and regularly reports progress toward achieving the goals and objectives to the board and community.

Effective schools meet the needs of the communities they serve. Population diversity, economic and ethnic backgrounds of the students, special service requirements, adequacy of facilities, staffing resources and instructional priorities of the community, all contribute to shaping the unique organization of each school.

To ensure that schools meet the needs of the communities they serve, state law requires a site-based model for decision-making (SBDM) in Texas school districts. The Texas Education Code (TEC) specifies many requirements for site-based decision-making including those listed below.

- The district improvement plan and campus improvement plans must be developed, reviewed and revised annually.
- District and campus performance objectives that, at minimum, support state goals and objectives must be approved annually.
- Administrative procedures or policies must clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers and district-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development and school organization.

- District and school-based decision-making committees must be actively involved in establishing administrative procedures.
- Systematic communications measures must be put in place to obtain broad-based community, parental and staff input and to provide information to those persons on the recommendations of the district-level committee.
- Administrators regularly consult with the district-level committee on the planning, operations, supervision and evaluation of the district's educational program.

SBDM provides a mechanism for teachers, parents and community members to assist central and campus administrators in improving student performance. Additionally, schools must have adequate resources and flexibility to develop programs that are tailored to meet the unique needs of the students they serve.

FINDING

LISD has developed a comprehensive strategic planning process, based on the belief that the district can provide the best education for its youth by involving the community in the planning process.

In 1996, a planning team of individuals from both schools and community participated in four days of discussion to outline the strategic plan. Action teams of community and school volunteers then researched and studied the district's goals, developed ways to accomplish those goals and presented the draft plan to the board in September 1997. Implementation teams then refined the plan, which was finally presented and approved by the board in the spring of 1998.

The district completed annual reviews in June and July 2000 and published its revised strategic plan in September 2000. Since that time, the district has provided three updates to the board and district stakeholders detailing LISD's progress implementing the plan.

The LISD strategic plan is comprehensive, containing a mission statement and a vision statement, goals and objectives, detailed action plans with assigned tasks, timelines, responsibilities, resources, measurements and evaluation criteria. The plan is linked to the budget. The district developed the 2001-2002 budget based on priorities established in the *LISD Strategic Improvement Plan 2000-2005*.

The district involves the original planning team and members of the District Educational Improvement Council in an annual review process to continuously improve and update to the plan.

COMMENDATION

LISD uses a model strategic planning process that includes extensive community participation in goal setting, an in-depth analysis of community input and the allocation of budget resources to specific goals and objectives.

FINDING

LISD's site-based decision-making model (SBDM) includes the Campus Educational Improvement Council (CEIC), District Educational Improvement Council (DEIC) and site-based decision making committees, consisting of councils, standing committees and ad hoc committees. The superintendent's cabinet, in cooperation with the DEIC is responsible for developing LISD's Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP), while each CEIC is responsible for developing individual campus improvement plans. The DEIC includes 36 members representing the four district quadrants and six ex-officio members who are district staff.

LISD's most recent district improvement plan, *LISD Strategic Improvement Plan 2000-2005*, contained the district's strategy for helping students become successful. CEICs complete LISD's campus improvement plans annually, and each plan is tied to the strategic goals and related objectives included in the district plan.

Site-based decision-making within LISD is working well with respect to the campus-based leadership teams. The district involves the original planning team and members of the DEIC in an annual review, to provide continuous improvement and to update to the plan. A flow chart of the district's SBDM process is shown in **Exhibit 1-35**.

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Exhibit 1-35
LISD Site-Based Decision Making

</div>

Flow Chart

CAMPUS STANDING COMMITTEES
Planning, Budget, School Organization, Staffing Patterns, Curriculum, Staff Development

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Committees Chaired by Members of the CEIC

Members appointed by Principal

↕

CAMPUS EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

2/3 Elected teachers

1/3 elected from other professional campus and district staff

Appointed parents, community members, business and higher education representatives required as well as representatives from feeder campuses

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Exhibit 1-35 (continued)
LISD Site-Based Decision Making

Flow Chart

Establishes academic plans, goals, performance objectives and major campus classroom instructional programs to specifically address AEIS and special populations
Approves portion of the campus plan addressing staff development needs
Serves in advisory role to principal

Campus Performance Objectives go to School Board for approval

DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

2/3 Elected teachers

1/3 Elected from other professional campus and district staff

Elected parents, community members, business representatives required

Representation by member of higher education institution requested

Establishes and reviews district plans, goals, performance objectives and major district instructional programs
Presents annual district performance report to the board and community

Evaluates the district/campus SBDM process

Serves in an advisory role to the board or its designee (superintendent)

District Performance Objectives go to School Board for approval

Source: LISD Site Based Decision Making in LISD: An Inventory of Essential Practices, September 2001.

The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving published a report in September 2001, *LISD, Site Based Decision Making in Laredo Independent School District: An Inventory of Essential Practices*, that includes:

- the legal requirements for SBDM;
- a description of the local process;
- information on SBDM committees;
- a checklist of essential practices, a monitoring and evaluation instrument;
- a description of the role of the instructional team member as SBDM/academic coach;
- standards-based reform initiatives;

- LISD drivers for systemic reform;
- district goals and objectives;
- a principal evaluation instrument based on policy reform issues; and
- a flow chart of the SBDM model in LISD.

The model is easy to read and understand, and makes lines of authority and decision-making clear at all levels. As a result of the district's SBDM model, principals report that CEICs understand their respective roles and provide valuable advice to principals throughout the SBDM process.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents to the principal and assistant principal survey distributed by TSPR and 54 percent of the respondents to the teacher survey either agree or strongly agree that site-based budgeting is used effectively to increase the involvement of principals and teachers in the SBDM process. Survey results show that members of the CEICs generally feel that they are involved in the SBDM process.

COMMENDATION

LISD's effective implementation of site-based decision-making processes has increased the involvement of parents, teachers and community members by providing resource guides and annual training for members of each campus-based leadership team.

FINDING

The superintendent initiated "Neighborhood Chats" in 1999-2000 to provide an opportunity for area residents to give their input on initiatives that ultimately affect their respective schools. Theses informal presentations give area residents a chance to speak about educational issues and to hear first hand about the district's academic standards, facilities construction plan and the tax rate cap, as well as other pertinent issues.

Refreshments are provided. Notices of the neighborhood chats are printed in both English and Spanish. Neighborhood chats are held four times a year at schools and community sites in the "feeder" high school quadrants. A sample of attendance at scheduled neighborhood chats is shown in **Exhibit 1-36**.

Exhibit 1-36
Superintendent Neighborhood Chats
2001-02

Place	Date and Time	Number

		Attending
Colonia Guadalupe Housing Community Center	April 9, 2001 6:30 pm	29
Russell Terrace Housing Community Center	April 11, 2001 6:30 pm	49
Carlos Richter Housing Community Center	April 23, 2001 6:30 pm	39
South Laredo Housing Community Center	April 24, 2001 6:30 pm	20
Nixon High School	September 17, 2001 5:00 pm	55
Cigarroa High School	September 18, 2001 5:00 pm	48
Colonia Guadalupe Community Center	October 8, 2001	39

Source: LISD Superintendent's Office, November 2001.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent's Neighborhood Chats improve communication with the community and contribute to effective site-based decision-making.

Chapter 1
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

D. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LISD contracts for policy development with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).Any policy designated in the policy manual as "LEGAL" has been developed by TASB to comply with various legal sources of authority defining local district governance. Local policies developed by or for the district to reflect decisions of the local board of trustees are designated as "LOCAL."policy updates regularly for local review to help ensure that the district's policies remain current.

The district's administrative procedures and regulations are accessible online through LISD's Web site. Each department manager is responsible for updating administrative and operational procedures. The director of Communication serves as the "content author" that coordinates updates from the various department managers to ensure that LISD's Web site is continuously updated.

FINDING

LISD subscribes to TASB's "Policy On Line" service, which enables the district to publish its policy manual on the Internet with "read only" access. The electronic document is secure, and only TASB's Policy Service, as directed by LISD, can make changes to the manual. Users navigate the district's policy manual by accessing a district-specific table of contents that lists every policy the district is using. This list is in alphabetical order, and to see a specific policy, the user merely "clicks" on the list. There also is a search engine available that allows users to look for a word or phrase, with search results showing a list of policies and titles containing the word or phrase, which can be selected with a "click" as well.

Local policies approved by the board are submitted to TASB's Policy On Line service where they are electronically posted on TASB's policy Web site under LISD's district number. The Web address for accessing LISD's Board Policy Manual is *www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/240901*. The word "private" appears in the Web address only to indicate that the policy manual is for a specific school district and does not restrict the public's access to the Web site.

LISD has a comprehensive policy manual that has been updated for all legal and local policies through Update 66, dated September 4, 2001.

COMMENDATION

LISD uses the Internet to maintain an up-to-date policy manual and expand access to administrators, teachers, parents, students and the community.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter reviews the Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) educational service delivery in seven sections:

A. Student Performance and Instructional Delivery
B. Gifted and Talented Education
C. Special Education
D. Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language
E. Title I/State Compensatory Education
F. Career and Technology Education
G. Library Services

If a school district is to meet the needs of its students, it must have a well-designed and well-managed process for directing instruction, maintaining its curriculum, evaluating and monitoring the success of its educational programs and providing the resources needed to support them.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides information on Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) results as well as other demographic, staffing and financial data to school districts and the public annually through its Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). This chapter uses the latest AEIS data available for 2000-01.

LISD selected five Texas school districts to serve as "peer districts" for comparative purposes: Eagle Pass, Edgewood, Edinburg, Harlandale and United. Compared to the state average, all six districts have a lower percent of African American, Anglo and Other (Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native American) students and a higher share of Hispanic students. The six districts' share of economically disadvantaged students is much higher than the statewide average (**Exhibit 2-1**).

Exhibit 2-1
Demographic Characteristics of Students
LISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Student Enrollment	Racial/Ethnic Percent				Percent Economically Disadvantaged
		Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	

Eagle Pass	12,515	0.1%	97.0%	1.5%	1.5%	89.8%
Edgewood	12,983	1.6%	97.0%	1.1%	0.3%	92.6%
Harlandale	14,468	0.4%	94.0%	5.4%	0.2%	90.6%
Edinburg	22,005	0.2%	96.3%	3.1%	0.4%	84.2%
Laredo	**22,547**	**0.1%**	**98.9%**	**0.9%**	**0.1%**	**91.1%**
United	27,558	0.2%	96.2%	3.0%	0.5%	73.2%
Region 1	**302,528**	**0.2%**	**95.6%**	**3.8%**	**0.3%**	**82.7%**
State	**4,059,619**	**14.4%**	**40.6%**	**42.0%**	**3.0%**	**49.3%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

During 2000-01, LISD employed 3,108 total personnel, including 1,283 teachers, 74 campus and central office administrators, 238 professional support employees, 387 educational aides and 1,126 auxiliary personnelor full-time non-educational staff such as maintenance or food service employees. LISD's percentage of total staffing represented by teachers, professional support personnel and campus administrators is lower than in the state as a whole. LISD's share of total staffing represented by educational aides and auxiliary staff is higher than the state average (**Exhibit 2-2**).

Exhibit 2-2
Staff Information
LISD and State Totals
1996-97 and 2000-01

Category	LISD			State		
	1996-97	**2000-01**	**Percent Change 1997-2001**	**1996-97**	**2000-01**	**Percent Change 1997-2001**
Staff						
Teachers	39.4%	41.3%	1.9%	51.9%	50.8%	(1.1%)
Professional Support	7.2%	7.7%	0.5%	6.7%	7.8%	1.1%
Campus Administration	1.7%	2.1%	0.4%	2.5%	2.6%	0.1%
Central Administration	0.6%	0.3%	(0.3%)	0.9%	0.8%	(0.1%)

Educational Aides	17.5%	12.4%	(5.1%)	9.0%	10.2%	1.2%
Auxiliary Staff	33.6%	36.2%	2.6%	29.1%	27.8%	(1.3%)
Race/Ethnicity (Teachers)						
African American	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	8.2%	8.8%	0.6%
Hispanic	91.2%	92.5%	1.3%	15.5%	17.1%	1.6%
Anglo	8.0%	7.0%	(1.0%)	75.6%	73.2%	(2.4%)
Other	0.5%	0.2%	(0.3%)	0.8%	0.9%	0.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 and 2000-01.
Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

LISD's share of the teaching staff represented by beginning teachers (4.2 percent) is the lowest among the peer districts and lower than the Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) and state averages. Fifty-five percent of LISD's teachers have more than 10 years of experience, a higher share than in the peer districts, Region 1 and the state as a whole (**Exhibit 2-3**).

Exhibit 2-3
Percent of Teachers by Years of Experience
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District	Beginning	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20+ Years	11+ Years
Eagle Pass	8.2%	28.6%	19.8%	20.4%	23.0%	43.4%
Edgewood	10.7%	28.4%	16.8%	23.9%	20.1%	44.4%
Edinburg	5.1%	30.1%	20.7%	24.5%	19.5%	44.0%
Harlandale	15.1%	27.2%	13.0%	25.3%	19.4%	44.7%
Laredo	**4.2%**	**23.4%**	**17.1%**	**26.3%**	**29.0%**	**55.3%**
United	8.4%	39.5%	21.7%	20.1%	10.3%	30.4%
Region 1	**8.0%**	**26.9%**	**19.8%**	**26.1%**	**19.1%**	**45.2%**
State	**7.8%**	**27.4%**	**18.1%**	**25.3%**	**21.4%**	**46.7%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

LISD's share of teachers with no degree is tied for the lowest among the peer districts and is lower than Region 1 and the state. The share of LISD teachers with a masters or doctorate degree ranks fourth among the peer districts; is higher than Region 1 and lower than the statewide average (**Exhibit 2-4**).

Exhibit 2-4
Degree Status of Teachers
LISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District	Percent with Degree				
	No Degree	**Bachelors**	**Masters**	**Doctorate**	**Masters and Doctorate**
Eagle Pass	0.5%	79.6%	19.5%	0.4%	19.9%
Edgewood	1.0%	77.2%	21.7%	0.1%	21.8%
Edinburg	2.5%	85.0%	12.3%	0.2%	12.5%
Harlandale	1.0%	71.6%	27.3%	0.1%	27.4%
Laredo	**0.5%**	**81.3%**	**18.1%**	**0.1%**	**19.2%**
United	3.2%	84.6%	12.2%	0.0%	12.2%
Region 1	**2.4%**	**83.2%**	**14.2%**	**0.1%**	**14.3%**
State	**1.3%**	**74.7%**	**23.4%**	**0.5%**	**23.9%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-5 compares student performance on TAAS and property values for LISD, the peer districts and the state. LISD's property value per student is lower than those of all but two of the peer districts and is lower than the Region 1 and state averages. LISD's percent of students passing all TAAS tests is the lowest among the peer districts and lower than the Region 1 and state averages.

Exhibit 2-5
Property Value Per Pupil and Percent of Students Passing the TAAS
LISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District Name	2000-01 Enrollment	2000-01 Property Value	Rank by Value	Percent of Students Passing	Rank by Performance

		per Pupil		All TAAS Tests 2000-01	
Eagle Pass	12,515	$63,403	3	78.6%	2
Edgewood	12,983	$37,928	6	76.3%	4
Harlandale	14,468	$50,892	5	80.2%	1
Edinburg	22,005	$92,331	2	77.6%	3
United	27,558	$137,182	1	75.2%	5
Laredo	**22,547**	**$57,520**	**4**	**71.3%**	**6**
Region 1	**302,528**	**$85,677**	**N/A**	**77.9%**	**N/A**
State	**4,059,619**	**$215,232**	**N/A**	**82.1%**	**N/A**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

AEIS provides information regarding the percent of students enrolled in various programs including regular education, bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL), career and technology education (CATE), gifted and talented education (G/T) and special education. Among the peer districts, LISD has the highest percent of students enrolled in bilingual/ESL programs and the next-to-lowest percent of students enrolled in CATE programs. The percent of students enrolled in bilingual/ESL and special education programs is higher in LISD than in Region 1 and statewide and lower for CATE and G/T (**Exhibit 2-6**).

Exhibit 2-6
Student Enrollment by Program
LISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District	Special Education	Gifted and Talented	Bilingual ESL	Career and Technology
Eagle Pass	7.1%	12.0%	35.1%	16.3%
Edgewood	14.2%	7.7%	19.9%	12.1%
Edinburg	8.3%	7.9%	30.4%	15.5%
Harlandale	14.9%	5.6%	14.3%	19.2%
Laredo	**13.1%**	**8.3%**	**57.8%**	**14.7%**
United	12.1%	5.8%	45.0%	23.7%

Region 1	10.3%	8.8%	35.4%	18.3%
State	11.9%	8.4%	12.6%	18.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

The percent of LISD teachers assigned to regular education is second highest among the peer districts and higher than the Region 1 and state percentages. Its share of teachers assigned to compensatory and bilingual/ESL education is second lowest among peer districts and lower than the Region 1 and state shares. The percent of LISD teachers assigned to G/T education programs is higher than the peer districts, Region 1 and the state as a whole (**Exhibit 2-7**).

Exhibit 2-7
Percent of Teachers by Program
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District	Regular Educ.	Comp. Educ.	Special Educ.	Gifted and Talented	Bilingual ESL	Career and Tech.	Other
Eagle Pass	39.5%	2.5%	7.1%	3.8%	42.0%	4.3%	0.7%
Edgewood	78.4%	6.7%	9.2%	1.5%	0.3%	3.7%	0.3%
Edinburg	49.1%	2.7%	7.3%	6.5%	27.5%	4.8%	2.2%
Harlandale	69.6%	0.2%	12.8%	0.9%	10.7%	4.2%	1.5%
Laredo	**77.6%**	**0.3%**	**7.5%**	**6.6%**	**2.9%**	**4.2%**	**1.0%**
United	54.4%	0.4%	9.0%	2.8%	27.9%	5.1%	0.5%
Region 1	**58.5%**	**1.7%**	**8.3%**	**4.2%**	**21.5%**	**4.4%**	**1.5%**
State	**70.4%**	**3.3%**	**9.9%**	**2.2%**	**7.5%**	**4.3%**	**2.4%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.
Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

According to the 2000-01 AEIS report, LISD's budgeted instructional operating expenditures per student ranked fourth among the peer districts and lower than the averages for Region 1 and the state. Among the six peer districts, the percent of LISD's budgeted instructional expenditures was the highest for compensatory education and lowest for gifted and talented education (**Exhibit 2-8**).

Exhibit 2-8
Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and the State
2000-01

District	Total Instructional Operating Expenditures* Per Student	Percent of Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures**					
		Regular Educ.	Gifted and Talented	Special Educ.	Career and Tech.	Bilingual ESL	Comp. Educ.
Harlandale	$3,612	62.6%	0.9%	14.9%	3.5%	10.7%	7.4%
Edgewood	$3,548	71.4%	0.9%	13.0%	4.0%	1.0%	9.8%
Edinburg	$3,538	56.1%	1.3%	8.0%	4.8%	21.1%	8.8%
Laredo	**$3,374**	**68.0%**	**0.3%**	**12.5%**	**4.3%**	**3.0%**	**11.9%**
Eagle Pass	$3,262	76.7%	1.5%	8.9%	3.6%	2.1%	7.2%
United	$2,918	71.3%	0.9%	9.2%	4.9%	1.8%	11.8%
Region 1	**$3,437**	**69.2%**	**1.7%**	**10.4%**	**4.5%**	**5.4%**	**8.8%**
State	**$3,500**	**70.7%**	**1.8%**	**12.6%**	**4.1%**	**4.3%**	**6.6%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.
*Instruction (Functions 11, 95) and Instructional Leadership (Function 21)
**Functions 11 and 95 only.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY (PART 1)

School districts need sound systems for managing the instructional process. Administrators must ensure that the resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvements in student performance. This effort should include monitoring and evaluating personnel and programs as well as maintaining a comprehensive program for student assessment that accurately evaluates achievement across all content areas and grades.

The TAAS is a series of tests used to measure student performance. TAAS tests are administered in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10; in reading and mathematics in Spanish in grades 3 and 4; in writing in grades 4, 8 and 10; and in science and social studies in grade 8. End-of-course (EOC) examinations are administered in Algebra I, Biology, English II and U.S. History. To graduate from a high school in Texas, a student must pass the TAAS exit-level examination, which is given for the first time in grade 10.

Passing rates for LISD students rose over the six-year period 1995-96 through 2000-01. The percent of students passing the TAAS reading test rose by more than 13 percentage points, from 67 percent to 80.2 percent. The increase was even greater in mathematics, from 64.6 percent in 1995-96 to 84.9 percent in 2000-01. The passing rate on the TAAS writing test rose by about three percentage points from 1995-96 through 2000-01, while the passing rate for LISD students on all tests rose by more than 17 points, from 53.9 percent to 71.3 percent. Even so, LISD's passing rates in 2000-01 were lower than those statewide in all areas. LISD and state pass rates on TAAS reading, mathematics, writing and all tests for 1995-96 through 2000-01 are provided in **Exhibit 2-9**.

Exhibit 2-9
LISD Passing Rates: Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Reading, Mathematics, Writing and All Tests
1995-96 through 2000-01

Year	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		All Tests	
	District	State	District	State	District	State	District	State
1995-96	67.0%	80.4%	64.6%	74.2%	77.0%	82.9%	53.9%	67.1%

1996-97	72.4%	84.0%	73.2%	80.1%	79.7%	85.3%	61.4%	73.2%
1997-98	71.7%	87.0%	71.3%	84.2%	79.2%	87.4%	59.6%	77.7%
1998-99	74.2%	86.5%	77.7%	85.7%	81.5%	88.2%	64.4%	78.3%
1999-2000	76.8%	87.4%	80.7%	87.4%	80.4%	88.2%	67.9%	79.9%
2000-01	80.2%	88.9%	84.9%	90.2%	80.1%	87.9%	71.3%	82.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01.

LISD's share of students passing the three TAAS subtests and all tests combined was the lowest or next-to-lowest among the six peer districts. LISD's pass rates were also lower than the Region 1 and state averages (**Exhibit 2-10**).

Exhibit 2-10
2000-01 TAAS Pass Rates
Reading, Mathematics, Writing and All Tests
LISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State

District	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	All Tests
Eagle Pass	84.8%	89.2%	88.2%	78.6%
Edgewood	86.0%	86.9%	79.5%	76.3%
Edinburg	84.6%	88.3%	84.4%	77.6%
Harlandale	87.5%	90.1%	88.1%	80.2%
Laredo	**80.2%**	**84.9%**	**80.1%**	**71.3%**
United	82.5%	84.9%	86.8%	75.2%
Region 1	**84.5%**	**88.7%**	**85.7%**	**77.9%**
State	**88.9%**	**90.2%**	**87.9%**	**82.1%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

By 2003, TAAS will be replaced by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and administered in grades 9, 10 and 11. Reading and mathematics tests will be added in grade 9 and the exit-level exam, including science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics, will be moved to grade 11. A science test also will be added in grade 5.

Student performance on the TAAS is the primary factor in determining district and school accountability ratings. Accountability standards for 2000-01 include four ratings for districts (exemplary, recognized,

academically acceptable and academically unacceptable) and four ratings for schools (exemplary, recognized, acceptable and low performing). For a school to receive an exemplary rating, at least 90 percent of all students combined as well as 90 percent of each student group (African American, Hispanic, Anglo and economically disadvantaged) must pass all TAAS subtests (reading, writing and mathematics). In addition, the annual dropout rate in grades 7-12 for all students and each student group cannot exceed 1 percent. To receive a rating of recognized or acceptable, the passing rates must be at least 80 percent and 50 percent, respectively. The annual dropout rate cannot be greater than 3 percent to receive the recognized rating or greater than 5.5 percent to be rated as acceptable. A school is rated as low performing if less than 50 percent of all students or any of the four student groups pass any of the subject area tests or if the dropout rate exceeds 5.5 percent.

Schools are not rated if they do not serve students within the grade 1-12 span, such as pre-kindergarten centers, or if a school has no official enrollment, such as certain magnet schools where students are reported through their sending or "parent" school. Additionally, campuses that have applied to TEA and are identified as alternative education programs (AEP) are evaluated under alternative education procedures resulting in one of three ratings including alternative education (AE): acceptable, AE: needs peer review or AE: not rated.

Since 1997-98, LISD's accountability ratings have changed significantly. Its number of exemplary schools has doubled, from two to four, and its number of recognized schools has quadrupled, from two to eight (**Exhibit 2-11**).

Exhibit 2-11
LISD Schools by Grades Served with Accountability Ratings
1997-98 through 2000-01

Name of School	Grades Served	Accountability Rating			
		1997-98	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**	**2000-2001**
Cigarroa High School	9-12	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Martin High School	9-12	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Nixon High School	9-12	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
F. S. Lara Academy	6-12	AE: Acceptable	AE: Acceptable	AE: Acceptable	AE: Acceptable

School	Grades				
Christen Middle School	6-8	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*
Cigarroa Middle School	6-8	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Lamar Middle School	6-8	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Memorial Middle School	6-8	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Bruni Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Buenos Aires Elementary School	PK-5	*Recognized*	*Recognized*	*Recognized*	*Recognized*
Daiches Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*
Dovalina Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Farias Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Hachar Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Kawas Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*	*Recognized*
Heights Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	*Recognized*	*Recognized*	Acceptable
Leyendecker Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	*Recognized*	Acceptable	Acceptable
Ligarde Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*	*Recognized*

Macdonell Elementary School	PK-5	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**
Martin Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	*Recognized*	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**
Milton Elementary School	PK-5	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**
Ochoa Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*
Pierce Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*
Ryan Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	*Recognized*	**Exemplary**	**Exemplary**
Sanchez Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Santa Maria Elementary School	PK-5	*Recognized*	*Recognized*	*Recognized*	*Recognized*
Santo Nino Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Tarver Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*	Acceptable
Zachry Elementary School	PK-5	Acceptable	Acceptable	*Recognized*	Acceptable
Exemplary **Recognized** **Acceptable** **AE: Acceptable** **Low-Performing** **No Rating**		**2** **2** **24** **1** **0** **0**	**2** **6** **20** **1** **0** **0**	**4** **7** **17** **1** **0** **0**	**4** **8** **16** **1** **0** **0**

The percent of schools falling under each accountability rating for 1997-98 through 2000-01 for LISD and the state is provided in **Exhibit 2-12**.

Exhibit 2-12
Accountability Ratings by Percent of Schools
LISD and State
1997-98 through 2000-01

Accountability Rating	Percent of Schools							
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	LISD	State	LISD	State	LISD	State	LISD	State
Exemplary	6.9%	15.7%	6.9%	16.5%	13.8%	18.8%	13.8%	22.5%
Recognized	6.9%	25.0%	20.7%	27.1%	24.1%	29.1%	27.6%	33.3%
Acceptable	82.8%	50.5%	69.0%	46.3%	58.6%	42.2%	55.2%	35.5%
Low Performing	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	1.4%
AE: Acceptable*	3.4%	6.1%	3.4%	5.8%	3.4%	4.7%	3.4%	4.9%
Other**	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	2.3%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**99.9%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.
Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.
*Includes ratings of Acceptable: Data Issues" and "No Rating" based on data quality, PK-K campuses and issues related to charter schools.

In addition to TAAS-related information, AEIS provides data on other performance indicators including dropout and graduation rates. Between 1998-99 and 1999-2000, the annual dropout rate for LISD students in grades 9-12 decreased slightly for all students and special education students and increased slightly for economically disadvantaged students. LISD's dropout rate in 1999-2000 was third highest among the peer districts but lower than the rates for Region 1 and the state for all three student groups (**Exhibit 2-13**).

Exhibit 2-13
Annual Dropout Rate Grades 9-12
LISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
1998-99 and 1999-2000

District	Percent of Students Dropping Out Annually					
	All Students		Economically Disadvantaged Students		Special Education Students	
	1998-99	1999-2000	1998-99	1999-2000	1998-99	1999-2000
Eagle Pass	1.1%	0.3%	0.9%	0.2%	1.1%	0.6%
Edgewood	3.5%	2.6%	2.9%	1.5%	3.0%	2.6%
Edinburg	1.8%	2.4%	1.4%	1.9%	2.1%	3.2%
Harlandale	1.7%	0.6%	1.2%	0.5%	1.5%	0.8%
Laredo	**1.1%**	**1.0%**	**0.8%**	**0.9%**	**1.7%**	**1.3%**
United	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%
Region 1	**1.7%**	**1.7%**	**1.3%**	**1.3%**	**1.8%**	**1.9%**
State	**1.6%**	**1.3%**	**1.5%**	**1.3%**	**1.8%**	**1.6%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

For the four-year period ending in 1999-2000, LISD's dropout rate was slightly higher than for the previous four years for all students, but lower for economically disadvantaged and special education students. Among the peer districts, LISD's four-year dropout rate ending in 1999-2000 was third highest for all students and fourth highest for economically disadvantaged and special education students. The rate was lower than the Region 1 and state rates for economically disadvantaged and special education students. (**Exhibit 2-14**).

Exhibit 2-14
4-Year Dropout Rate Grades 9-12
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
1998-99 and 1999-2000

District	Percent of Students Dropping Out Over a Four-Year Period		
	All Students	Economically Disadvantaged Students	Special Education Students

	Class of 1999	Class of 2000	Class of 1999	Class of 2000	Class of 1999	Class of 2000
Eagle Pass	12.1%	9.2%	11.3%	9.8%	16.7%	8.3%
Edgewood	21.6%	19.5%	18.6%	17.5%	21.1%	23.4%
Edinburg	8.0%	10.2%	8.4%	11.7%	10.1%	15.7%
Harlandale	5.0%	5.8%	3.9%	5.7%	4.3%	4.0%
Laredo	**9.5%**	**10.1%**	**8.7%**	**7.3%**	**13.3%**	**8.5%**
United	4.8%	3.3%	6.4%	4.0%	4.5%	8.7%
Region 1	**9.3%**	**8.5%**	**9.8%**	**8.6%**	**13.1%**	**13.1%**
State	**8.5%**	**7.2%**	**13.1%**	**11.6%**	**12.1%**	**11.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

Students graduating from all Texas schools must complete one of three graduation plans: the Distinguished High School Program (DAP), the Recommended High School Program or the Minimum Graduation Plan. The plans differ in the type and number of courses to be taken for high school credit. The DAP and Recommended programs each require 24 high school credits. DAP requires that a student achieve certain levels on at least four "advanced measures" including an original research or research project; specified scores on advanced placement (AP), International Baccalaureate or Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) examinations; and a minimum grade on any courses taken for college credit. AEIS combines the number of students graduating under the DAP and Recommended programs and also reports special education students who graduate as a result of completing an individualized education plan (IEP).

For the class of 2000, LISD's share of students completing the DAP or Recommended High School Program was highest among the six peer districts and higher than the Region 1 and state averages. Its percent of students graduating upon completion of an IEP was second lowest among peer districts and lower than the shares in Region 1 and the state (**Exhibit 2-15**).

Exhibit 2-15
Graduates by Graduation Program
LISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
Class of 2000

District	Total Graduates	Percent of Total Graduates

		Recommended or DAP Program	Special Education	Other
Eagle Pass	591	44.7%	5.4%	49.9%
Edgewood	511	11.2%	17.2%	71.6%
Edinburg	975	53.7%	7.3%	39.0%
Harlandale	806	36.7%	24.4%	38.9%
Laredo	**1,076**	**90.1%**	**6.8%**	**3.1%**
United	1,214	70.2%	8.2%	21.6%
Region 1	**14,930**	**55.7%**	**7.0%**	**37.3%**
State	**212,925**	**38.6%**	**9.4%**	**52.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

FINDING

LISD has developed academic standards in technology and the core areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies as a result of its participation in the Comprehensive Partnerships for Mathematics and Science Achievement, a grant program funded by the National Science Foundation. One of the goals of the project, recently renamed the Urban Systemic Program, is to encourage districts to develop standards-based curricula.

LISD has developed these standards for grades PreK-12 that define what every student should know and be able to achieve in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and technology. The standards provide information on the specific content to be learned, the performance expected and the assessment criteria needed to measure student achievement. Curricular resources, such as textbooks and library resources, are provided. The achievement criteria are tied to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which outline the knowledge and skills that should comprise the basic content of Texas public schools' instructional programs and are assessed by TAAS. The standards are designed to provide a framework by which the district will ensure alignment of the curriculum as students progress from grade to grade.

The academic standards developed include five components for each core subject at each grade level: statements of understanding, essential formative questions, content standards, performance standards and achievement criteria. TEKS skills, TAAS objectives or other tests and

curricular resources are provided where appropriate. An example of the components in sixth-grade mathematics is provided in **Exhibit 2-16**.

Exhibit 2-16
Academic Standards
Grade 6 Mathematics

TEKS	Tests	Mathematics Sixth Grade	Curricular Resources
TEK 6.3 6.3a 6.3b 6.3c	TAAS Teacher Made Tests	**Enduring Understanding:** By discovering patterns in our world, we can analyze relationships, processes and systems. **Essential Questions:** How do patterns affect us in our world? How do we analyze relationships, processes and systems? **Content Standard 1:** Solve problems involving proportional relationships. **Performance Standards:** 1. Use ratios to describe proportional situations. 2. Represent ratios and percents by using concrete models, fractions and decimals. 3. Use ratios to make predictions involving proportional situations. **Achievement Criteria:** 1. Effectively use ratios to describe proportional situations. 2. Accurately use concrete models, fractions and decimals to represent ratios and percents. 3. Make predictions involving proportional situations.	**Connected Mathematics Project** **Prime Time (Factors and Multiples)** **Data About Us (Statistics)** **Shapes and Designs (Two-Dimensional Geometry)** **Bits and Pieces I (Understanding Rational Numbers)** **Covering and Surrounding (Two Dimensional Measurement)** **Bits and Pieces II (Using Rational Numbers)** **Ruins of Montarek (Spatial Visualization)**

Source: LISD, Elementary Academic Standards, August 2001.

LISD's development of these academic standards involved a large number of teachers and administrators over an extended period of time. Mathematics, science, social studies, language arts/reading and technology

teachers, with the support of curriculum specialists, developed a standards-based framework correlated with TEKS and other standards developed by national professional organizations. These materials were preceded by district curricula in mathematics and science that had been reviewed and critiqued by The McKenzie Group, a company based in Washington, D.C. that specializes in conducting research and policy studies on national, state and local education issues. The district conducted staff training related to the development of standards-based curricula and specific content-related programs such as Connected Mathematics, FOSS, TEKS for Leaders, Understanding by Design, Performance Assessments and the A+ Reading Program. Teachers recommended textbooks from the state-approved list and participated in training related to instructional programs and materials and attended ongoing training on instructional programs.

Committees composed of content area teachers, elementary teacher trainers and secondary master teachers developed instructional timelines for reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies for grades K-12. Led by content-area coordinators, the committees used the TEKS as a foundation to ensure coordination of the timelines with the district-developed academic standards and with available resources. The committees also developed district assessments to monitor and test specific objectives covered in each six-week grading period.

COMMENDATION

LISD has developed curricula based on objective standards for language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and technology.

FINDING

LISD is in the process of developing written standards to evaluate the effectiveness of non-core curricular and non-academic programs. As of August 2001, the district has approved standards for evaluating the effectiveness of various district programs for high school and middle school athletics and for the safety and security and behavior management programs in schools. The format for LISD's standards is based on the state accreditation model of unacceptable, acceptable, recognized and exemplary. The specific conditions that must be met for the standard at the various levels are identified in each area. For example, under the standard "condition of dressing, practice and playing areas," an athletic program could be determined as "acceptable" if no safety hazards are present. To be rated as "recognized," no safety hazards could be present and all areas must be clean and properly maintained. To be "exemplary," the facilities must meet the standards for a "recognized" facility and "all dressing

facilities must be exceptionally clean." The standards for each of the three areas approved to date are listed in **Exhibit 2-17**.

Exhibit 2-17
Programs Standards
High School and Middle School Athletics and Orderly Schools

Program Standards		
High School Athletics	**Middle School Athletics**	**Standards for an Orderly School**
Number of teams	Number of teams	• Standards for student conduct • Procedures developed and enforced on visitors to school, student dress code, attendance and tardies, deterring fighting and bullying, hall passes, substance abuse, after-school detention and In-School Suspension
Number of participants	Number of participants	Written vision for a safe school
Results of competition	Results of competition	Character education program
Lack of UIL violations	Lack of UIL violations	Crimestoppers' Program
Lack of documented complaints	Lack of documented complaints	Staff training /Code of Conduct
Parent organizations	Parent organizations	Staff training/classroom management
Condition of facilities	Condition of facilities	Staff training/conflict resolution and peer mediation
Inventory and care of equipment	Inventory and care of equipment	Code of Conduct distributed to parents
Student discipline	Student discipline	Advisor program developed
Attendance	Attendance	Extra-/co-curricular programs monitored
Graduates, number and	End-of-year promotions	• Use of surveillance cameras studied

program		• Use of metal detectors studied

Source: LISD, Programs Standards, August 2001.

Standards related to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; guidance, health and library services; health and physical education for grades K-8; specified high school physical education courses; and high school health have been prepared and are in draft form. All are under final review for anticipated districtwide adoption before the start of the 2002-03 school year.

COMMENDATION

LISD is developing written standards for non-core curricular and non-academic program evaluation.

FINDING

LISD does not have a specific board-approved policy providing districtwide direction for curriculum management to supplement the existing six policies that refer to curriculum design and required instruction as developed by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).

The district contracts with TASB to develop its basic policies. Any policy TASB designates in the policy manual as (LEGAL) or (Exhibit) is designed to comply with various legal requirements. Local policies developed by or for the district to reflect decisions of its board are designated as (LOCAL). TASB issues policy updates to help the district keep its basic policies current. All of the district's policies are available online through the TASB Web site.

LISD has six basic policies designated as LEGAL related to curriculum or curriculum design although they have placed particular emphasis upon the development of academic standards for both core and non-core curricular programs. There are no policies designated as LOCAL. The current board approved policies include:

- Policy EHA (LEGAL) Curriculum Design: Basic Instructional Programs
- Policy EHAA (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (All Levels)
- Policy EHAB (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Elementary)

- Policy EHAC (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary)
- Policy EHAD (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Elective Instruction
- Policy EHB (LEGAL) Curriculum Design: Special Programs

Well-written board policies provide commonly understood curriculum standards and a framework for districtwide consistency in decision-making across all instructional settings. The district's existing policies provide a framework for LISD's curricula. Strong curriculum management policies provide clear direction for staff members and set a direction for the use of available district resources. They also establish the processes by which decisions relative to the delivery of curriculum are to be made. Strong curriculum policies include statements that:

- define the curriculum,
- outline the curriculum development process,
- require written documents in all subject areas and courses,
- establish expectations that the curriculum, instructional materials and assessment program will be coordinated,
- provide for staff training and
- connect the budgeting process with the district's curricular priorities.

LISD is missing these elements in its curriculum policies although they have placed a significant emphasis upon the improvement and use of objective standards as a basis for their current curriculum development. A number of districts, such as San Angelo ISD and Fort Bend ISD, have developed and adopted in-depth local policies to specifically direct and manage their curricula as efforts to standardize curriculum and create curriculum guides are implemented.

Recommendation 9:

Develop and adopt a board policy to provide direction for the management of curriculum.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Communications contacts TASB for information on districts with locally developed and adopted policies related to curriculum management.	July 2002
2.	The superintendent appoints a committee including the director of Communication, administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness and appropriate campus administrative staff to review	August - September 2002

	the curriculum management policies and propose additions and modifications for consideration and adoption by the board.	
3.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness submits the committee's proposed policy to the superintendent's cabinet for review and approval.	October - November 2002
4.	The superintendent submits the policy to the board for approval and inclusion in the LISD policy manual.	November 2002
5.	The superintendent submits the policy to TASB's Policy Services for formatting and inclusion in the Internet accessible version of LISD's policy manual.	November 2002
6.	The superintendent and principals ensure that teachers, support personnel and administrators are informed of the curriculum management policy updates and additions.	December 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not have curriculum guides to support 96 percent, or 465 of the 482 courses it offers in grades 9-12 for 2001-02 or a scheduled plan for the development of these guides. TSPR reviewed courses offered at the high school level listed in the *LISD Curriculum Guides* for 2000-01 and 2001-02. The guides list 470 and 482 courses available in grades 9-12 during 2000-01 and 2001-02, respectively (**Exhibit 2-18**).

Exhibit 2-18
LISD Courses in Grades 9-12
2000-01 and 2001-02

Subject Area	Courses Offered*	
	2000-01	2001-02
Language Arts	98	98
Mathematics	30	31
Science	27	27
Social Studies	32	32
Other Languages	20	19
Fine Arts	51	56
Technology Applications	10	10

Self-Contained/Restricted	51	51
Health and Physical Education	40	42
Career and Applied Technology	111	116
Total	**470**	**482**

Source: LISD Curriculum Guides, 2000-01 and 2001-02.
*Courses assigned either a local or TEA code number.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY (PART 2)

The district's academic standards provide excellent overall direction regarding "what students need to know" in the core areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and technology. The performance standards, however, are tied specifically to only 17 courses in four subjects in grades 9-12: English I-IV in English/language arts; Algebra I and II, Geometry and Pre-calculus in mathematics; Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Chemistry I, Biology I and Physics I in science; and World History, World Geography, United States History, United States Government and Economics in social studies. The district has no guidelines to connect its performance standards to the remaining 465 courses offered in grades 9-12.

Well-written curriculum guides serve as functional work plans for teachers. They provide direction to teachers on student objectives, assessment methods, prerequisite skills, instructional materials and resources, as well as classroom strategies. Many districts like Fort Bend ISD create a master schedule to use when planning and assembling teams of teachers for curriculum guide development and subsequent update. By ensuring that all courses have an updated curriculum guide and by coordinating curriculum efforts, these districts ensure that all students are taught the same concepts for the same course. Additionally, once student test results are available, many campus and district administrators use these test results to target curriculum areas needing improvement or revision. Many districts also use a review of student test results as an opportunity to revise the district curriculum plan ensuring that all students in the district are receiving adequate instruction in all subject areas.

Recommendation 10:

Create and implement a schedule for curriculum guide development and update for all high school courses.

Curriculum guides identify basic instructional resources and describe suggested approaches for delivering content in the classroom. Curriculum guides should identify essential district priorities; suggest effective teaching strategies based on feedback from assessment data; and connect what is taught between grades and schools. The most effective curriculum guides are "user friendly" and easy to translate into day-to-day lessons.

A guide for each of the high school courses in LISD should be scheduled for initial development or review and revision over the next five-year period that is coordinated with state graduation requirements and the state textbook adoption cycle. Assuming that no new courses are either added or deleted, approximately 465 guides will need to be developed over the next five years. LISD currently has 17 course guides available, of which one-third or six will need revision during the initial five-year period. Using teachers familiar with the academic standards development may enhance the district's curriculum guide development process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness convenes a committee of teachers, administrators and support staff to develop and recommend a schedule for the development of curriculum guides in all high school subject areas.	July 2002
2.	The committee recommends curriculum development schedules after reviewing documents currently available, state textbook adoption schedules, current and projected course offerings, procedures/schedules of other districts, etc.	January 2003
3.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness submits the committee's recommendations to the superintendent's cabinet for review and approval.	February 2003
4.	The superintendent submits the schedule and projected costs to the board for approval and inclusion in the proposed 2003-04 budget.	March 2003
5.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness initiates and oversees the curriculum guide project.	September 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

Thirty-one teams of three teachers per team will be needed to provide input into the curriculum guide writing process with each team writing three guides each year. The teams will write 93 guides per year for a total of 465 guides in a five-year cycle and revise outdated guides as needed thereafter. Additionally, two teams of three teachers per team will be responsible for updating six of the current 17 available course guides in years 2004-05 and 2005-06 and five guides in 2006-07. (Three teachers per team for 5 days at $100 a day or 3 teachers x 5 days = 15 x $100 = $1,500 x 2 teams = $3,000 a year for initial updating.) The estimate assumes that each teacher will be paid approximately $100 per day for five days during the summer months. (Three teachers per team for 5 days at $100 a day or 3 teachers x 5 days = 15 x $100 = $1,500 x 31 teams =

$46,500 per year). In years 2004-05 through 2006-07 the cost totals
$46,500 + $3,000 = $49,500.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create and implement a schedule for curriculum guide development and update for all high school courses.	$0	($46,500)	($49,500)	($49,500)	($49,500)

FINDING

LISD students' Advanced Placement (AP) examination scores accepted by
universities for advanced standing credit are relatively low on most
courses tested. AP is a nationally recognized program that introduces
students to university-level work while they are still in high school. More
than 1,400 upper-level institutions around the world, including 58 in
Texas, grant college credit to students who make satisfactory grades on
AP exams. During 1999-2000, more than 1.2 million AP examinations
were given across the nation in 33 courses.

The percent of LISD students taking an AP examination was higher than
the percent in any of the peer districts as well as Region 1 and the state for
each of the years from 1998-99 through 2000-01 (**Exhibit 2-19**).

Exhibit 2-19
Percent of Students Tested
Advanced Placement Examinations
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
1998-99 through 2000-01

District	Percent of Students Tested		
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Eagle Pass	13.0%	17.2%	17.4%
Edgewood	3.4%	3.6%	15.9%
Edinburg	19.6%	18.5%	21.5%
Harlandale	6.8%	14.1%	14.4%
Laredo	**15.6%**	**18.8%**	**26.0%**
United	11.0%	11.7%	15.3%
Region 1	**12.7%**	**15.2%**	**17.2%**

State	**11.0%**	**12.7%**	**14.3%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Colleges and universities generally require an AP examination score of
three (qualified), four (well-qualified) or five (extremely well-qualified) to
award credit or advanced standing for AP courses. LISD's share of
students with scores of three, four or five ranked in the middle of the peer
districts for each of the three years 1998-99 through 2000-01, but was
lower than the Region 1 and state shares (**Exhibit 2-20**).

Exhibit 2-20
Percent of AP Examination Scores
With a Score of 3, 4 or 5
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
1998-99 through 2000-01

District	Percent of Scores of 3, 4 or 5		
	1998-99	**1999-2000**	**2000-01**
Eagle Pass	50.9%	31.5%	37.8%
Edgewood	50.0%	41.0%	5.6%
Edinburg	49.1%	41.6%	32.6%
Harlandale	18.3%	16.3%	16.8%
Laredo	**38.4%**	**33.1%**	**33.8%**
United	30.4%	34.7%	44.1%
Region 1	**47.3%**	**36.2%**	**35.1%**
State	**55.7%**	**53.9%**	**50.1%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 through 2000-01.

According to reports prepared for the district by the College Board's AP
Program, LISD students received 1,033 examination grades covering 12
AP courses during 2000-01. The district had 415 scores (40.2 percent) of
three or higher on the 12 AP course examinations taken by its students in
that year. Of that number, 355 were received in one of two Spanish-
language courses. In the other 10 courses, only 60 grades (5.8 percent)
were for three, four or five (**Exhibit 2-21**).

Exhibit 2-21
LISD Advanced Placement Examination Grades
2000-01

AP Course	Grade of 3 (Qualified)		Grade of 4 (Well-Qualified)		Grade of 5 (Extremely Well-Qualified)	
	Number of Grades	**Percent of Course Total**	**Number of Grades**	**Percent of Course Total**	**Number of Grades**	**Percent of Course Total**
Biology	1	2.6%	0	0	0	0
Calculus AB	3	6.7%	2	4.4%	0	0
Chemistry	0	0	0	0	0	0
English Language and Composition	10	5.1%	2	1.0%	0	0
English Literature and Composition	8	8.6%	0	0	0	0
Government and Politics, U.S.	0	0	1	1.7%	0	0
Human Geography	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physics C, Mechanics	1	12.5%	0	0	0	0
Spanish Language	89	2.0%	130	32.1%	132	32.6%
Spanish Language, Standard Group	0	0	4	33.3%	0	0
Spanish Literature	24	42.9%	6	10.7%	2	3.6%
United States History	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**136**	**NA**	**145**	**NA**	**134**	**NA**

Percent of Grade 3, 4 and 5	32.8%	NA	34.9%	NA	32.3%	NA
Percent of All Grades	13.2%	NA	14.0%	NA	13.0%	NA

Source: College Board, LISD 2001 Report to AP Teachers.

Killeen ISD conducted seminars and preparation courses designed to assist students with the information generally included on Advanced Placement and SAT tests. The district provided students with study materials, sample tests and tutorials as well. Strategies were included in the campus improvement plans that concentrated on specific curricular areas such as vocabulary and analogies.

Recommendation 11:

Implement strategies to improve student scores on Advanced Placement examinations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving contacts the College Board to learn what programs and resources are available to assist students in preparing for AP exams.	June 2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving meets with AP teachers, students enrolled in AP classes, counselors and administrators to decide on ways to improve enrollment in AP classes.	September 2002
3.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving and a selected group of faculty, staff and students develop recommendations and related cost estimates for assisting students in preparation for AP exams.	February 2003
4.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving submits the proposed plan to the superintendent for review and approval.	March 2003
5.	The superintendent submits the plan and related cost estimates to the board for approval and inclusion in the 2003-04 proposed budget.	April 2003
6.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving initiates the program.	September 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Between 1998-99 and 2000-01, the percent of LISD students passing end-of-course (EOC) examinations did not improve on three of the four examinations offered, were significantly lower than the percent of students actually taking the exams and lower than the percent of students passing these exams in both the state and Region 1. Neither the campus nor district improvement plans identify specific strategies to focus improvement on EOC examination.

All students completing Algebra I, Biology, English II and U.S. History must take an EOC examination. Senate Bill 103 passed by the 76th Session of the Texas Legislature mandated a number of changes to TAAS. Renamed the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the exit-level portion of the test will be moved to grade 11 and administered for the first time in 2003-04. The new test will assess English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Students in the ninth grade in 2001-02 will be the first class required to pass the EOC tests to graduate. TEA indicates that 2001 pass rates on the EOC examinations are the best predictor of performance on the new exit-level tests.

In 2001, LISD's share of students taking EOC examinations was highest or next to the highest among the peer districts and higher than Region 1 and state averages. The percent of LISD students passing the EOC examinations, however, was next to lowest among the peer districts for Algebra I and the lowest for Biology, English II and U.S. History. LISD's results also were lower than Region 1 and state averages on all four examinations (**Exhibit 2-22**).

Exhibit 2-22
Percent of Students Taking and Passing EOC Examinations
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-2001

District	End-of-Course Examination			
	Algebra I	**Biology**	**English II**	**U.S. History**
Percent Taking Examination				
Eagle Pass	21.1%	21.6%	24.4%	4.8%
Edgewood	17.3%	15.8%	22.5%	2.2%

Edinburg	17.2%	26.2%	22.9%	15.5%
Harlandale	11.7%	24.9%	20.8%	18.5%
Laredo	**18.8%**	**28.5%**	**23.9%**	**19.2%**
United	17.5%	27.3%	22.4%	17.3%
Region 1	**17.9%**	**25.5%**	**21.6%**	**17.9%**
State	**17.2%**	**23.8%**	**22.0%**	**18.5%**
Percent Passing Examination				
Eagle Pass	40.6%	64.5%	68.7%	66.7%
Edgewood	36.2%	72.5%	60.7%	58.1%
Edinburg	31.3%	61.2%	70.5%	62.1%
Harlandale	30.0%	66.7%	63.0%	69.4%
Laredo	**31.0%**	**52.9%**	**51.0%**	**47.3%**
United	35.0%	62.0%	64.7%	61.1%
Region 1	**42.4%**	**67.8%**	**70.6%**	**64.5%**
State	**49.2%**	**79.9%**	**75.1%**	**74.3%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

LISD's EOC pass rates remained relatively constant from 1998-99 through 2000-01 on two of the four tests. In Algebra I, 30.1 percent of LISD students passed the exam in 1998-99, compared with 31.0 percent in 2000-01. In English II, 49.2 percent passed in 1998-99 compared with 51.0 percent in 2000-01. A slight decline has occurred in Biology, from 55.7 percent in 1998-99 to 52.9 percent in 2000-01. An increase occurred in U.S. History, from 38.9 percent to 47.3 percent (**Exhibit 2-23**).

Exhibit 2-23
Percent of LISD Students Passing
End-of-Course Examinations
1998-99 through 2000-01

Year	End-of-Course Examination			
	Algebra I	**Biology**	**English II**	**U.S. History**
2000-01	31.0%	52.9%	51.0%	47.3%
1999-2000	29.0%	60.9%	54.7%	48.4%

| 1998-99 | 30.1% | 55.7% | 49.2% | 38.9% |

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Many Texas school districts attempt to increase student performance on EOC examinations through strategies specifically identified in campus and district improvement plans including curricular reviews, tutoring and passing incentives.

Recommendation 12:

Include and implement specific strategies to improve student pass rates for high school end-of-course examinations in campus and district improvement plans.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving gathers information regarding the assistance with curriculum studies available from regional education service centers or other school districts.	June 2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving convenes a committee of teachers, administrators and central office personnel to review the information and formulate recommendations regarding the alignment of the district's Algebra I, Biology, English II and U.S. History curricula with EOC examinations in campus and district improvement plans.	September 2002
3.	The committee submits its recommendations with timelines and any cost estimates to the superintendent for review.	February 2003
4.	The superintendent submits the recommendations with timelines and cost estimates to the board for approval.	March 2003
5.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving initiates the approved plan for ensuring alignment of the district's curricula with EOC examinations and ensures inclusion of recommendations in the campus and district improvement plans on an annual basis.	April 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The percent of LISD students taking a college entrance examination and the percent receiving a score at or above the criterion score are low. The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT I) is designed to assess the academic skills deemed important to a student's success in college. The American College Testing Program Assessment (ACT) is designed to evaluate the general educational development of high school students and their ability to complete college-level work. Most colleges and universities use either the SAT I or ACT as a requirement for entry.

The percent of LISD students with scores at or the above the criterion used by TEA for reporting SAT and ACT information in AEIS-1110 on the SAT I or 24.0 on the ACT-is third-lowest (5.0 percent) among the peer districts and is lower than Region 1 (10.8 percent) and state (27.3 percent) averages for the class of 2000 as reported in 2000-01 data to TEA. The percent of students taking the SAT I or ACT is lowest among peer districts and lower than Region 1 and state averages.LISD's average SAT I score was fourth (860) among peer districts. Its average ACT score was second (17.6) among the peers, about the same as the Region 1 average and lower than the state average (**Exhibit 2-24**).

Exhibit 2-24
AT I and ACT Scores, Students Tested and Average SAT I and ACT Scores
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
Class of 2000

District	Percent of Students With SAT/ACT Scores At or Above 1110/24.0	Percent of Students Tested	Average SAT I Score	Average ACT Score
Eagle Pass	7.0%	53.3%	872	18.6
Edgewood	2.6%	53.7%	780	16.2
Edinburg	8.3%	72.3%	935	17.1
Harlandale	4.4%	48.6%	815	16.8
Laredo	**5.0%**	**29.8%**	**860**	**17.6**
United	9.6%	55.1%	898	17.2
Region 1	**10.8%**	**51.9%**	**915**	**17.7**
State	**27.3%**	**62.2%**	**990**	**20.3**

The percent of LISD students with SAT I or ACT scores at or above the criterion remained about the same for the classes of 1998, 1999 and 2000, as did the state and region averages. LISD's share of students tested fell between 1998 and 2000, from 39.9 percent to 29.8 percent. During the same period, the percent of students tested in Region 1 rose from 48.7 percent to 51.9 percent while the percent statewide increased from 61.7 percent to 62.2 percent. These data are provided in **Exhibit 2-25**.

Exhibit 2-25
Percent SAT I/ACT Scores and Students Tested
LISD Region 1 and State
Classes of 1998, 1999 and 2000

District	Percent of Students with SAT I or ACT Scores At or Above Criterion			Percent of Students Tested		
	Class of 1998	Class of 1999	Class of 2000	Class of 1998	Class of 1999	Class of 2000
Laredo	4.8%	6.2%	5.0%	39.9%	31.9%	29.8%
Region 1	10.9%	10.8%	10.8%	48.7%	49.7%	51.9%
State	27.2%	27.2%	27.3%	61.7%	61.8%	62.2%

The SAT I is composed of two parts, verbal and math. The verbal test focuses on critical reading. Students are required to read passages from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities and to discuss the authors' points of view, techniques and logic. The math test requires students to apply problem-solving techniques and use math in thinking about solutions to new and different problems. The ACT examination includes 200+ multiple-choice questions covering English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning based on high school curriculum. It also includes an interest inventory that provides information for career and educational planning.

The College Board and American College Testing Program both offer various strategies for assisting students with test preparation. The College Board encourages students to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude

Test (PSAT) to prepare for the SAT. It also offers free analysis regarding areas needing strengthening and methods for making improvements to requesting parties. Both the College Board and American College Testing Program can provide schools with test preparation software.

Recommendation 13:

Increase student participation and pass rates for college entrance examinations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Evaluation and Assessment recommends to the administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving a committee of teachers, administrators and support staff to review information and programs available to assist students with test preparation.	June 2002
2.	The committee contacts the College Board, the American College Testing Program, regional education service centers, TEA and school districts with a high percent of students scoring at or above the criterion score and taking the SAT or ACT to identify successful programs available to assist LISD students.	August 2002
3.	The committee provides the superintendent with recommendations for encouraging students to take the SAT or ACT and assisting them with test preparation.	November 2002
4.	The superintendent submits a plan to the board for approval and assigns implementation to the administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving.	January 2003
5.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving begins implementation of plan components not requiring new expenditures.	March 2003
6.	The superintendent includes any new estimated program costs in the proposed 2003-04 budget and submits it to the board for approval.	March 2003
7.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving begins implementing any plan components requiring new expenditures.	September 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The number of LISD students tested on TAAS is too low. The percent of LISD students whose TAAS performance is used to determine the school and district's accountability ratings- its "accountability subset"-is lower than those of the peer districts and the Region 1 and state averages.

While the state intends that every Texas public school student enrolled in grades 3-8 and 10 take the TAAS, not every student's performance is used to determine school and district accountability ratings. Under certain circumstances, a student may not be tested or his or her test performance may not be included in the accountability ratings. The number of students participating in TAAS and the reasons for any non-participation are reported in AEIS as the district's "participation profile." Reasons for non-participation include:

- The student takes the test but was not enrolled in the district by the last Friday in the previous October (the "mobile subset").
- The student is being served in special education in grades 3-8 and is tested using the state-developed alternative assessment (SDAA) implemented for the first time in 2000-01.
- The student receives a special education Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) exemption for every test.
- The student is absent during test administration.
- The student receives a bilingual education Limited English Proficiency (LEP) exemption as an immigrant receiving services in grades 3-8 and in his or her first three years of enrollment in America.

During 2000-01, 93.8 percent of all LISD students were tested on TAAS. The performance of 3 percent of those students did not contribute to the district's rating, however, as they were not enrolled in the district by the last Friday of the previous October. Similarly, 15.6 percent of those tested made no contribution to the district's accountability rating because they were tested using the SDAA. And, 6.2 percent of students were not tested for various other reasons, a percent that is higher than any of its peers, the state or the region. Thus only 75.1 percent of LISD students contributed to the district's accountability rating, a result lower than those in any the peer districts as well as the Region 1 and state averages. (**Exhibit 2-26**)

Exhibit 2-26
Student Tested/Not Tested on TAAS
LISD Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District	Percent of Students Tested or Not Tested on TAAS

	Students Tested			Students Not Tested		
	Performance Not Counted		Performance Counted (Accountability Subset)	Total Not Tested	LEP Exempt	ARD Exempt
	Mobile Subset	SDAA				
Eagle Pass	5.0%	5.8%	87.2%	2.0%	0.3%	1.0%
Edgewood	5.6%	11.0%	78.0%	5.3%	1.4%	1.9%
Edinburg	5.4%	5.6%	84.5%	4.5%	2.3%	1.0%
Harlandale	5.4%	10.4%	79.6%	4.6%	0.7%	2.3%
Laredo	**3.0%**	**15.6%**	**75.1%**	**6.2%**	**3.7%**	**1.3%**
United	2.9%	10.3%	81.7%	5.1%	2.5%	1.5%
Region 1	**4.6%**	**7.8%**	**82.6%**	**5.0%**	**2.5%**	**1.1%**
State	**4.8%**	**6.4%**	**85.0%**	**3.8%**	**1.4%**	**1.1%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.
*Note: *Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.*

Recommendation 14:

Increase the number of students tested on TAAS.

LISD should develop methods to increase the numbers of students tested. TAAS and alternative test data provide important information to support the development of appropriate instruction for students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Evaluation and Assessment meets with a committee of teachers, principals, special education personnel and staff working with PEIMS data collection to develop processes and procedures to ensure that all students eligible for TAAS participation are tested.	May 2002
2.	The director of Evaluation and Assessment submits the recommended processes and procedures to the superintendent's cabinet for review.	November 2002
3.	The superintendent submits the processes and procedures to the board for approval.	January 2003

4.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving meets with the appropriate building and central office staff to discuss the implementation of the approved procedures.	February 2003
5.	The superintendent assigns staff to implement the processes, monitor their results and counsel schools or programs found to have unacceptable participation rates.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

B. GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Section 29.122 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) states that school districts "shall adopt a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students in the district and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level." Section 29.123 requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) to "develop and periodically update a state plan for the education of gifted and talented students" to be used for accountability purposes "to measure the performance of districts in providing services to students identified as gifted and talented." The SBOE plan, adopted in 1996 and revised in 2000, provides direction for the refinement of existing services and the creation of additional curricular options for gifted and talented (G/T) students.

The *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* establishes three levels of performance measures-acceptable, recognized and exemplary-for five program areas: student assessment, program design, curriculum and instruction, professional development and family-community involvement. "Acceptable" performance measures are those required by state law or rule. The "recognized" and "exemplary" measures are provided as "viable targets that local district educators seeking excellence, both for their district and for its students, may strive to attain."

According to LISD G/T staff, the purpose of the district's G/T education program is to address the intellectual, social and emotional needs of G/T students through the collaboration and support of educators, parents and community members.

TEA's Division of Accountability Evaluations is responsible for conducting District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visits, one purpose of which is to monitor compliance with state and federal requirements for special programs. The indicators used by on-site monitoring teams are the acceptable performance measures for educating G/T students.

TEA conducted a DEC visit in LISD from November 27 through December 1, 2000. Of 20 compliance indicators for gifted and talented programs, the DEC team selected 11 for on-site review.

The team found the district to be in compliance with state requirements in 10 of these areas; one indicator was determined to be non-applicable.

TSPR's review of the indicators not included in the DEC visit indicated that the district complies with all of them.

In 2000-01, LISD's share of total student enrollment served in its G/T program was second highest among the peers, slightly lower than the Region 1 average and about the same as the state average. The percent of teaching staff allocated to G/T programs was highest among the peer districts and higher than both the Region 1 and state averages. LISD's share of instructional expenditures allocated to G/T was lowest among the peers and lower than Region 1 and the state (**Exhibit 2-27**).

Exhibit 2-27
Percent of Students, Teachers
And Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures
Gifted/Talented Programs in LISD, Peer Districts and State
2000-01

District	Percent G/T Student Enrollment	Percent G/T Teachers	Percent G/T Budgeted Instructional Expenditures
Eagle Pass	12.0%	3.8%	1.5%
Edgewood	7.7%	1.5%	0.9%
Edinburg	7.9%	6.5%	1.3%
Harlandale	5.6%	0.9%	0.9%
Laredo	**8.3%**	**6.6%**	**0.3%**
United	5.8%	2.8%	0.9%
Region 1	**8.8%**	**4.2%**	**1.7%**
State	**8.4%**	**2.2%**	**1.8%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Between 1997-98 and 2000-01, LISD's budgeted operating expenditures for all programs and expenditures per student enrolled rose by 8.8 percent and 9.3 percent respectively. During the same period, however, its expenditures for G/T programs fell by 77.7 percent, from $993,392 to $221,252, while enrollment in the program rose by 44.3 percent. The result was a decrease in expenditures per student enrolled in gifted and talented programs of 84.6 percent, from $765 to $118. These data are provided in **Exhibit 2-28**.

Exhibit 2-28
LISD Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures
All Programs and Gifted and Talented Program
1997-98 and 2000-01

Expenditure Category	1997-98	2000-01	Percent Increase (Decrease)
Expenditures, All Programs	$115,527,467	$125,638,883	8.8%
Student Enrollment	22,651	22,556	(0.4%)
Expenditures per Student Enrolled	$5,100	$5,572	9.3%
Expenditures, G/T Program	$993,392	$221,252	(77.7%)
G/T Enrollment	1,298	1,873	44.3%
Expenditure per G/T Student Enrolled	$765	$118	(84.6%)

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 and 2000-01.

FINDING

LISD provides a variety of options for its gifted students. LISD's first G/T program began in 1988. According to a February 2001 district self-evaluation instrument for the G/T department, LISD provides stimulating, challenging curricula differentiated in depth, complexity and pacing in order for G/T students to reach their potential. In addition, the gifted programs promote mastery of high-level concepts and skills in efforts to support sophisticated products and performances from LISD students.

During 2000-01, the program served students in grades K-5 in regular classrooms as well as special G/T classes. Parents can transfer their children, on a space-available basis, between schools offering either of the two programs. Credit by exam is also available to students in grades K-11. Those students in grades 1-8 who earn credit for classes through this examination option may be advanced to the next grade if specific predetermined requirements are met. High school G/T students exercising the credit by exam option must receive a score equal to or higher than a specific mark on the examination to receive credit for that course.

In grades 6-12, G/T students are served through Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Students in grades 9-12 may enroll concurrently in courses at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) and Laredo Community College (LCC) to earn college credit in high school. This dual credit program allows high school G/T students to

receive college credit for university courses if they earn a grade equal to or higher than a specific grade in the course. Students may also apply for admittance to either of the district's magnet schools. LISD offers the dual credit program, Pre-AP and AP classes to all students whether or not they are in the designated G/T program.

COMMENDATION

LISD offers its gifted students a variety of academic program options.

FINDING

LISD operates two magnet schools for the unique instructional needs of gifted high school students, the Vidal M. Trevino (VMT) School of Communications and the Health Science Magnet School.

Opened in 1993, the VMT Magnet School is located in a residential area in downtown Laredo, offering classes in 10 renovated houses. The VMT program provides artistic training in communications, dance, music, theatre arts and visual arts, with an emphasis on creative development and college preparation. Students apply for the program and are interviewed by members of the VMT fine arts faculty. All courses offered use the AP curriculum and all academic faculty have received the training required to teach AP courses as well as 30 hours of state-required special training to teach gifted and talented students. Students do not have to be identified as G/T to attend VMT Magnet School.

Most students attend VMT on a half-day basis, with a 90-minute period of fine arts and a 90-minute period for language arts, math or social studies; they attend their "parent" campuses for the other half-day. Although VMT maintains all grades and attendance records, the students' parent schools remain their "schools of record," and all student records are returned to the parent schools at the end of each grading period. While most VMT students are from LISD, the program accepts a maximum of 30 students from United ISD high schools each time a course is offered. The district supplies transportation to and from students' parent schools. At present, VMT has an enrollment of about 800 students.

VMT students and programs have received numerous state and national awards, including first place at the all-state orchestra and band competition for six consecutive years; national recognition in writing competitions; and National Hispanic Merit Scholarships. Interviews with students and faculty found a high level of commitment to the program.

The Health and Science Magnet School, located on the Martin High School campus, opened in 1999-2000 and now has about 150 students.

Students interested in careers in health and science are offered advanced courses in mathematics, science and health. The school has a number of fully equipped laboratories, including three computer labs, four science labs, one distance-learning lab and 94 computer workstations with Internet access.

COMMENDATION

LISD provides opportunities for its students to explore communications, fine arts, health and science through innovative programs and advanced curricular offerings.

FINDING

Some LISD staff members who deliver services to gifted students lack the required professional development training. *The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* requires teachers who provide instruction as a part of a G/T program to have 30 clock hours of staff development training specifically related to the instruction of gifted students. Administrators and counselors who make decisions about G/T instruction are required to have six hours of related staff development training.

According to the district, 482 of its teachers, counselors and administrators should have G/T training. Of that number, 436 (90.5 percent) have completed the training (**Exhibit 2-29**) including 346 of 355 teachers and 90 of 127 administrators and counselors.

Exhibit 2-29
LISD Professional Staff by Campus
Training Required for the Instruction of Gifted Students

School	Total Professional Staff Required to Have Training	Staff Meeting Training Requirement	Percent of Staff Meeting Requirement
Cigarroa High School	33	29	87.9%
Martin High School	53	42	79.2%
Nixon High School	43	36	83.7%
VTM Magnet School	11	9	81.8%
F. S. Lara Academy	0	0	N/A
Christen Middle School	23	22	95.7%

Cigarroa Middle School	24	24	100.0%
Lamar Middle School	31	31	100.0%
Memorial Middle School	35	35	100.0%
Bruni Elementary School	11	11	100.0%
Buenos Aires Elementary School	9	7	77.8%
Daiches Elementary School	17	15	88.2%
Dovalina Elementary School	17	16	94.1%
Farias Elementary School	11	10	90.9%
Hachar Elementary School	7	7	100.0%
Kawas Elementary School	15	14	93.3%
Heights Elementary School	5	3	60.0%
Leyendecker Elementary School	14	14	100.0%
Ligarde Elementary School	10	9	90.0%
Macdonell Elementary School	15	12	80.0%
Martin Elementary School	14	14	100.0%
Milton Elementary School	10	10	100.0%
Pierce Elementary School	10	10	100.0%
Ryan Elementary School	11	9	81.8%

Exhibit 2-29
LISD Professional Staff by Campus
Training Required for the Instruction of Gifted Students

School	Total Professional Staff Required to Have Training	Staff Meeting Training Requirement	Percent of Staff Meeting Requirement
Sanchez/Ochoa Elementary School	12	10	83.3%
Santa Maria Elementary	9	9	100.0%

School			
Santo Nino Elementary School	16	16	100.0%
Tarver Elementary School	8	6	75.0%
Zachry Elementary School	8	6	75.0%
District	**482**	**436**	**90.5%**

Source: LISD, Office of Gifted and Talented/Advanced Placement, January 2002.

In addition to summarizing these requirements, the district's *Gifted and Talented Program Handbook: Project Quest* outlines the means by which staff can satisfy these requirements and the responsibilities for maintaining staff training records.

Many districts receive G/T training through regional education service centers, local colleges or universities and various conferences and workshops held across the state. Secondary teachers of Pre-AP/GT and AP/GT classes may also attend an institute provided by the College Board's Advanced Placement Program in lieu of a portion of their required training. The district's coordinator of Gifted and Talented is also trained to provide some staff development training in G/T education. LISD contracts with the Region 1 Gifted and Talented Cooperative to provide some required training for district personnel that the G/T coordinator cannot provide. During September 2001, LISD contracted with the cooperative to provide the 30-hour certification training for 29 teachers and the six-hour training for 14 administrators and counselors during the fall of 2001 and spring of 2002. The G/T coordinator provided six-hour update training for 165 teachers who preregistered with the G/T office during the fall of 2001. Each school maintains its own training records and forwards copies annually to the district's G/T coordinator.

Recommendation 15:

Ensure that all LISD Gifted and Talented professional staff members have the required training.

Due to staff turnover and new job assignments, TSPR estimates that 150 LISD teachers will require G/T update training, 50 teachers will require the 30-hour certification training and 20 administrators and counselors will require the administrator/counselor six-hour training each year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The coordinator of Gifted and Talented develops a form denoting required and other G/T training offered to district staff to record the training status of teachers, counselors, administrators and other professional support staff who deliver services to gifted and talented students.	August 2002
2.	Principals complete G/T training forms for appropriate campus staff and return to the coordinator of Gifted and Talented.	September - October 2002
3.	The coordinator of Gifted and Talented contacts Region 1 to coordinate G/T training and scheduling for LISD teachers.	November 2002
4.	The coordinator of Gifted and Talented develops a district schedule for required G/T training courses including those provided by the district and Region 1.	December 2002
5.	The coordinator of Gifted and Talented ensures all appropriate staff attends training necessary to satisfy requirements identified on their G/T training forms.	February 2003 and Ongoing
6.	The coordinator of Gifted and Talented receives the G/T staff development form from principals on an annual basis and monitors the status of staff training.	June 2003
7.	The coordinator of Gifted and Talented provides regular status reports to the administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving and the superintendent.	July 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Using Region 1's 2001-02 fee of $200 per registrant for the 30-hour training and $100 fee for the six-hour administrator/counselor training, the cost to LISD is estimated at $12,000 ([50 x $200] + [20 x $100]). Based on a $55 daily rate for substitutes for 150 teachers, the cost for in-district training is estimated at $8,250 ($55 x 150). The total cost for providing the required training related to G/T education is estimated at $20,250.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Ensure that all LISD Gifted and Talented professional staff members have the required training.	($20,250)	($20,250)	($20,250)	($20,250)	($20,250)

FINDING

LISD does not have a comprehensive assessment program for its magnet schools that provides feedback on student achievement and program effectiveness. An effective assessment plan provides information on programs producing the desired learning outcomes. Without compiling and analyzing student achievement data, the district cannot make informed decisions concerning modifications to existing curriculum and program offerings.

As noted above, students attending the district's two magnet programs, the VMT School of Communications and Fine Arts and the Science and Health Magnet, are considered to be "students of record" at their home or parent schools. Grades, attendance records and other student information compiled at the magnet schools are forwarded to the parent schools at the end of each grading period. Information such as SAT, ACT and AP examination results, numbers of graduates and postsecondary institutions attended are maintained by the parent school; neither magnet location makes any attempt to record and compile such data.

Both magnet schools have written goals and objectives, but no procedures for evaluating the extent to which they are being met. Examples of the schools' goals and objectives are provided in
Exhibit 2-30.

Exhibit 2-30
Goals and Objectives
LISD Magnet School Programs

Program	Goals	Objectives
Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications	• To understand and operate industry-standard hardware and software pertaining to television, radio, print publication, and photography. • To create and produce television, radio, newspaper.	• Will use relevant, varied and creative forms of technology to support student productions. • Will identify, recognize and formulate the contemporary role of mass media. • Will become acquainted with and define the laws and ethical considerations affecting print and broadcast media. • Will develop, write, edit and apply print and broadcast production skills. • Will demonstrate the

	photographic and creative writing productions. • To broadcast and publish student productions in the various mediums. • To enhance the multicultural, bilingual community through student productions. • To understand the history, ethics and legal standards of print and broadcast journalism.	intellectual, emotional and aesthetic relationships and impact on bicultural audiences.
Health Science Magnet	• Health Science Magnet School students will attend school everyday and be ready to learn. • Health Science Magnet School students will attain high academic success.	• Will use the skills and knowledge to pursue communications through higher education. • The average daily attendance at the Health Science will be at or above 99 percent. • One hundred percent of the Health Science Magnet School students will graduate with the Distinguished Achievement Program Seal. • Fifty percent of the Health Science Magnet School students will receive academic recognition in one or more areas of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)

		test. • Seventy-five percent of the Health Science Magnet School students will be exempted from the Texas Academic Skill Program test by scoring at or above the required criteria on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills Test: 1780 Writing, 89 Reading, and 86 Mathematics.

Source: LISD, Division of Academics/Problem Solving, Undated.

A formal approach to assessing student achievement and program effectiveness is essential to improving district quality and productivity. Effective decisions regarding programming require the collection and use of data measuring the academic success of students to provide feedback to the board, parents and the community. Assessments also help teachers, principals and central administrators make decisions regarding instructional programs, teaching arrangements and the quality of student learning.

Data currently available in the district for use as indicators of program effectiveness include:

- Percent of daily student attendance;
- Incidence of discipline referrals and expulsions;
- Annual and four-year dropout rates;
- SAT, ACT and AP scores;
- Number of advanced academic courses taken;
- Number of graduates on the Recommended and DAP graduation plans and
- Rate of enrollment and completion in postsecondary institutions.

Recommendation 16:

Create an assessment system for the district's magnet school program to measure the academic success of attending students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving	August

	and appropriate central office and campus personnel review all indicators that might be used to evaluate the district's magnet school programs and recommend a plan, including implementation timelines for evaluating program effectiveness.	2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving submits the proposed plan to the superintendent for consideration and approval.	November 2002
3.	The superintendent approves the plan and submits to the board for approval.	December 2002
4.	The director of Evaluation and Assessment meets with administrators, counselors and other appropriate staff to discuss implementation.	January 2003
5.	The director of Evaluation and Assessment coordinates the collection and dissemination of data, meets with magnet school and appropriate central office staff to decide how it will be used and recommends modifications as needed.	January - May 2003
6.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving makes periodic reports to the superintendent and the board regarding the effectiveness of the district's magnet programs, based on the data collected.	June 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. SPECIAL EDUCATION

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires free, appropriate public education for all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their handicaps. This law, which also is designed to protect children and parents in educational decision-making, requires the district to develop an individualized education plan (IEP) for each child with a disability.

The law also requires the district to educate students with disabilities in the "least restrictive environment." In 1997, the federal government re-authorized IDEA. The law as revised states that the IEP must be clearly aligned with the education received by children in general classrooms and that the IEP preparation process must include regular education teachers. The law also requires students with disabilities to be included in state and district assessment programs and performance goals.

To serve the multiple needs of all students with disabilities and comply with IDEA's requirements, an effective special education program should implement the following practices (derived from Public Law 101-15, the 1997 amendments to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act):

- **Pre-referral intervention in regular education.** When a student experiences an academic problem in regular education, an intervention can and should occur to solve the problem. If steps taken do not produce results, the problem should be referred to special education.
- **Referral to special education for evaluation.** Referring a student to special education requires an official, written request supported by documentation. Referral information must include an explanation of steps that have been taken in regular education to solve the student's problem before the referral.
- **Comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation.** Once a student has been referred, the district must provide a comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation, commonly called an assessment, within a prescribed amount of time.
- **Initial placement through an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting.** After the evaluation is complete, an Admission, Review and Dismissal committee, meets to discuss the results of the evaluation; decide if the student qualifies for special education services in one of 12 federal special education categories; and, if so, develop an educational plan for the student.

- **Provision of educational services and supports according to a written individualized education plan (IEP).** The IEP developed by the ARD committee includes information about the classes the student will take, the amount of time the student will spend in regular education and related needs such as speech therapy or counseling.
- **Annual program review.** Each year after a student's initial qualification and placement, an ARD committee conducts a review to ensure that the student's program is appropriate.
- **Three-year reevaluation.** Every three years, the student undergoes a comprehensive individual assessment. The ARD committee meets to discuss the results of the reevaluation and decides whether the student still qualifies for special education in the same category.
- **Dismissal from the special education program.** If and when the ARD committee decides that a student no longer meets education eligibility criteria, he or she is dismissed from special education.

Students with disabilities who spend all of their classroom hours in a regular classroom are considered "mainstreamed." Additional instructional and related services are provided depending on students' needs, up to full-day service in special education settings. If a student's disability is so severe that satisfactory education cannot take place in a regular classroom, he or she will be served in a separate "self-contained" classroom.

LISD has a well-defined prereferral process for determining whether students require special education assessment. Special education staff from both the central office and the school provide support to regular education teachers and professional staff who need assistance with student prereferrals. Region 1 offers LISD training and support for teachers working with mainstreamed special education students. This training includes lesson modifications and classroom management techniques.

LISD has good procedures for identifying students for special education, and the district provides a full range of services for students with disabilities. To ensure the least restrictive environment appropriate for each student, district personnel always begin by considering supplementary aids that can be offered in regular education. All students receive appropriate curricular modifications and services. ARD committees composed of parents and professional staff determine program eligibility and participation, educational plans and placement in and dismissal from special education. IEPs are developed for every student with a disability.

LISD provides special education services to 2,962 students (13.1 percent) with disabilities. This number includes students with auditory impairments

from United ISD who are served at the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) located in Laredo. The district offers a continuum of special education services including general education, mainstream, resource, self-contained, homebound and vocational adjustment classes. Additional instructional help is provided through content mastery, co-teaching and in-class tutoring.

LISD offers special education services at all campuses, including its alternative education and residential care facilities. Related services being provided to students with disabilities include counseling, occupational and physical therapies, school health and social work services, assistive technology services (recordings, reading machines, tape recordings, computers and other devices that help disabled students learn), orientation and mobility training and transportation.

LISD employs 95.8 full-time equivalent special education teachers making up about 7.5 percent of its total faculty and 40 other special education staff members, such as diagnosticians and homebound teachers, for a total staff of 135. The district's special education teacher/student ratio is 1:22, slightly above the state (1:18) and regional (1:19) averages, and comparable to the peers, which range from 1:15 (Eagle Pass) to 1:22 (Edgewood and Laredo).

LISD's special education staff members have appropriate credentials, and certifications, including the paraprofessional support staff. LISD pays annualstipends for certain high-demand positions including a $400 stipend for resource teachers, a $1,000 stipend for homebound teachers and a $3,500 stipend for teachers in self-contained classrooms who teach the most severely disabled students.

All LISD schools have a Special Education supervisor and a diagnostician. One person may hold both positions if the school has relatively few students. School-based special education staff members provide teacher training, assist teachers with lesson plan modifications and obtain assistive devices as needed. They also monitor teachers to ensure that modifications are actually used in the classroom.

In 2000-01, 13.1 percent of LISD's students were enrolled in some form of special education; in that year, the district spent $3,128 per student on special education. LISD's share of enrollment in special education was higher than the region and state averages and third highest among the peers. LISD allots 12.5 percent of its budget to Special Education, a share only slightly lower than the state average. Its per-student spending was lower than the state and regional averages and all but one of the peers (**Exhibit 2-31**).

Exhibit 2-31
Special Education Expenditures
LISD, Peers, Region 1 and the State
2000-01

District	Number Students Enrolled	Percent of Total Students Enrolled	Budgeted Special Education Expenditures	Percent of Total Expenditures
Eagle Pass	888	7.1%	$3,563,185	8.9%
Harlandale	2,160	14.9%	$7,598,444	14.9%
Edinburg	1,819	8.3%	$6,000,458	8.0%
Edgewood	1,840	14.2%	$5,798,713	13.0%
Laredo	**2,962**	**13.1%**	**$9,265,320**	**12.5%**
United	3,323	12.1%	$7,291,285	9.2%
Region 1	**31,086**	**10.3%**	**$104,906,894**	**10.4%**
State	**483,442**	**11.9%**	**$1,739,689,310**	**12.6%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

FINDING

LISD offers its special education staff extensive training opportunities through its own personnel, Region 1 and other individuals, agencies and providers. Topics offered include behavior management and intervention plans; special education law; ARD meetings; inclusion; technology; educating and understanding individuals with learning disabilities; the needs of diverse learners; parents as teachers; and student support system (SSS) core team training.

Faculty members attend statewide conferences and meetings, such as the state conference on autism and meetings of the Bilingual/Special Education Assessment Institute Task Force. The district also pays registration and travel expenses for parents of special education students who attend conferences concerning their children's disabilities. The district also provides annual training and written materials to parents and regular teachers on the *Student Support System Procedural Manual*. The manual addresses the characteristics of specific types of disabilities and the accompanying learning styles, so that teachers and parents can recognize symptoms of a disability and seek a referral through the special education department to determine whether or not their child is eligible for services.

For each kind of disability, the manual identifies common learner organizational skills or the ways that a child in that category tends to learn and process information and suggests assistive devices, modifications to classrooms and techniques in classroom management to enhance learning.

COMMENDATION

LISD provides its special education personnel with extensive training opportunities.

FINDING

LISD has made significant improvements in its testing of special education students. As indicated in **Exhibit 2-32**, LISD has greatly reduced its percentage of students receiving an ARD-committee exemption from TAAS (**Exhibit 2-32**).

Exhibit 2-32
Percent of Special Education Students Exempted from TAAS
LISD Compared to Peers, Region and State
1999-2000 and 2000-01

District	1999-2000	2000-01
Eagle Pass	7.0%	1.0%
Edinburg	6.1%	1.0%
Edgewood	12.2%	1.9%
Harlandale	10.1%	2.3%
Laredo	**16.0%**	**1.3%**
United	11.8%	1.5%
Region 1	**8.3%**	**1.1%**
State	**7.1%**	**1.1%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

LISD moved from 16.0 percent exempted in 19999-2000-01 to 1.3 percent exempted in 2000-01, an improvement of 14.7 percent. According to the district, the impressive decrease in exemptions occurred because LISD started using the State Developed Alternative Assessment in 2001.

COMMENDATION

LISD has significantly reduced its number of special education students exempted from TAAS.

FINDING

LISD is not receiving all of the Medicaid reimbursements for which it is eligible. In September 1992, Texas' Medicaid program was amended to allow school districts to enroll as Medicaid providers and apply for Medicaid reimbursement for services they provide to children with disabilities. The reimbursement program is known as the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program. School districts need not spend new money, but instead can simply apply for reimbursement for specific services provided to Medicaid-certified students. Because SHARS provides reimbursement for funds already spent, it is returned to the district and made available to offset future expenses without restrictions. If a student's IEP requires occupational therapy, physical therapy or speech therapy and that student is Medicaid-eligible, the district can receive Medicaid reimbursement for providing those services.

Another reimbursement program available to Texas school districts is the Medicaid Administrative Claims (MAC) program. MAC reimburses districts for health-related administrative services that cannot be billed through SHARS. Because public schools play a critical role in helping children and their families obtain physical and mental health services, they can be reimbursed for referral, outreach, coordination and other related administrative activities. **Exhibit 2-33** below shows LISD's SHARS and MAC reimbursements for 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-33
LISD SHARS and MAC Reimbursement Revenue
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Year	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Total
SHARS	$229,961	$128,630	$106,883	$465,474
MAC	$460,309	$319,790	$301,471	$1,081,570
Total	**$690,270**	**$448,420**	**$408,354**	**$1,547,044**

Source: LISD Student Services Department, 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Until 2000, three workers in the Special Education central office tracked reimbursement-eligible costs and applied for reimbursements; in 2001, they added a fourth staff person to the team so that each of the LISD quadrants or divisions of the district would have its own staff member. To date, LISD does not obtain reimbursement for services provided by nurses,

counselors or eligible transportation services provided for students in special education.

Dallas ISD has identified nurses' services, counselors' services and transportation as areas to increase reimbursements. Other districts have negotiated a lower fee for claim filing services; for example, some new vendors, including TASB and Houston ISD, have begun to offer these services at a more competitive rate than private companies and regional collaboratives.

Recommendation 17:

Improve tracking and oversight activities and set a goal of increasing Medicaid reimbursements by 5 percent annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness to assume all responsibility for Medicaid reimbursement.	September 2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness and the director for Special Education contact the Texas Department of Health and TEA about SHARS and MAC reimbursement procedures to obtain additional information regarding all eligible areas of reimbursement.	September - October 2002
3.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness and the chief financial officer review current costs for district Medicaid submissions and obtain information and cost estimates from outside vendors who provide Medicaid submission services for comparative purposes.	October - November 2002
4.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness and the chief financial officer submit a recommendation for approval to the superintendent and board recommending current or outsourced services for future Medicaid submissions.	November 2002
5.	The director for Special Education ensures that all appropriate personnel receive training on the identification of services eligible for reimbursement.	November - December 2002
6.	Central office Special Education staff streamlines and monitors its tracking and reporting procedures in each quadrant.	January 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

It is conservatively estimated that LISD could increase its Medicaid reimbursements by 5 percent annually ($20,418) based on its 1999-2000 reimbursement of $408,354 ($408,354 x .05 = $20,418). A full year's savings are anticipated for the first year because Medicaid allows retroactive billings for up to 12 months.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Improve tracking and oversight activities and set a goal of increasing Medicaid reimbursements by 5 percent annually.	$20,418	$20,418	$20,418	$20,418	$20,418

FINDING

LISD does not evaluate special education programs designed to improve TAAS scores for effectiveness. From 1999 to 2001, LISD's TAAS scores for special education students fell in four of the seven grades being tested from 1999 to 2001. As shown in **Exhibit 2-34**, the gap has widened at five of seven levels between 2000 and 2001 and is especially wide for grade 10, where 64.7 percent of all students passed TAAS in 2001, compared to only 21.0 percent of special education students.

Exhibit 2-34
Percentage Difference in TAAS Pass Rates
Between All Students and Special Education Students
1999-2000 through 2000-01

Grade	1999-2000 Percent Passed			2000-01 Percent Passed		
	All Students	Special Education	Difference	All Students	Special Education	Difference
3	72.3%	72.9%	0.6%	72.3%	64.3%	(0.8%)
4	76.0%	72.2%	(3.8%)	76.5%	64.7%	(11.8%)
5	81.6%	85.7%	4.1%	84.5%	81.3%	(3.2%)
6	57.5%	22.2%	(35.3%)	63.9%	53.3%	(10.6%)
7	61.3%	61.0%	(0.3%)	71.5%	61.0%	(2.9%)
8	40.4%	18.8%	(21.6%)	54.5%	38.8%	(15.7%)
10	66.6%	32.0%	(34.6%)	64.7%	21.0%	(43.7%)

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000 and 2000-01.

Because LISD continuously monitors and analyzes TAAS data, the Special Education administrative staff is aware of the discrepancies between the performance of special education students and other students. To address the greater discrepancies at the secondary level, the department has launched several programs, including after-school tutorials, Super Saturday tutorials and home visits to enlist parental support for improvements in student performance and train parents in strategies for helping students at home. LISD does not, however, have a process for continuously evaluating these programs so that they can make changes to them if they are not working.

Killeen ISD has an excellent method called Results Based Monitoring, for evaluating special programs. Peer committees make school visits twice a year, during which they review the school improvement plan, interview school personnel using a standard set of questions, assess a self-evaluation by school administrators and teachers and analyze assessment data. If students are not improving, the school takes responsibility for redirecting compensatory funds immediately to improve academic achievement.

Robstown ISD uses practice exams to familiarize students with the TAAS format and with historical data and questions used on prior years' tests. Software is also available to help students practice TAAS test taking skills.

Recommendation 18:

Monitor and evaluate programs designed to improve TAAS scores of special education students.

LISD must identify the specific academic needs of special education students, particularly in grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 who fail TAAS. District personnel should determine which programs help special education students and find the resources needed to implement or support these programs. Care should be taken to maintain sufficient support for special education students in grades 3, 5 and 7 so that they maintain their progress as well.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Problem Solving and the administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness coordinate with school principals to provide school TAAS reports identifying special education students' specific areas of academic strength and weakness.	September 2002
2.	The director of Special Education works with special	October 2002

	education teachers and staff members to identify program evaluation strategies (such as quarterly TAAS practice tests) and adjust programs or redirect resources as needed.	
3.	The principals and their special education specialists identify and provide staff training for TAAS Line Item (TLI) mentoring and tutoring.	September 2002 - June 2003
4.	School intervention teams identify successful programs that address specific areas of TAAS deficiency, giving consideration to traditional and technology-based programs that develop both thinking and content-based skills and design an ongoing monitoring system to modify, improve expand or eliminate programs.	September 2002 - January 2003
5.	The director of Special Education implements the monitoring program.	January 2003 - Ongoing
6.	The director of Special Education reassigns personnel and resources as needed to support the suggested programs.	September 2002 - June 2003
7.	The director of Special Education and the principals evaluate annual TAAS scores and programs for effectiveness and accordingly make budget suggestions to the superintendent and board for approval.	September 2002 - June 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

D. BILINGUAL EDUCATION/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Texas Education Code Chapter 29 requires all school districts with an enrollment of 20 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the same grade level to offer a Bilingual English/English as a Second Language (BE/ESL) class or an alternative language program. A LEP student is defined as one whose primary language is other than English and whose English language proficiency limits participation in an English-language academic environment.

Parents may waive Bilingual/ESL instruction. Students on waived status receive no modifications and must take the TAAS the year they enroll. The number of parent denials for services in the district is as follows: 23 at the elementary level, 26 at the middle school level and 16 at the high school level.

LISD serves 13,040 LEP students. The primary languages are English and Spanish. State law specifies that bilingual education must be provided in pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades and that bilingual education, instruction in ESL or other transitional language instruction approved by TEA be provided in post-elementary grades through grade 8. For students in grades 9-12, only instruction in ESL is required.

BE instruction uses two languages for instructional purposes: the student's native language and English. The amount of instruction in each language is commensurate with the students' level of proficiency in both languages and their level of academic achievement. Students in K-2 receive most of their instruction in their native language, with a designated time for ESL instruction. As a general rule, transition into English instruction takes place in the third grade. Content-area instruction like math, science and social studies is provided in both languages.

ESL instruction is designed to develop proficiency in the comprehension, speaking, reading and composition of both oral and written English. Depending on each student's language ability, the amount of time accorded to English may vary from total immersion to partial instruction in the regular classroom in the elementary grades and from one to two periods in grades 6-12.

Dual-language classes are made up of 50 percent of students whose first language is English and 50 percent of students whose first language is

Spanish. Instruction in each language is provided equally. Dual language classes are intended to encourage bilingual fluency. LISD middle schools (grades 6 through 8) have ESL. Lamar middle school has both ESL and BE. All four high schools have ESL programs.

LISD uses a Transitional Bilingual Program Model that follows TEKS. The BE/ESL department coordinates with the district's Early Childhood, A+ Reading, special education and G/T programs. Students served in BE benefit from materials purchased through these programs as well as through Title I and Emergency Immigrant Education Program funds.

Texas requires that all LEP students be tested with the state TAAS or with an alternative test if the student is not academically prepared in English. A school Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) decides the identification, instructional placement and reclassification of LEP students at each school. The LPAC also exempts students from TAAS. Beginning in spring 2001, LPAC may grant immigrants in grades 3-8 an exemption on the basis of limited English proficiency during their first three years of enrollment in U.S. schools; Spanish-speaking LEP students may not be administered TAAS in Spanish for longer than three years.

LISD uses Spanish and English TAAS data to evaluate the impact of bilingual education on student performance. The district uses the Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) to evaluate students' English reading skills. Other evaluation measures include the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and Tejas Lee for students in grades PK-2 and the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) to evaluate oral English language skills in grades PK-5. Local assessments in mathematics and reading in English and Spanish are administered to all students in grades 1-10.

All BE and ESL teachers have the appropriate certification or are in the process of obtaining certification. In recent years, the district has had no problem in hiring LEP teachers and has discontinued special stipends formerly offered, with the exception of an $800 stipend paid to ESL teachers who work in the required program for recent immigrants. The district has 21 elementary staff and eight secondary staff in BE/ESL.

FINDING

LISD has been successful in pursuing additional funds to improve its LEP program offerings. In 2000, the director of the LEP program sought grants from the U.S. Department of Education for dual-language pilot projects at Macdonell Elementary and Bruni Elementary. In early 2001, the district learned that it would receive two grants, one for $1.3 million and another for $1.9 million, for this purpose. The 2000-01 school year was designated

as the planning year, with implementation of the grants beginning in 2001-02.

The Title VII Bilingual Two-Way/Dual Language Program, which is the program the district set up with the federal grants, proposes to reform, restructure and upgrade all relevant LEP programs and operations within each of the schools. It will provide instructional support for LEP students in a dual-language environment. It will also include funds for additional staff training and parental involvement.

So far, the district has identified personnel for the programs in each school. The first of five training days on the design or model that will be used in each school has been held. The financial procedures have been established with the LISD Budget Finance Office with the directives and approval of the DOE Program Specialist. Region 1 and a professor at the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg have provided training sessions on incorporating best approaches and practices in a two-way/dual language program. The LEP faculty will integrate curriculum, lesson models and teaching strategies developed in the pilot projects into the entire LEP program.

COMMENDATION

LEP administrative staff successfully secured grant funding for a dual language program for students.

FINDING

LISD's BE/ESL students do not perform as well on TAAS as all students in the general population. Some evidence suggests that the resources LISD dedicates to the LEP program may be inadequate. **Exhibit 2-35** shows per-student expenditures for students enrolled in LISD's BE and ESL services. In 2000-01, LISD spent $169 per student on these services, less than the state and regional averages and all but one of the peers. Although BE/ESL students make up 57.8 percent of the district's total enrollment, LISD spends only 3 percent of its budget on BE/ESL.

Exhibit 2-35
Bilingual/ESL Per Student Expenditure
LISD vs. Peer Districts, Region and State
2000-01

District	Students Enrolled in Bilingual/ESL	Percent of Total Enrollment	Budgeted Expenditures	Percent of Budgeted Expenditures	Per Student Expenditures

District				
Eagle Pass	4,391	35.1%	$852,246	22.1%	$194
Edinburg	6,684	30.4%	$15,812,717	21.1%	$2,365
Edgewood	2,588	19.9%	$465,744	1.0%	$180
Harlandale	2,075	14.3%	$5,424,623	10.7%	$698
Laredo	**13,040**	**57.8%**	**$2,207,938**	**3.0%**	**$169**
United	12,401	45.0%	1,448,695	1.8%	$117
Region 1	**107,073**	**35.4%**	**$54,022,901**	**5.4%**	**$505**
State	**509,885**	**12.6%**	**$590,748,041**	**4.3%**	**$1,159**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Programs and services are directly related to resources. Another way that the LEP program is negatively affected is the teacher-to-student ratio. **Exhibit 2-36** shows that LISD has a much higher teacher-to-student ratio (1:348) in BE/ESL than Region 1 (1:17) and state (1:25) averages.

Exhibit 2-36
Bilingual/ESL Teacher/Student Ratio
LISD vs. Peer Districts, Region and State
2000-01

District	Students Enrolled in BE/ESL	BE/ESL Faculty	Percent of BE/ESL Staff	Teacher/ Student Ratio
Eagle Pass	4,391	316.6	42.0%	1:14
Edinburg	6,684	405.2	27.0%	1:16
United	12,401	484.5	27.9%	1:26
Harlandale	2,075	104.9	10.7%	1:194
Laredo	**13,040**	**37.4**	**2.9%**	**1:348**
Edgewood	2,588	2.9	0.3%	1:892
Region 1	**107,073**	**4250.8**	**21.5%**	**1:17**
State	**509,885**	**20,515.7**	**7.5%**	**1:25**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-37 reflects slow progress for BE and ESL students since 1997-98. In 2000-01, ESL students scored below the acceptable standard in

math, reading, writing and all tests. BE students scored above the acceptable standard (70 percent) in math, reading and writing, but below the acceptable standard in all tests (69.1 percent).

Exhibit 2-37
LISD TAAS Passing Rates for LEP Students
1997-98 through 2000-01

Test Category	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	BE	ESL	BE	ESL	BE	ESL	BE	ESL
All Tests	51.0%	15.9%	59.0%	25.2%	68.7%	29.4%	69.1%	26.3%
Math	62.7%	38.6%	73.7%	48.2%	80.0%	57.5%	84.1%	65.4%
Reading	67.4%	26.0%	70.8%	36.4%	77.1%	47.9%	79.8%	44.9%
Writing	73.9%	43.6%	77.0%	47.9%	73.9%	46.7%	81.8%	43.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.

The test scores of BE students were significantly different from those of ESL students, with ESL students scoring lower on all tests. Students in the ESL program are not served all day as are those in the BE program, because ESL students are making a transition to English.

Fort Worth ISD has a comprehensive BE/ESL program that addresses LEP students' varied needs. The McKenzie Group recognized the program in a review in September 2000 as a national trendsetter. Students' language development is monitored through explicitly defined procedures and benchmarks. Fort Worth ISD's percentage of LEP students passing the TAAS rose at all grade levels between 1996 and 2000.

Recommendation 19:

Create a comprehensive program to address ESL students' needs and focus instruction to improve student performance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent provides schools and teachers with printouts of TAAS data analyzed by teacher and by student.	May 2002
2.	Teachers review the TAAS data for their classes and students and identify areas of weakness of individual students and groups of students.	May 2002

3.	The director of Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language develops remediation strategies for each subject area.	June - August 2002
4.	The director of BE/ESL disseminates information on these remediation strategies.	August - September 2002
5.	Teachers and other staff make remedial efforts based on identified needs.	September 2002 - May 2003
6.	Principals evaluate the effectiveness of these remediation efforts through an analysis of student performance on the subsequent TAAS.	April 2003 - May 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

While LEP exemption rates have fallen in the state, Region 1 and all of the peer districts since 1998, LISD's have increased. The 2001 LEP exemption rates for the state, region and peer districts ranged from 0.3 percent to 3.7 percent. LISD's exemption rate was highest of all, at more than twice the state average (**Exhibit 2-38**).

Exhibit 2-38
Percentage of Bilingual/ESL Students Exempted from TAAS
LISD, Peers, Region and State
1997-98 through 2000-01

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Eagle Pass	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%	0.3%
Harlandale	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.7%
Edgewood	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	1.4%
Edinburg	2.1%	2.7%	2.0%	2.3%
United	11.8%	10.3%	2.5%	2.5%
Laredo	**0.7%**	**1.7%**	**2.8%**	**3.7%**
Region 1	**4.2%**	**4.8%**	**2.4%**	**2.5%**
State	**2.3%**	**2.2%**	**1.3%**	**1.4%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.

According to district administrators, exemption rates went up when changes in state law specified that recent unschooled immigrant LEP students could be exempted for three years. When TEA redefined exemptions (SB 676) the district returned to using exemptions. In 2001-02, however, both the Department of Assessment and Evaluation and the Department of Bilingual Education are being very specific about exemptions. Students will be classified as Category I or Category II based on specific exemption criteria.

Recommendation 20:

Reduce the number of LEP students exempted from TAAS.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of LEP programs prepares training material on the Category I and II exemption criteria.	May 2002
2.	The director of LEP provides training to all staff members serving on LPAC committees.	August 2002
3.	The director of LEPprovides training to parents who will serve on LPAC committees.	August 2002
4.	The director of LEPmonitors LPAC committees to ensure that the exemption criteria are being applied correctly.	September 2002 - Ongoing
5.	The director of LEP provides staff and LPAC committee training as needed and provides annual progress to the superintendent.	September 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

E. TITLE I/STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

In addition to regular classroom instruction, other instructional programs provide special support for students at risk of dropping out and students who are not performing on grade level. The Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title I) originally enacted in 1965, and the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, provide funds for students not meeting performance standards. Title I funds are sent to campuses via TEA, based on the number of economically disadvantaged students (typically, students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch or breakfast). The students served, however, are selected on educational need, not economic status. Funds are intended to be supplemental in nature; in other words, these funds must be added to the regular program and not take the place of or supplant regular funds.

LISD uses Title I, Part A funds to provide supplemental opportunities for low-income and at-risk students to master the TEKS and meet state TAAS performance standards. The amended law allows a school to be designated as a schoolwide Title I, Part A program if 50 percent or more of students in the school or the attendance zone are low income. In LISD, all campuses are designated as schoolwide programs.

In Texas, state-funded compensatory programs began in 1975 with the passage of H.B. 1126. In 1997, Section 42.152 of the Texas Education Code was amended to include the reporting and auditing of compensatory education funds. The Texas Education Code requires that state compensatory education (SCE) funds, like federal Title I funds, must be supplemental in nature. SCE rules allow a great deal of flexibility of student identification and programmatic approaches. As with the federal program, the state funds flow on the basis of the number of economically disadvantaged students, but students served need not be economically disadvantaged. These federal and state special programs provide funds to targeted special populations, which often have crossovers in eligibility.

School needs are identified through a comprehensive needs assessment process, using multiple sources of information and documentation, including the AEIS report, TPRI, TLI, student progress reports, retention rates, failure rates, graduation rates and surveys from teachers and parents. Each school receives a Title I, Part A schoolwide program packet. These packets include the program requirements, intended beneficiaries, instructions addressing the development of parent involvement and

directions for incorporating the eight components of a schoolwide program.

LISD has used Title I, Part A funds to initiate several districtwide reform efforts (**Exhibit 2-39**).

Exhibit 2-39
LISD Title I, Part A Reform Strategies
2000-01

Elementary	Middle School	High School
• Districtwide reading performance objective • Full-day pre-kindergarten program • Reading facilitators	• Writing initiative requiring that all students submit two written compositions every six weeks	• Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT) offered to students at no cost, in an effort to increase the number of students participating

Source: LISD LEP Department, 2000-01.

LISD also has made a strong commitment to using federal funds for staff training provided by district administrators, Region 1 staff and private consultants. Teachers select training from a staff development booklet that lists the training sessions and topics available.

Federal Title I, Part C funds are used to assist districts in supporting educational programs for migrant children. These services are designed to help reduce the educational disruptions resulting from repeated moves and to ensure that migrant students can meet the same state content and student performance standards all students are expected to meet. LISD's 2001 migrant allocation was $218,325 and served 264 students. Migrant program staff participates in district training as well as training conducted by Region 1. This training has addressed instructional techniques, student identification and strategies for working with at-risk students.

Migrant students are served academically through the district's instructional program. The Summer Access Resource through Technology (SMART) program is integrated into the summer migrant program. Other programs, such as Even Start Home Based Instruction, Reading is Fundamental (RIF) and Early Childhood Home Instruction, are provided to migrant students and parents to ensure appropriate educational services.

The district uses an array of measurement instruments to monitor Title I student progress and relies primarily on TAAS results to measure program effectiveness. **Exhibit 2-40** shows TAAS passing rates and the dropout rate for students receiving services under Title I, Part A and Part C:

Exhibit 2-40
TAAS Passing Rates and Dropout Rates
for LISD Students Receiving Title I Services
1998 through 2000

Year	Percent Passing All Tests	Percent Passing Math	Percent Passing Reading	Percent Passing Writing	Dropout Rate
Students Receiving Title I, Part A Services					
2000	69.0%	81.5%	77.7%	81.7%	0.7%
1999	66.5%	78.9%	76.3%	81.7%	1.9%
1998	59.6%	71.3%	71.7%	70.2%	2.1%
Students Receiving Title I, Part C Services					
2000	59.5%	81.4%	70.3%	71.0%	NA
1999	56.3%	75.3%	72.8%	68.1%	2.4%
1998	51.9%	66.3%	61.7%	78.4%	2.2%

Source: LISD Department of Federal Program, 1998 through 2000.

Parental involvement plays a major role in the Title I program. Parent involvement is the first goal addressed in the district improvement plan. Parent liaisons and parent volunteers assist teachers on campuses. The Parent Connection program works to effectively involve parents in their children's education. Campuses are required to organize at least six parent workshops or information sessions to conduct conferences with parents, increase parent participation and conduct family needs assessments.

In the 2000-01 school year, 91.1 percent of LISD students were economically disadvantaged, compared with a state average of 49.3 percent. LISD had a higher percent of economically disadvantaged students than the state, the region and all but one of the peers (**Exhibit 2-41**).

Exhibit 2-41
Economically Disadvantaged Enrollment

LISD and Peers
2000-01

District	Number	Percent
Edgewood	12,017	92.6%
Laredo	**20,532**	**91.1%**
Harlandale	13,601	90.6%
Eagle Pass	11,233	89.8%
Edinburg	18,532	84.2%
United	20,161	73.2%
Region 1	**250,298**	**82.7%**
State	**2,001,697**	**49.3%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-42 shows that about 3.4 percent of LISD's faculty members are compensatory education teachers and about 11.9 percent of district expenditures are allocated for compensatory education a higher percent than the state, the region and all of the peers.

Exhibit 2-42
Compensatory Education Expenditures
LISD, Peers, Region 1 and State
2000-01

District	Compensatory Education Teachers (FTEs)	Percent of Total FTEs	Budget Expenditures	Percent of Total Budget
Laredo	3.4	0.3%	$8,784,977	11.9%
United	6.9	0.4%	$9,894,449	11.8%
Edgewood	60.2	6.7%	$4,351,638	9.8%
Edinburg	40.4	2.7%	$6,612,135	8.8%
Harlandale	2.4	0.2%	$3,780,486	7.4%
Eagle Pass	18.8	2.5%	$2,867,429	7.2%
Region	**333.8**	**1.7%**	**$89,061,561**	**8.8%**
State	**8,947.2**	**3.3%**	**$911,525,819**	**6.6%**

LISD's state compensatory education program provides Pregnancy Education and Parenting (PEP) services, pregnancy-related services and school and districtwide at-risk services. The SCE program supplements the regular program by providing program staff at all schools, including the discipline alternative education facilities; supplies and materials; tutoring; attendance monitoring; focused child care; counseling; and professional training in specialized areas, including ESL strategies and sheltered English in content areas, cognitive academic language learning approach, TAAS strategies, dropout prevention methods and specific training for the F. S. Lara Academy alternative education program (AEP).

LISD's counselors work with administrators and teachers to identify students at-risk of dropping out of school each fall. The district uses state identification criteria in Section 29.081 of the Texas Education Code and does not add any requirements of its own. The criteria for secondary students include failing a grade level for two or more years; math or reading skills two or more years below grade level; failing two or more courses during a semester and/or not being expected to graduate from high school within four years; unsatisfactory performance on TAAS or other testing; or pregnancy or parenthood. Elementary student criteria include unsatisfactory performance on a readiness or other assessment test given at the beginning of the year; unsatisfactory performance on TAAS or other testing; limited English proficiency; or physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

LISD counselors monitor students throughout the school year, so that identification and exiting are ongoing processes. Often student needs are met with one of several programs provided in school, but other students may require special accommodation plans to meet their needs. Both approaches to assist "at-risk" students are used in LISD's schools.

Exhibit 2-43 shows LISD, peer district, state and regional TAAS passing rates for economically disadvantaged students. LISD appears to do better at preparing disadvantaged students to pass the test compared to the state, but not as well as Region 1 or all of the peers except United.

Exhibit 2-43
Percent of All Students and Economically Disadvantaged
Students Passing All TAAS
LISD and Peers
2000-01

2000-01

District	All Students	Disadvantaged Students	Percent Difference	Peer Rank
Eagle Pass	78.6%	77.8%	(0.8%)	3
Edinburg	77.6%	75.0%	(2.6%)	4
Edgewood	76.3%	76.4%	0.1%	1
Harlandale	80.2%	80.0%	(0.2%)	2
Laredo	**71.3%**	**70.2%**	**(4.4%)**	**5**
United	75.2%	70.8%	(4.4%)	5
Region 1	**77.9%**	**75.7%**	**(2.2%)**	
State	**82.1%**	**73.6%**	**(8.5%)**	

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

FINDING

LISD provides specialized help and after school tutoring for students at-risk of failing, in ill health, with frequent absences or in need of personal support and assistance. LISD uses SCE-funded counselors and specialized programs such as AEP, after-school tutoring and the PEP program to improve attendance, reduce the dropout rate and increase the achievement of at-risk students. LISD alsouses students' TAAS scores, local individualized assessment and other data such as attendance and dropout rates to evaluate the success of SCE programs. Regular school at-risk services have been successful by these measures, as have AEP students after transition into a regular program. **Exhibit 2-44** provides evidence of steady improvement in TAAS passing rates and declining dropout rates since 1998.

Exhibit 2-44
TAAS Passing Rates and Dropout Rate for
Students in SCE programs
1998 through 2000

Year	Percent Passing All Tests	Percent Passing Math	Percent Passing Reading	Percent Passing Writing	Dropout Rate
2000	56.0%	73.1%	67.2%	73.5%	1.0%
1999	52.8%	69.2%	65.8%	74.8%	2.2%
1998	45.1%	60.2%	61.2%	71.4%	4.2%

Pregnant and/or parenting students have benefited from multiple services provided by the PEP program. The district's number of births to teenaged mothers fell from 1997 to 2000. Since students in LISD's Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP) at F.S. Lara Academy have been more successful after returning to regular school (as evidenced by fewer students being repeaters), LISD also uses SCE funds to extend the DAEP program to the middle and elementary school levels.

COMMENDATION

LISD uses measurable indicators to support its use of State Compensatory Education aid to reduce its dropout rate and increase the academic achievement of at-risk students.

FINDING

LISD does not integrate its Title I funds or coordinate program management for students at-risk of dropping out of school. One reason the funds are not well integrated is that program directors report to two separate administrative assistants for Academics (**Exhibit 2-45**). Three programs report to the administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness, and four programs report to the administrative assistant for Academics - Communications.

Exhibit 2-45
Administrative Organization
Federal and State Supplementary Programs
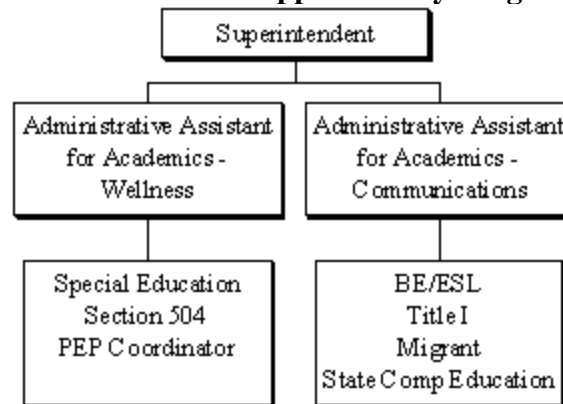
LISD's organization and administration of its supplemental programs is inconsistent. The directors of these programs do not meet regularly to discuss their programs and look for overlaps or gaps among them. Many

school districts have found that regular meetings among the directors of supplemental funds help them to integrate their programs and use targeted funds more efficiently. Furthermore, such communication can help ensure that a district draws down the maximum amount of federal and state funds.

There is evidence that LISD coordinators and directors operate in different ways. For example, the director of Title I is involved in planning the allocation of Title I funds, working with school principals to identify and address special school needs and reserving adequate funds for the central office to ensure that training is not needlessly replicated or that gaps in training occur. The coordinator of SCE serves primarily as a trainer, with no role in budget planning or needs assessment. Decisions about spending SCE money are made at the school level and sent to the budget office; the coordinator often does not know how the campuses are spending the money or if they have spent it. The central budget office informs the SCE coordinator of the state appropriation and how SCE funds will be allotted and spent in the district. Sometimes, the SCE coordinator does not get the information in a timely manner.

Without regular meetings, directors cannot share and compare best practices. Inadequate districtwide oversight over SCE expenditures has led the district to duplicate expenditures. For example, several schools may plan the same training in a year when they could have pooled their funds and provided a single training session resulting in a savings of funds. Schools sometimes spend dollars on items that are not allowable according to state and/or federal parameters or purchase the same items every year when they have other needs. Some schools may fail to expend all of their funds, forcing their districts to return unexpended funds to the funding agency.

Recommendation 21:

Coordinate supplemental program administration efforts to improve funding and student services for at-risk students.

Regular meetings should improve overall understanding of all special programs. Program directors could rotate annually as chair of the group so that all have a chance to lead the meetings. Program directors should prepare and follow agendas for each meeting. This should help directors become fully knowledgeable about all programs, not simply their own, so that they can learn how to integrate their programs and use best practices.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent charges a task force of administrators, principals, teachers and program managers to review the	June 2002

	current administrative organization and management of supplemental programs and make recommendations for improvement.	
2.	The Supplemental Program Task Force studies current practices; interviews parents, teachers and other interested parties; and requests exemplary practices from TEA and the U.S. Department of Education.	July - August 2002
3.	The directors of supplemental programs meet to schedule meeting dates and plan agendas for the 2002-03 school year.	September 2002
4.	The directors of supplemental programs meet a minimum of four times to discuss ways to better integrate and manage federal and state programs for targeted populations.	September 2002 - May 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

F. CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

All students, whether or not they continue their education after high school, eventually enter the workplace. A major source of employees for the general workforce is the K-12 educational system. Section 29.181 of the Texas Education Code requires school districts to provide a curriculum that affords each student the opportunity to "master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner; and gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student's education at the post-secondary level."

LISD currently offers a career and technology education (CATE) program in grades K-12. The overall purpose of this program is to develop a highly skilled and educated workforce to compete successfully in the 21st century global economy. As shown in **Exhibit 2-46**,the CATE program had an enrollment of 3,323 students in 2000-01. The district received a total of $3,158,367 in CATE funding in 2001.

Exhibit 2-46
LISD Percentage of Student Enrollment,
Budgeted Expenditures and Staffing in CATE
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1996-97	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**	**2000-01**
Students	1,920	2,422	3,112	3,394	3,323
Percent of all students	8.4%	10.7%	13.8%	15.1%	14.7%
Funding	$2,196,572	$2,120,203	$2,214,034	$2,361,434	$3,158,367
Percent of budget	3.4%	3.2%	3.1%	3.5%	4.3%
CATE teachers	50.7	47.2	44.1	55.5	53.6
Percent of teachers	3.6%	3.3%	3.1%	4.0%	4.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS,1996-97 through 2000-01.

In 2000-01, 14.7 percent of LISD's students were enrolled in CATE classes. This was a lower share than the regional and state averages and all

but one of the peers (**Exhibit 2-47**). LISD's CATE spending per student exceeded the regional and state averages but fell in the middle of the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-47
Percent of Student Enrollment and Budgeted Expenditures in CATE
LISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Number CATE Students Enrolled	Percent of Total Students Enrolled in CATE	Budgeted Career and Technology Expenditures	Percent of Total Budgeted Expenditures	Per Student Expenditure	Rank
United	6,531	23.7%	$3,892,642	4.9%	$596	6
Harlandale	2,785	19.2%	$1,804,727	3.5%	$950	3
Eagle Pass	2,039	16.3%	$1,451,356	3.6%	$712	5
Edinburg	3,410	15.5%	$3,572,591	4.8%	$1,048	2
Laredo	**3,323**	**14.7%**	**$3,158,367**	**4.3%**	**$950**	**4**
Edgewood	1,576	12.1%	$1,766,686	4.0%	$1,121	1
Region 1	**55,464**	**18.3%**	**$45,330,978**	**4.1%**	**$817**	
State	**768,200**	**18.9%**	**$566,681,113**	**4.1%**	**$738**	

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

LISD offers CATE at all secondary schools. Transportation is provided for students who wish to attend a class taught at only one school. The district has cooperative partnerships with more than 50 businesses that contribute to the CATE program through mentors, job fairs, worksite observations, guest speakers and co-op programs.

CATE instruction is delivered in primarily cooperative-work study programs in business, marketing and industrial settings. Students can earn credits toward industry-recognized credentials in several programs. The health science technology curriculum is a two-year training program that gives students an actual clinical rotation at Mercy Regional Medical Center.

LISD follows all CATE graduates for five years. **Exhibit 2-48** indicates the most recent information available on the number of former CATE students currently employed or attending an institution of higher learning.

Exhibit 2-48
Number and Percent of CATE Graduates
Currently Employed or Attending an Institution of Higher Education
1995-96 through 1997-98

Year	Number of Graduates Employed or Enrolled in Higher Learning	Percentage of Graduates Employed or Enrolled in Higher Learning
1995-96	366	79.8 %
1996-97	104	80.5 %
1997-98	739	84.7 %

Source: LISD Career and Technology DEC/Office of Civil Rights Report, 2000.

FINDING

TAAS scores for CATE students have significantly improved since 1997, with the percent passing all tests rising from 56.5 percent in 1997 to 68.9 percent in 2000(**Exhibit 2-49**). TAAS scores improved in each subject area. In addition, CATE attendance has remained around 95 percent. The dropout fell slightly over the same period.

Exhibit 2-49
TAAS Passing, Attendance and Dropout Rates
For Students in CATE Programs
1997 through 2000

Year	Percent Passing All Tests	Percent Passing Reading	Percent Passing Math	Percent Passing Writing	Percent Attendance Rate	Percent Dropout Rate
2000	68.9%	81.9%	83.1%	80.5%	95.0%	0.7%
1999	64.6%	77.0%	77.5%	82.6%	94.8%	2.0%
1998	65.8%	82.6%	73.2%	84.0%	94.6%	3.0%
1997	56.5%	72.9%	69.8%	79.4%	94.6%	1.1%

At the secondary level, LISD offers a wide range of occupational programs in the areas of agriculture science; business; health; home economics; marketing; building trades and industrial education, including welding, auto technology, building trades and automotive collision repair and refinishing; cosmetology; and industrial cooperative training (**Exhibit 2-50**).

Exhibit 2-50
Career and Technology Education
LISD Program Offerings 2001-02

Course	Lowest Grade	Credit	Location
Agriculture Science			
Agribusiness Management and Marketing	9	1/2	C
Agriculture Metal Fabrication Technology	9	1/2	ALL
Animal Science	9	1/2	N, C
Applied Agriculture Science and Technology	9	1/2	ALL
Equine Science	9	1/2	N, C
Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Production	9	1/2	ALL
Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Production	9	1	ALL
Home Maintenance and Improvement	9	1/2	M, C
Horticultural Plant Production	9	1/2	ALL
Intro to Agricultural Mechanics	9	1/2	ALL
Personal Skill Development in Agriculture	9	1/2	ALL
Intro to World Agriculture & Technology	9	1/2	ALL
Landscape Design	9	1/2	ALL
Plant and Animal Production	9	1/2	ALL
Range Management and Ecology	9	1/2	ALL
Wildlife and Recreation Management	9	1/2	N, C
Agricultural Mechanics I	11	2	ALL

Meat Processing I	11	2	N
Agricultural Mechanics II	12	2	ALL
Meat Processing II	12	2	N
Business/Office Technology			
Business Support Systems	9	1	ALL
Business Support Systems (CTED)	9	1	ALL
Intro to Business	9	1/2	ALL
Intro to Business	9	1	ALL
Keyboarding	9	1/2	ALL
Keyboarding	9	1	ALL
Keyboarding (CTED)	9	1	ALL
Record keeping	9	1	ALL
Accounting I	10	1	AL
Accounting II	10	1	ALL
Business Communications	10	1/2	ALL
Business Communications	10	1	ALL
Business Computer Information Systems I	10	1	ALL
Business Ownership	10	1/2	ALL
Administrative Procedures (COOP)	11	3	N, M
Administrative Procedures I	11	1	ALL
Administrative Procedures II	11	1	ALL
Banking and Financial Systems	11	1/2	C
Banking and Financial Systems	11	1	M, C
Business Law	11	1/2	ALL
Business Law	11	1/2	ALL
Business Computer Information Systems II	11	1	ALL
Business Computer Programming I	11	1	ALL
Business Computer Programming II	11	1	ALL
Diversified Career Preparation I	11	2	L
Diversified Career Preparation II	12	2	ALL

Business Image Mgmt and Multimedia	10	1/2	ALL
Business Image Mgmt and Multimedia	10	1	ALL
Telecommunications and Networking	10	1/2	ALL
Telecommunications and Networking	10	1	ALL
International Business	11	1	ALL
Health Careers			
Health Science Technology Education I	9	1	HSM, C
Intro to Health Science Technology	9	1/2	HSM
Intro to Health Science Technology	9	1	HSM
Medical Terminology	9	1/2	HSM
Gerontology	10	1/2	HSM
Anatomy and Physiology	11	1	ALL
Clinical Nutrition	11	1/2	HSM
Health Science Technology II	11	2	HSM, C
Health Science Technology III	11	2	HSM
Mental Health	11	1/2	HSM
Pharmacology	11	1/2	HSM
Health Science Terminology Independent Study	12	1	HSM
Home Economics			
Personal & Family Development	9	1	ALL
Career Studies	10	1	ALL
Child Development	10	1/2	ALL
Consumer and Family Economics	10	1/2	ALL
Family and Career Management	11	1/2	ALL
Family Health Needs	10	1/2	ALL
Food Science and Technology	10	1/2	ALL
Housing	10	1/2	ALL
Individual and Family Life	10	1/2	ALL
Interior Design	10	1/2	M, N

Management	10	1/2	N
Nutrition and Food Science	10	1/2	ALL
Preparation for Parenting	10	1/2	ALL
BESTT (Teaching Profession)	11	1	ALL
Child Care and Guidance Mgmt and Services	11	2	ALL
Food Production Mgt. and Services I	11	2	C
Food Production Mgt. and Services II	11	2	C
Marketing			
Entrepreneurship	9	1/2	ALL
Entrepreneurship	9	1	ALL
Marketing Yourself	9	1/2	ALL
Principles of Marketing	9	1/2	ALL
Principles of Marketing	9	1	ALL
Retailing	9	1/2	ALL
Retailing	9	1	ALL
Hotel Management	10	2	ALL
Travel & Tourism	10	2	ALL
Marketing Management I (COOP)	11	3	ALL
Marketing Dynamics II (COOP	11	3	ALL
Trade and Industrial			
Intro Construction Careers	9	1	C
Intro Electrical Electronic Career	9	1	C
Intro Precision Metal Manufacturing Careers	9	1	M, C
Intro to Transportation Service Careers	10	1	ALL
Advertising Design I	11	2	M, N, VMT
Automotive Technician I	11	2	ALL
Auto Collision Repair and Refinishing Tech I	11	2	N

Building Trades I	10	2	C
Building Trades I	11	2	C
Cosmetology I	11	3	N
Metal Trades I	11	2	C
T & I Education Career Preparation I	11	3	ALL
Welding I	11	2	M
Advertising Design II	12	2	M, N, VMT
Automotive Technician II	12	2	ALL
Auto Collision Repair & Refinishing Tech II	12	2	N
Cosmetology II	12	3	N
Metal Trades II	12	2	C
T & I Education Career Preparation II	12	3	ALL
Welding II	12	2	M
Intro to Advertising	9	1/2	M
Intro to Graphic Communications Careers	9	1/2	M, VMT
Intro to Graphic Communications Careers	9	1	M, VMT
Career Orientation			
Career Connections	9	1	C

Source: LISD, High School Curriculum Guide, 2001-02.
Note: All = All High Schools; M = Martin HS; N = Nixon HS; HMS = Health Science Magnet; L= Lara Academy HS; VMT = Trevino Magnet School.

In middle school (grades 6-8), LISD offers the following CATE courses:

- Food Production
- General Mechanical Repair
- Building Trades
- Business Office Services
- Advertising and Design

During eighth grade, all students take the EXPLORER interest and aptitude test. These results are used as a basis for the initiation of four-year high school course plans for each student. LISD also has developed a Step-Up to Education/Career Preparation document that assists students in selecting a career path and graduation plans. This document outlines the sequence of courses available in the district and the recommended courses and general instructions for developing four-year plans. It also lists prerequisites, credits, graduation requirements and general electives available to students.

At the elementary level (PK-5), LISD offers career awareness counseling. Counselors located at every elementary school assist teachers in planning activities for a six-week period in each year during which all elementary students participate in career exploration. The students hear presentations from workers, interview adults to learn about careers, participate in career days, see videotapes on careers and hear from CATE teachers about the LISD CATE program.

LISD also is involved in a CATE cooperative with Region 1. The cooperative provides training opportunities for district faculty and staff.

COMMENDATION

LISD's CATE program provides diverse career and business interactions to enhance student's TAAS scores and attendance rates and reduce dropout rates.

FINDING

LISD does not have a comprehensive CATE plan to address program expansion, the elimination of courses, facilities and equipment needs and program evaluations by business and community members. Trends during the last five years demonstrate that district leaders have not used the information available to plan a program to keep up with student demands.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-51**,CATE student enrollment rose substantially between 1997 and 2001. Over the same period, however, the district's number of CATE teachers rose by only 3.1 FTEs. In 2000-01, the program's teacher-student ratio was 1:62, much higher than the 1:38 ratio of 1996-97. In 1996-97, CATE funding accounted for 3.4 percent of the district budget; in 2000-01, CATE funding had only increased to 4.3 percent of the district budget. While program enrollment increased by 6.3 percent, the budget increased by only 0.9 percent. Per-pupil expenditures declined from $1,149 in 1996-97 to $950 in 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-51
LISD Percentage of Student Enrollment,
Budgeted Expenditures and Staffing in CATE
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Students	1,920	2,422	3,112	3,394	3,323
Percent of All Students	8.4%	10.7%	13.8%	15.1%	14.7%
Funding	$2,196,572	$2,120,203	$2,214,034	$2,361,434	$3,158,367
Percent of Budget	3.4%	3.2%	3.1%	3.5%	4.3%
Per Pupil Expenditure	$1,149	$275	$7ll	$ 696	$950
CATE Teachers	50.7	47.2	44.1	55.5	53.6
Percent of Teachers	3.6%	3.3%	3.1%	4.0%	4.2%
Teacher/Student Ratio	1:38	1:51	1:71	1:61	1:62

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01.

According to the CATE administrator, secondary CATE course offerings have changed little since 1998-99. Most courses that have been eliminated were dropped because a CATE teacher had left the district and was not replaced. Most decisions about CATE teacher replacements are made by school principals, with first priority given to school needs rather than any impact the course elimination might have on the program. At present, enrollments in CATE are unbalanced, with some programs under-enrolled and others over-enrolled. For example, the cosmetology course could double its enrollment, while some students cannot get into the business and marketing classes they want.

In an effort to address the four-county area job demand, the district has added some programs, notably the health careers magnet program and BESTT which encourages students to enter the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the district has never held formal discussions about eliminating a career program due to a lack of student interest or incompatibility with the local economy. And the district has no written plan for adding to or upgrading CATE technology.

A 2001 TEA District Effectiveness and Compliance evaluation found that the CATE program complied with state standards. Simple compliance, however, does not mean that the program meets the needs of its students and the local community.

The *State Plan for Career and Technology Education 2000-02* strongly supports local control of Texas public schools by offering strategies districts can choose to implement based on their own needs and decisions. It also clearly mandates that all districts provide students with opportunities to participate in an academically rigorous curriculum that enables them to achieve their potential and participate fully in the economic and educational opportunities of Texas and the nation. Its objectives are based on elements that contribute to CATE effectiveness: academic excellence, high-quality guidance and counseling, partnerships that benefit students and schools alike, strong curricula, professional training for educators and ongoing program evaluation. The state plan has been revised based on the input of educators and representatives of the business community.

The plan's curricular strategies suggest some criteria for the creation or evaluation of a district plan:

- Does the plan provide for a curriculum that offers all students opportunities to participate in career and technology education?
- Does the program ensure that the CATE curriculum is provided through programs of sufficient size, scope and quality to improve the academic and occupational skills of all students, while providing strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of the industries students are preparing to enter?
- Does the plan identify, develop and implement curricula using the SBOE-approved essential knowledge and skills as a framework?
- Does the plan provide a dynamic curriculum that is engaging, rigorous and relevant and that emphasizes technology?
- Does the plan provide all students with opportunities for a variety of learning experiences that address diverse learning styles?
- Does the plan offer all students opportunities to participate in programs including work-based learning components?
- Does the plan allow students to acquire and use information about both current and emerging careers?
- Does the plan provide opportunities for all students to participate in student leadership organizations?
- Does the plan provide opportunities for all students to understand employer expectations and citizenship skills?
- Does the plan group courses in areas of career concentration to assist students in achieving academic and career skills that apply to continued education and employment?

Other exemplary practices for CATE are available from the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB's) *High Schools That Work* program. This is the nation's largest and fastest-growing effort to combine academic courses and modern vocational studies. Dallas ISD has developed a five-year CATE plan including the following objectives:

- Prepare the future Dallas workforce to reach world-class standards;
- Provide curricula based on competencies identified by Dallas business and industry;
- Link secondary and postsecondary learning through curricula across educational levels;
- Promote awareness, knowledge and support of school-to-work programs;
- Promote Career Pathways as established by the Texas State Plan for Career and Technology Education; and
- Increase the percent of high school graduates by identifying vocational interests.

Recommendation 22:

Create a long-range plan for future CATE programs including a broad-based task force of business and community members.

The district should include CATE teachers and administrators, parents, business representatives and workforce development representatives on the task force. LISD should also provide the task force with historical data including class size, course demand, number of students transported, and facility and equipment needs. The task force should gather input on CATE needs through surveys and focus groups. The task force would help the CATE department analyze the current program using the state-recommended evaluation criteria.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of Career and Technology Education to appoint a broad-based task force to review current CATE offerings.	May 2002
2.	The task force meets to review documents, interview stakeholders, research best practices and make recommendations for changes to the CATE program.	May - August 2002
3.	The CATE director leads the department in creating a five-year improvement plan.	September - November 2002
4.	The CATE director presents the plan to the superintendent	January 2003

	and trustees so that its facility and equipment needs may be considered for funding in the next budget cycle.	
5.	The CATE director recommends the elimination of programs and redirection of resources as needed to implement the plan.	January 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not provide its high school students and their parents with adequate information and counseling about Early College Start. As a result, while its total CATE enrollment is 3,323, LISD has only 1,617 students in grades 9-12 enrolled in the Early College Start programs.

Early College Start is a program that allows high school juniors and seniors to take college courses for credit while still enrolled in high school. An early college start lowers the cost of higher education because tuition paid at present is likely to be lower than it will be after graduation from high school. If the institution waives its tuition and fees for high school participants, as many Texas community colleges do, the credits are free and the savings higher. Earned college credit hours are transferable to any public college in Texas.

Early College Start credits may be earned through three options: Credit in Escrow, or Tech-Prep, Dual Credit and Co-enrollment.

Credit in Escrow is offered for a Tech-Prep course that combines strong academic and workforce skills in a career pathway. An articulation agreement-a formal written contract between a public school and a postsecondary institution-coordinates occupational training to eliminate the unnecessary duplication of course work. After high school graduation, if the student continues the same program of study at a postsecondary institution, he or she can receive college credit for credits earned for the high school courses identified in the articulation agreement.

As **Exhibit 2-52** shows, LISD students can participate in 25 approved Tech Prep degree plans at three postsecondary institutions: 10 at Laredo Community College, one at Southwest Texas Junior College and 14 at Texas State Technical College at Harlingen. The district has 24 articulation agreements in all.

Exhibit 2-52
Approved Tech Prep Degree Plans

Available to LISD Students
2000-01

Laredo Community College	Southwest Texas Junior College	Texas State Technical College
- Air Conditioning and Refrigeration - CIS - Business Application - CIS - Networking Technology (CISCO) - Banking and Finance - Import/Export - Management - Medical Office Assisting	Criminal Justice	- Agricultural Technology - Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology - Auto Collision Technology - Building Construction Technology - Business Office Technology - Computer Drafting and Design Technology
- Physical Therapy Assisting - Applied Accounting - Office Technology		- Computer Maintenance Technology - Culinary Arts - Electrical Mechanical Manufacturing Technology - Electronics Technology - Health Information Technology - Instrumentation Technology - Network Information Management Technology

Source: South Texas Tech Prep Counselors' Guide, 2000-01.

Under the *Dual Credit* option, a student can earn college credit while satisfying high school diploma requirements. Participation is free. Under the *co-enrollment option*, a high school student earns college credit for a course not needed to satisfy high school diploma requirements. Such classes can be offered at the high school or a nearby postsecondary school, or delivered through interactive technology.

Early College Start courses are fully accredited and faculty members must meet the same accreditation standards as those required by four-year colleges and universities. Early College Start courses emphasize real-world applications of learning. Day, evening and weekend classes often are available, and credit classes may have flexible time lengths. In-class, self-paced and electronic instruction is common. Student support services such as basic skill assessment, career aptitude/interest assessments and learning labs/tutorial support help guarantee success.

LISD does offer information about Early College Start courses, but it is not centralized and some is difficult to find. TSPR examined the *High School Curriculum Guide 2000-01*, prepared by the Counseling Department; the *Step Up to Education/Career Preparation* manual, prepared by the CATE Department; and the *South Texas Tech Prep Counselors' Guide,* prepared by the South Texas Tech-Prep Consortium. Each contain bits of information about Early College Start, but some information needed to plan one's educational path, such as which campuses offer which CATE programs, does not appear in any written document.

The curriculum guide mentions earning advanced college credit for academic courses but does not explain Tech Prep and the opportunity for advanced or dual credit for CATE classes. It also omits any discussion of the opportunity to earn an Advanced Technological Diploma. Articulated arrangements are listed in the counselor's guide, but students and parents have to seek this information from counselors. None of the printed materials gave information about the Distinguished Achievement Program Option II for Career and Technology, which requires 2.5 credits in a coherent sequence of courses for career and technology preparation.

Many Texas districts with high numbers of economically disadvantaged students encourage CATE students to participate in Early College Start due to the financial benefits of earning early college credits. Districts such as Austin ISD and Leander ISD have identified best practices for improving enrollment in Tech Prep. Best practice indicators include:

Outreach/Marketing

- Board policy requires high school/post-secondary transition plans, including Early College Start goals.
- School district's course catalog explains Early College Start options.
- Early College Start is publicized to students and parents in a variety of ways such as through the use of posters, meetings, newsletters and orientations.

- Early College Start is included in faculty/staff orientation and development activities.
- Early College Start is included in the annual planning and student scheduling processes.

Planning/Evaluation

- Early College Start goals are included in the district's annual strategic plan and in school plans (numbers of students in dual credit, co-enrollment and credit in escrow arrangements).
- Early College Start is part of the evaluation process for personnel (high school principal, vocational counselor and others) and for institutional effectiveness.
- District receives feedback from local higher education institutions on how students perform in Early College Start courses and programs.

Curriculum

- District has matched its course inventory with local higher education course inventories to identify possible "matches" for dual credit/co-enrollment or credit in escrow.
- District encourages co-enrollment by allowing students to leave school for up to two class periods to take courses at nearby college campuses and/or offers co-enrollment credit through distance learning.

Support Services

- District encourages students to test early for compliance with TASP and/or encourages students to do well on grade 10 TAAS so they can be exempted from testing and eligible to enroll in Early College Start.
- District encourages CATE students to test early for SAT, ACT and other improved alternatives.
- District offers TASP workshops.
- District has established relationships with local higher education institutions and provides multiple opportunities for higher education to make its presence felt on campus (through parent nights, career fairs, student orientations, college days and so forth).
- District works with local higher education institutions to ensure that tuition and fees for Early College Start articulated credits are waived.

Recommendation 23:

Improve awareness and effectiveness of the Early College Start program.

LISD already has successfully implemented some of the best practices discussed above. However, the district could strengthen a program that provides enormous benefits to students and considerable financial savings to parents by increasing the awareness of the program and by replicating best practices used in central Texas by Austin Community College and the public school districts in its service area. Austin Community College has excellent publications and additional informational sources available on the Web site at http://www3.austin.cc.tx.us/highschl/.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of School to Careers and director of Counseling convene a districtwide task force including principals to develop a plan to implement best practices for an Early College Start program, including methods of tracking success of the program, such as the number of credit hours earned, tuition dollars saved and the like.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent directs that Early College Start goals be included in the district's annual strategic plan and that every high school plan include a high school-to-college transition plan including participation goals for Early College Start.	May 2002 - Ongoing
3.	The superintendent or designee includes Early College Start implementation as part of the evaluation process for appropriate personnel such as high school principals, counselors and others and for institutional effectiveness.	February 2003 - Ongoing
4.	The director of School to Careers (STC) and director of Counseling provide orientation and training on the transition plan and the approach to STC.	February 2003 - Ongoing
5.	The superintendent asks the director of Communication, coordinator of Scholarships and Community Partnerships, director for School to Careers and director of Counseling to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign for Early College Start.	February 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

G. LIBRARY SERVICES

The district's library program is completely automated and linked to the Texas Library System (TLS). Connection to TLS greatly expands the library's research capabilities because it allows students and faculty to borrow materials from any Texas library that belongs to TLS. Students and teachers also can check out books or materials from any campus in the district. School libraries have computer stations available to students before and after school and at lunch. The district has a staffing formula for librarians and in 2001 achieved its goal of placing a full-time, certified librarian at each school.

Legislation affecting school libraries reads as follows: "The Texas State Library and Archives Commission, in consultation with the State Board of Education, shall adopt standards for school library services. A school district shall consider the standards in developing, implementing of expanding library services" (Texas Education Code 33.021). In May 1997, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission adopted the *School Library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards*. These guidelines are intended to ensure that students and staff become effective users of ideas and information, enabling them to be literate lifelong learners. To accomplish this task, the library program should provide instruction in information gathering and the evaluation of resources, individual guidance and access to materials in multiple formats.

To assist districts, the guidelines provide criteria identifying programs as exemplary, recognized, acceptable or below standard in five areas: library learning environment, curriculum integration, resources, library program management and facilities. **Exhibit 2-53** provides examples of these rating criteria.

Exhibit 2-53
TEA School Library Standards
2001

Standard	Acceptable Rating	Recognized Rating	Exemplary Rating
Building staffing	• HS: 2 librarians/2 clerks • MS: 1	• HS: 2 librarians/3 clerks • MS: 1or 2	• HS: 3 librarians/ 4 clerks • MS: 2

	librarian/1 or 2 clerks • ES: 1 librarian/1 clerk	librarians/1.5 or 2 clerks • ES: 1 libr./1.5 clerks	librarians/2 or 3 clerks • ES: 2 librarians/2 clerks
District staffing	1 all-level, certified director/coordinator with additional district duties	1 all-level, certified director/coordinator with other district duties; 1 technical services specialist	1 all-level, certified director/coordinator with no other district duties; 1 technical services specialist
Funding available	Receives not less than 1% of total instructional budget	Receives not less than 2% of total instructional budget	Receives not less than 3% of total instructional budget
Resources	9,000 for fewer than 600 students; 15 items per student if more than 600	10,000 for fewer than 600 students; 18 items per student if more than 600	12,000 for fewer than 600 students; 20 items per student if more than 600
Periodicals	• HS 45-75 • MS 40-70 • ES 20	• HS 45-120 • MS 45-70 • ES 35	• HS 55-125 • MS 50-125 • ES 45
News sources	1 local and 1 state or international paper and 1 full-text data base	1 local and 1 state or international paper and 1 full-text database	1 local and 1 state or international paper and 1 full-text database
Electronic data bases	Full text periodical and news databases	Full-text periodical and news databases	Full-text periodical and news databases
Statewide resources	Participation in TLC	Participation in TLC	Participation in TLC
Scheduling	Modified flex/controlled	Mostly flex/some scheduled	Total flexible scheduling
Librarian/teacher planning	Attends grade level department meetings with teachers; plans some lessons to correlate with content areas	Plans collaboratively with individual teachers on a regular basis.	Collaborates with individual teachers at scheduled times to integrate library instruction with content areas

Access to library	Controlled access to resources and librarian during the instructional day; minimal access beyond the instructional day	Some access to resources and librarian at point of need, some controlled; access available beyond the school day	Individual and group access to resources and librarian at point of need, beyond the instructional day, either on site or electronically
Teaching	Librarian teaches library/media lessons; provides individual reference assistance; introduces research tools	Librarian offers instruction on use of library resources as needed; facilitates use of technology; teaches information resources within curriculum context	Librarian teaches information literacy models; engages, directs and encourages students in research and use of technology; totally integrates library instruction with content instruction

Source: LISD Library Department, New Library Standards Comparison Sheets, November 2001.

FINDING

LISD does not evaluate its library program using state standards nor maintain comprehensive information about the strengths or weaknesses of its program. The district also does not have a certified librarian to supervise library operations. According to the district's organizational chart, the administrative assistant for Academics - Communications supervises the district's librarians. According to district personnel, however, central office support and direction for librarians is delegated to one elementary librarian and one secondary school librarian, both employees with other responsibilities. Because of conflicts with other duties, the administrative assistant for Academics - Communications does not attend state library association meetings or participate in TEA professional training.

LISD staff said this lack of appropriate central leadership has been detrimental to the library program. District librarians told TSPR that they have few opportunities to meet as a group and discuss issues such as a lack of district attention to library and audio-visual services. Although the libraries have computers for student use, students entering the library often have better computer skills than the librarians. As librarians' roles and

responsibilities become more technical, appropriate training becomes increasingly important.

Furthermore, LISD has little information about its school collections. In response to TSPR's request, only five school libraries could produce a document measuring their programs against state library standards. None had annual reports providing information on collection additions or deletions or annual checkout and return activity. The district also lacks a K-12 curriculum for library instruction. Most campus improvement plans address library goals and needs, but the district does not have a districtwide assessment/improvement plan.

According to TSPR surveys conducted in November 2001, parents have a greater belief that the libraries are effective than do the teachers, administrators and students who use them (**Exhibit 2-54**).

Exhibit 2-54
Survey Feedback On Library Effectiveness
November 2001

Group	Percent that Strongly Agree or Agree Library Services are Effective
Teachers	66.7 %
Principals and Assistant Principals	63.0%
Students	59.2%
Parents	75.0%

Source: TSPR Surveys, November 2001.

Dallas ISD reviewed both state and national library standards to establish goals for its own library media services plan. Dallas ISD centralized its library services and provides monitoring, technical assistance and personnel observations for all school libraries.

Recommendation 24:

Create an assessment and improvement plan using state standards for the district's library program.

The district cannot improve its library services until it assesses its collection. Library needs should be prioritized; it may be necessary to

move some libraries from unacceptable status before moving others to acceptable, or from acceptable to recognized and so on.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Communications directs librarians to measure their school library services against state standards and identify improvements needed to move their collections to the next-highest rating.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent directs the administrative assistant for Academics - Communications to establish a task force to review individual and district library needs and to develop a districtwide library services improvement plan, including specific goals and actions, estimated costs of improvements, a timeline for the completion of improvements and a person responsible for each activity.	September 2002
3.	The task force works with the administrative assistant for Academics - Communications and the chief financial officer to identify and incorporate into the plan all possible sources of funding.	October 2002
4.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Communications and librarians implement the plan.	November 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD staff members cannot consistently use the automated library due to a lack of technical training and technical support. Additional problems with both software and hardware disrupted students' connection to the library excessively in 2000-01.

In 2000-01, LISD adopted a new library management program and offered training in the system to all library staff members. No member of the district's technical support staff participated in training, however, and their technical support proved inadequate when librarians subsequently had software problems. Furthermore, the district's computers became infected with a virus, resulting in a loss of available hardware. The computers were not functional within a timely manner.

All libraries have an adequate number of computers and good management software. However, when the computers are not working,

technical support is not available or the software has a computer virus that the librarian can't fix, the instructional program comes to a halt.

Many school districts that change their software or hardware require training for at least one member of the district's technical staff. This person then can then train other personnel unable to attend the initial training sessions. Nonessential personnel wishing to learn about the new software or hardware also may receive training from this staff member. Also, many districts assign responsibility for maintenance and updates of pertinent manuals to a member of the technical staff.

Recommendation 25:

Ensure that technical support staff is trained to support the library software and hardware.

Technical specialists who are familiar with library hardware and software, as well as the kind of reports needed and the language and acronyms used by library professionals, would be better prepared to provide expedient, effective and efficient service.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Instructional Technical Support appoints one or two specialists to train on the Alexander software.	May 2002
2.	The library technical specialists provide training to those library staff who have not already been trained and to other district employees who wish to learn about the new software or hardware.	May 2002 - Ongoing
3.	The library technical specialists give priority to requests for technical assistance from libraries.	May 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter reviews the Laredo Independent School District's (LISD) community involvement function in the following four sections:

A. Organization and Management
B. Communications and Public Relations
C. Community and Business Involvement
D. Parental Involvement

Community involvement is essential to both a school district's success and the quality of life within a school district's community. Community involvement includes those activities that enable parents, business leaders and others with a stake in public education to become involved in the district.

Effective community involvement programs address the unique characteristics of the school district and the community. A critical component of community involvement programs includes strategies for communicating both with the community (external communications) and within the school district (internal communications). Other essential program components include methods for recruiting volunteers and soliciting business support for campus functions and outreach activities designed to encourage community participation in the district's activities.

Chapter 3
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A school district must effectively manage and organize two-way communication between itself and the community. A good system is easy for all to understand and navigate. It is staffed efficiently, using personnel and monetary resources wisely.

LISD's community involvement and communications function are overseen by the administrative assistant for Academics-Communications, administrative assistant for Academics-Wellness and the director of Community and Partnerships (Communications). The administrative assistant for Academics-Communications is responsible for the Parental Involvement Office that supervises the campus-based parent liaisons and the Home Instruction Program (HIP). The administrative assistant for Academics-Wellness is responsible for the Scholarships and Special Programs unit. The director of Communications is responsible for the Printing, Graphics and Mail Service operations and for Instructional TV.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the current organizational structure of community involvement and communications for LISD.

<div align="center">

Exhibit 3-1
Community Involvement Organization

</div>

Programs and Personnel

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                         ┌──────────────────┐
                         │   Superintendent │
                         └──────────────────┘
            ┌────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌────────────────────┐ ┌────────────────────┐ ┌────────────────────┐
│ Administrative     │ │ Administrative     │ │ Community and      │
│ Assistant for      │ │ Assistant for      │ │ Partnerships       │
│ Academics-         │ │ Academics-Wellness │ │ (Communications)   │
│ Communications     │ │                    │ │ (2)                │
└────────────────────┘ └────────────────────┘ └────────────────────┘
          │                       │                       │
┌────────────────────┐ ┌────────────────────┐ ┌────────────────────┐
│ Parental           │ │ Scholarships and   │ │ Printing           │
│ Involvement Office │ │ Special Programs   │ │ Department         │
│ (2)                │ │ (2)                │ │ (10)               │
└────────────────────┘ └────────────────────┘ └────────────────────┘
          │                                               │
┌────────────────────┐                       ┌────────────────────┐
│ Campus-Based       │                       │ Graphics           │
│ Parent Liaisons    │                       │ (2)                │
│ (27)               │                       │                    │
└────────────────────┘                       └────────────────────┘
          │                                               │
┌────────────────────┐                       ┌────────────────────┐
│ Home Instruction   │                       │ Mail Service       │
│ Program            │                       │ (2)                │
│ Instruction Aides  │                       │                    │
│ (22)               │                       │                    │
└────────────────────┘                       └────────────────────┘
                                                          │
                                              ┌────────────────────┐
                                              │ Instructional TV   │
                                              │ (11)               │
                                              │ (Includes 3        │
                                              │  Teachers)         │
                                              └────────────────────┘
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Source: LISD Organizational Chart, 2001-02 and interviews.

A coordinator and secretary staff the Parental Involvement Office. This office oversees 27 campus-based parent liaisons who implement strategies for building meaningful parental participation at the campus level. The parent liaison may be a designated counselor, a teacher taking on extra duty or the campus may have someone who is exclusively paid to perform the duty. The situation depends on how the school chooses to use its Title I funding. Title I is federal funding that provides supplemental financial assistance to local educational agencies to improve the teaching and learning of children who are at risk of not meeting challenging academic standards and who live in predominantly low-income areas.

Examples of responsibilities of campus-based parent liaisons include establishing volunteer opportunities for parents, coordinating parent activities on campus, coordinating after-school programs and community education and seeking commitments from community resources for school needs.

The Home Instruction Program (HIP) is a home-based, voluntary program for two- and three-year olds of families living within Title I elementary school zones. HIP is an extension of the Title I Regular Parental Involvement component designed to prepare children for school. HIP's goals and objectives focus on identifying and providing support to the family to forge a positive home/school relationship. As an early intervention program, HIP's ultimate goal is to reduce school failure and the percent of school dropouts by laying the foundation for school success. Title I funds the program's 22 home instruction aides, the Parental Involvement coordinator and secretary. In 2001-02, the program serves 611 children.

The Scholarship and Special Projects Unit reports to the Guidance and Counseling Department, which is supervised by the administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness. This department works with students, parents, teachers and the community to inform them of scholarships, pre-collegiate programs and financial aid opportunities. The office also collaborates with institutions of higher learning, foundations and local businesses to implement concurrent enrollment between high school and college, increase financial aid opportunities and prepare students for education and training beyond high school.

The Community and Partnerships (Communications) office is staffed by the director of Communications, school board secretary, grant writer, photographer, secretary and communications officers for student activities and federal programs. This office handles the district's public relations, internal and external communications, grants and media relations. The director of Communications also oversees Printing, Graphics, Postal Services and Instructional TV. The Printing Department has a 10-person staff, and the graphics and mail operations each have two employees.

Although TV falls under the Community and Partnerships Department, its main focus is instruction. ITV develops and broadcasts televised programs to reinforce and supplement LISD students' instructional needs. The ITV staff includes the director, studio teachers, secretary, videotape librarian, cameraperson, graphics artist, production assistants and production chief. Of these, the director, two teachers, the graphic artist and cameraperson are Title I-funded. ITV also produces programming that focuses on current events, staff development, local issues and district news.

FINDING

The district's process for securing grants and in-kind donations is decentralized. A number of people at different levels throughout the school district, including the administrative assistants for Academics, principals and teaching staff have written and secured grants. For example,

Instructional Technology secured more than $3 million in a pre-K expansion grant and more than $1 million in an e-rate grant. The district also secured a five-year $2.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation. While the district has had success in obtaining grants, it lacks a system for integrating the grant-writing process with overall planning for district improvement.

Ysleta ISD developed a coherent plan to pursue outside funding from sources including federal, state and local programs, businesses and private foundations. The plan identifies potential funding opportunities and builds teams to apply for funding or services. Examples of the team's tasks include obtaining support from federal and state programs, foundations and the business community and conducting research to match the district's needs with specific funding opportunities.

Recommendation 26:

Centralize the grant writing process.

The director of Communications coordinates all grant-writing efforts to eliminate duplication of effort and to maximize the district's ultimate gains. The district begins by identifying the staff who are writing grants and the areas being funded. It then develops a process for grant-writing that ensures that this process is aligned with overall district improvement planning.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the director of Communications to develop a comprehensive list of all district staff writing grants, and a list of all grants won, pending and lost within the past two years.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent, administrative assistants for Academics - Wellness, Communications, Problem-Solving and Technology and the director of Communications meet to assess to what extent grant-funding is helping meet the district's goals as outlined in the Strategic Improvement Plan.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent, administrative assistants for Academics - Wellness, Communications, Problem-Solving and Technology and the director of Communications develop a process for centralizing grant-writing.	July 2002
4.	The process is implemented.	August 2002
5.	The superintendent, administrative assistants for Academics - Wellness, Communications, Problem-Solving and Technology and	May 2003

	the director of Communications review the process and make adjustments, as appropriate.	and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD's photographer's services are not needed consistently. The district employs a full-time photographer who reports to the director of Communications and takes pictures of special events, collects cut line information and processes film. According to the photographers job description, the photographer:

- organizes daily assignments in assignment book;
- covers assignments (take pictures);
- processes film/pictures
- sorts and distributes pictures to writers;
- collects and prepares outline information;
- takes pictures for special projects;
- relays interest stories to writers;
- promotes good will throughout the campuses; and
- programs and repairs minor glitches on computer.

The district's qualifications for this position indicate the need for a high school diploma or GED, a valid Texas drivers license and photojournalism skills. In addition, the photographer's pay grade
CT 06, listed at a minimum of $17,558 to a maximum of $26,333 for a 230 day contract which is not consistent with the current salary expended for this position of $34,202 plus benefits. The state appropriations act for 2001 lists the pay grade for a Step 1 photographer as $28,740 with similar qualifications.

Districts of like size to Laredo, such as Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District and many larger school districts, do not employ a photographer. Ysleta ISD, for example, contracts with freelance photographers on an as-needed basis for special events, therefore eliminating the need for a permanent full-time position.

Recommendation 27:

Eliminate the position of photographer.

The director of Communications determines how the photographer's responsibilities will be redistributed within the Communications

Department and if student photographers from LISD or local colleges and universities would be appropriate on certain assignments. The director should also determine the need for a freelance photographer.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Communications determines how the photographer's responsibilities can be distributed among the Communications staff.	May 2002
2.	The director of Communications looks at the possibility of using student photographers from LISD or local colleges and universities and freelance photographers as needed.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent seeks board approval to eliminate the position and reassign duties.	June 2002
4.	The director of Communications redistributes the duties of the eliminated position across the remaining staff and/or students and freelance photographers.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating the photographer position would save the district $34,202 in salary costs plus $5,309 in benefits for a total of $39,511. Benefits include variable benefits of $2,867, or 8.3822 percent of the photographer's salary, and fixed benefits of $2,442.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Eliminate the position of photographer.	$39,511	$39,511	$39,511	$39,511	$39,511

FINDING

The graphics function of the Community and Partnerships Department is overstaffed and inefficient.

The Graphics operation consists of two full-time graphic artists who spend the majority of their time making signs and banners by hand for lack of the proper equipment. The artists seldom use a computer to produce signs or posters because the computer's printer is limited to 8.5 by 11 inch paper and most of the graphics produced by the department require the use of a larger printer. Using manual rather than computer generated graphics slows the production of graphics. While the graphics department does not have adequate equipment to function at capacity, the print shop houses appropriate computers, printers and software that can assist the graphics artists in producing computer-generated art.

Many large school districts often use computers to generate posters and banners of all sizes. By doing so, these districts are able to function more efficiently and trim down on staff. In addition, some districts outsource banner production as needed to a local vendor in order to run a more cost efficient operation.

Recommendation 28:

Eliminate one graphic designer position and transfer the remaining graphic designer to the print shop.

The transfer of the remaining graphic designer to the print shop would eliminate the Graphics Division. The remaining graphic designer should be trained to do his work on the computers available in the print shop. Training the graphic designer to produce computer-generated art will increase his productivity.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent seeks board approval to eliminate one graphic designer position and transfer the remaining designer to become part of the print shop operation.	May 2002
2.	The director of Communications and the Printing Department supervisor develop a computer-training plan for the existing graphic designer.	June 2002
3.	The director of Communications relocates the graphic designer and revises the job description, as needed.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating a graphic designer position would save the district $19,056 in salary cost plus $4,039 in benefits for a total of $23,095. Benefits include variable benefits of $1,597, or 8.3822 percent of the graphic designer's salary, and fixed benefits of $2,442.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Eliminate one graphic designer position and transfer the remaining graphic designer to the print shop.	$23,095	$23,095	$23,095	$23,095	$23,095

FINDING

The district's Mail Services has had operational and chronic staffing problems that have resulted in delayed mail delivery.

The mailroom is budgeted to be staffed by two full-time mail clerks, but the district has had difficulties keeping both positions filled. In August 2001, one of the two clerks unexpectedly retired, leaving only one clerk and an occasional temporary clerk to handle the district's mail.

According to a October 3, 2001 memoranda from the director of Communications to the chief financial officer, the mail pickup and delivery is inconsistent. Important items such as student testing materials and performance assessments have failed to reach their intended destination in a timely manner.

Recommendation 29:

Evaluate the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and staffing of mailroom operations and determine whether the district should continue its operation.

The Communications director and the chief financial officer should review the Mail Service's financial and workload data to assess whether it is in the district's financial interest to continue to provide this service in-house or whether it should contract services. The district should not continue to support in-house mail service if important mail continues to be delivered late or if operating costs are higher than they would be if an outside contractor handled the service.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The chief financial officer and the director of Communications collect and review staffing and financial data on the district's Mail Services for 2000-01.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer and the director of Communications determine whether Mail Services is adequately staffed, whether it can overcome its staffing problems and how much it would cost to run this operation effectively.	June 2002
3.	The chief financial officer and the director of Communications compare the Mail Service's current revenue and expenses and any projections available to determine whether the district is saving money and will continue to save money by providing these services in-house.	June 2002
4.	If the mail service is found to be not cost-effective, the director of Communications works with the chief financial officer to identify	August 2002

| | the district's mail requirements and develops a plan to contract for mail services. | |

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

B. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

School district communications and public relations departments incorporate strategies that inform, educate, involve and engage people. An effective communications and public relations department gains the support and confidence of students, parents, staff and community members through two-way, open communication that both disseminates and gathers information.

The Community and Partnerships Department of LISD handles all communications and public and media relations for the district. This department prepares board agendas, news releases, the employee newsletter and board updates and schedules the speakers' bureau and neighborhood chats with the superintendent.

FINDING

LISD maintains a comprehensive Web site that provides useful information for the community on a variety of topics, including online board reports, board meetings and agendas, strategic plans, district policies, a downloadable calendar, maps, employment opportunities, administrative forms and news releases. Additionally, the Web site includes names, photographs and biographies of district board members, board meeting summaries, directories, press releases and policies, such as the use of school facilities by community groups. The Web site also includes the district's goals and vision statements.

The Web site provides current and comprehensive information about the district. Although not all households in the Laredo community have access to the Internet, maintaining a user-friendly Web site provides another avenue for district communications.

COMMENDATION

LISD operates a comprehensive Web site that provides the community with useful information about the district.

FINDING

The district uses a speaker's bureau to inform business and civic leaders of school district issues and events. The speaker's bureau is composed of three-member teams of district administrators and principals. These teams

are assigned to make presentations to local civic groups and the news media throughout the year. Every principal in the district is required to make three presentations per year.

Among many other groups, the teams have made presentations to: the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Laredo Chamber of Commerce, Texas Classroom Teachers Association, Laredo Housing Authority, Voices in Democratic Action, Laredo Rotary Club, Laredo Crime Stoppers and the Women's City Club. The district uses these meetings to inform the community about the use of public funds for facilities construction.

Participants in focus groups with community and business leaders and district staff noted that these presentations were an effective way to communicate key issues to the community. The community and business leaders said they were well informed of district news and activities.

COMMENDATION

The district effectively communicates news to community leaders through its speaker's bureau.

FINDING

LISD sponsors a student-hosted news program that highlights school, community, national and world events. Campus News, a 30-minute weekly show, not only teaches students news production skills, but also provides a community service. The program features stories on preventive health care, including dental care, nutrition, tuberculosis and immunizations. The program has also featured interviews with the Laredo mayor, Webb County commissioners, city and county judges, U.S. Marshals and state-elected officials.

The program also includes segments on the accomplishments of LISD students and teachers. For example, it features Student of the Week/Month, Kid's Talk, Spelling Bee winners, Science Fair winners, award winning teachers, Read Across Laredo contest winners and Fact O'Mania trivia game contest winners.

The Campus News program provides training for students and a service to the community. The production of the news program also helps bolster students' self-confidence and self-esteem. The students' feedback surveys were all overwhelmingly positive regarding this program.

COMMENDATION

Instructional TV's Campus News provides information to the Laredo community while educating and increasing the self-esteem of LISD students who participate.

FINDING

The district Printing Department's cost-effectiveness study is out-of-date.

The Printing Department handles 90 percent of the district's printing needs. Commercial vendors are used only when this department cannot complete a job in the time frame requested or when the print shop lacks the equipment to handle the job. Since local print shops cannot handle four-color process, the few print jobs that the district cannot handle are forwarded to commercial vendors in San Antonio.

Typical print jobs include administrative forms, handbooks, letterhead and business cards, instructional materials, note pads, lunch menus, pamphlets, brochures, calendars, newsletters, report cards, parent and community flyers and folders.

The most recent study of cost comparisons between commercial printing and the LISD Printing Department was conducted in 1995-96. The study revealed that in-house printing costs per job were significantly lower than the prices for similar jobs handled by commercial printers. **Exhibit 3-2** shows the comparison.

Exhibit 3-2
Cost Comparisons
Commercial Printing and the LISD Printing Department
1995-96

Job	Commercial Cost	LISD Cost
Cigarroa Graduation Programs	$1,793	$992
Continuous Progress Books, 1st Grade	$2,332	$888
Continuous Progress Books, 1st Grade	$1,390	$741
Personnel Department Attendance and Substitutes Carbonless Copies	$1,302	$902
Window Envelopes and Letterhead	$133	$70
Standard Envelopes and Letterhead	$90	$68
Total	**$7,040**	**$3,661**

The cost comparison included all materials and the number of hours expected to complete the job multiplied by the cost per hour, which ranged from $8.14 to $13 per hour. However, LISD did not include all costs associated with operating the Printing Department, for example, maintenance expenses.

Recommendation 30:

Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the Printing Department.

The director of Communications and the chief financial officer should review the Printing Department to assess whether it is in the district's financial interest to continue to provide this service in-house or whether it should contract for services outside. The review should take into account all the costs of operating the department including, maintenance, salaries, benefits and other costs and determine whether the district could save money by using commercial vendors. The district should also consider whether commercial vendors could provide the same quality of service in the same turnaround time. The district should not continue to support the Printing Department if the costs of operating it are more expensive than a commercial printing service.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The chief financial officer and the director of Communications do a comprehensive evaluation of the Printing Department's cost-effectiveness.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer and the director of Communications compare the real costs of operating the Printing Department to the costs of using a commercial vendor that can meet the district's printing needs.	June 2002
3.	If the Printing Department is found not to be cost-effective, the director of Communications works with the chief financial officer to identify district printing needs and develops a plan to contract for services.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have a regular publication disseminated to the community in both English and Spanish, except for the student code of conduct. **Exhibit 3-3** shows all communication methods that the district currently uses.

Exhibit 3-3
Communications Methods
2001-02

Device	Description	Audience
The LINK	This monthly newsletter features district employee activities, accomplishments and financial news.	District employees
Board Update Newsletter on Web site	This electronic newsletter updates employees about board actions from the latest school board meeting. It is posted monthly and/or as needed.	District employees
http://www.laredo.k12.tx.us	The Web site is designed to provide current information about the district.	Laredo community and outside communities
LISD Student Code of Conduct and the Student/Parent Handbook	These publications provide information about the district's rules and regulations concerning the conduct of students.	Student and parents in LISD
Campus News	This 30-minute show is broadcast weekly.	Laredo and surrounding communities

Source: LISD Department of Communication, October 2001.

Of the above communication methods, only the Web site and Campus News provide regular updated information to the community. The Web site is published in English, and Campus News has very limited programming in Spanish. Further, if residents do not have access to a computer or cable television, communication from the district is severely limited.

By publishing and mailing a newsletter printed both in Spanish and English, Socorro Independent School District (SISD) improved communication with many households in its district. SISD's bilingual newsletter is the district's primary means of communication, and survey results at SISD indicate that the district communicates well with the community.

Recommendation 31:

Produce a newsletter for the community in English and Spanish.

Spanish is the primary language for most families in the Laredo community. Having an informational publication in Spanish as well as English is essential for district information to be available to everyone.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent obtains board approval to publish a district newsletter.	May 2002
2.	The Communications staff begins developing the newsletter.	August 2002
3.	The Communications staff publishes the newsletter.	August 2002
4.	The director of Communications collaborates with the Webmaster to include the bilingual newsletter on the Web site.	September 2002
5.	The district distributes the newsletter via students and provides copies at libraries, community centers and at special events.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Reproduction costs of the bilingual newsletter will vary widely depending on its size, whether the district will outsource the job or print in-house, colors, frequency, paper quality and quantity. The director of Communications has collected bids from outside sources to produce 23,000 copies, four times per year of a two color, eight-page newsletter. The cost of that type of newsletter would be $35,000 per year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Produce a newsletter for the community in English and Spanish.	($35,000)	($35,000)	($35,000)	($35,000)	($35,000)

Chapter 3
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

C. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

Positive relations with local community organizations and businesses are essential to school district success. Districts promote positive community and business involvement by working with all members of the community and by being responsive to their needs.

LISD capitalizes on long-standing personal relationships in the community to promote community and business involvement in the school. LISD has successfully forged many relationships with community organizations, institutions of higher learning and business leaders. The Laredo Chamber of Commerce has an education committee that works closely with the school district. The district has close relations with Laredo Community College, Texas A&M International University, LULAC and local foundations who provide money and training to students and teachers.

FINDING

Through the Guidance and Counseling and the Scholarships and Special Projects offices, the district has forged partnerships with higher education institutions and 80 businesses for the advanced education and training of students. Both offices collaborate with local foundations and the business community to provide educational opportunities and resources for students and teachers.

The Scholarships and Special Projects office has researched local and national scholarship opportunities for LISD students. It develops brochures with comprehensive information on local and national scholarship opportunities, disseminates these to counseling departments at each school and provides them at career fairs and school open houses.

These offices have partnered with Texas A&M International University to prepare students to take college entrance exams. In addition, they have worked with other local school districts and representatives from agencies such as Communities in Schools, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and foundations, colleges and universities to provide students and parents the most current financial aid information available. They have also personally contacted local, state and national organizations to obtain information on pre-collegiate programs for students.

One significant result of all these efforts has been the dramatic increase in scholarship amounts for LISD students. **Exhibit 3-4** shows how scholarship amounts have steadily increased.

Exhibit 3-4
Cumulative Report on Scholarships

Year	Number of Graduates	Number of Scholarships	Scholarship Amount
1996	1,182	584	$1,296,050
1997	1,154	621	$1,622,502
1998	1,140	759	$2,658,734
1999	1,128	788	$2,707,327
2000	1,071	380	$3,043,672
2001	981	437	$3,300,117

Source: LISD Community and Partnerships, June 21, 2001.

COMMENDATION

By working with foundations, local businesses, educational institutions, LISD staff, parents and students, the district has increased the amount of scholarship money awarded to graduates.

FINDING

The LISD Educational Foundation began in 1992 when LISD leaders convened an organizational meeting to discuss the hardships some students and members of the LISD teaching staff had in meeting the Texas Education Agency's technology mandates. These mandates required students, as well as teachers, to develop computer literacy skills.

Apart from the mandates and conventional scholarship awards for deserving graduates, some financial assistance for teacher training, certification and travel expenses for conferences was needed. Financial assistance was also required for student transportation to educational events and concurrent learning programs.

The LISD Educational Foundation is a registered 501(c) 4 private foundation. The district was able to start the foundation with $18,000 contributed by local donors and a $308,000 grant from D.D. Hachar Charitable Trust, a private foundation. The principal in the fund has now

grown to $938,000. The LISD Educational Foundation distributes equal amounts of scholarship money derived from the interest earned on the principal to LISD's three high schools. **Exhibit 3-5** shows the categories and amounts given in 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-5
LISD Educational Foundation
Scholarship Disbursement for 1999-2000

Category	Amount
Student Scholarship Award (high achievement)	$16,800
Student Scholarship Award (medium achievement)	$11,200
Student Scholarship for Low Economic Status Students	$2,800
Teacher Enhancement (training and certification)	$14,000
Student Concurrent Programs	$5,600
Student Summer Programs	$5,600

Source: LISD Educational Foundation, 1999-2000.

In 1996, the teacher enhancement portion of the foundation had accumulated a surplus, which was used to provide five teachers' lounges with a total of 18 computers equipped with Internet access and Microsoft Explorer, Excel, Power Point and Word software programs.

COMMENDATION

The LISD Educational Foundation helps students and teachers attain their higher education and training goals by providing financial resources.

Chapter 3
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

D. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Research affirms that parental involvement is a key component of student success. LISD attempts to engage parents in their student's educational progress through conferences, progress notes, praise reports, phone calls and home visits. Parents are also encouraged to be involved in district activities through volunteerism, community-mentoring programs, after-school programs and community education. Recognition programs, open houses, workshops, celebrations, holiday parties and parent nights are other ways for parents to participate in school activities. The district involves parents in school governance activities through Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs), Parent Teacher Councils (PTCs), Parent Advisory Councils, parent leadership conferences and Site-Based Decision-Making Committees (SBDM).

All parental involvement initiatives are monitored through the Parental Involvement office. Each campus implements its own programs and reports its progress to the Parental Involvement office. The Parental Involvement office keeps detailed records on volunteer hours, activities, parental involvement policies, parent/student/teacher agreements, parent surveys and parent leadership in committees.

FINDING

The district hosts an annual Parent Conference. The LISD instructional team developed the conference to meet the parental involvement requirements of individual Title I programs and to fulfill goal 1, objective A in the district's strategic plan that reads, "Continue to expand the parent program where parents are full partners in the decisions that affect student learning."

The first conference was held on a Saturday in March 2001. The district enlisted community organizations to assist in the programming, including Texas A&M International University, Scott Foresman Company and the Intercultural Development Research Association. The second conference was held in November 2001.

The conference is open to all LISD parents. Lunch, snacks and daycare are provided. Each campus pays $10 for each parent it sends to the conference. Campuses can use Title I funds to cover the fee. At some campuses, PTO/PTA organizations pay the fee. Community donations provide additional financial support for the conference.

Sessions for parents include:

- Parents: First Teachers and Promoters of Literacy;
- Informing Parents on Instructional Strategies, Methods and Processes Being Used in the Acquisition of English as a Second Language;
- Inquiry-Based Instruction-Science Standards;
- Integrating Assistive Technology into the Home;
- Enhancing Parent-Child Communication Through Social Skills Modeling;
- STEP UP to Educational/Career Preparation;
- Stages of Child Development and Concomitant Activities in Math and Science for Parents;
- Practical Reading Activities and Ideas for Parents;
- Opening Communication Between Parents and Their Children;
- Not Everyone is Smart in the Same Way; and
- The Roles in a Family/Who's the Boss?

There were 231 registered participants at the March 2001 conference. From 113 evaluations completed, 94 rated the conference as excellent. The November 2001 conference drew 232 parents.

COMMENDATION

The district's Parent Conference is an innovative program that educates and involves parents.

FINDING

The 2000-01 school year saw a decline in parent volunteers in LISD following several years of a steady increase. The Parental Involvement coordinator noted that some schools might not have reported their volunteer information. For instance, three schools that reported more than 1,000 hours in school year 1999-2000 showed zero hours in 2000-01.

Even if some data are missing, reports for all years reveal that volunteer hours vary widely from school to school. At some campuses parental involvement is very high, while at others, it is low. The 2000-01 report of the Parent Involvement/Parent Volunteers List shows 14 out of 21 elementary schools, two out of three middle schools and two of three high schools reporting no volunteer activity. Again, these numbers represent only what schools reported to the Parental Involvement office, and some may not have reported their volunteer activity. However, even among those reporting, volunteer hours ranged from a low of 92 hours to a high of 1,183 hours in 2000-01.

LISD uses a decentralized system for recruiting volunteers. Volunteers are recruited at the campus level, and volunteer hours are reported back to the district's Parent Involvement coordinator. Reports show that parental involvement steadily increased until 2000-01. **Exhibit 3-6** shows the number of volunteers and volunteer hours for each school in the district.

Exhibit 3-6
Detail of Volunteer Hours
1998-99, 1990-2000 and 2000-01

School	1998-99 Hours Worked	1998-99 Number of Volunteers	1999-2000 Hours Worked	1999-2000 Number of Volunteers	2000-01 Hours Worked	2000-01 Number of Volunteers
Bruni Elementary	0	0	0	1	0	0
Buenos Aires Elementary	450	2	1,407	22	0	0
Daiches Elementary	100	1	0	0	0	0
Dovalina Elementary	74	1	643	15	333	7
Farias Elementary	0	2	0	0	149	7
D.D. Hachar Elementary	1,172	12	678	8	245	7
Heights Elementary	24	2	0	1	0	0
Kawas Elementary	2,571	41	2,911	18	1,055	6
Leyendecker Elementary	278	7	2,874	8	0	8
Ligarde Elementary	0	1	0	1	705	9
Macdonell Elementary	531	2	555	3	1,183	3
J.C. Martin Elementary	1,341	4	43	2	0	0

C.L. Milton Elementary	0	0	208	8	0	0
Ochoa Elementary	0	0	60	20	0	0
A. Pierce Elementary	140	9	105	3	0	2
Ryan Elementary	212	26	319	9	92	9
T. Sanchez Elementary	97	3	0	0	0	0
Santa Maria Elementary	24	1	21	2	0	0
Santo Nino Elementary	0	0	0	4	0	1
K. Tarver Elementary	0	0	0	7	0	0
Zachry Elementary	0	0	0	0	879	3
J.C. Christen Elementary	2,049	15	354	8	472	7
Cigarroa Middle School	43	8	202	3	406	7
Lamar Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Memorial Middle School	0	1	0	1	0	0
Cigarroa High School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Martin High School	0	0	178	9	583	2
Nixon High School	0	0	1,032	16	0	0
Total	**9,106**	**138**	**11,589**	**169**	**6,102**	**78**

Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) developed a full complement of volunteers at each of their campuses by supporting volunteer programs through Partners in Education (PIE) teams. These teams bring together all the volunteer leaders on a campus, such as the volunteer campus coordinator, the PTA/PTO president, the school business partner, the Parent Advisory Council representative, the School-Business Partner liaison and the FBISD Education Foundation Volunteer Organization. A comprehensive manual describes members' roles, responsibilities and expectations.

With PIE teams each campus has a complete complement of volunteers to help students succeed in school. Each campus also has a parent center/volunteer room that has been set aside for PIE teams where volunteers can sit, socialize and assist teachers outside the classroom. In Title I schools the parent center also provides a place for parents to work and learn how to help their children succeed in school.

Recommendation 32:

Form parental involvement teams and share model techniques and practices used in successful schools across the district.

LISD could form teams to nurture a continuing and stable volunteer program at the campus level. The teams would welcome, involve and recognize volunteers in schools in a meaningful way and match volunteer skills, talents and interests with campus needs as designated in campus improvement plans. These organizations would also empower campus volunteers to reach their fullest potential.

These volunteer teams would connect the volunteer community to schools, enhance campuses via shared community resources, expertise and experience; provide volunteers for all schools and involve the community in meeting common goals.

If some campuses still have difficulty finding volunteers, the district could do further outreach to local college campuses where student organizations are often looking for community service projects. Although college students can be a transient population, campuses that need assistance can benefit from the accessible supply of potential volunteers that colleges and universities can offer.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Parental Involvement coordinator and superintendent ask each campus to form a team of volunteer leaders at each	May 2002

	campus.	
2.	Each campus team develops a model volunteer program by sharing ideas among campuses. The model program should establish leadership among the volunteers, recruit volunteers, train and provide orientations, place volunteers, show appreciation and evaluate volunteer involvement.	June 2002
3.	Team leaders from each school submit the model to the Parental Involvement coordinator for review and approval.	August 2002
4.	Volunteer team leaders follow the model on their respective campuses and support teams through training and securing resources.	September 2002
5.	The team leader at each campus and the Parental Involvement coordinator monitor teams and assist them when needed.	September 2002 and Ongoing
6.	The team leaders and Parental Involvement coordinator evaluate the process and prepare an annual report of all volunteer activities and accomplishments.	June 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) personnel management and Human Resources functions in three sections:

A. Organization and Management
B. Compensation, Recruitment and Retention
C. Training and Staff Development

Personnel and human resources management are critical functions of a school district. Successful management of personnel includes efficient recruiting, hiring, classification, compensation, training and development and performance evaluation of employees. Compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission statutes, Department of Labor regulations, state laws and the establishment of fair and workable policies, procedures and training are important for the recruitment and retention of competent staff.

Chapter 4
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

LISD's Human Resources Department is responsible for carrying out personnel management policies and procedures for the recruitment, employment and retention of 3,108 employees. Payroll for all district employees accounts for 80.6 percent of LISD's 2000-01 budget, as summarized by **Exhibit 4-1**.

Exhibit 4-1
LISD Budgeted Expenditures by Object Group
2000-01

Expenditure Category	Budgeted Amount (Millions)	Percent of Total
Payroll Costs	$110.28	80.6 %
Contracted Services	$7.35	5.4 %
Supplies and Materials	$6.48	4.7 %
Capital Expenses	$1.27	.9 %
Debt Service	$9.97	7.3 %
Other Expenses	$1.55	1.1 %
Total	**$136.90**	**100%**

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-2 details the Human Resources Department budgets for the past three fiscal years.

Exhibit 4-2
Budget for Human Resources Department
1999-2002

Expenditure Category	Budget 1999-2000	Budget 2000-01	Budget 2001-02
Salaries	$563,768	$573,883	$709,465

Contracted Services	$18,186	$28,403	$34,136
Supplies & Materials	$18,696	$30,550	$17,000
Other Expenses	$66,141	$53,760	$59,654
Capital Outlay	$11,738	$55,750	$0
Total	**$678,529**	**$742,346**	**$820,255**

Source: LISD's Expenditure Summary Report by Function & Object, October 31, 2001.

Exhibit 4-3 shows the organizational structure of the Human Resources Department.

Exhibit 4-3
Human Resources Department Organization
2001-02
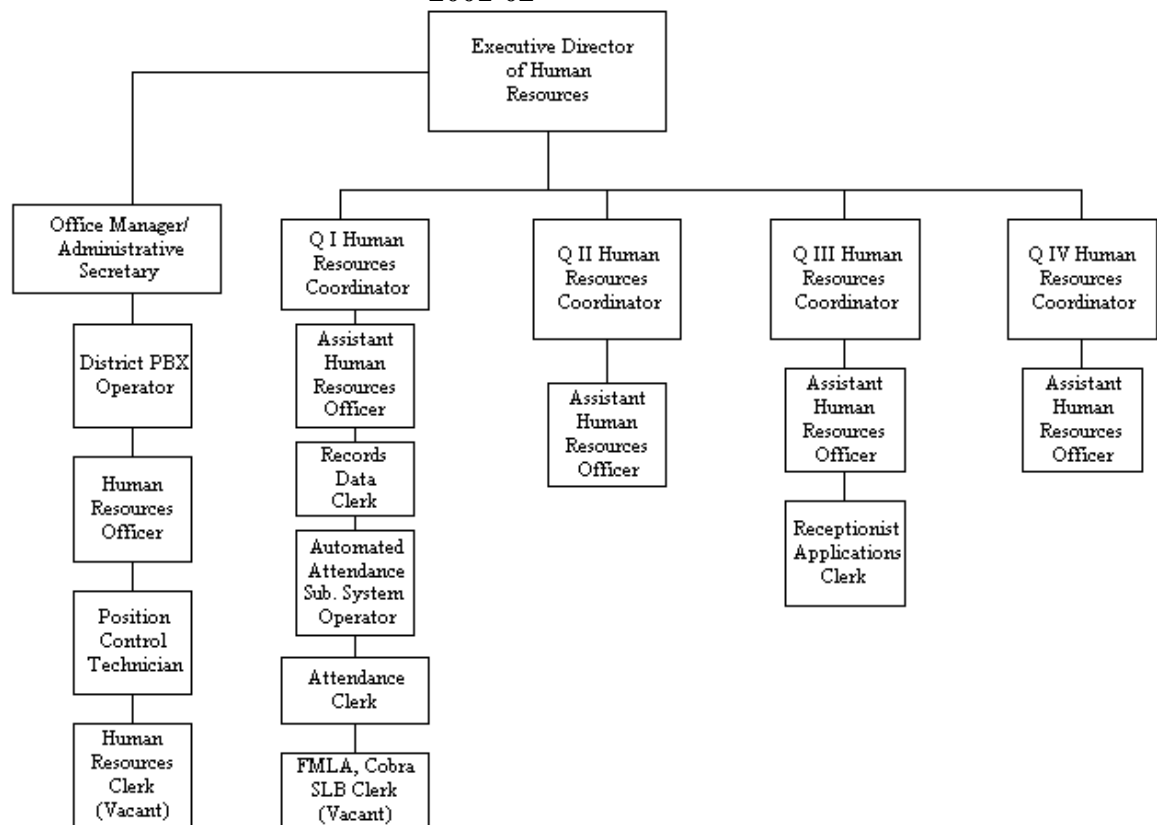
Source: LISD, Human Resources Department, 2001.

The executive director of Human Resources oversees the Human Resources Department with a staff of 18 administrative and support

personnel. Two of these positions are vacant. The executive director of Human Resources was hired September 3, 2001 and was preceded by the QIII Human Resources coordinator who served as interim director for two months. The new executive director has six years recent experience with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and 25 years in education, serving school districts as teacher, diagnostician, counselor, director of bilingual education, principal and superintendent. The executive director of Human Resources holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and has published materials related to Human Resources training and educational planning.

Responsibilities for hiring staff and handling most personnel issues are delegated to four Human Resources coordinators who are each assigned one of four geographic quadrants of the district. Each of the coordinators serves a generalist role, meaning each one is required to attend to all Human Resources issues and do not necessarily specialize in one particular area. The coordinators use a considerable amount of independent judgment and are cross-trained on the job in all aspects of personnel management. The schools and departments that the Human Resources coordinators serve are shown in **Exhibit 4-4**.

Exhibit 4-4
Quadrant Responsibilities
Human Resources Department
2001-02

Staff	Major Areas of Responsibility	Employees Served
QI Human Resources coordinator	Cigarroa HS, Cigarroa MS, Santo Nino, Zachary, Kawas, Ligarde, Superintendent's Office, Communications/Public Information, Human Resources Department, substitutes, State Compensatory/Bilingual, Problem Solving, Instructional Technology, Communications, Assessment, Media Services, Instructional Television, Graphics/Mail Room, Title 1, Title 1 Migrant, Project Teams	800+
QII Human Resources coordinator	Martin HS, Christen MS, Bruni, Daiches, Farias, Leyendecker, MacDonell, Santa Maria, Dovalina, Health Services	800+
QIII Human Resources coordinator	Nixon HS, Memorial MS, Buenos Aires, Sanchez/Ochoa, JC Martin, Tax Office, Risk Management, Finance, Purchasing, Fixed Assets, Transportation, MIS, Food Service, Operations, Plant Operations, Construction	900+

QIV Human Resources coordinator	VMT Magnet Program, FS Lara Academy, Lamar MS, Heights, Tarver, Milton, Alma Pierce, Ryan, DD Hachar, Pupil Services, Hearings Officer, PE Department, CATE, Wellness, Section 504, Guidance/Counseling, Attendance Officers, Athletics, Special Education	700+

Source: Interviews conducted by the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR), November 2001.
Note: "Employees served" includes full-time and part-time employees.

The previous executive director of Human Resources identified several areas for improvement in the department, implemented the restructuring of the department by geographical quadrants and began cross-training staff members. The executive director determined that services provided by the department were fragmented, recruitment efforts were lacking and there were internal conflicts among employees in the department. The Human Resources Department strengthened its service to district employees by allowing each campus and department to have one contact person in Human Resources instead of several points of contact depending on what kind of assistance was needed.

The remaining support staff do not specialize with the exception of attendance clerks. Each position supports the entire structure, creating an atmosphere of teamwork and collective responsibility.

The Human Resources Department does not handle employee benefits or workers' compensation. The Finance Department administers benefits with assistance from the Risk Management and Human Resources departments. The Safety Department manages workers' compensation insurance. The Human Resources Department works closely with the Finance Department to process payroll. **Exhibit 4-5** illustrates that certain Human Resources tasks are shared with other departments and individuals.

Exhibit 4-5
LISD Human Resources Tasks
2001-02

Task	Department	Position
Recruiting staff	Human Resources	Human Resources coordinators, assistant Human Resources officers, receptionist/applications clerk

Hiring staff	School Administration, Human Resources	Principals, Human Resources coordinators
Background checks	Transportation, Human Resources	Clerks, Human Resources PBX operator
Certification verification	Human Resources	Human Resources coordinators, asst. Human Resources officers
Reference checks	Human Resources	Human Resources coordinators, asst. Human Resources officers, Human Resources PBX operator
EEOC complaints and issues	Human Resources	Executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators
Salary determinations	Human Resources	Executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators, position control technician
Employee contracts and evaluations	Schools, Departments, Human Resources	Principals, department supervisors, executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators
Salary adjustment calculations	Human Resources	Executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators, position control technician
Compensation and classification	Human Resources	Executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators, reclassification committee (made up of professionals), Human Resources officer
Records maintenance and retrieval	Human Resources	Human Resources coordinators, asst. Human Resources officers, records data clerk
Attendance monitoring (employees) and substitute teacher assignment	Schools, Departments, Human Resources	Campus attendance clerks, supervisors, automated attendance/substitute system operator, attendance clerk
Benefits	Finance, Risk	Payroll supervisor, risk manager,

administration	Management, Human Resources	Human Resources coordinators
Employee safety	Risk Management	Safety officer, risk manager
Pay management	Finance, Human Resources	Payroll supervisor, executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators
Employee grievances and complaints	Schools, Departments, Human Resources, Superintendent	Principals, department supervisors, executive director of Human Resources, administrative secretary/office manager of Human Resources, superintendent
Electronic information system for all personnel functions	Information Technology, Human Resources	Director of Information Technology, Human Resources coordinators, asst. Human Resources officers
New teacher orientation	Risk Management, Human Resources	Risk manager, Human Resources coordinators
Training and staff development	Problem Solving, Human Resources	Administrative assistant of Problem Solving, Human Resources coordinators
Termination	Human Resources	Executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators
Planning for staffing levels	Human Resources	Executive director of Human Resources, Human Resources coordinators
Policies and procedures	Board, Human Resources	Board committee, executive director of Human Resources

Source: Interviews conducted by TSPR, November 2001.

The mission of LISD's Human Resources Department is to "support, in a systemic manner, the mission of LISD to develop and educate students by providing a relevant and challenging curriculum through innovative programs and effective use of resources in a safe and nurturing environment." The goal of the department is to "maximize fiscal and Human Resources and utilize sound fiscal planning."

FINDING

LISD is not adequately managing compliance with the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) and Department of Labor (DOL) agency regulations. A Human Resources coordinator said that COBRA notifications are not being sent out to the dependents of terminated employees in accordance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements. Other Human Resources staff could not confirm the posting of required DOL posters in every workplace location, although they do respond to requests for these materials from the departments and schools. An approved position for a FMLA/COBRA/SLB clerk remains vacant. This auxiliary position is responsible for responding to the needs of employees regarding these state and federally-mandated regulations.

According to the IRS, employers must provide written notice to employees and their dependents of their option to elect COBRA, a continuation of group health plan coverage following certain "qualifying events," such as the employee's termination, layoff or reduction in working hours, entitlement to Medicare and the death or divorce of the employee (that would cause dependents to lose coverage under the employer's plan). According to each of the following governing agencies, the following posters are required to be posted in English and Spanish in every Texas employee's work environment in clear view.

- Notice to Employees Concerning Workers' Compensation (Texas Workers' Compensation Commission)
- Notice of No Workers' Compensation (Texas Workers' Compensation Commission)
- Unemployment Insurance (Texas Workforce Commission)
- Payday Law (Texas Workforce Commission)
- Hazard Communication Act (Texas Department of Health)
- Child Labor Law (Texas Workforce Commission)
- Equal Employment Opportunity (Texas Commission on Human Rights)
- Minimum Wage (U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division
- It's the Law OSHA Notice (U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration)
- Equal Employment Opportunity (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)
- Notice to Workers with Disabilities (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration)
- Employee Polygraph Protection (U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division)
- Family and Medical Leave Act (U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division)
- Migrant and Seasonal Agriculture Worker Protection (U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division)

Each governing agency has the authority to inspect an employer's facilities to ensure postings are present and up to date, and maintains its own schedule of penalties applicable to employers found to be out of compliance. Management of compliance issues for employers requires specialized knowledge of labor laws and continued training in order to assure policies are kept current with new rulings.

Recommendation 33:

Reclassify the vacant clerk position to that of a compliance officer and immediately comply with federal employment regulations.

The current position of FMLA/COBRA/SLB clerk should be upgraded to compliance officer and should require the education and experience necessary to appropriately address compliance issues and monitor the changes in rules, regulations and labor laws.

The new compliance officer should be a Human Resources specialist who will relieve the Human Resources coordinators of all responsibilities for compliance tasks pertaining to their quadrant population and the administrative secretary/office manager of responsibility for monitoring the placement of required postings in all workplace locations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources seeks board approval to upgrade the FMLA/COBRA/SLB clerk position to compliance officer.	May 2002
2.	The board approves the request.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources upgrades the position of FMLA/COBRA/SLB clerk to compliance officer.	June 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources posts the job opening on the Web site and in local papers.	July 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources hires the appropriate candidate to fill the vacant compliance officer position.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The midpoint salary level for the clerk position (grade four) is $19,010. The midpoint salary level for the compliance officer (grade eight) is $29,097. The fixed benefits rate is the same for both positions. The difference between midpoint salaries is $10,087. There would be an

additional cost of variable benefits of $846 for a total cost of $10,933 (variable benefit rate of .083822 x $10,087 = $846).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Reclassify the vacant clerk position to that of a compliance officer and immediately comply with federal employment regulations.	($10,933)	($10,933)	($10,933)	($10,933)	($10,933)

FINDING

A number of LISD personnel files lack required documentation and are not organized in compliance with Department of Labor agency recommendations. LISD maintains one file per employee that contains a variety of documentation, some of which should not be filed in a single folder. The review team sampled 15 personnel files and found that some files were missing immigration documentation (I-9), job descriptions, employee evaluations and education and training records. Human Resources employees estimate that a three-year backlog of attendance documents need to be filed, and closed files have not been purged from active files. In addition, the department does not frequently sample personnel files for completeness. Human Resources has purchased an improved filing system and equipment but has not used it due to installation difficulties.

According to a Society for Human Resources Management article, the following records relating to employment should be kept in a basic personnel file:

- employment application and resume;
- college transcripts;
- job description;
- records relating to special employment practices (contracts);
- records relating to hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, rates of pay, other forms of compensation and education and training records;
- letters of recognition;
- disciplinary notices and documents;
- performance evaluations;
- test documents;
- exit interviews; and
- termination records.

The following items should be maintained in separate files:

- Medical records and insurance applications-The American with Disabilities Act requires employers to keep all medical records separate. Many states have privacy laws to protect employees. Medical records include physical examinations, medical leaves, workers' compensation claims and drug and alcohol testing.
- Equal Employment Opportunity-In order to minimize claims of discrimination, it is important to keep source documents that identify an individual's race and sex in a separate file. Additionally, if internal or external charges of discrimination are investigated, it is recommended that the related documentation also be maintained separately.
- I-9 Documentation-The Immigration and Naturalization Law of 1986 requires employers to verify within three business days of hiring, that all employees hired after Nov. 6, 1986, are citizens or aliens authorized to work in the United States. Both employer and employee are required to fill in information to complete an I-9 Form. This documentation is the most likely to be reviewed during an inspection. Keeping this information in a separate file provides easy access to the information and reduces the opportunity for an auditor to pursue and investigate unrelated information.
- Invitation to Self-Identify Disability or Veterans Status-Laws prohibit employment decisions on the basis of certain protected classes, however, managers have the right to access an employee's file for a number operational issues. Unless there is a need to know for accommodation purposes, these files should be maintained separately to reduce a potential source of bias.

LISD could be placed at risk for federal agency fines or allegations of discrimination if strict attention is not given to protecting the confidentiality of employee records and ensuring the district is acquiring and retaining all the necessary information.

Recommendation 34:

Ensure that active personnel files are maintained in compliance with state and federal laws in a secure location and that all required documentation is contained in every file.

In concert with the installation of the new filing equipment, a complete review of active files should be initiated to correct any non-compliance issues. Files also should be separated and placed in one of two groups: basic personnel information and confidential information. This separation will make it less likely that the district inadvertently releases confidential information.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a checklist of records to be maintained in a basic personnel file and a checklist of records to be maintained in a separate file.	August 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee separates closed employee files from those of active employees and stores closed files in a separate, secure area.	August 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee removes sensitive documentation, including medical records, as recommended and files these documents in separate folders.	September 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee reviews active files to ensure document checklists are complete and all recommended documents filed.	October 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources schedules periodic file sampling three times per year to evaluate the completeness of personnel records and to ensure the district maintains compliance with state and federal laws.	January 2003 and Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not have a process to track and analyze grievances that are filed by employees or parents. The district bases grievance procedures on board policy, but does not track grievances by class, employee category or resolution.

The review team requested data regarding grievances filed with LISD since 1998. The data included the grievant's name, the year, the level and type of grievance and the resolution. Since 1998, LISD reports that employees filed 18 grievances. Some copies of grievances later collected by the review team, however, were not identified in the data provided by Human Resources staff, demonstrating the difficulty staff has in providing accurate and complete information about grievances.

Without a tracking system for grievances, LISD management is not aware of trends that exist districtwide or the frequency of grievances filed against a single individual.

Recommendation 35:

Develop a system for tracking grievances filed by employees or parents according to class, category and resolution.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee develops an electronic template for tracking grievances by various criteria.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee logs the history of grievances into the template.	July 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources designates a Human Resources coordinator to analyze the grievance log on a quarterly basis to identify trends that indicate LISD has a need to address recurring problems.	August 2002
4.	The Human Resources coordinator reports grievance trends and status of open grievances to the superintendent on a quarterly basis.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Human Resources Department does not have a consolidated procedures manual to support the efficiency and accuracy of its operations. A Human Resources staff member said that the ability to learn and fully understand job duties was hindered by not having a resource to verify that correct procedures were being followed. Human Resources staff members frequently refer to board policy when they are faced with a procedural question, and several staff members have devised procedures for their own use or rely on verbal instructions and supervision of other staff to make sure work is accurate.

While policy books and staff feedback are helpful to staff members, the lack of written procedures prevents them from ensuring consistency and continuity of their work, especially when there is a change in staff.

Fort Bend ISD's Human Resources Department maintains a detailed procedures handbook that includes step-by-step descriptions of each process and procedure used to deliver services, including applications, posting of positions, recruitment, adding or reassigning staff, evaluations, transfers, payroll and records retention. Copies of all forms, as well as computer screens used in the process, are included in the handbook. Fort Bend ISD updates the handbook on a regular schedule, and the director of Employee Records reviews the procedures with staff so that improvements

are made as part of the overall quality control system within the department.

Recommendation 36:

Develop a comprehensive procedures manual for Human Resources operations.

The procedures manual should include detailed step-by-step descriptions of each process and procedure used to deliver various services, copies of all forms and computer screens used in the process and guidelines for periodically updating the manual.

Because human resources practices are under continued scrutiny and industry regulations are constantly being revised, it is imperative that districts conduct comprehensive periodic reviews of operational procedures and delegation of responsibilities and update these procedures annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources delegates the various operations of the department to the appropriate staff members to draft a detailed procedure for each operation.	June 2002
2.	Staff members develop the procedures for their assigned operations.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources reviews the completed procedures for consistency with board policies.	August 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources makes the manual available online for department staff members.	August 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources reviews the procedures manual annually and requests revisions to outdated procedures from department staff.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Human Resources Department staff members do not receive adequate training or have access to human resources industry standards to enable them to stay current with human resources management topics. While

many staff members have experience in school administration, no staff member in the department has a Human Resources certification such as Professional in Human Resources (PHR) or Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR). Consequently, staff members lack knowledge regarding industry resources, successful recruiting techniques, best practices for operations and new compliance regulations.

Human Resources certification is a symbol of professional achievement. Beyond experience and education, the PHR or SPHR designation signifies that an individual has mastered the practice and body of knowledge of human resources management. Select Human Resources Department employees such as the executive director of Human Resources and the four Human Resources coordinators, receive training primarily at summer and winter conferences conducted by the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators.

Human Resources Department employees are not members of professional networks or associations, which are invaluable resources for human resources professionals. Membership with Human Resources associations provides even non-certified professionals exposure to current topics in human resources management, networking opportunities, access to vital industry information, products and services, professional development, access to newsletters and periodicals, community involvement initiatives and legislative updates.

A well-managed staff is trained and current on new issues, laws and rules. LISD's Human Resources staff members do not have enough exposure to the numerous resources available to keep them on the leading edge of their profession.

Recommendation 37:

Provide training opportunities for all Human Resources staff and encourage membership in the local chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management.

Membership in the local SHRM chapter provides individuals with changes to current laws and regulations, new recruitment tools, access to other human resources professionals, frequent training opportunities and monthly periodicals that can be shared with non-members.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources performs a department-wide training needs analysis.	June 2002

2.	The executive director of Human Resources subscribes to three SHRM publications and routes them to all Human Resources staff for review.	June 2002 and Annually
3.	The executive director of Human Resources researches and builds a list of Human Resources training opportunities available to department staff.	July 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources requires staff members to attend the TASPA Summer Conference on a rotating basis.	July 2002 and Annually
5.	The executive director of Human Resources requires two Human Resources coordinators to become members of the Laredo Association for Human Resources Management, attend monthly meetings and deliver acquired information to all department staff at a monthly staff meeting.	August 2002 and Monthly Thereafter
6.	The executive director of Human Resources and the four Human Resources coordinators attend TASPA's Legal Digest conference.	December 2002 and Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

TASPA's Summer Conference fees are $170 per person, or a total of $1,530 per year for nine staff members. TASPA's Legal Digest conference fees are $130 per person, or a total of $650 per year for five staff. Laredo Association for Human Resources Management corporate membership fee is $150 annually for two members. The Society for Human Resources Management subscriptions total $131 per year. The conference fees, the membership fees and subscriptions would cost the district $2,461 annually ($1,530 + $650 + $150 + $131).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Provide training opportunities for all Human Resources staff and encourage membership in the local chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management.	($2,461)	($2,461)	($2,461)	($2,461)	($2,461)

FINDING

LISD's automated phone system for taking employee absence calls is not used effectively by employees, producing an unnecessary workload for Human Resources staff. The district uses the MicroSage attendance

system for both teachers and staff to report absences, to automatically search for replacement staff and to initiate the resulting payroll adjustments.

In 1999, the executive director of Human Resources distributed a memorandum to all principals and department heads that outlined the penalties, which included termination, for not using the attendance and substitute system. Human Resources staff said, however, that employees still resist using the automated system because they do not know how it works or the Spanish-speaking employees do not understand the English language version.

Every non-system absence call generates paperwork and requires manual payroll adjustments. Human Resources staff makes approximately 200 manual entries every pay period due to manual absentee calls. When teachers do not use the system, the attendance clerks must work together with the school attendance clerks to manually search for and call substitutes.

Automated attendance systems are used at many school districts. This technology greatly reduces the amount of workers needed to manage a large number of operations, such as reporting absences. LISD has not equipped its employees with the instructions and language needed to manipulate the attendance system at an optimum level.

Recommendation 38:

Acquire a Spanish version of the attendance system, distribute written, user-friendly instructions in English and Spanish to all staff and enforce the use of the automated system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources requisitions an upgrade of the automated attendance system that includes a Spanish language component.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee develops a written, user-friendly instruction sheet outlining the exact steps to take when reporting an absence.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee distributes instruction sheets to every LISD employee and extra copies to each school and department and holds training sessions.	July through September 2002
4.	The superintendent issues a directive, complete with penalties	October 2002

	for non-compliance, requiring all staff to use the automated system.	
5.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a system to track employees who do not comply with the directive and distributes a monthly report to all principals, department heads and the superintendent.	November 2002 and Ongoing
6.	The department heads, principals and the superintendent, when applicable, use the monthly report to enforce the directive consistently.	December 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

According to eSchool Solutions, the current system provider, a one-time upgrade of the automated attendance system to enable a Spanish language module would cost approximately $2,500.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Acquire a Spanish version of the attendance system, distribute written, user-friendly instructions in English and Spanish to all staff and enforce the use of the automated system.	($2,500)	$0	$0	$0	$0

Chapter 4
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

B. COMPENSATION, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The LISD's Human Resources Department uses information from salary surveys and published data from TEA to determine how competitive the compensation levels are at the district. **Exhibit 4-6** presents a four-year trend of average LISD salaries for central administration, campus administration, professional support staff and teachers.

Exhibit 4-6
LISD Average Salary Trends
1997-98 Through 2000-01

Staff	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Central Administration	$70,720	$69,613	$69,961	$74,387
Campus Administration	$54,136	$57,614	$57,347	$60,958
Professional Support Staff	$41,420	$43,468	$44,602	$46,946
Teachers	$34,042	$36,019	$39,081	$39,756

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-7 presents a comparison of LISD's average salaries for 2000-01 to its peer districts.

Exhibit 4-7
Laredo ISD and Peer Districts Average Actual Salaries
2000-01

District	Central Administration	Campus Administration	Professional Support Staff	Teachers
Harlandale	$84,107	$64,576	$49,393	$40,523
Edinburg	$78,489	$60,706	$46,313	$37,665
Laredo	**$74,387**	**$60,958**	**$46,946**	**$39,756**
Eagle Pass	$76,253	$54,864	$47,482	$39,151
Edgewood	$68,012	$52,690	$43,330	$37,431
United	$58,223	$56,229	$42,105	$35,013

LISD's salaries for teachers remain competitive with its peers, ranking second highest among them and 12 percent higher than its geographically closest competitor, United ISD. LISD's salaries generally rank second or third highest among its peers in each category.

Salaries are the largest expenditure for LISD, and budget planning for this expenditure is addressed on a biennial basis. LISD reviews the effects of salary increases in both years of a biennium in relation to the available revenues generated over both years.

Workforce planning is critical to the success of LISD and its students. The ability to recruit, hire and retain quality staff is a constant challenge. Ineffective recruitment programs can result in unqualified employees, unfilled positions and high employee turnover. Hiring qualified teachers and providing incentives for them to stay with the district ultimately enhances academic success.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for conducting recruitment fairs, mainly at university locations, to attract students to the teaching field and to LISD as their potential employer. Human Resources employees, teachers and principals staff the presentations. The executive director of Human Resources said that principals are excellent presenters and have the authority to hire new teachers immediately, pending review of the applicant's qualifications. **Exhibit 4-8** outlines LISD's recruiting fair activities for 2000-01 and an estimated number of resulting hires.

Exhibit 4-8
LISD Recruiting Fairs
2000-01

Recruitment Fairs	Estimated Hires
UT - San Antonio	8
UT - Austin	1
Texas A & M - College Station	3
UT - Pan American	1
TAMIU - Laredo	129
Texas A & M - Kingsville	10
Southwest Texas State University - San Marcos	1

Our Lady of the Lake University - San Antonio	1
Missouri Job Opportunities in Education	Not Available
Tarleton State University	Not Available
Laredo Community College	Not Available
Stephen F. Austin State University	Not Available
Texas Tech University - Lubbock	1
West Texas A & M University - Canyon	Not Available
North Dakota - Grand Forks	Not Available
Minnesota - Minneapolis	Not Available
Region Four - German Video Job Fair	1
University of Montana - Missoula	Not Available
Region Ten - Teachers of Spain	4

Source: LISD, Human Resources Department, Interviews conducted by TSPR, November 2001.

Other LISD recruiting efforts include print advertising in a variety of Texas newspapers, a subsidized employment program under a Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) contract, Web site postings and a partnership with Region 1 Personnel Support Services. LISD's 2000-01 expenses for recruiting are presented in **Exhibit 4-9**.

Exhibit 4-9
LISD Recruiting Expenditures
2000-01

Expenditure	Amount
Recruitment Fairs	$7,099
Travel	$5,133
Supplies	$1,676
Print Advertising 9/3/00 - 7/22/01	$19,870
Website	No direct cost
Region 1	No direct cost
TWC	$2,377 (proposed)

Of the expenditures listed in **Exhibit 4-9**, print advertising is the most costly, making up 55 percent of recruiting costs.

FINDING

LISD does not use quantitative data to measure the success of its recruiting efforts. The Human Resources Department does not track the effectiveness or outcomes of its recruiting strategies and cannot report with certainty which efforts are most successful and cost-effective for LISD.

LISD has experienced shortages in teachers, substitute teachers, specialized staff and paraprofessional staff. Competition for employees is very strong in the Laredo area, as employees have the choice of two districts in the area, Laredo and United, as well as public and private employers. Both LISD and United ISD have a good relationship with the local university, Texas A&M International University, although participants in a TSPR principal focus group said that United ISD hires more teachers from the university because it recruits early. LISD's Human Resources staff admits that it needs to develop a closer relationship with the university in order to attract students as they begin their teaching education.

The district's lack of a system to track and measure its recruiting activity is detrimental to the best use of budgeted funds.

Recommendation 39:

Develop a report that reflects each recruiting activity, its cost and the number of resulting hires from each activity.

The Human Resources Department should track and measure the success of its recruiting activities to determine the most effective activities, the activities it needs to enhance, the cost-effectiveness of those activities and the candidate populations it should target. Visitors to recruitment fair events should sign a "guest list" that can be compared to actual applicants and new hires. Applications should include a question regarding how the applicant learned of employment opportunities at LISD. The Human Resources Department should analyze expenditures for recruitment and track them according to activity. An analysis of all such data should be conducted on a quarterly basis to determine changes in recruiting strategies for the next quarter and budget year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a "guest list" to accompany recruitment fair presentations.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources adds a question to the application regarding the source of applicants' employment interest.	May 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a report that tracks the number of applicants and new hires by source of recruitment.	June 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a report that tracks recruiting expenditures by recruiting activity.	June 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources conducts an analysis of collected data on a quarterly basis and determines changes to recruiting strategies.	October 2002 and Quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not know what factors contribute to employee turnover. The Human Resources Department does not conduct exit interviews with staff who are leaving and does not track separation reasons. Although an exit form completed by exiting staff asks the reason for leaving, most staff merely state "personal" on the form. Because the district does not maintain termination checklists in employees' personnel files consistently, it cannot analyze separation trends.

Exhibit 4-10 compares teacher turnover rates at LISD compared to its peer districts, the region and statewide averages. LISD has the second highest turnover rate among its peer districts.

Exhibit 4-10
LISD Teacher Turnover Rates Compared to Peer Districts, Region and State
2000-01

District	Turnover Rate

Edgewood	22.6%
Laredo	**16.6%**
United	12.4%
Edinburg	12.1%
Harlandale	12.1%
Eagle Pass	10.8%
Region	**8.1%**
State	**16.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Since LISD has strong competition for the recruitment of employees, especially from United ISD, it is clear that improving retention would greatly relieve recruiting activities and costs.

School districts that conduct exit interviews include documentation of the reason for separation, including:

- moving from district;
- returning to school;
- dissatisfied with type of work;
- health reasons;
- family obligations; and
- promotion or higher pay.

The most valuable information regarding employee turnover can only be collected from the employees themselves. Without seeking this feedback, LISD passes up the opportunity to address employee job dissatisfaction and improve employee retention.

Recommendation 40:

Develop an exit interview process for all employees to identify potential sources of job dissatisfaction.

A formal exit interview would help LISD determine why employees are leaving and help the district design strategies that promote employee retention. The reasons for employee turnover can be tracked and analyzed on a quarterly basis to determine changes to retention strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a process for conducting a formal exit interview with all exiting staff.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources implements the exit interview process.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources monitors the exit interview process.	July 2002 and Ongoing
4.	The executive director of Human Resources analyzes and shares the turnover information with the staff and the board so that strategies to reduce turnover can be developed.	September 2002 and Quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD's list of available substitute teachers is not up to date. The computerized attendance system automatically calls substitutes who are programmed in the system. The telephone database of substitutes, however, contains a population of inactive substitutes. While Human Resources adds 10 to 20 new substitutes per month to the system, it has not inactivated or purged substitutes from the system.

The district's lack of reliable information in the automated attendance system hinders the Human Resources Department's ability to make a substitute assignment in a timely manner and evaluate the staffing levels for substitute teachers.

Recommendation 41:

Develop a process to ensure that the list of available substitutes is current and re-evaluate the substitute recruitment needs of each school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee develops a process to evaluate the current list of substitute teachers and eliminates inactive members.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources analyzes the substitute staffing levels for each school and develops an appropriate recruiting strategy, if needed.	July 2002 and Ongoing

3.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee ensures the list of substitutes is updated on a monthly basis.	August 2002 and Monthly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD's employment application process is cumbersome and does not adequately help applicants file applications with the Human Resources Department. Although the district makes applications and job postings available on its Web site, its job postings do not list a job description, job requirements or salary level; it does not provide a Spanish version of the applications; and it does not post instructions for filling out an application.

Exhibit 4-11 shows the demographics of LISD employees.

Exhibit 4-11
LISD Employee Demographics
2000

Ethnicity	Percent of total staff
African American	0%
Hispanic	92%
Anglo	8%
Other	0%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, Snapshot, 2000.

A number of manual-trade employees, such as food service workers, groundskeepers and custodians are well qualified for their positions, despite English language deficiencies. Because manual-trade positions often are difficult to fill, it is appropriate that LISD accommodate employees' language barriers. A lack of application materials in Spanish greatly interferes with the Human Resources Department's ability to recruit these valuable employees.

With the exception of the application being available on the Web site, the entire application process is labor intensive and is not managed using technology. A largely manual application process increases workload and

application turnaround time and decreases the Human Resources Department's capacity to process more applications.

Recommendation 42:

Revise the employment process to accommodate the needs of the applicant and use technology to make application materials more accessible.

Application materials, such as forms, job postings and instructions should be presented in English and Spanish to accommodate the demographics of LISD's applicants. Job postings should be comprehensive in nature and include a description of the job, job requirements and salary range. The Human Resources Department should use refurbished computers from LISD's computer disposal inventory to set up two or three workstations for applicants to use. Each workstation should include a step-by-step guideline to the application process in English and Spanish. The Human Resources Department also should add a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page to its Web site to address the most commonly asked questions presented to Human Resources staff regarding the application process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a format for all job posting descriptions, requirements and salary ranges to be posted on the Web site.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources develops an FAQ document to be posted on the Web site.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources contacts the director of Information Technology to request the development of Spanish applications materials, a FAQ page for the Web site and computer workstations.	June 2002
4.	The director of Information Technology provides online Spanish versions of application materials, a FAQ page for the Web site and computer workstations.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

C. TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All issues pertaining to the development of employees, such as job descriptions, training, appraisals and certification deserve equal and strong attention in order to retain valuable employees and ensure fair treatment for all.

The purpose of training and staff development is to improve the quality and/or quantity of work produced, reduce employee turnover rates and increase employee job satisfaction. The three major elements in successfully implementing training programs are:

- assessment of training needs;
- training programs; and
- evaluation of training programs' effectiveness.

LISD teachers have training opportunities to gain knowledge of best practices and processes, and they are afforded regular, comprehensive feedback about their performance. Effective training is key to ensuring all district employees have an equal opportunity to excel in their chosen field, thereby providing their peers and students with continued excellence.

To assess the developmental needs of employees, LISD conducts annual performance appraisals. Evaluating an employee's performance gives clear indicators of the kinds of training and development needed to improve that employee's abilities and expertise.

FINDING

LISD offers a comprehensive employee orientation to all new employees. The district schedules and requires five-hour employee orientations for new employees on a monthly basis and includes training on employment policies, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, sexual harassment policy, drug- free school policy, code of ethics, leaves and absences and grievance procedures. The orientations also present training on safety in the workplace and insurance benefits. All new employees receive the LISD handbook at orientation. LISD's employee handbook effectively communicates LISD's policies and ensures all employees are familiar with the standards used for enforcement of policies, procedures and employee entitlements. Employees also receive an orientation to their work environment by their immediate supervisors. Supervisors present

completion certificates for all new employees to document that the district advises all new employees of important policies and procedures.

In addition to orientation, the district provides Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) appraisal tool training to its teaching staff through TEA and presents teachers with LISD's expectations for performance. Teachers receive a PDAS manual that extensively details how the tool is used, minimum performance standards, teacher self-reporting and scoring factors. LISD offers PDAS training, which is required for new teachers, to its teaching staff twice a year.

COMMENDATION

LISD consistently provides employees with standard training at orientation to explain district policies, procedures, benefits, entitlements and performance measures.

FINDING

LISD has a high number of emergency certified and non-certified teachers employed at its schools. Teachers do not take an active role in completing deficiency plans, requesting transcripts and reporting information to the Human Resources Department by the required deadlines. Each teacher is provided information on what is required to remain certified and asked to sign a memo stating that they have been advised. Yet, many teachers claim they are not informed of their responsibilities or do not know the procedures for completing the process.

The district requires some teachers, Early Childhood Center through grade five, to have bilingual certification, which contributes to the workload and expense of their deficiency plans. The growing population of new teachers with professional degrees is not aware of the scope of additional educational requirements needed for state certification. LISD does not provide periodic in-service trainings to its teaching staff to communicate the importance of completing certification requirements.

Exhibit 4-12 shows the percentage of teacher full-time equivalents (FTEs) on emergency permits for LISD and its peer districts.

Exhibit 4-12
Percentage of LISD and Peer District Teachers on Emergency Permits
2000-01

District	Percentage of Teachers

United	17.2%
Eagle Pass	16.3%
Laredo	**12.8%**
Edgewood	7.0%
Edinburg	4.7%
Harlandale	4.0%
Region	**8.2%**
State	**5.2%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

LISD ranks third highest among its peer districts in the percentage of teachers on permits and is 7.6 percentage points above the state. **Exhibit 4-13** presents a breakdown of LISD's teacher permits by type.

Exhibit 4-13
LISD Teacher Permits by Type
1998-99 Through 2000-01

Type	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Emergency Permit	100	142	134
Non-renewable Permit	20	23	30
Temporary Classroom Assignment	0	2	0
Temporary Exemption	0	5	0

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Recommendation 43:

Conduct an intensive campaign to assist and encourage all teaching staff to attain certification.

The Human Resources Department should increase its certification activities to include a new teacher certification workshop, required in-service workshop for all teachers approaching certification deadlines and regular collection of deficiency reports from the applicable universities. The executive director of Human Resources will require a great deal of support from school principals and administrators to reduce the number of emergency permits.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources sets a quarterly schedule and agenda for quarterly new teacher certification workshops.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources sets a schedule and agenda for workshops directed at existing teachers requiring certification to be held twice a year.	June 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources ensures that the Human Resources Department receives monthly reports from applicable universities on the status of active deficiency plans.	June 2002 and Ongoing
4.	The executive director of Human Resources uses university status reports to solicit support from school principals and administrators in order to follow up with individuals not progressing.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In many cases, LISD's written job descriptions do not exist or do not match actual job duties. Non-existent or inadequately documented job descriptions make it difficult for the district to evaluate employee performance as well as recruit individuals with the correct skills for vacant positions.

Many job descriptions evaluated by the review team were several years old and had not been revised to accurately depict the current job requirements. LISD employs many staff members that have been employed up to 30 years. These employees have never received a job description because they already worked for the district when it began developing job descriptions.

The district has not developed job descriptions consistently, resulting in job descriptions that are not uniform across employee categories. Some job descriptions are very detailed, while many are very generic and difficult to interpret. Job descriptions for existing employees have not been reviewed or updated. During the TSPR review, the executive director of Human Resources acknowledged that district job descriptions need development and are not useful tools in the evaluation of employee performance or applicant qualifications.

The Human Resources coordinators are developing job descriptions for all new positions based on examples from TEA. TEA, however, does not provide examples of job descriptions for highly specialized positions. Human Resources coordinators use their best judgment in the development of job descriptions for these specialized jobs.

Without developing and maintaining job descriptions for all district positions, the district cannot ensure that it has useful tools to evaluate employee performance or applicant qualifications.

Recommendation 44:

Develop job descriptions that clearly identify the job requirements for every position in the district.

The Human Resources Department should develop a universal template for the creation of a job description. Elements of the LISD job description should include job title, job code, supervisor, qualifications, job demands, job goal, performance responsibilities, terms of employment and salary classification.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources creates a master list of all district positions.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources distributes the list to department directors and school principals who review the list and work with employees and supervisors to create accurate job descriptions.	July 2002
3.	Employees and supervisors review job descriptions and report accurate information to the executive director of Human Resources.	August 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources finalizes the updated job descriptions and obtains the superintendent's approval.	September 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources distributes approved job descriptions to all employees and to their personnel file.	October 2002
6.	The executive director of Human Resources oversees the updating of job descriptions annually and conducts position audits at least every three years.	October 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Some LISD employee personnel files lack written copies of the employee's performance evaluation. According to LISD board policy and Education Code 21.352(c)(d), LISD is required to maintain a written copy of each teacher's performance evaluation in the teacher's personnel file. The review team sampled 15 LISD personnel files and found that some files lacked written appraisals.

Department supervisors retain employee performance evaluations and performance-related documents. Because individual supervisors vary in their level of attention to confidential materials, evaluations maintained by them are at risk of being viewed by others not privileged to such information.

Without adhering to documented procedures for written appraisals, the Human Resources Department has no way of knowing if appraisals are conducted and where the documents are maintained. Missing evaluations greatly hinder a supervisor's ability to evaluate an employee's progress toward improving his/her performance. The absence of performance records would compromise LISD's credibility if an employee's record of performance were required to resolve a dispute or charge of unfair treatment.

Recommendation 45:

Require all performance-related documents to be properly filed in employee personnel files, and develop a tracking system to ensure performance appraisals are conducted.

The Human Resources Department should ensure performance-related records be collected and properly placed in a personnel file. Supervisors should have access to copies of an employee's performance file when necessary for future evaluations, but should not keep copies of performance documents.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources creates and distributes a memo requesting the collection of all performance-related documentation.	May 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources manages the filing of confidential performance evaluations in the appropriate manner.	June 2002

3.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a procedure for providing access to performance documents to supervisors without compromising the integrity of the file.	July 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources develops a tracking system to ensure that performance appraisals are conducted and documents are submitted to Human Resources.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD appraisal forms and procedures are not uniform for all employees. While teachers are evaluated with the PDAS tool and guidelines, administrative, auxiliary and manual trade employees are evaluated with a variety of appraisal forms and standards. Board-approved performance appraisal policies exist in the employee handbook and indicate appropriate evaluation standards for teachers and professional staff. Board policy, however, does not address the use of a standard form by which employees other than teaching staff are evaluated.

The district uses up to five different forms for the evaluating staff. Each appraisal form is pre-printed with indicators of performance for tasks specific to the position's description. Considering that many job descriptions are not up to date, it is likely that the points of performance printed on the forms are not representative of each position's requirements.

While the PDAS includes an employee self-rating, a self-report form is not used for non-teaching staff. The PDAS appraisal system uses a quantitative scoring system based on a rating scale that includes:

- Exceeds,
- Proficient,
- Below, and
- Unsatisfactory.

Evaluations sampled by the review team showed that ratings used for teacher-aide/clerical, librarian, educational diagnostician and administrator are not assigned a numerical score and are based on rating scales different from the PDAS tool. Most evaluations are designed to evaluate an employee among eight domains, or areas, of responsibility. The educational diagnostician evaluation is designed with ten domains that are not specifically identified. PDAS guidelines allow for an employee response, as does the administrator evaluation.

LISD employees could argue they are not receiving fair and equitable treatment if they are not afforded the same opportunities to respond to their own performance or are not evaluated to the same degree as other employees.

Recommendation 46:

Develop an improved and uniform employee appraisal tool for performance evaluation of all employees, based on the PDAS appraisal system and the employee's job description.

In order to address the performance and developmental needs of all LISD employees, appraisal tools should include equitable performance measures based on the position's description and performance requirements. The Human Resources Department should conduct a series of workshops to evaluate the various appraisal tools, bring the evaluation forms into a single format based on the PDAS system and provide for employee self-assessments and the opportunity to respond to the appraisal process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources develops an agenda for a series of workshops that will address the need for a uniform appraisal tool for all employees.	June 2002
2.	The executive director of Human Resources leads the series of appraisal tool workshops that are attended by selected department directors.	July 2002
3.	The executive director of Human Resources develops the uniform appraisal form based on the PDAS system, job descriptions and feedback of workshop participants.	August 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources conducts an in-service training for all department directors that explains the correct use of the new appraisal forms.	October 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources or designee distributes the uniform appraisal tool to all district supervisors.	October 2002
6.	District supervisors use the new appraisal tool in annually evaluating all staff members.	October 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) facilities use and management in four divisions.

A. Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Management
B. Maintenance and Operations
C. Custodial Services
D. Energy Management

A comprehensive facilities, maintenance, custodial, energy and construction management program should coordinate all of the physical resources in the district to integrate facility planning with all other aspects of school planning. Facility personnel are involved in design and construction and are knowledgeable about maintenance and operations. In addition, facility departments operate under defined policies and procedures and perform activities that can be adapted to accommodate changes in the district's resources and needs.

BACKGROUND

The LISD Division of Operations oversees in an area of approximately 14 square miles within the city of Laredo. The district maintains 59 facilities with more than 1.8 million square feet of space. During the construction phase of the capital improvement program, the district will also maintain additional temporary schools to house students while their schools are being reconstructed.

Exhibit 5-1 lists LISD facilities and their square footages.

Exhibit 5-1
LISD Facilities

Elementary Schools	Square Footage (SF)	Support Facilities	Square Footage (SF)
Bruni	25,169	Public Information	912
Buenos Aires	40,546	Superintendent's Office	5,000
L. Daiches	42,653	Administration - Division of Instruction	6,828
A.T. Dovalina	33,836	Administration Building - General	16,200
F. Farrias	63,249	Aldape Building	1,656

D. D. Hachar	25,025	Board Room	13,758
Heights	25,561	Federal Programs	13,758
J. A. Kawas	42,266	Food Services	24,217
J. Leyendecker	44,272	Food Services Warehouse	Leased *
Honore Lingarde	46,144	Food Services Warehouse	Leased *
Macdonell	27,314	Instructional Television	5,301
J. C. Martin, Jr.	58,778	Division of Operations	40,000
C. L. Milton	44,666	Printing	2,749
Ochoa	23,904	Special Education	Leased 2,568
A. Pierce	61,752	Staff Development	3,673
M. S. Ryan	48,188	Tax Office	1,309
Tomas Sanchez	48,674	Department of Transportation	4,320
Santa Maria	18,257	Athletics (Shirley Stadium)	*
Santo Nino	60,639	F. S. Lara Academy (Annex)	*
K. Tarver	39,080	V.M. Trevino Student Center	*
H. B Zachry	53,001	Communications Broadcast Center, Newspaper, Photo Lab, Metal Arts	*
Middle Schools	**Square Footage (SF)**	Theater Arts	*
L. J. Christen	109,870	Performing Arts Annex	*
L. G. Gigarroa	53,800	Academic Annex II	*
M.B. Lamar	154,918	Performance Arts	*
Memorial Middle	53,936	V.M. Trevino Communications and Fine Arts	*
High Schools	**Square Footage (SF)**	Academic Annex I	*
Leo G. Cigarroa	53,800	F.S. Lara Academy	*

Martin	186,456	Special Education	*
Nixon	224,731	Fixed Assets	Leased *
		Technology - River Drive Mall	Leased *

Source: LISD Division of Operations, facilities prior to CIP Bond Program,
*November 2001. *Data not available from district at this writing.*

Responsibilities of the Division of Operations include building maintenance and operations, uniforms, outside pest control, energy management, long-range facility planning and construction management. Each individual school or facility manages its own custodial services and grounds maintenance.

The organization of the Division of Operations is shown in **Exhibit 5-2**.

Exhibit 5-2
Organization Chart
Division of Operations
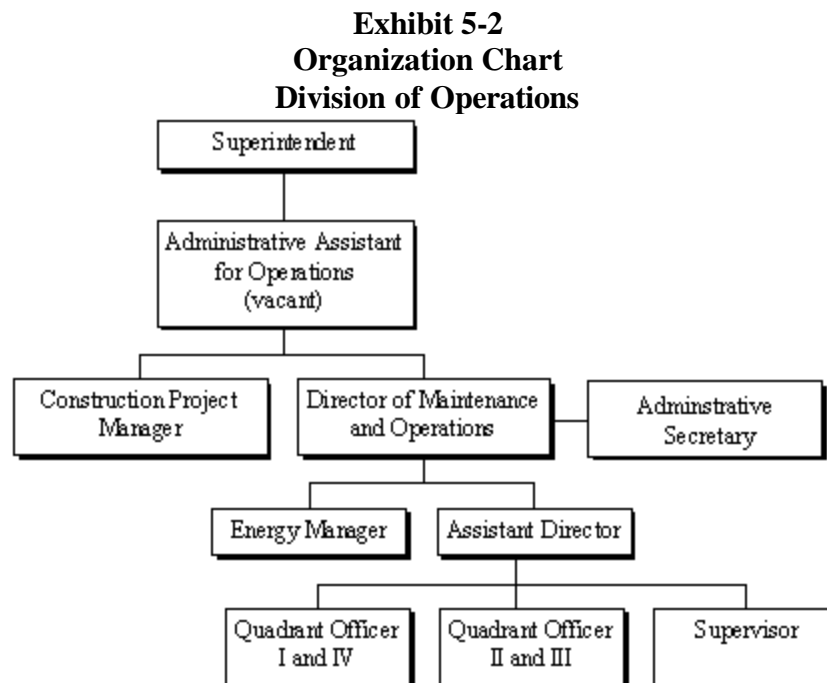
Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

The administrative assistant for Operations manages a total staff of 87 in the departments of Maintenance and Operations and Energy Management with expenditures of $3.2 million for 2000-01. **Exhibit 5-3** compares the Maintenance and Operations Department's actual expenditures for 1999-2000 and 2000-01. The significant increases between 1999-2000 and

2000-01 in Other Expenses and Capital Outlay were due largely to vehicle replacements and higher travel expenses for supervisory training.

Exhibit 5-3
Actual Expenditures Division of Operations
1999-2000 and 2000-01

Expenditure Category	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change
Payroll Costs	$2,226,709	$2,283,986	2.57%
Contracted Services	$295,880	$314,148	6.17%
Supplies and Materials	485,439	473,297	-2.5%
Other Expenses	1,055	5,771	447.01%
Capital Outlay	88,924	158,413	78.14%
Total	**$3,098,007**	**$3,235,615**	**4.44%**

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

Exhibit 5-4 shows the number of LISD's Division of Operations employees by position for 1999-2000 and 2000-01, with percent changes between the two years.

Exhibit 5-4
LISD's Division of Operations Employees by Position
1999-2000 and 2000-01

Position	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change
Director	1	1	0%
Assistant Director	1	1	0%
Quadrant Officers	3	2	(33%)
Supervisor	1	1	0%
Warehouse Manager	1	0	(100%)
Administrative Secretary	1	1	0%
Personnel Secretary	1	1	0%
Receptionist	1	1	0%
Clerks	16	15	(6%)

Custodians (Operations Div. Only)	2	2	0%
Matron	1	1	0%
Band Repair	1	1	0%
A/V Technicians	3	1	(67%)
Communication/Alarm and Life Safety Technician	1	1	0%
A/V Bench Repair Technician	1	1	0%
HVAC-R Systems Control Technician	0	1	100%
HVACR Technicians	7	6	(14%)
Carpenters	6	4	(33%)
Doors/Hardware Repairman	0	1	100%
Cabinet Maker	0	1	100%
Welder	1	0	(100%)
Small Engine Repairman	1	1	0%
Upholsterers	2	0	(200%)
Floors	1	1	0%
Locksmiths	2	2	0%
Electricians	4	4	0%
Glass	1	1	0%
Masons	2	1	(50%)
Roofs	1	1	0%
Sheet metal	1	1	0%
Blind Repairman	1	1	0%
Master Plumber	1	1	0%
Plumbers	4	4	0%
Utility Crew	4	4	0%
Fence	1	1	0%
Painters	4	4	0%
Tractor/Mower Operator	0	1	100%
Helpers	17	16	(6%)

Drafting Clerk	0	0	0%
Total	**96**	**87**	**(11%)**

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

Chapter 5
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

A. FACILITIES PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

The mission of an effective facilities planning, design and construction management department is to plan for and provide facilities that meet the needs of students at the lowest possible cost. A district must ensure that all facilities built by the district create an environment for productive instruction. Long-range facilities planning is one of the most critical aspects of facilities management. A district must continuously project changes in student enrollment and assess the state of its existing facilities.

LISD's construction project manager is responsible for overseeing LISD's Capital Improvement Plan and reports to the administrative assistant for Operations. Due to the vacancy in the administrative assistant for Operations position, the construction project manager at the time of this review in Fall 2001, reported directly to the superintendent. The construction project manager was hired in November 1999 and the assistant construction project manager was hired in February 2002. LISD's Construction Management Department is organized as shown in **Exhibit 5-5**.

Exhibit 5-5
LISD Construction Management Department

2001-02
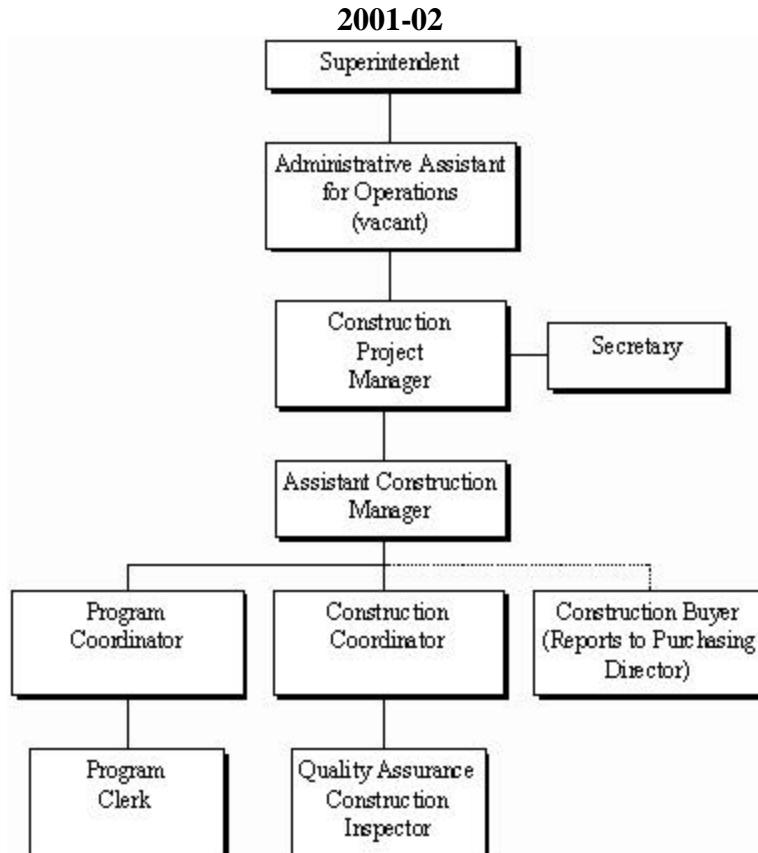
Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

The mission of the Construction Management Department is to construct state-of-the-art educational facilities on time, within budget and in compliance with all applicable codes and regulations. Major responsibilities of this department include the following:

- Creating and maintaining the educational facility design specifications and construction standards;
- Assisting in the selection of design professionals, contractors and consultants;
- Negotiating fees and developing contracts for board approval;
- Directing the work of project architects, engineers and contractors;
- Overseeing funds spent during construction;
- Obtaining soil tests, land surveys and traffic studies;
- Coordinating platting, zoning, drainage and municipal utility district (MUD) requirements;
- Preparing all work-in-progress reports; and
- Conducting project observation reports on ongoing construction projects.

LISD has begun a major capital improvement program totaling $175.1 million that impacts all schools and most other facilities. Twelve elementary schools are being reconstructed and improvements are being made to all other schools. During the reconstruction of the twelve elementary schools, students are relocated at temporary facilities that were designed and purchased by the district specifically for that purpose.

In 1999, the district contracted the Vitetta Group to perform a comprehensive analysis of district facilities and future facility needs. The Vitetta Group consulted with school staff, parents and the community during the development of the plan. The Vitetta study analyzed district demographics in terms of historical student population and expected growth and change over three, five and 10 years. In addition, the group analyzed the condition, use, capacity, instructional adequacy and potential future needs of all district facilities. The study primarily served as a "pre-bond" concept for the purpose of presenting the district's facilities needs to the public. The district assembled a Facilities Needs Assessment Advisory Committee to review the Vitetta study and make recommendations to the board. The Facilities Needs Assessment Advisory Committee was composed of:

- secondary school principal;
- elementary school principal;
- middle school principal;
- secondary school teacher;
- elementary school teacher;
- special populations representative;
- facilities committee board member;
- community leader/at large;
- community leader/university;
- parent (elementary); and
- parent (secondary).

On May 1, 1999, LISD constituents approved $144 million in bonds to be sold to finance the Capital Improvement Plan that was developed by the Vitetta Group. The original intent of the Capital Improvement Plan was to address the immediate needs for educational facilities with four replacement schools and additions and/or renovations to all other campuses. The Capital Improvement Plan was to cover a period of eight years, with completion scheduled during the 2006-07 school year. In November 1999, the district hired a construction project manager to oversee the implementation of the Capital Improvement Plan.

In June 2000, a revised plan was developed by an ad hoc committee of district staff and submitted to and approved by the board. The purpose of the revised plan was to authenticate the districts current needs since the

time the Vitetta study was prepared and the bonds were approved. The revised plan increased the original scope of the Capital Improvement Plan, adjusting it from $144 million to $175.1 million. Quality Zone Academy Bonds of $13.1 million and almost $18 million in estimated interest earning will provide funding for this increase of $31.1 million. The revised plan also reduced the schedule from 8 years to 5 years and provided for the following:

- Half- to full-day kindergarten sessions at all elementary schools;
- Pre-K and kindergarten students to be taught at respective elementary schools in lieu of busing to early childhood centers;
- Class size reduction;
- Additional technology;
- Elimination of many temporary classrooms;
- Asbestos abatement;
- Correction of defective roof trusses in certain cafeteria buildings;
- A transportation center, technology center and food service facility;
- Twelve new replacement schools;
- Major renovations to middle and high schools; and
- Major renovations to seven elementary schools.

To assist in the design and management of the Capital Improvement Plan, the district advertised for architect qualifications and received more than 30 responses from architectural firms across the state. An evaluation team of district staff ranked the firms, and a committee that included school board members recommended seven local firms to the board. The board approved the assignment of projects to these firms based on evaluation scores received so that the highest-ranking firm would receive the most work.

Fees were negotiated with the seven architectural firms based upon a percentage of a project's cost. Fees for new prototype schools were negotiated at 3.5 percent of the project cost, and those for additions and renovations were negotiated at 8 percent. Four different architectural firms were selected to design the first four school projects.

Design of the first four projects was completed in the summer of 2001. These projects consisted of three new replacement schools, one of which combines two existing schools into one new school, and additions and renovations to the fourth school. LISD advertised and received competitive sealed proposals from construction firms for the construction ofthese projects in August 2001. A committee composed of LISD management and staff evaluated the proposals and interviewed the firms. The committee recommended and the board approved Leyendecker Construction Inc. as the contractor for all four projects.

LISD provides insurance for its construction contractors through a Rolling Owner Controlled Insurance Program (ROCIP). A ROCIP is a self-insurance program designed to give the district more control over the cost of insurance. Instead of requiring contractors to provide their own insurance, the district purchases the insurance for all projects and makes it available to contractors. The program includes general liability insurance, workers' compensation/employers' liability, and Builders' Risk insurance. The program helps reduce insurance costs by consolidating coverage into one policy. Other school districts, including Austin ISD, reports substantial savings from ROCIPs.

FINDING

LISD has developed and is using prototype school models when designing the reconstruction of its twelve elementary schools. Prototype school models provide established criteria for a school's design such as classroom sizes, hallway dimensions and cafeteria size and configuration. This established criteria is provided to contracted architects and engineers in the district's *Design Guide for Architects and Engineers*.

Using these models help to ensure equity among elementary schools. Two of the models (A and B) are used for schools with student capacity of 825, and two (B and D) are used for schools with a capacity of 650. Models A and C are similar in design, and models B and D are similar. In addition, Models B and D have early childhood centers.

Prototype designs need only a few adjustments, such as adopting sites to terrain, or in the arrangement and placement of rooms such as certain offices, libraries or *cafétoriums* (large rooms used as both cafeterias and auditoriums), to be adapted for specific projects. Using prototypes also reduce architect fees that are paid for the design of schools since much of the preliminary design has already been established and doesn't have to be created separately for each project. The district was successful in negotiating architectural fees of 3.5 percent for new schools.

COMMENDATION

LISD's use of prototype designs for the reconstruction of 12 elementary schools ensures equity among the schools and reduces architectural fees.

FINDING

LISD does not have a comprehensive set of master standard specifications for the Capital Improvement Plan bond program. A comprehensive set of master specifications include specifications for all materials and

equipment needed for a construction project that is provided to prospective bidders. While the district has developed standard specification for items such as flagpoles, metal lockers, interior/exterior signage, toilet accessories, marker boards and tack boards and mini-blinds, specifications for all items normally included in a set of master standard specifications have not been developed. A comprehensive set of master specifications normally includes specifications for other items such as ceiling tiles, carpet, floor tile, restroom partitions, plumbing fixtures, roofing material, wood for cabinets, paint and Heating and Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment.

The district has completed and the board has approved four volumes of its "Design Guide for Architects and Engineers" but the fifth volume that should contain the set of master standard specifications has not been completed. Master standard specifications help ensure that the same equipment and construction materials are used in all school construction projects.

Ysleta ISD Facilities Department uses a standardized approach to their construction projects, allowing the district to use common materials and building systems on all its projects, which reduces architectural and engineering fees. Also, with standardization the district needs to stock fewer lines of inventory items, so it can order higher volumes, which reduces overall procurement and inventory costs. In addition, standardization creates a uniform, cohesive appearance in the school's facilities.

Fort Worth ISD developed a master standard specification plan for its construction program in 1999. This plan resulted in similar materials and equipment for all construction projects. Once the project manager had developed master specifications, the district was able to transmit information on CD-ROMs to prospective bidders.

Without a comprehensive set of master standard specifications, the district is unable to include a uniform and consolidated set of specifications to potential bidders to use on construction projects.

Recommendation 47:

Prepare a comprehensive set of specification standards for use in LISD's Capital Improvement Plan bond program.

The set of master standard specifications should be developed in two parts. Part one should cover all construction materials that will be used in the Capital Improvement Plan program and be developed with input from the Maintenance and Operations Department and the administrative assistant

for Custodians and Textbooks. Input will help in selecting materials that are reliable, efficient and easily maintained. In part, this would include items such as carpet, floor tile, restroom partitions, HVAC equipment, plumbing fixtures, roofing material, wood for cabinets, paint and ceiling tile.

Part two should include all furniture items. The construction project manager should consult members of the instructional staff to ensure that the furniture selected is appropriate for all classrooms, labs, libraries and other facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The construction project manager consults with facilities departments at other school districts that use a set of master standard specifications to determine best practices.	May 2002
2.	The construction project manager meets with the director of Maintenance and Operations and appropriate instructional and custodial staff to develop set of master standard specifications.	June 2002
3.	The construction project manager presents the set of master standard specifications to the superintendent for approval.	July 2002
4.	The construction project manager meets with the Purchasing Department to ensure appropriate language is included in bid specifications for future construction projects.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Monthly reports provided to the board that present LISD's construction schedules do not clearly indicate the status of each project. Many of the construction projects, especially elementary reconstruction projects require demolition and asbestos abatement to be performed before reconstruction can begin, but construction schedules do not identify these major events.

The schedule for completion of the overall Capital Improvement Plan was decreased from 8 years to 5 years when the district revised the plan in June 2000. At that time schedules were revised for each project.

Exhibit 5-6 shows a comparison of the revised construction schedules at June 2000 and one that was published in November 2001.

Exhibit 5-6
Construction Schedule
June 2000 and November 2001

School	Construction Type	Construction Cost	Construction Schedule as of June 2000		Construction Schedule as of November 2001	
			Award Date	Completion Date	Award Date	Completion Date
Kawas Elementary	Addition	$4,211,386	9/13/01	1/16/02	1/15/01	11/24/02
Ligarde Elementary	Addition	$3,388,153	9/13/01	1/16/03	2/19/02	2/19/03
Santo Nina Elementary	New	$5,191,225	9/13/01	1/16/03	2/15/02	2/15/03
Zachry Elementary	Addition	$1,456,725	9/13/01	1/16/03	2/12/02	2/12/03
Daiches Elementary	New	$5,191,225	9/13/01	1/16/03	5/13/02	4/13/03
Cigarroa Middle	Addition	$3,314,867	9/13/01	1/16/02	2/15/02	6/04/03
Cigarroa High	Addition	$8,168,516	7/11/02	10/16/03	2/15/02	6/04/03
Ochoa/Sanchez Elementary	New	$5,140,785	8/16/01	12/12/02	10/15/01	9/27/02
D.D. Hanchar Elementary	Addition	$5,348,285	6/13/02	9/11/03	8/30/02	9/30/03
Lamar Middle	New	$7,358,620	8/16/01	12/12/02	4/24/02	6/24/03
Nixon High	Addition	$8,644,032	8/16/01	12/12/02	12/24/01	2/24/03
Memorial Middle	New	$8,907,728	6/13/02	9/11/03	8/15/02	12/15/03
Alma Pierce Elementary	New	$5,061,225	6/13/02	9/11/03	6/15/02	6/15/03
Buenos Aires Elementary	New	$5,759,585	6/13/02	9/13/03	6/15/02	6/15/03
J.C. Martin Jr. Elementary	Addition	$1,997,044	8/16/01	12/12/02	11/24/01	8/15/02
K. Tarver	Addition	$4,606,191	8/16/01	12/12/02	2/26/02	3/26/03

Elementary						
Milton Elementary	New	$5,246,865	8/16/01	12/12/02	12/24/01	2/24/03
Ryan Elementary	New	$5,246,865	6/13/02	9/11/03	6/15/02	6/15/03
Bruni Elementary	New	$5,107,115	5/14/02	8/14/03	10/15/02	12/15/03
Dovalina Elementary	Addition	$2,598,715	7/12/01	11/14/02	10/15/01	9/30/02
Farias Elementary	New	$4,594,395	7/12/01	11/14/02	10/15/01	10/03/02
Leyendecker Elementary	New	$4,488,315	5/14/02	8/14/03	6/15/02	6/15/03
Macdonell Elementary	New	$5,107,115	5/14/02	8/14/03	10/15/02	12/15/03
Santa Maria Elementary	New	$5,107,115	7/12/01	11/14/02	10/15/01	8/30/02
Christen Middle	New	$7,193,380	7/12/01	11/14/02	5/15/02	12/15/03
Martin High	Addition	$7,823,946	5/14/02	8/14/03	5/15/02	12/15/03

Source: LISD Construction Department, November 2001

The construction project manager said projects are about one year behind schedule. He further stated that the district is not behind schedule as much as that the district has voluntarily prolonged the planning and design stage to facilitate and secure the best designs.

Schedules are prepared for each project that shows dates for the:

- hiring of architects;
- start of preliminary design by architect if not a prototype project;
- start of design development by architect;
- start of final design by architect;
- receive final contract drawings from architect and advertise for construction contract;
- receive, open and negotiate construction proposals;
- award construction contract; and
- completion of construction.

Although the review team was provided copies of individual schedules for each project and reviewed information on the district's web site, it was very difficult to determine the status of individual projects and the Capital Improvement Plan as a whole. Construction completion dates varied between reports that made it difficult to determine if individual projects were progressing according to plan.

San Antonio ISD produces four types of reports for its construction projects that provide information on individual projects and summaries for the overall projects. The reports present information in easily understandable presentations that provide both scheduling and budget information.

Recommendation 48:

Establish firm schedules for each project and prepare reports that clearly indicate the status of each construction project.

All major work necessary to complete building projects should be included in the overall construction schedule. For example, asbestos removal, demolition, temporary buildings and the coordination of all consultants should be detailed as they will impact the overall schedule.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The construction project manager evaluates the current construction reports and schedules, makes necessary modifications to include all pertinent major tasks and presents format to the superintendent and board for approval.	June 2002
2.	The construction project manager prepares monthly reports using the revised formats and presents them to the superintendent and board.	July 2002 Ongoing
3.	The construction project manager continually monitors and reports on the status of projects and formally requests board approvals to change schedules.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have a long-range facilities master plan that is reviewed and updated annually. While the Capital Improvement Plan developed in 1999 by the Vittea organization addressed immediate facility

needs that facilitated the passage of bonds to fund necessary improvements, the district does not have a process that formally updates facilities' future needs.

Some essential components of a long-range facilities master plan include:

- Identification of the current and future needs of district facilities and educational programs;
- Analysis of the condition of existing schools;
- Student growth projections, evaluation of trends and community expansion plans;
- Cost and capital requirements analysis;
- Facilities program management and design guidelines; and
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation of facility and educational needs with district stakeholders.

A long-range facilities master plan will also specify what roles district staff, management and community will play in the process, identify what best practices and alternatives are applicable, an implementation strategy and include a mechanism for review and updates at future dates. A long-range facilities master plan is used to set a district's strategy for the future, and is reviewed and updated annually using current information.

The Vitetta study predicted an increase of 748 students from 1998 to 2002, but actual student enrollment decreased by 45 students. The comparison of actual student enrollment and projected student enrollment are critical for planning future facility needs. **Exhibit 5-7** shows the district's projected and actual student enrollment from 1998-99 through 2001-02.

Exhibit 5-7
LISD's Enrollment Projections
Compared to Actual
1998-99 through 2001-02

Year	Projected Student Enrollment	Actual Student Enrollment	Projected over (under) Actual
1998-99	22,061	22,601	(540)
1999-00	22,213	22,524	(311)
2000-01	22,479	22,547	(67)
2001-02	22,809	22,556	253

Source: LISD Administration, November-December, 2001.

Exhibit 5-8 shows the number of students accommodated in each school prior to the Capital Improvement Plan bond election and the capacity planned for by the Capital Improvement Plan.

Exhibit 5-8
Capacity Analysis of LISD

Elementary Schools	Pre-Capital Improvement Plan bond 4/7/00	Post-Capital Improvement Plan bond
Bruni	412	648
Dovalina	561	648
Farias	1,107	648
Leyendecker	816	648
Macdonell	343	648
Santa Maria	298	648
A. Pierce	1,067	839
Buenos Aires	527	839
J.C. Martin Jr.	807	839
K. Tarver	420	839
Milton	959	839
Ryan	928	839
Ochoa/Sanchez	1,034	839
Hachar	359	839
Kawas	533	825
Ligarde	584	825
Santo Nina	978	825
Zachary	771	825
Daiches/Heights	884	825
Sub-Total	**10,492**	**12,133**
Middle Schools		
L.J. Christen	1,526	1,349
J.G. Cigarroa	1,367	1,349

M.B. Lamar	1,379	1,349
Memorial	635	1,349
Sub-Total	**4,907**	**5,396**
High Schools		
Cigarroa	1,507	1,507*
Martin	2,105	2,105*
Nixon	2,240	2,240*
Sub-Total	**5,852**	**5,852**
Grand Total	**21,251**	**23,381**

Source: LISD Construction Department, November 2002.
*No future capacity was given by LISD.

Several agencies have developed model facilities planning processes. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) model is outlined in **Exhibit 5-9**. The Council of Educational Facility Planners International also has a model that is widely used.

Exhibit 5-9
Texas Education Agency
Model Facilities Planning Process

Program Element	Mission	Responsibilities	Deliverables
Planning	Needs Assessment	Identify current and future needs	Demographics, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis
	Scope	Outline required building areas; develop schedules and costs	Programming, cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis
	Strategy	Identify structure	Facilities project list, master schedule, budget plan organizational plan, marketing plan

	Public Approval	Implement public relations campaign	Public and media relations
Approach	Management plan	Detail roles, responsibilities and procedures	Program management plan and systems
	Program Strategy	Review and refine details	Detailed delivery strategy
	Program Guidelines	"Provide educational, design and construction standards"	Educational specifications, design guidelines, computer-aided design standards

Source: TEA, 1998.

Recommendation 49:

Establish a facilities planning committee to create a long-range facilities master plan and update it annually.

LISD should establish a facilities planning committee, with the construction project manager serving as the chairman, to develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan and update it annually. A facilities planning committee made up of teachers, administrators, maintenance and operations personnel, parents, members of the community and students. The comprehensive long-range facilities master plan should integrate effectively with maintenance and educational programs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent identifies district staff and citizens to serve on the facilities planning committee and recommends to the board for approval.	May 2002
2.	The construction project manager chairs a meeting of the facilities planning committee to review the 1999 Vitetta study and to develop a process to update the data for an annual review process.	June 2002
3.	The facilities planning committee prepares an updated long-range facilities master plan and presents it to the superintendent for approval.	July - August 2002
4.	The construction project manager presents the long-range facilities master plan to the board for approval.	August 2002

5.	The construction project manager chairs the annual long-range facilities planning committee to update the facilities master plan.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Monthly construction budget reports do not provide sufficient information to easily determine if total funding needed for all projects will be available. The revised Capital Improvement Plan that was approved in June 2000 increased project costs from $144 million to $175.1 million. To fund the increase of $31.1 million, the district is relying upon $17,946,290 in estimated interest earnings.

Interest rates on investments sometimes fluctuate significantly from year to year. The interest rates that were used for calculations to arrive at the $17,946,290 of interest earnings needed to fund the projects will likely vary over the four or five years that funds are invested. **Exhibit 5-10** shows the planned funding for LISD's construction projects.

Exhibit 5-10
Capital Improvement Plan bond Program Revenues of LISD

Source of Funds	Amount
Round One - IFA	$72,000,000
Round Two - IFS	$72,000,000
1st Qualified QZAB	$6,560,000
2nd Qualified QZAB	$6,560,000
Interest Earnings	$17,946,290
Total	**$175,066,290**

Source: Construction Department, November 2001.

If interest earnings do not materialize as planned, shortages could have a significant impact on the overall Capital Improvement Plan bond program.

Recommendation 50:

Prepare monthly status reports to track interest earnings and adjust projections based on current interest rate trends.

LISD must closely monitor interest earnings and interest rate trends to timely identify possible shortages in funding for construction projects caused by lower interest rates. Higher interest rates could also produce more earnings than anticipated and the district should be aware of this also in a timely manner to enable the additional funds to be used in a planned manner.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The chief financial officer and the construction project manager revise reporting formats to include summaries of interest earnings and revised projections based on current interest rate trends.	May 2002
2.	The construction project manager presents revised monthly reports to the board.	June 2002 Ongoing
3.	The chief financial officer and construction project manager monitor interest earnings and interest rate trends and present to the superintendent and boards revisions to projects as may be needed.	June 2002 Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

B. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Maintenance and operations of LISD's facilities are under the director of Maintenance and Operations, who reports to the administrative assistant for Operations. The director of Maintenance and Operations is responsible for overall leadership and direction in building maintenance, energy management and use of facilities and property throughout the district. **Exhibit 5-11** shows the organization of the Maintenance and Operations Department.

Exhibit 5-11
Organization Chart
Maintenance and Operations Department
2000-01
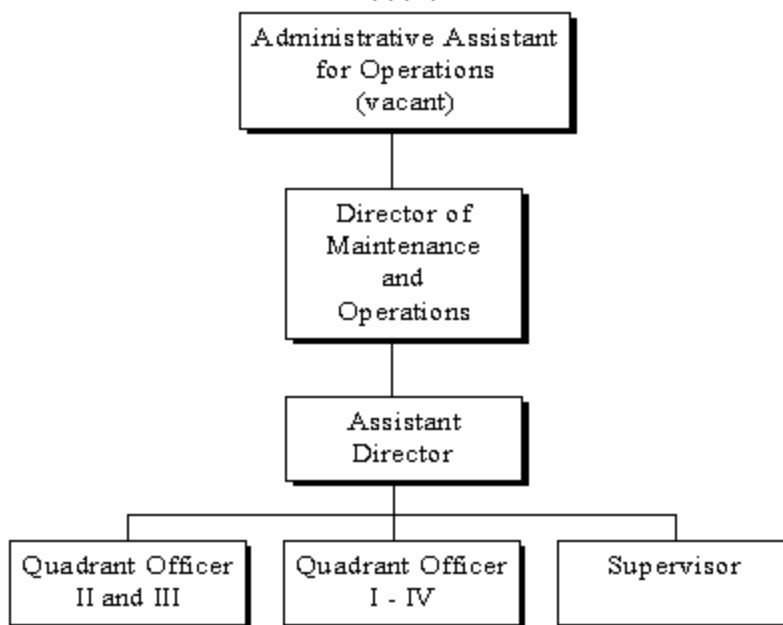
Source: LISD Division of Operations, 2000-01.

LISD's Maintenance and Operations Department is responsible for daily, preventive and routine summer maintenance of the district's facilities, which include more than 1.8 million square feet of space in 21 elementary schools, four middle schools, three high schools and 31 other facilities. The Maintenance and Operations Department has a staff of 61 and an actual expenditures budget of $3.2 million for 2000-01. **Exhibit 5-12** compares the number of LISD maintenance and operations employees, facilities and square footage to that of peer districts.

Exhibit 5-12
Employees and Facilities Ratio of LISD
and Peer Districts
November - December 2001

District	Number of Maintenance Employees	Number of Facilities	Estimated Area Square Feet	Square Feet to Employee Ratio
Eagle Pass	44	29	1,394,958	31,704
Harlandale	95	59	2,415,553	25,427
Laredo	**61**	**59**	**1,852,634**	**30,371**
United	120	45	3,677,098	30,643

Source: LISD Division of Operations, United ISD, Harlandale ISD and Eagle Pass ISD. November-December 2001.
* Data not available for Edgewood and Edinburg ISDs.

The major areas of responsibilities of selected Maintenance and Operations Department management positions are presented in **Exhibit 5-13**.

Exhibit 5-13
Selected Maintenance and Operations Department
Management Positions
November 2001

Position	Major Areas of Responsibility
Assistant director	District-wide contracts, electrical upgrades, A/C upgrades, inventory control, safety officer, training officer, service center, custodial staff, shipping & receiving and learning media center
Quadrant officer	Preventive maintenance and daily work orders for assigned facilities
Supervisor	Instructional supplies and janitorial supplies
Energy manager	Energy conservation, repair parts/general supplies, band instrument repair, communications/alarms & life safety and HVAC-R systems control

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

A listing of the Maintenance and Operations Department personnel, by trade, is shown in
Exhibit 5-14.

Exhibit 5-14
Maintenance and Operations Department
Personnel by Trade
November 2001

Trade	Number
Director	1
Assistant Director	1
Quadrant Officers	2
Supervisor	1
Warehouse Manager	0
Administrative Secretary	1
Personnel Secretary	1
Receptionist	1
Clerks	15
Custodians	2
Matron	1
Band Repair	1
A/V Technicians	1
Senior Alarm Communications	0
Communications/Alarm and Life Safety Technician	1
A/V Bench Technicians	1
HVAC-R Systems Control Technician	1
HVACR Technicians	6
Carpenters	4
Doors/Hardware Repairman	1
Cabinet Maker	1
Welders	0
Small Engine Repair	1

Upholsterers	0
Floors	1
Locksmiths	2
Electricians	4
Glass	1
Masons	1
Roofs	1
Sheet metal	1
Blind Repairman	1
Plumbers	4
Master Plumber	1
Utility Crew	4
Fence	1
Painters	4
Tractor/Mower Operator	1
Helpers	16
Total	**79**

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

FINDING

The Maintenance and Operations Department does not routinely monitor customer satisfaction data and use results to improve efficiency. To address districtwide work-order demands, the department has divided its assignments into four geographic quadrant teams led by two quadrant officers, each of whom is in charge of two quadrant teams. Each team covers a quadrant of the district for daily maintenance repairs requested through work orders and performs scheduled preventive work. **Exhibit 5-15** lists the schools and facilities assigned to each quadrant team.

Exhibit 5-15
Schools and Facilities Per Quadrant Team
2000-01

Quadrant I	Quadrant II	Quadrant III	Quadrant

			IV
Daiches Elementary Kawas Elementary Ligarde Elementary Santo Nino Elementary H.B. Zachry Elementary Cigarroa Middle Cigarroa High	Dovalina Elementary Farias Elementary Leyendecker Elementary Macdonell Elementary Santa Maria Elementary L.J. Christen Middle Martin High Athletic Office Shirley Stadium Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts Administrative Offices: Special Education, Division of Instruction, Tax Office, Administration, Superintendent, Board Room, Federal Program, ITV, Public Information, Professional Development, Instructional Technology, Information Technology, Textbook/Custodial, Fixed Assets	Bruni Elementary Buenos Aires Elementary J.C. Martin Elementary K. Tarver Elementary Tomas Sanchez/Ochoa Elementary Memorial Middle F.S. Lara Academy Annex Printing Department Department of Food Service Division of Operations Transportation Dept Nurses Office Computer Technology K. Tarver Annex Offices (Hearings Office, Postal Services, Music Dept, Risk Management, Graphics)	Alma Pierce Elementary D.D. Hachar Elementary Heights Elementary Milton Elementary Ryan Elementary Lamar Middle Nixon High F. S. Lara Academy

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

This method of operations has helped immediate response time for requests for maintenance and repair but not all steps in the work order process required for completing work orders are monitored and evaluated. The department reported completing nearly 100 percent of work orders received between September 1999 and September 2001.

Exhibit 5-16 shows the number of work orders requested, completed and those delayed during the two-year period.

Exhibit 5-16
Number of Work Orders Received and Processed
September 1999 to September 2001

Number of Work Orders Submitted	Number of Work Orders Completed	Number of Work Orders Not Completed	Number of Work Orders Delayed Due to Material
32,138	32,089	49	15

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

In spite of the high completion rate, results from teachers, staff, parents and students for a review-team survey indicate only marginal satisfaction with the timeliness of facilities maintenance. **Exhibit 5-17** shows the results of the survey with regard to the timeliness of service.

Exhibit 5-17
Timeliness of Facilities Maintenance
Survey Results

Survey Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Measure: "Buildings are maintained in a timely manner."					
Teachers	4.2%	41.7%	4.2%	37.5%	12.5%
Staff	11.6%	51.2%	9.3%	25.6%	2.3%
Students	7.6%	40.2%	22.0%	19.7%	10.6%
Parents	16.3%	44.9%	4.1%	24.5%	10.2%
Measure: "Repairs are made in a timely manner"					
Teachers	4.2%	27.1%	6.3%	39.6%	22.9%
Staff	6.8%	50.0%	9.1%	29.5%	4.5%
Students	6.8%	32.3%	22.6%	24.1%	14.3%
Parents	10.2%	44.9%	12.2%	22.4%	10.2%
Measure: "Emergency maintenance is handled promptly"					
Teachers	6.3%	54.2%	12.5%	20.8%	6.3%
Staff	20.5%	52.3%	13.6%	13.6%	0.0%
Students	12.0%	41.4%	26.3%	11.3%	9.0%
Parents	10.2%	38.8%	26.5%	14.3%	10.2%

Source: TSPR Survey Results, December 2001.

Recommendation 51:

Prepare a maintenance improvement plan to increase satisfaction with facilities maintenance.

The plan should be developed based on an assessment of current operations to evaluate what areas need to be corrected or adjusted. Historical work-order data should be evaluated to determine what types of maintenance work require more time to complete than others. A thorough analysis of the historical data and evaluation of the resources will make it possible to make appropriate adjustments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations, prepares an assessment of current resources and management, including an evaluation of historical work-order data.	May-June 2002
2.	The director of Maintenance and Operations develops a plan and a schedule to remedy major problems, and submits it to the administrative assistant for Operations for approval	July 2002
3.	The director of Maintenance and Operations conducts training sessions with district staff to instruct them on procedures and implement changes.	August 2002
4.	The director of Maintenance and Operations solicits feedback from each school/facility on a quarterly basis for continuous adjustments and improvements.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD uses a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS), but work order requests are submitted using hard-copy forms.

A work-order request is a one-sheet paper form that a school or facility administrator submits to the Maintenance and Operations Department's service center to request repair or maintenance. Once the form is received at the service center, the assistant director evaluates the type of work required and assigns a priority level. Service center personnel then enter the request into the CMMS and maintain/update the record. Work is then assigned to the appropriate quadrant officer who delegates it to a maintenance employee. This work-order database helps maintenance

managers prioritize and operate more effectively. The CMMS tracks paperwork from start to finish, from when a work order first arrives in the Maintenance Department service center through when it is completed. The CMMS system can generate various reports and work can be sorted by staff, date, priority, facility or type of task.

The Maintenance and Operations Department handles three types of work orders: regular, preventive and summer maintenance. Regular work orders are those that occur on a day-to-day basis for repairs or maintenance needed. Preventive work orders are limited to monthly Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) repair and maintenance, such as when the air filters are changed and mechanical systems are serviced.

Summer work orders are used to request total team maintenance. The total team maintenance concept is one in which a group of district maintenance personnel, such as plumbers, kitchen repairmen and refrigeration repairmen, go through an entire facility performing minor repairs, maintenance and touch-up painting. One work order covers all of the work the team performs in a given facility.

LISD work orders contain the following information:

- Work order ID number;
- Location requesting work order;
- Date received;
- Service personnel assigned;
- Description of work requested;
- Priority ID number;
- Action taken to complete request; and
- Authorized signature after work order is completed.

Work orders are also prioritized as illustrated in **Exhibit 5-18**.

Exhibit 5-18
Work Order Priority Codes
November 2001

Code	Description	Definition
1	Emergency	Danger to life or property
2	Priority	Possible danger
3	Routine	Daily maintenance repairs
4	Improvement	Changes to facility
5	Summer Work	Summer request

6	Rejected	Request rejected
7	Deferred for study	Future consideration

Source: LISD Division of Operations, November 2001.

The CMMS allows directors, supervisors and even originators to track the work order using the following information:

- Date received;
- Priority code;
- Service personnel assigned;
- Percentage completed;
- Date completed; and
- Work completion signature.

Once the work has been completed, the appropriate school/facility administrator signs off that the work has been finished, and the maintenance person returns the completed work order to the supervisor. The supervisor then closes out the work order, entering time and materials used, and then returns it to the service center for inputting and final recording.

Recommendation 52:

Implement an automated method to transmit work order requests to the Maintenance and Operations Department's service center.

The automation of the work order requests will allow the requests to be received more quickly by the Maintenance and Operations Department and reduce the need to have the work order information reentered.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations consults with the director of information Technology for assistance in developing an electronic template that can be used across the district to request work orders.	May 2002
2.	The director of Maintenance and Operations reviews the electronic work-order template with facility administrators and the superintendent.	June 2002
3.	The director of Maintenance and Operations implements and provides information and instructs appropriate district staff on its use.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Maintenance and Operations Department does not have a comprehensive procedures manual, although the department does have a safety program and training is provided on a monthly basis. A comprehensive procedures manual usually includes a clear definition of the unit's organization; descriptions of duties, responsibilities and expectations of each employee; related district policies and procedures; safety techniques; and a description of performance and evaluation measures.

Documented procedures and effective training methods provide the foundation for a successfully operated department. A procedures manual also provides a good training and guideline tool for new employees when staff turnover occurs.

Conducting operations without a comprehensive procedure manual creates the potential for staff to perform daily routines and procedures in an unsafe or otherwise costly manner. Staff performing facility maintenance and operations duties without proper guidelines from a well written procedures manual have the potential of causing severe consequences.

Recommendation 53:

Develop a comprehensive procedures manual for the Maintenance and Operations Department.

The manual should be created in two phases. The first phase should include data gathering and assessment of all existing programs and procedures. The second phase should include the development of written procedures that pertain to the entire department and are aligned with district policies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations gathers data from each maintenance area.	May 2002
2.	The director of Maintenance and Operations develops a draft of a comprehensive procedures manual and reviews it with the appropriate management personnel.	June - July 2002
3.	The director of Maintenance and Operations finalizes the proposed manual.	July 2002

4.	The director of Maintenance and Operations reviews the manual with the administrative assistant for Operations and obtains approval.	August 2002
5.	The director of Maintenance and Operations conducts training sessions for all department employees.	August 2002
6.	The director of Maintenance and Operations monitors and improves the manual as required.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

A procedures manual can be developed for an initial cost of $20 per manual, or a total cost of $2,000, for 100 printed manuals. Updates can be created at an average cost of $5 per manual per year for a cost of $500. Cost estimates are based on an estimate of 200 pages per manual at $.10 per page. Costs will also vary according to variables such as including dividers or using color printing or binders.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop a comprehensive procedures manual for the Maintenance and Operations Department.	($2,000)	($500)	($500)	($500)	($500)

Chapter 5
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

C. CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Responsibilities for custodial services are shared among district and school personnel. The LISD administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks is responsible for safety and some technical training, assisting facility administrators in job performance expectations, handling all records and reports and maintaining custodial supplies and materials. Individual school principals, assistant principals and facility administrators, in conjunction with lead custodians, manage work schedules, safety and supplies on a daily basis. Custodial staffs maintain all schools and grounds.

LISD has a total of 219 custodial employees, most of whom are supervised by local school or facility administrators. Schedules, custodial tasks and cleaning methods vary from school to school. In most elementary schools, custodians also serve as crossing-guards in addition to handling general cleaning and minor maintenance duties, whereas security officers work as crossing guards in middle and high schools.

FINDING

Although the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks has the title and much of the responsibility for custodial services, the custodial operation is not centralized to the degree that this person has control over the custodial staff, services, purchasing or supplies. Such decentralization across 59 facilities implies that there are 59 individual school/facility custodial departments throughout the district. Local administrators determine work schedules, workloads, types of tasks and even the procedures custodians use on a daily basis.

Generally, at each school, the lead custodian establishes routine cleaning and maintenance procedures, sets schedules and focuses on safety and cleanliness. The lead custodian also does the following:

- Directs and monitors the work of custodians;
- Helps screen, select and train custodians;
- Directs and assists in setting up facilities for special events;
- Maintains an inventory of cleaning supplies and equipment and orders additional supplies as needed;
- Regulates heat, ventilation and air conditioning systems to provide appropriate temperatures and ensures economical usage of fuel, water and electricity;

- Assumes responsibility for opening and closing buildings each school day;
- Oversees procedures for locking, checking and safeguarding facilities;
- Ensures that all exit doors and panic hardware are working properly;
- Inspects machines and equipment for safety and efficiency;
- Operates tools and equipment in accordance with the established safety procedures;
- Follows established safety procedures and techniques to perform job duties; and
- Corrects and reports unsafe conditions in work areas.

Typical general custodial duties include:

- Cleaning floors, chalkboards, windows, furniture, equipment and restrooms;
- Emptying wastebaskets, disposing of and storing trash;
- Keeping school buildings clean and maintaining school grounds, including sidewalks, driveways, parking lots and play areas;
- Assisting with lunchroom set up, including arranging tables, chairs;
- Making minor building repairs as needed and reporting major repair needs to the principal or facility administrator;
- Moving furniture and equipment within buildings as directed by the facility administrator;
- Maintaining outdoor grounds, including mowing grass, pruning shrubs, setting sprinklers and cleaning parking lots and sidewalks.

Since each school custodial department operates independently, central control is diminished. Decentralization of this type can result in non-equitable working conditions, services, purchases, supplies and a district without a clear definition of custodial and non-custodial tasks. A recent cleanliness assessment audit of two schools conducted by the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks revealed that custodians were overseeing detention programs, setting up and taking down metal detectors and searching backpacks, none of which are custodial responsibilities. In addition, custodians have performed maintenance work, such as major painting, under the authority of an individual school or facility administrator. Furthermore, it is unclear which schools and facilities conduct performance evaluations, but there is no comprehensive, ongoing performance evaluation that is monitored on a regular basis.

In addition, the district will incur unnecessary costs and experience equipment repair delays if communication among decision-makers for the

purchase of custodial equipment is not increased. Purchasing decisions for custodial equipment, including equipment such as vacuums and floor buffers, were decentralized from the Maintenance and Operations Department to campus principals beginning with the 2001-02 school year. Having a single decision-maker enables the district to purchase selected equipment brands, makes and models throughout the district and to maintain a parts inventory that minimizes the time required to repair equipment. The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks has recommended that campus principals make standardized equipment purchases, but there is no central point or mechanism to implement the recommendation for non-bid items. Campus principals refer to a list of approved vendors for bid items, but are responsible for recommending vendors for purchasing non-bid items themselves. Within the current structure, each campus principal may request a number of similar non-bid items of different brands, makes and models, and only when the Purchasing Department identifies that similar requests have been made would the item be placed on bid.

The inability to standardize equipment purchases affects the Purchasing Department, Maintenance and Operations Department, the Textbook and Custodial Services Department and the campuses. The current process does not enable the Purchasing Department to adequately plan for purchases of similar custodial equipment items and may result in delays for receiving needed custodial equipment while competitive solicitation activities are performed. Purchasing custodial equipment of different brands may result in paying a higher price than if the same brands and models were purchased from a single vendor. Additionally, since repair needs cannot be anticipated, purchasing numerous brands, makes and models may result in increased turnaround time for equipment repairs, because it is not cost effective for the Maintenance and Operations Department, which repairs the district's equipment, to keep spare parts on hand for numerous types of similar equipment. The Maintenance and Operations Department would have to order each repair item separately when the need for it arises, and it is not equipped to loan out in the interim while repairs are made.

Recommendation 54:

Centralize custodial operations, including staff, under the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks.

Centralizing custodial operations under the direction of the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks will enhance accountability, standardize operations hiring procedures and work assignments and provide more uniformity in training and safety procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksdevelops a plan for centralizing custodial services and presents it to the board.	May 2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksevaluates existing custodial conditions at each school and/or facility.	June - July 2002
3.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksevaluates findings and makes equitable adjustments to staff, services and supplies.	August 2002
4.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksdevelops and monitors performance evaluations for custodial staff.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The amount of space that district custodial staff clean and maintain is below both the district allocation formula and the Texas industry standard. LISD's allocation formula provides for 13,000 square feet per custodian, and the Association for School Business Officials recommends 20,000 square feet per custodian. LISD'S actual average is 10,457 square feet per custodian.

The district developed its allocation formula based on the age of the facilities, their open design and the assignment of non-custodial tasks. Each custodian is expected to clean an 800-900 square-foot area or the average size of classroom, in 20 minutes, which equates to three classrooms per hour. Thus, in a five-hour period, a custodian should be able to clean 15 classrooms or approximately 13,000 square feet. This leaves three hours per day for the custodian to perform school-specific, non-custodial tasks, as directed by the school or facility administrator. **Exhibit 5-19** presents LISD custodial staffing levels compared to the district standard of 13,000 square feet.

Exhibit 5-19
LISD Custodial Staffing Levels Compared to District Standard
2000-01

School	Total Gross Square Feet (GSF)	Current Number Of Staff	Number of GSF per Custodian	Staff Needed for District Standard of 13,000 GSF per Custodian	Number of Staff Over or Under Standard
Bruni	28,676	3	10,000	2	+1
Buenos Aires	31,847	4	8,000	2	+2
Daiches	35,156	4	9,000	3	+1
Dovalina	31,496	3	10,000	2	+1
Farias	78,594	8	10,000	6	+2
Hachar	28,700	3	10,000	2	+1
Heights	24,703	3	8,000	2	+1
Kawas	43,894	4	11,000	3	+1
Leyendecker	45,665	5	9,000	4	+1
Ligarde	40,892	4	10,000	3	+1
Macdonell	30,144	3	10,000	2	+1
J.C. Martin	69,666	7	10,000	5	+2
Milton	49,093	6	8,000	4	+2
Ochoa	30,656	4	8,000	2	+2
A. Pierce	62,413	6	10,000	5	+1
Ryan	49,974	6	8,000	4	+2
T. Sanchez	45,492	6	8,000	4	+2
Santa Maria	19,068	2	9,534	2	0
Santo Nino	59,725	6	10,000	5	+1
K. Tarver	47,524	5	10,000	4	+1
Zachry	54,576	5	11,000	4	+1
Total Elementary Schools	**907,954**	**97**	**9,000**	**70**	**+27**
Christen	151,182	13	12,000	12	+1

Cigarroa	103,802	9	12,000	8	+1
Lamar	126,824	13	10,000	10	+3
Memorial	69,521	6	12,000	5	+1
Total Middle Schools	**451,329**	**41**	**11,000**	**35**	**+6**
Cigarroa	179,571	16	11,000	14	+2
Martin	216,008	20	11,000	17	+3
Nixon	289,844	24	12,000	22	+2
VMT Comm & Fine Arts	89,147	7	13,000	7	0
Total High Schools	**774,570**	**67**	**12,000**	**60**	**+7**
F.S. Lara	35,504	4	9,000	3	+1
LAP	5,960	1	6,000	1	0
Admin. Offices	61,829	5	12,000	5	0
Div. Of Operations	43,915	3	15,000	3	0
Transportation	8,915	1	9,000	1	0
Total Other Sites	**156,123**	**14**	**11,000**	**12**	**+2**
Grand Total	**2,289,976**	**219**	**10,457**	**178**	**+41**

Source: LISD Textbook and Custodial Services Department, November 2001.

LISD also has significantly lower area coverage in square feet (SF) per custodian than its peer districts, as illustrated in **Exhibit 5-20.**

Exhibit 5-20
LISD Custodial Allocation Compared with Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Estimated Area in Square Feet (SF)	Total Custodians	Square Feet (SF) per Custodian	Over/(Under) compared to ASBO standard (20,000

				SF)
Eagle Pass	1,394,958	92	15,163	22
Harlandale	2,415,553	159	15,192	38
Laredo	**2,289,976**	**219**	**10,457**	**105**
United	3,677,098	220	16,714	36

Source: TSPR Peer School District Survey and LISD, November - December 2001. Data not available for Edgewood and Edinburg ISDs.

In the performance and management review report conducted for the district in 1997 by Empirical Management Services (EMS), EMS recommended that the district establish a minimum cleaning standard of 14,000 square feet per custodian. EMS also recommended that the district reduce the number of custodial positions to increase the efficiency of its custodial services. The district had a total of 306 custodial positions in 1997-98, and that number has been reduced to 219 by the 2001-02 school year.

LISD is over staffed by 41 positions, by its own standards, and by 105 positions according to the industry standard of 20,000 square feet per custodian.

Recommendation 55:

Apply district staffing formulas for custodial positions.

Applying district staffing formulas should reduce the number of custodial positions by 41 positions from 219 to 178. The district should evaluate custodial work schedules, practices and tasks to develop a plan that converts custodial services into purely custodial duties.

To maximize custodial services, a team-cleaning approach should be applied where possible. Essentially, the team-cleaning concept requires that a primary technician straighten classroom furniture and empty wastebaskets; a floor technician vacuums floors; and a sanitation technician cleans desktops, door handles and various other items in the classroom. Once all classrooms and restrooms are cleaned, technicians take on a multipurpose role and handle a variety of additional cleaning tasks. Scheduling day and night shifts is critical since cleaning duties are more efficiently and effectively handled when children are not in classrooms.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksevaluates current custodial procedures, work schedules and performance.	May-June 2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksmakes appropriate adjustments to define equitable workloads among custodians.	June 2002
3.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksdevelops a plan for reducing the number of custodial positions.	July 2002
4.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbookspresents the plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	August 2002
5.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooksimplements the plan to reduce the number of custodial positions.	September 2002
6.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbookscontinually monitors, evaluates and adjusts custodial work schedules, procedures and performance expectations for improvement purposes.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual salary at the minimum level for custodians at Pay Grade I for 240 duty days is $11,628. Health insurance for para-professionals is $2,280 per year and other benefits are 13.6422 percent of gross salary. Eliminating one custodian position will save the district $11,628 in salary and benefits of $3,866 ($11,628 x .136422=$1,586 plus $2,280) for a total of $15,494. Eliminating 41 custodial positions will save the district $635,254 annually.

The fiscal impact assumes that custodial staff reductions will be distributed across all elementary, middle and high schools and 21 of the staff reductions can be achieved in 2002-03, but the remaining 20 reductions will not occur until 2003-04.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Apply district staffing formulas for custodial positions.	$325,374	$635,254	$635,254	$635,254	$635,254

Chapter 5
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

D. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

The Energy Management Department consists of just one manager whose primary responsibilities are energy management. This department also oversees repair parts/general supplies, band instrument repair, communications/alarms and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems control. Primary responsibilities are listed below:

- Checking utility bills for accuracy;
- Coordinating with utility companies to ensure best rates;
- Coordinating with the water utility on conservation;
- Monitoring utilities usage for irregularities which might indicate a problem;
- Consulting on new construction mechanical systems and HVAC projects;
- Coordinating energy-saving programs; and
- Scheduling times of operation for HVAC equipment.

LISD's Energy Management Department is organized as shown in **Exhibit 5-21**.

Exhibit 5-21
LISD Energy Management Department
2001-02
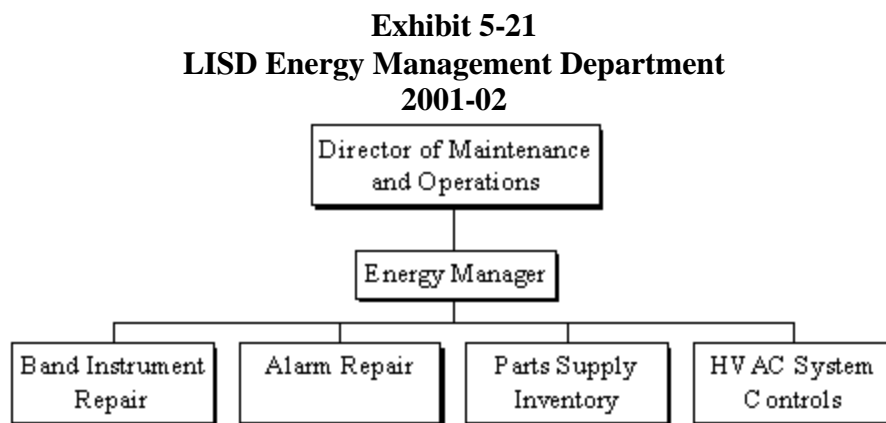
Source: LISD Energy Management Department, November 2001.

FINDING

In September 1998, the Energy Management Department contracted with TD Industries (TDI) in a districtwide, comprehensive energy conservation program. The program included a comprehensive lighting retrofit, the addition or replacement of approximately 162 HVAC units, the

installation of a building automation system for districtwide control of mechanical and electrical equipment and a pilot water conservation project at Cigarroa Middle and High schools. Implementation lasted from January 1999 through June 2000 with the final energy conservation retrofit accepted June 30, 2000. TDI performed energy impact studies for base year July 2000 through June 2001 to compare with future costs. TDI estimated a first-year energy savings of $461,583. **Exhibit 5-22** lists the facilities and savings estimated by TDI.

Exhibit 5-22
LISD Year One, Savings Report

School Name	Baseline Cost	Period Cost	Year-One Actual Savings	TDI Estimated Savings
Buenos Aires	$40,626	$29,234	**$11,392**	$8,310
Christen	$201,625	$135,971	**$65,654**	$23,826
Cigarroa Complex	$395,751	$303,512	**$92,240**	$25,931
Daiches	$43,193	$32,546	**$10,647**	$9,537
Dovalina	$67,467	$56,313	**$11,154**	$5,220
Farias	$74,529	$52,146	**$22,383**	$16,500
Fine Arts & Admin	$140,321	$121,096	**$19,225**	$46,705
Food Service	$7,532	$2,017	**$5,515**	$5,454
Hachar	$39,137	$31,541	**$7,596**	$5,163
J.C. Martin	$99,840	$74,259	**$25,581**	$13,872
Kawas	$52,380	$45,147	**$7,233**	$9,630
LAC	$7,530	$4,700	**$2,830**	$2,584
Lamar	$175,789	$122,738	**$53,051**	$17,581
Leyendecker	$45,165	$36,361	**$8,804**	$8,196
Ligarde	$58,840	$47,580	**$11,260**	$15,990
Martin	$284,894	$174,753	**$110,141**	$47,657
Memorial	$100,622	$70,543	**$30,079**	$23,095
Milton	$64,789	$57,727	**$7,062**	$10,120
Nixon	$267,848	$204,207	**$63,641**	$76,227

Ochoa	$49,756	$33,397	**$16,359**	$8,958
Ops Center	$24,816	$15,425	**$9,391**	$7,972
Pierce	$69,594	$49,896	**$19,698**	$15,719
Ryan	$60,116	$47,756	**$12,360**	$13,310
Sanchez	$44,249	$39,545	**$4,704**	$9,131
Santa Maria	$21,734	$15,843	**$5,891**	$3,187
Santa Nino	$63,264	$47,279	**$15,985**	$13,933
Tarver	$59,201	$39,218	**$19,983**	$17,774
Total	**$2,560,608**	**$1,890,750**	**$669,859**	**$461,582**

Source: TD Industries, November 2001.

The performance summary for the base year with actual costs and adjustments is shown in **Exhibit 5-23.**

Exhibit 5-23
Performance Summary Report
Base Year: July 2000 - June 2001

Performance Summary (with Adjustments)	Cost/Savings
Weather and Summer Sessions	($34,807)
Technology Upgrades	$396,673
Extended Runtime	$189,685
Additional equipment and buildings	$49,505
Total Cost of Energy Adjustments	**$601,056**
Difference between Estimated and Actual Energy Costs	**(below)**
Total Anticipated Energy Costs	$2,560,609
Actual Costs	$1,890,750
Total Savings for Base Year	**$669,859**

Source: TD Industries, November 2001.

LISD is attempting to automate energy management systems at all schools, including all future facilities included in the capital improvement Capital Improvement Plan bond program, in order to minimize energy

waste, ensure building comfort and encourage energy awareness. Computers control levels of heating and cooling as well as the time of operation. Reports may be generated that include the following:

- Facility ID number;
- Utility usage by type;
- Utility cost by type per facility;
- Savings and losses by amount and percent of cost per utility;
- Cost avoidance per facility; and
- Budget management information.

COMMENDATION

The Energy Management Department has developed an effective energy management and conservation program that has realized savings of $669,859 during the first year of energy performance.

Chapter 6
ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter of the report addresses the asset and risk management of the Laredo Independent School District (LISD) in the following four sections:

A. Cash and Investment Management
B. Insurance Programs
C. Fixed Asset Management
D. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness

Texas school districts must ensure public funds are used wisely and efficiently to educate children. An effective cash and investment management program maximizes interest income without exposing the district to unacceptable risk. The district's risk management should provide a safe environment for students and employees, minimize workers' compensation claims and costs, and ensure insurance coverage for district assets is obtained at appropriate levels for a minimal cost. District employees should have access to health insurance coverage at a reasonable cost. Fixed assets should be properly accounted for, with inventory updated as assets are disposed of and acquired. Effective debt management should reduce financing costs while ensuring funds are available for timely payments.

BACKGROUND

Several organizational units perform asset and risk management at LISD. Cash and investment management is primarily the responsibility of the investment officer in the Accounting Department. Risk management is shared between the Risk Management director and the director of Safety and Occupational Health. The Risk Management director negotiates the employee insurance package. The Fixed Assets manager and his staff are responsible for maintaining the fixed assets inventory. The chief financial officer and Accounting Department manage district debt.

Recent reorganizations have changed the reporting relationships within these groups.

Chapter 6
ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

A. CASH AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Cash and investments must be managed daily to maximize revenues and enable a school district to meet its instructional goals and objectives. Effective cash and investment management requires beneficial banking relationships, accurate and timely cash forecasting to ensure funds are available when needed and maximized returns from safe, approved investments. **Exhibit 6-1** shows the positions and reporting relationships involved in managing the district's cash and investments.

Exhibit 6-1
LISD Cash and Investment Managers
November 2001
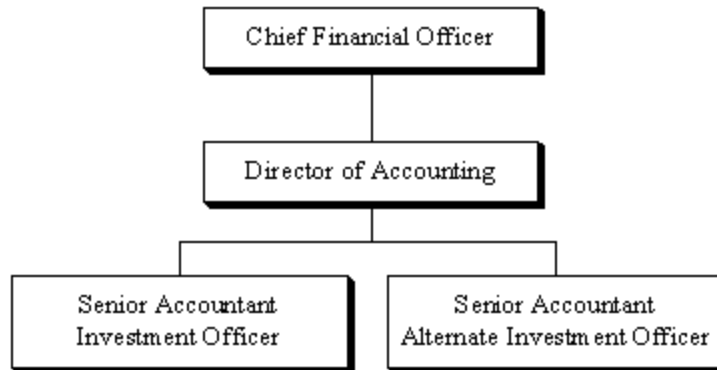
Source: LISD Finance Department, November 2001.

Exhibit 6-2 shows the funds received by LISD from fiscal 1998 through fiscal 2000 by revenue type. Total revenues have risen almost 28 percent since fiscal 1998 due to increases in federal grant funds, aggressive collection of local taxes and sales of weighted average daily attendance (WADA) credits to property-wealthy school districts. WADA sales allow property-poor school districts to receive payments from wealthy districts. The sale reduces the property-wealthy district's wealth per student. Chapter 7 contains additional detail on WADA sales.

Exhibit 6-2
Revenue from Local, State and Federal Sources
Fiscal 1998 through 2001

Fiscal Year	Local Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue	Total

1998	$22,532,225	$94,655,336	$11,643,287	$128,830,848
1999	$21,198,179	$97,732,276	$20,409,596	$139,340,051
2000	$27,173,632	$109,531,425	$24,997,477	$161,702,534
2001	$29,413,492	$110,992,855	$23,938,669	$164,345,016

Source: 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 LISD Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, Annual Financial and Compliance Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2001.

LISD has a depository contract with NBC Bank of Laredo. The contract was initiated on September 1, 1999 after LISD reviewed bids received from four financial institutions. On May 17, 2001, the LISD board voted to extend the contract under the same terms for an additional two years, through August 31, 2003. This type of extension is authorized under the Texas Education Code, Section 45.205 Subchapter G.

Under the depository contract, interest is paid to LISD based on the Bank of America federal funds rate minus 0.96 percent, with a floor rate set at 2.85 percent. The federal funds rate is the rate charged to other banks borrowing from Bank of America Dallas. NBC Bank charges LISD fees for various banking services, as shown in **Exhibit 6-3**.

Exhibit 6-3
Selected Fees Charged to LISD by NBC Bank

Service Provided	Fee
Account Maintenance	$10 per acct (monthly)
Deposits/Credits Posted	$0.25
Items Deposited - Encoding charge	$0.11
Items Deposited - Clearing charge	$0.11
Debits/Checks Paid	$0.11
Return Items - Re-cleared	$1.00
Return Items - Charged back	$2.50
Stop Payment	$15.00
Daily Balance Reporting via Telephone	No charge

Daily Balance Reporting via Fax	No charge
Cash Deposit Processing	No charge
Coin Counting and Wrapping	$0.06 per roll
Rolls of Coin/Straps of Currency Purchased	$0.06 per roll
Outgoing Wire Transfers	$15.00
Incoming Wire Transfers	$5.00
Wire Transfer Mail Advices	No charge
Telephone Transfers Between Accounts	No charge
Insufficient Funds Items	$24.00 + 18%
CPA Confirmations	$10.00
Cashier's Checks	$2.00
Research/Statement Reproduction	$20 per hour
Collateral Fee	$10
Monthly Collateral Reports at Market Value	No charge
Safe Deposit Box	$35

Source: LISD Depository Contract for Funds, September 1, 2001.

Total interest from checking accounts was $192,241 for fiscal 2001, compared with total bank charges of $23,945.

As of August 31, 2001, LISD had 11 primary bank accounts as shown in **Exhibit 6-4**.

Exhibit 6-4
LISD Bank Accounts
August 31, 2001

Name of Account	Purpose of Account
Operating Account	General account for most district operations
Interest and Sinking	Pay interest and principal for debt service
Lunch Program	School lunch revenues and expenditures
Accounts Payable	Clearing account for payables
Payroll	Clearing account for payroll

Investment	Clearing account for wiring investment funds in/out
Public Property Finance Contract 1998 (198)	Collect funds and pay expenses related to Public Property Finance Contractual Obligation (PPFCO).[1]
Public Property Finance Contract 1998 (197)	Collect funds and pay expenses related to PPFCO
125 Claims	Cafeteria plan pretax collections and disbursements
Premium	Payroll deductions including insurance
Deferred Compensation FICA Alternative Trust	Deductions for deferred compensation plan

Source: LISD Chief Financial Officer, November 2001.
Note 1: School districts can issue PPFCOs to lease, lease-purchase or purchase personal property, real property or improvements to real property.

According to the *Annual Financial and Compliance Report* for fiscal 2001, all funds were covered by FDIC insurance and securities held as pledged collateral by the district's bank.

LISD has an investment policy that was last reviewed and updated by the board in November 2001. According to the policy, the district strives to invest all available funds to the maximum extent possible at the highest possible rates with the maximum security, while still meeting the cash flow demands of the district and conforming with federal, state and local laws governing the investment of public funds. In compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act, authorized investments are:

- obligations of, or guaranteed by, governmental entities;
- certificates of deposit;
- fully collateralized repurchase agreements;
- banker's acceptances;
- commercial paper;
- mutual funds;
- investment pools; and
- letters of credit.

Certificates of deposit and repurchase agreements must be collateralized with acceptable securities to provide protection of 102 percent of the investment's market value and accrued interest.

The district's investment officer reviews the district's cash position daily and initiates transfers into higher-yielding investments. The chief financial officer, director of Accounting, investment officer and alternate investment officer completed training required by the investment policy and the Public Funds Investment Act in November 2001.

Exhibit 6-5 details the district's investment portfolio as of August 31, 2001.

Exhibit 6-5
LISD Investment Accounts
as of August 31, 2001

Account Name	Interest Rate	Market Value at August 31, 2001	Percent of Portfolio
Construction Funds			
Flex Repurchase Agreement	6.00%	$65,418,882	65.0%
Federal National Mortgage Association Discount Note	3.36%	6,772,392	6.7%
Investment Pools			
Lone Star Investment Pool	3.86%	22,946,299	22.8%
LOGIC Investment Pool	3.86%	2,481	0.0%
MBIA Investment Pool	3.86%	18,579	0.0%
Cash in Bank - NBC Bank	Varies	5,533,239	5.5%
Total		**$100,691,872**	**100.0%**

Source: LISD Investment Report as of August 31, 2001.

LISD has 29 separate campus bank accounts, 15 student activity bank accounts and seven homemaking bank accounts at NBC Bank. Campus accounts are used for non-student expenditures at the campus level, while student activity funds are used for student club and fund-raising activities. Homemaking accounts at seven secondary schools are used to purchase instructional supplies for homemaking classes. On August 31, 2001, there was $269,077 in the student activity accounts.

Campus accounts are used for funds raised at a particular campus. The funds are managed by the principal or another campus administrator. Campus accounts must be used to promote the general welfare of the

school and the educational development of students. Examples of expenditures allowed include light refreshments for teacher or parent meetings, school furnishings and equipment, student body assembly or dance expenditures and student field trips. Expenditures not allowed include gifts, loans, private memberships, alcoholic beverages and employee stipends or monetary awards.

Homemaking accounts contain vocational education funds designated for homemaking class expenses. Student activity accounts are used for receipts and expenditures for various student groups. These groups raise funds and control associated disbursements, which must benefit the students or school. Authorized expenditures include:

- supplies and materials for students in the group;
- entry fees and other expenses for competition and meetings;
- travel expenses and meals for students and adult sponsors;
- membership in organizations related to the group;
- flowers, cards or plaques that are expressions of condolence or appreciation;
- charitable contributions and scholarships;
- expenditures for student member parties or other entertainment; and
- equipment used by student members.

Campus personnel manage campus, student activity and homemaking accounts at their respective schools. Middle schools have one bookkeeper, high schools have two. Principals are responsible for elementary school accounts. Bookkeepers use a software package called OneWrite+ to record and reconcile transactions in each account. They use subsidiary accounts to monitor individual student group funds in the student activity account or money designated for specific purposes in the campus account. For example, Nixon High School's student activity fund has 53 subsidiary accounts for groups including the band, choir, senior class, auto machine, cheerleaders, baseball team, student council and geography club.

FINDING

Several years ago the LISD Accounting Department, with the assistance of the previous internal auditor, developed the *Campus and Student Activity Funds Manual* to provide standardized accounting procedures for these accounts. The manual, updated in November 2000, provides a comprehensive, standardized, user-friendly guide for personnel who manage these funds. Internal controls for safeguarding funds include:

- monthly reconciliation of each account;

- tracking and reviewing monthly statements and reconciliations performed by the Accounting Department;
- written acknowledgements of responsibility from each campus budget manager and student activity faculty sponsor;
- expenditure spot-checks by the Accounting Department;
- annual training for bookkeepers by the Accounting Department and Internal Auditor; and
- periodic, unannounced cash audits by the Internal Auditor.

COMMENDATION

LISD developed a comprehensive manual, trained campus bookkeepers and implemented appropriate internal controls to safeguard campus and student activity funds.

FINDING

The district's internal auditor audits campus and student activity funds on a rotating schedule and whenever a principal position becomes vacant. Each audit includes a financial review and a compliance review, which generates an overall compliance score for each fund that is expressed as a percentage on a 100-point scale. Thirty-three compliance criteria are audited. Criteria include checking to see if:

- checks have not been pre-signed;
- checks contain two signatures, one of which is the school principal;
- bank account reconciliation has been submitted to the Accounting Department by the 15th day of the subsequent month;
- student activity and campus account expenditures have promoted the general welfare of the school and the educational development of the students;
- all funds received were deposited to the bank account; and
- faculty sponsors completed the fundraiser report within 10 school days of the conclusion of the fundraising event. All sections of the report were completed as required.

Scores of less than 100 percent require written responses to address problems identified, and the internal auditor conducts a follow-up audit to confirm compliance. Audit reports are distributed to the superintendent, board members and the principals of the schools audited.

An audit report covering five elementary schools' campus funds, one middle school's campus and student activity funds and one high school's campus and student activity funds was published in June 2001. Six of the nine funds audited scored 90 percent or greater for compliance with the

manual, with the other three scoring 83 to 86 percent. The financial review found no material or unexplained variances.

Another audit report on campus and student activity funds at two elementary schools with retiring principals was issued in July 2001. The four accounts audited had scores from 84 to 88 percent for compliance with the manual. No material or unexplained variances were found during the financial review.

COMMENDATION

Internal audit reports on campus and student activity funds are presented in a user-friendly format that summarizes results and allows comparisons of campus funds.

FINDING

LISD has too many separate accounts, with a total of 62 accounts. In addition to the 11 operating accounts, 29 campus bank accounts, 15 student activity bank accounts and seven homemaking accounts are active. At middle and high schools, all check requests are made to the campus bookkeeper. Principals request funds from campus accounts; faculty sponsors request funds from student activity accounts and homemaking teachers request funds from homemaking accounts. The campus bookkeeper then issues a check from the appropriate account. If the amount is known, the check is made for the actual amount. If the exact amount is not known, the check is issued for an estimated amount. The requestor then reimburses the account for any excess funds received.

Several Texas school districts have consolidated their depository accounts. This has resulted in lower management fees and more efficient reconciliation and administration of bank accounts.

Mount Pleasant ISD centralizes management of all activity funds to maintain effective internal controls and efficient accounting. Centralized management has allowed the district to reduce the need for audits and the amount of time administrators spend monitoring individual bank accounts.

Recommendation 56:

Consolidate campus, student activity and homemaking accounts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

| 1. | The superintendent directs the chief financial officer to prepare a plan for consolidating campus, student activity and homemaking | June 2002 |

	accounts.		
2.	The chief financial officer, with input from Accounting Department staff and campus bookkeepers, prepares a detailed plan for consolidating the accounts, including staff training.	July 2002
3.	The chief financial officer submits the plan to the superintendent for approval.	August 2002
4.	The chief financial officer develops procedures for operating with one consolidated account.	August 2002
5.	The chief financial officer implements the plan for account consolidation.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation will save the district $6,000 per year. (Fifty accounts with monthly bank account maintenance fees of $10.)

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Consolidate campus, student activity and homemaking accounts.	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000

FINDING

Only about one third of LISD employees use the district's direct deposit system. According to LISD Accounting personnel, many employees do not have checking accounts and instead cash their monthly paychecks. Other employees, however, have checking accounts but prefer to receive a printed check. Employees are also allowed to sign up for direct deposit over the summer and return to printed checks when school begins again. Using direct deposit cuts costs by streamlining the payroll process and eliminating the need to prepare, safeguard and deliver physical checks.

Midland ISD has implemented a fully automated wire transfer direct deposit program for its employees and reports significant improvement over the previous payroll distribution method. Veribest ISD requires that all employees be paid through direct deposit, streamlining the payroll process and saving money by eliminating the need to prepare, handle and safeguard physical checks.

Recommendation 57:

Expand direct deposit marketing efforts and encourage all employees to use direct deposit.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The chief financial officer instructs the Accounting Department to use innovative methods to market the district's direct deposit program.	May 2002
2.	The Accounting Department conducts a survey to determine why employees do not use direct deposit.	May 2002
3.	The chief financial officer instructs the senior accountant investment officer to develop a financial institution partnering program and to identify and contact area financial institutions that might be interested in partnering with the district in marketing direct deposit.	June 2002
4.	The chief financial officer and the Accounting Department work in conjunction with LISD technology personnel to offer direct deposit information.	July 2002
5.	The chief financial officer instructs the Accounting Department to advertise the benefits of direct deposit in all district publications and to continue traditional efforts to market the program.	July 2002
6.	The Accounting Department uses the survey information to focus and fine-tune the district's direct-deposit marketing efforts.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD prepares an annual cash forecast but does not revise it during the year. During the budget process, the accounting department and chief financial officer prepare an annual cash forecast of projected district expenditures and funds to be received from local taxes, the Texas Education Agency and other sources. These forecasts are based upon past experience and assumptions on future events. Conditions may change dramatically during the year, however, which makes the annual forecast obsolete. For example, interest rates and investment earnings may rise or fall. By not adjusting the annual cash forecast, it will not accurately reflect projected cash flow and will subject the district to making financial decisions based on dated information.

Recommendation 58:

Prepare updated quarterly cash forecasts in addition to the annual cash forecast prepared during the budget process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the chief financial officer to prepare quarterly cash forecasts.	September 2002
2.	The chief financial officer and Accounting Department prepare quarterly cash forecasts and submit to the board along with potential adjustments to the budget.	December 2002 and quarterly thereafter
3.	The board reviews the quarterly cash forecasts and budget adjustments.	January 2003 and quarterly thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6
ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

B. INSURANCE PROGRAMS

The district purchases group health care and employee benefit plans, workers' compensation insurance, and property and casualty insurance. LISD's Risk Management director is responsible for employee health insurance, property and casualty insurance and security. The director of Safety and Occupational Health is responsible for facility safety inspections, employee safety training, the accident prevention plan and workers' compensation insurance.

Significant organizational changes affected risk management and safety in 2001. Prior to 2001, the director of Safety and Occupational Health reported to the Risk Management director, and the Risk Management director reported to the chief financial officer. In fall 2001, the director of Safety and Occupational Health was placed under the direct supervision of the superintendent. The Risk Management director was moved from the Finance Department to the Human Resources Departmentand now reports to the Human Resources director. Specific responsibilities and staff assignments were not finalized before the reorganization, and continue to be defined.

LISD purchases health insurance coverage through a request for proposal (RFP) process. An employee advisory committee reviews the proposals submitted and makes a recommendation to the finance committee. The finance committee makes a recommendation to the full board, which ultimately determines coverage. Despite a favorable ratio of insurance claims to premiums paid, insurance premiums rose 9.5 percent in October 2001. In December 2001, the board voted to pay half of the increase, with employees paying the other half. In April 2002, the Risk Management director will begin preparing a RFP for health insurance coverage beginning September 2002.

PacifiCare Life Assurance Company provides employee health insurance for LISD. Different options and levels of coverage are available. **Exhibit 6-6** summarizes the major provisions of the health insurance options available to LISD employees.

Exhibit 6-6
LISD Employee Health Insurance Options
2000-01

Plan/Provision/Service	Preauthorization	Participating	Nonparticipating

		Provider	**Provider**
LISD "State Preferred Provider Organization (PPO)"			
Policy Maximum	$2 million	Not applicable	Not applicable
Coinsurance		90%	70%
Calendar-Year Deductible		$250/individual and $750/family	
Coinsurance Maximum		$1,000/individual	$2,000/individual
Hospital and Facility Services	Yes	90%	70%
Physician Office Visits	No	100% after $10 co-pay	70%
Other Physician Services	No	90%	70%
Emergency Room Services	Within 48 hrs if admission occurs	$50 deductible, then 90%	$50 deductible, then 70%
Periodic Health Evaluations (max $200 per 24-month period)	No	90%	70%
Maternity Benefits	None if stay up to 48 hrs for normal delivery or 96 hrs for cesarean section delivery	90%	70%
LISD "High Option PPO"			
Policy Maximum	$2 million	Not applicable	Not applicable
Coinsurance		80%	60%
Calendar Year-Deductible		$500/individual and $1500/family	
Coinsurance Maximum		$3,000/individual	$9,000/individual
Hospital and Facility Services	Yes	80%	60%
Physician Office Visits	No	100% after $25 co-pay	60%

Other Physician Services	No	80%	60%
Emergency Room Services	Within 48 hrs if admission occurs	$75 deductible, then 80%	$75 deductible, then 60%
Periodic Health Evaluations (max $200 per 24-month period)	No	80%	60%
Maternity Benefits	None if stay up to 48 hrs for normal delivery or 96 hrs for cesarean section delivery	80%	60%
LISD "Low Option PPO"			
Policy Maximum	$2 million	Not applicable	Not applicable
Coinsurance		70%	50%
Calendar-Year Deductible		$500/individual and $1500/family	
Coinsurance Maximum		$4,000/individual	$12,000/individual
Hospital and Facility Services	Yes	70%	50%
Physician Office Visits	No	100% after $25 co-pay	50%
Other Physician Services	No	70%	50%
Emergency Room Services	Within 48 hrs if admission occurs	$75 deductible, then 70%	$75 deductible, then 50%
Periodic Health Evaluations (max $200 per 24-month period)	No	70%	50%
Maternity Benefits	None if stay up to 48 hrs for normal delivery or 96 hrs for cesarean section delivery	70%	50%

Source: LISD Human Resources Department, November 2001.

Exhibit 6-7 shows the cost of the different health insurance options for LISD professional employees, and **Exhibit 6-8** displays the cost for para-professional employees. LISD contributes $190 per month for professional employees and $203.49 for para-professional employees.

Exhibit 6-7
LISD Professional Employee Health Insurance Costs
2000-01

Plan/Level of Coverage	Total Cost	District Contribution	Employee Contribution
LISD State Option PPO			
Employee Only	$401.50	$190.00	$211.50
Employee and Spouse	$763.93	$190.00	$573.93
Employee and Child(ren)	$687.96	$190.00	$497.96
Employee and Family	$1,146.77	$190.00	$956.77
LISD High Option PPO			
Employee Only	$247.70	$190.00	$57.70
Employee and Spouse	$471.04	$190.00	$281.04
Employee and Child(ren)	$424.75	$190.00	$234.75
Employee and Family	$707.46	$190.00	$517.46
LISD Low Option PPO			
Employee Only	$226.31	$190.00	$ 36.31
Employee and Spouse	$443.69	$190.00	$253.69
Employee and Child(ren)	$400.09	$190.00	$210.09
Employee and Family	$666.40	$190.00	$476.40

Source: LISD Human Resources Office, November 2001.

Exhibit 6-8
LISD Para-professional Employee Health Insurance Costs
2000-01

Plan/Level of Coverage	Total Cost	District Contribution	Employee Contribution
LISD State Option PPO			

Employee Only	$401.50	$203.49	$198.01
Employee and Spouse	$763.93	$203.49	$560.44
Employee and Child(ren)	$687.96	$203.49	$484.47
Employee and Family	$1,146.77	$203.49	$943.28
LISD High Option PPO			
Employee Only	$247.70	$203.49	$44.21
Employee and Spouse	$472.04	$203.49	$268.55
Employee and Child(ren)	$424.75	$203.49	$221.26
Employee and Family	$707.46	$203.49	$503.97
LISD Low Option PPO			
Employee Only	$226.31	$203.49	$22.82
Employee and Spouse	$443.69	$203.49	$240.20
Employee and Child(ren)	$400.09	$203.49	$196.60
Employee and Family	$666.40	$203.49	$462.91

Source: LISD Human Resources Office, November 2001.

Employee surveys indicate dissatisfaction with the current health insurance coverage. Eighty-nine percent of principals and assistant principals, 91.7 percent of teachers and 74.4 percent of administrative and support staff said the district's health insurance package did not meet their needs. According to the Risk Management director, the dissatisfaction stems from relatively high deductibles and high premiums. However, options for school employee health insurance are limited, and costs reflect the overall market for health insurance rather than factors specific to LISD.

The 2001 Texas Legislature established a statewide school employee health insurance plan for teachers and other employees of school districts. School districts with 500 or fewer employees must participate in the new state insurance plan beginning in fall 2001. Districts with 501 to 1,000 employees had to choose whether they would participate by September 30, 2001. Districts with more than 1,000 employees, including LISD, may join the plan in 2005 unless the Teacher Retirement System (TRS), which will administer the plan, determines that an earlier opt-in date is feasible. Districts that do not join the state insurance plan will still receive state support to continue their locally determined insurance programs. All districts, whether they participate in the state plan or not, will receive a

state contribution of $75 a month per covered employee and an additional $1,000 a year for each school employee.

All full-time employees and those part-time employees who are TRS members are automatically covered by the basic state plan, which is comparable to catastrophic coverage. Additional district and employee contributions will be required for employees electing to purchase higher levels of coverage. The $75-per-month state contribution and the additional $1,000-per-employee annual contribution are designed to help cover these higher costs. Each employee would receive an additional $83 per month to pay for additional coverage, depending upon coverage, compensation or a combination of the two. Part-time employees who are not TRS members may participate if the district pays the full cost.

Districts must make a minimum contribution of $150 per employee per month. If a district does not make that payment, the state will help pay the local district's share until 2008. Districts that reach the Maintenance and Operations tax cap of $1.50 will also receive state aid for any tax effort over $1.50 required to reach their minimum district effort of $150 a month. Districts that contribute more than $150 a month per employee may use the difference between their current expenditure per employee per month and the required $150 a month minimum effort to provide additional insurance coverage or other employee compensation. Plan details will be subject to contract negotiations with health insurance providers, actuarial estimates, and TRS rules and guidelines.

LISD, with 3,108 employees 2000-01, may join the state plan in 2005, unless TRS determines that an earlier opt-in date is feasible. LISD contributes $190 per professional employee and $203.49 per paraprofessional employee, more than the required minimum $150 a month per employee. LISD may use the difference to provide additional insurance coverage or other employee compensation.

An advisory committee on health insurance, organized by the Risk Management director, includes a cross-section of LISD employees. The committee identifies and reviews alternatives for health insurance and will continue evaluating future health insurance options including the state insurance plan.

The Risk Management director is responsible for obtaining and maintaining the district's property and casualty insurance coverage. Insurance covers LISD facilities, vehicles and equipment as well as general liability, employee dishonesty and school board legal liability. **Exhibit 6-9** lists current district property and casualty policies.

Exhibit 6-9
LISD Property and Casualty Insurance Coverage

Coverage Type	Company	Insurance Amount	Deductible	Policy Expires	Premium
Property and Casualty Package, includes the following components:				03/03/2002	$303,000
Building and Contents	Allianz	$181,402,598	$25,000		
Extra Expense	Allianz	$250,000	$25,000		
Business Income	Allianz	$250,000	$25,000		
Mobile Equipment	Ins. Co. of the West	$4,610,753	$250		
Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Equipment	Ins. Co. of the West	$17,950,973	$250		
Musical Instrument	Ins. Co. of the West	$2,758,779	$250		
AV Equipment	Ins. Co. of the West	$2,157,083	$250		
Forgery/Alteration	Ins. Co. of the West	$25,000	$1,000		
Public Employee Dishonesty	Insurance Co. of the West	$50,000	$1,000		
Theft Disappearance & Destruction	Ins. Co. of the West	$50,000	$1,000		
Robbery and Safe Burglary	Ins. Co. of the West	$50,000	$1,000		
Tax Assessor Collector Bond	Ins. Co. of the West	$210,000	$1,000		
General Liability	Ins. Co. of the West	Varies by type	Varies		
School Board Legal Liability	Ins. Co. of the West	$1 million per occurrence and general aggregate	$5,000		

Boiler & Machinery	Allianz	$50 million	$1,000		
Business Auto	Ins. Co. of the West	$100,000 bodily injury; $300,000 per occurrence; $100,000 property damage	$250 comp; $250 collision		
Notary Bonds (6)	Western Surety	$2,500 each	$0	Varies	$71 each
Student Activities/Athletic Blanket	Reliastar/Unum TPA: Student Assurance	$25,000 lifetime max; $5 million catastrophic accident; $1,500 catastrophic cash benefit	$0 $10,000 $0	07/30/2002	$97,412 $6,055 $0
Employee Dishonesty Bond/Crime Stoppers	Fidelity & Deposit	$36,500	$365	10/31/2001	$250

Source: LISD Risk Management director, November 2001.

LISD carries workers' compensation coverage through the Texas Educational Entity Corporation pool. Innovative Risk Management serves as the district's third-party administrator and provides claims administration, claims adjustment and data analysis. The plan for 2001-02 will cover all valid claims but has a substantial financial incentive to keep claims down. If LISD workers' compensation claims cost is $672,000 or less, the maximum premium is $1,067,579. If claims cost exceeds $672,000, the maximum premium could be as much as $1,571,579.

Exhibit 6-10 presents the number of claims, total claims costs and incurred costs per claim since 1997-98.

Exhibit 6-10
LISD Workers' Compensation Claims,
Total Claims Costs and Incurred Costs per Claim
1997-98 through 2000-01

Year	Number	Total Claims	Incurred Costs

	of Claims	Costs	per Claim
1997-98	452	$1,547,800	$3,424
1998-99	418	$1,105,352	$2,644
1999-2000	398	$852,169	$2,141
2000-01	329	$904,559	$2,749

Source: LISD Risk Management Department, November 2001.

Exhibit 6-11 presents the premiums paid for workers' compensation insurance from 1997-98 to 2000-01.

Exhibit 6-11
LISD Workers' Compensation Insurance Premiums
1997-98 through 2000-01

Year	Premium
1997-98	$859,681
1998-99	$1,185,125
1999-2000	$1,070,040
2000-01	$955,989

Source: LISD Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports 1997-98 through 1999-2000, LISD Annual Financial and Compliance Report for year ended August 31, 2001.

FINDING

The LISD Risk Management director and director of Safety and Occupational Health have improved the district's workers' compensation program since 1998. The safety program now includes a safety representative for each campus and department, monthly meetings of safety representatives, monthly safety training and facility audits/inspections, detailed quarterly analyses and monthly safety checklists. The Risk Management director and director of Safety and Occupational Health monitor compliance with safety program requirements.

LISD revised its formal accident prevention plan in 1998. The comprehensive plan contains standards for management responsibilities,

data collection and analysis, employee training, safety inspection and audits, accident investigation and ongoing plan reviews and revisions.

In 1998, the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission designated LISD as an extra-hazardous employer due to a higher frequency of injury than the expected claims rate. In June 2000, LISD completed six months of monitor status for the Hazardous Employer Program, was removed from the program and is no longer considered hazardous.

COMMENDATION

An effective safety program and accident prevention plan have reduced LISD workers' compensation claims and helped control workers' compensation insurance premium costs.

FINDING

LISD uses a rolling owner-controlled insurance program (ROCIP) as part of its capital improvement program. ROCIP gives the district more control over the cost of general liability insurance for construction. Construction contractors typically purchase their own general liability insurance to cover claims from construction activity. Under ROCIP, the district purchases the insurance and makes it available to contractors.

ROCIP allows smaller contractors that might be unable to obtain insurance to participate in construction projects. Consolidating multiple policies into one large policy also reduces insurance premiums.

The district's ROCIP coverage was obtained through a RFP process in 2000. The insurance company guarantees savings of at least $832,000 for Phase I of LISD's hard construction costsand $1,565,000 for the total bond program.

COMMENDATION

LISD minimizes construction costs by implementing a rolling owner-controlled insurance program.

Chapter 6
ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

C. FIXED ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Texas Education Agency defines fixed assets as purchased or donated items that are tangible, have a useful life of more than one year, are worth $5,000 or more and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* requires assets worth $5,000 or more to be recorded in the fixed assets account group.

Under TEA guidelines, items that cost less than $5,000 should be recorded as an operating expense. School districts may, however, establish lower thresholds for control and accountability of fixed assets. Although districts are not required to capitalize items worth less than $5,000 in general fixed asset account groups, some districts have chosen to do so.

Effective September 1, 2001, school districts must depreciate assets in accordance with the Governmental Accounting Statements Board (GASB), Statement 34. GASB 34, issued in June 1999, requires government entities to report assets, including the amount of depreciation, in financial statements. Prior to the issuance of GASB 34, governments recorded the value of all their assets at the time of purchase, not over the asset's useful life. LISD has formed a steering committee to implement changes required by GASB 34 and to ensure a smooth implementation.

LISD capitalizes all items that cost $500 or more and tags them individually with a bar code system. Items worth less than $500 are listed together by room, and the entire room is tagged as a whole.

Exhibit 6-12 presents the district's fixed asset balances on August 31, 2001.

Exhibit 6-12
LISD Fixed Assets
as of August 31, 2001

Asset	Balance
Land	$5,359,973
Buildings and Improvements	80,162,474
Furniture and Equipment	44,140,118

Leased Property Under Capital Lease	1,263,962
Construction in Progress	3,478,939
Total	**$ 134,405,466**

FINDING

LISD contracts with an outside auctioneering company to conduct auctions of surplus property when the district warehouse fills up with assets no longer in use. Auctions are typically held several times per year to minimize storage costs. Proceeds from auctions cover auction expenses and generate a modest amount of income. For example, the February 2001 auction netted the district slightly over $8,000.

COMMENDATION

LISD generates revenue and minimizes storage costs by contracting for periodic surplus property auctions.

FINDING

LISD has not consistently performed periodic inventories of fixed assets. An outside vendor performed the district's last complete inventory in December 2000 and January 2001. Interim inventory counts and reconciliations have not been done since then. At its January 2002 meeting, the board reviewed proposals submitted in December 2001 for another complete inventory.

During the last inventory process, the vendor installed a proprietary software package to manage LISD's fixed assets. The fixed asset management system does not work with the general ledger system. Changes to the fixed asset management system, such as fixed asset purchases and disposals, must be entered separately into the district's accounting records.

LISD has a long history of problems with its fixed asset system and procedures. External audit reports since at least 1997 commented on problems reconciling fixed assets between subsidiary and general ledgers. The 2001 outside inventory resulted in a downward adjustment of $26,207,435. According to the chief financial officer, for a number of years prior to the 2001 inventory, fixed asset values were added to the general ledger, while fixed assets that were auctioned or discarded were

not deleted. Also, the 2001 inventory eliminated calculators and similar devices costing less than $500 that were previously considered "fixed assets." The 2001 inventory resulted in a decrease of fixed asset value from $64,951,102 to $38,743,667 Audit reports for the fiscal 1999 and 2000 also noted that fixed assets purchased with federal funds were not identified separately as required by federal grant management standards.

The 2001 audit report noted that these findings had been resolved. External auditors were able to reconcile the subsidiary fixed assets ledger to the general ledger for the 2001 audit. The district does not have an ongoing process for verifying the accuracy of data in both the fixed asset management system and the general ledger, therefore, LISD has no assurance that problems will not reoccur. Sole reliance on infrequent outside inventories increases the risk that fixed assets could be taken without LISD's knowledge and without appropriate follow-up action, such as notifying law enforcement authorities and filing property insurance claims. School districts often use periodic unannounced inventory audits provide a deterrent effect against theft and provide an incentive for campus and department managers to keep current records.

Recommendation 59:

Conduct periodic unannounced inventory audits and perform quarterly reconciliations of the fixed asset subsidiary ledger to the general ledger.

Periodic inventory and reconciliation of fixed assets will improve the accuracy of records by ensuring fixed assets are both added and deleted from the inventory records in a timely manner.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Fixed Asset staff to conduct unannounced inventory audits.	June 2002
2.	Fixed Asset staff obtains input from the chief financial officer, Risk Management director, and internal and external auditors regarding an inventory audit plan.	July - September 2002
3.	Fixed Asset staff finalizes the inventory audit plan and submits to the superintendent for approval.	October 2002
4.	Fixed Asset staff conducts periodic inventory audits and provides the results to the Accounting Department and Internal Auditor.	November 2002 and periodically thereafter
5.	Accounting Department staff performs quarterly fixed asset reconciliations and provides a summary for the	December 2002 and quarterly thereafter

Internal Auditor and Fixed Asset Staff.	

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6
ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

D. BOND ISSUANCE AND INDEBTEDNESS

The chief financial officer is responsible for issuing bonds and other debt instruments, and for debt funding and refinancing. In a bond election held on May 1, 1999, voters approved $144 million for construction of school buildings. In October 1999, $72 million of those construction bonds were issued. In June 2000, the board approved an increase from $144 to $175 million, but the higher construction budget did not require additional bond approvals. The increase was to be funded from $13.1 million in Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs) and $17.9 million in interest earnings. The QZAB program is a federal program for school renovation that allows eligible districts to issue bonds that provide tax credits to bond holders. On September 1, 2001, LISD used the remaining $72 million of approved bond authority in a bond package for $98.6 million. **Exhibit 6-13** summarizes the sources and uses of the September 1, 2001 bond funds.

Exhibit 6-13
Sources and Uses of Bond Funds
September 1, 2001

Source / Use	Amount
Sources of Funds	
Principal amount of current interest bonds	$96,090,000
Principal amount of premium capital appreciation bonds	2,509,910
Subtotal	**$98,599,910**
Premium on premium capital appreciation bonds	2,603,056
Original issue premium	975,102
Accrued interest on current interest bonds	663,766
Total	**$102,841,834**
Uses of Funds	
Purchase U.S. government securities for escrow	$29,290,514
Cash deposit to escrow	11
Deposit to construction fund	72,000,000
Underwriters' discount and issuance costs	882,218

Deposit to interest and sinking fund	663,766
Contingency	5,325
Total	**$102,841,834**

Source: Official Statement $98,599,909.90 LISD Unlimited Tax School Building and Refunding Bonds, Series 2001.

The September 1, 2001 bond issue refunded $27.2 million of Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds, Series 1999, which were originally to be used to construct schools and were to be paid from future LISD tax revenues. Ratings on the new bonds were rated "AAA" by Standard and Poor's and by Fitch, and "Aaa" by Moody's, based upon the guarantee of the Permanent School Fund. These ratings are the highest ratings possible. Underlying ratings of A by Standard and Poor's and Fitch and A3 by Moody's were assigned, corresponding to upper medium quality.

Exhibit 6-14 lists the district's outstanding debt on August 31, 2001. **Exhibit 6-14** does not include the $98.6 million in tax school building and refunding bonds issued on September 1, 2001 as shown in **Exhibit 6-13**.

Exhibit 6-14
Outstanding Debt as of August 31, 2001

Description	Original Amount	Amount Outstanding as of August 31, 2001
Public Property Finance Contractual Obligations		
Series 1996 4.25%	$2,550,000	$700,000
Series 1998 4.85%	$2,800,000	$760,000
Series 1998 5.06%	$4,255,000	$3,210,000
Qualified Zone Academy Tax Notes, dated 8-1-2000	$8,000,000	$8,000,000
Qualified Zone Academy Tax Notes, dated 8-1-2001	$8,000,000	$8,000,000
Unlimited Tax Refunding		
Series 1991, Refunding Current Interest 5.7-6.6%	$7,300,000	$1,455,000

Series 1991, Refunding Capital Appreciation 6.9%	$815,000	$1,643,455
Series 1993, Refunding Current Interest 3.0-5.95%	$7,859,391	$5,530,000
Series 1993, Refunding Capital Appreciation 5.85%	$1,188,644	$1,912,786
Series 1993, Refunding Capital Appreciation 5.95%	$496,558	$805,398
Series 1999, School Building Bonds 5.5-6.75%	$72,000,000	$68,975,000
Total	**$115,264,593**	**$100,991,639**

Source: LISD audited financial statements for fiscal 2001 and Official Statement $98,599,909.90. LISD Unlimited Tax School Building and Refunding Bonds, Series 2001.

FINDING

LISD worked with bond rating agencies to improve bond ratings. In 1999, when LISD had a low fund balance, district financial officials outlined a plan to improve the district's financial position. The plan included adopting a fund balance policy, approving balanced budgets, adhering to budgets, increasing revenues and controlling expenditures. The plan helped dramatically improve the district's finances. Balanced budgets have been approved each year since 1999. **Exhibit 6-15** presents the district's general fund balance, revenues and expenditures on August 31.

Exhibit 6-15
General Fund Balance, Revenues and Expenditures
August 31, 1998 through August 31, 2001

Year	Fund Balance on August 31	Actual Revenues	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
1997-98	$13,658,840	$111,801,907	$116,883,414	$112,335,940
1998-99	$7,273,266	$120,860,324	$133,361,635	$128,069,251
1999-2000	$14,241,418	$129,353,673	$128,608,293	$123,043,885
2000-01	$17,814,246	$130,622,010	$131,686,326	$124,692,376

Source: LISD audited financial statements for the years ended August 31, 1998 through 2001.

In August 2001, district officials met with bond rating agencies and reviewed the district's progress. The district's bond ratings were upgraded after the meeting.

COMMENDATION

LISD improved its bond ratings and reduced bond interest expenses.

Chapter 7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) financial management function in the following five sections:

A. Fund Balance
B. Budgeting and Reporting
C. Internal and External Auditing
D. Tax Collection
E. Accounting Operations

Effective financial management in school districts includes planning, budgeting and managing the use of district resources to maximize financial performance. Financial management is most effective in an environment where resources are allocated based on established priorities, where internal controls are in place and operating as planned, where information is reported in a timely manner and in user-friendly formats and where staffing and technology are appropriate to the tasks to be performed.

BACKGROUND

School districts must follow various federal, state and local requirements. To handle the operating budget of almost $137 million, LISD financial operations are directed by requirements contained in:

- Federal and state laws, rules and regulations;
- Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG);
- LISD board-adopted policies and procedures;
- LISD Financial Operating Guidelines;
- Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP);
- Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncements; and
- Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) pronouncements.

Texas school districts receive appropriated state funds through complex formulas involving three tiers of funding. Tier I funding is designed for school districts and the state to share in the basic costs of public education. Tier I allotments are based on student attendance in weighted average daily attendance (WADA). WADA includes components for special needs such as special education, compensatory education, bilingual education and gifted and talented programs. Tier I also includes partial funding for student transportation. A school district's property wealth is factored into

the Tier I formula to adjust the allotment for each district's property tax base.

Tier II funding guarantees that tax efforts beyond the required local share for Tier I funding will be rewarded with a minimum amount of money per WADA. Tier III funds, added by the Legislature in 1999, allow school districts to obtain partial state funding for debt service requirements on previously issued bonds.

Texas school districts receive revenue from local, state and federal sources. For 2000-01, districts received about 53.1 percent of their revenues from local sources, 43.6 percent from the state and 3.4 percent from federal sources. State revenue for each district is based upon the district's property values. Districts with greater property wealth per pupil receive less in state funds because they have the ability to generate more property taxes. Districts with lower property value per pupil receive proportionally more from the state.

In Texas, a court-approved school finance system equalizes property wealth among school districts. Wealthy districts must pay into a pool that, together with additional state funds, subsidizes poorer districts. A property tax value of $300,000 per pupil in WADA qualifies a district as "wealthy."

Exhibit 7-1 presents a three-year summary of actual LISD total revenues. Over the same three-year period, budgeted revenues for the state as a whole have grown from $22.3 billion in 1998-99 to $26.1 billion in 2000-01, a 17 percent increase. LISD revenues have risen due to increases in federal grant funds, sales of WADA credits to property-wealthy school districts and aggressive collection of local taxes.

Exhibit 7-1
LISD Actual Revenues by Source
1998-99 through 2000-01

Source	1998-99 Revenues	Percent of Total	1999-2000 Revenues	Percent of Total	2000-01 Revenues	Percent of Total	Percent 3-year Increase
Local	$ 21,198,179	15.2%	$ 27,173,632	16.8%	$ 29,413,492	17.9%	38.8%
State	$ 97,732,276	70.1%	$109,531,425	67.7%	$110,992,855	67.6%	13.6%
Federal	$ 20,409,596	14.7%	$ 24,997,477	15.5%	$ 23,938,669	14.5%	17.3%
Total	**$139,340,051**	**100.0%**	**$161,702,534**	**100.0%**	**$164,345,016**	**100.0%**	**17.9%**

Exhibit 7-2 shows LISD's total budgeted expenditures by function, student enrollment and total expenditures per student for fiscal years 1997-98 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 7-2
LISD Total Budgeted Expenditures by Function, Student Enrollment
And Total Expenditures per Student
1997-98 through 2000-01

Function	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 through 2000-01
Instruction	$ 66,590,155	$ 70,940,296	$74,966,417	$74,066,379	11.2%
Instructional Related Services	3,783,996	4,238,368	4,004,931	3,840,286	1.5%
Instructional Leadership	2,344,912	2,600,721	2,411,163	2,003,472	(14.6%)
School Leadership	7,512,943	7,848,214	7,474,693	8,016,757	6.7%
Support Services - Student	5,870,295	6,615,366	6,934,329	7,142,888	21.7%
Student Transportation	1,263,374	1,472,787	1,460,194	1,589,007	25.8%
Food Services	6,988,540	7,138,417	7,495,355	7,325,821	4.8%
Co curricular/ Extracurricular Activities	1,954,076	2,308,776	2,021,603	2,051,069	5.0%
Central Administration	4,118,897	4,647,806	4,194,291	4,280,384	3.9%
Plant Maintenance and	13,300,662	15,314,188	12,788,439	12,648,480	(4.9%)

Operations					
Security and Monitoring Services	1,103,800	1,146,000	1,212,047	1,372,600	24.4%
Data Processing Services	695,817	947,972	1,006,356	1,301,740	87.1%
Community Services	57,002	63,371	59,942	16,572	(70.9%)
Total Budgeted Operating Expenditures	**115,584,469**	**125,282,282**	**126,029,760**	**125,655,455**	**8.7%**
Debt Service	2,760,416	4,594,150	9,784,936	9,971,331	261.2%
Capital Outlay	3,758,015	6,763,276	707,936	1,272,252	(66.1%)
Total Budgeted Non-Operating Expenditures	**6,518,431**	**11,357,426**	**10,492,872**	**11,243,583**	**72.5%**
Total Budgeted Expenditures	**122,102,900**	**136,639,708**	**136,522,632**	**136,899,038**	**12.1%**
Student Enrollment	22,651	22,601	22,524	22,556	(0.5%)
Total Expenditures Per Student	**$5,391**	**$6,046**	**$6,061**	**$6,072**	**12.6%**

Source: TEA, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 1997-98 through 2000-2001.

Exhibit 7-3 compares the district's total budgeted 2000-01 expenditures by object, expressed as a percentage of total expenditures, to those of its peer districts and the state average. LISD spends more than 80 percent of its budget on payroll, more than peer districts and more than the state average. Professional and contracted services, however, are proportionally lower for LISD.

Exhibit 7-3
Total Budgeted Expenditures by Object
As a Percentage of Total Budgeted Expenditures
LISD, Peer Districts and State Averages 2000-01

Function	Laredo	United	Edinburg	Harlandale	Edgewood	Eagle Pass	State
Payroll	**80.6%**	73.0%	74.9%	73.7%	79.2%	79.0%	73.5%
Professional and Contracted Services	**5.4%**	5.6%	5.6%	5.5%	6.2%	6.2%	7.9%
Supplies and Materials	**4.7%**	7.2%	6.2%	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	6.3%
Other Operating	**1.1%**	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%	1.9%	1.5%	1.7%
Total Operating	**91.8%**	87.5%	88.5%	88.1%	94.2%	93.6%	89.4%
Debt Service	**7.3%**	10.4%	10.0%	8.6%	4.8%	5.7%	8.3%
Capital Outlay	**0.9%**	2.1%	1.5%	3.3%	1.0%	0.7%	2.3%
Total Non-Operating	**8.2%**	12.5%	11.5%	11.9%	5.8%	6.4%	10.6%
Total Budgeted Expenditures	**100.0%**	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Student Enrollment	**22,556**	27,556	22,005	14,468	12,983	12,515	4,059,619
Total Expenditures Per Student	**$6,072**	**$5,788**	**$6,889**	**$7,721**	**$6,679**	**$5,977**	**$6,638**

Source: TEA, AEIS Reports 2000-01.

Exhibit 7-4 compares the district's total budgeted 2000-01 expenditures by function to those of its peer districts and the state average, expressed as a percentage of total expenditures. LISD spends proportionally more on instruction and related functions than peer districts and more than the state average.

Exhibit 7-4
Total Budgeted Expenditures by Function
As a Percentage of Total Expenditures
LISD, Peer Districts and State Averages 2000-01

Function	Laredo	United	Edinburg	Harlandale	Edgewood	Eagle Pass	State
Instruction	**54.1%**	49.5%	49.6%	45.8%	51.5%	53.5%	51.5%
Instructional Related Services	**2.8%**	1.8%	2.0%	3.0%	3.9%	2.1%	2.6%
Instructional Leadership	**1.5%**	0.9%	1.9%	1.1%	1.7%	1.1%	1.2%
School Leadership	**5.9%**	7.2%	4.4%	7.3%	6.2%	5.8%	5.3%
Support Services - Students	**5.2%**	3.8%	4.6%	5.6%	6.1%	3.9%	4.0%
Student Transportation	**1.2%**	2.4%	3.2%	1.3%	0.8%	2.5%	2.5%
Food Services	**5.4%**	5.6%	7.0%	5.9%	6.5%	7.8%	4.9%
Co curricular/Extra-curricular Activities	**1.5%**	1.9%	3.0%	1.2%	1.7%	2.2%	2.2%
Central Administration	**3.1%**	4.0%	2.4%	3.0%	3.5%	3.7%	3.5%
Plant Maintenance and Operations	**9.2%**	8.9%	8.5%	11.1%	10.2%	9.0%	9.7%
Security & Monitoring	**1.0%**	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	0.6%
Data Processing	**1.0%**	0.7%	0.6%	1.5%	0.6%	0.7%	1.1%
Community Services	**0.0%**	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Non-Operating	**8.2%**	12.5%	11.5%	11.9%	5.8%	6.4%	10.6%
Total Budgeted Expenditures	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Exhibit 7-5 shows the organizational structure of the finance, accounting, tax collection and internal audit functions.

Exhibit 7-5
LISD Organizational Structure
Finance, Accounting, Tax Collection and Internal Audit Functions
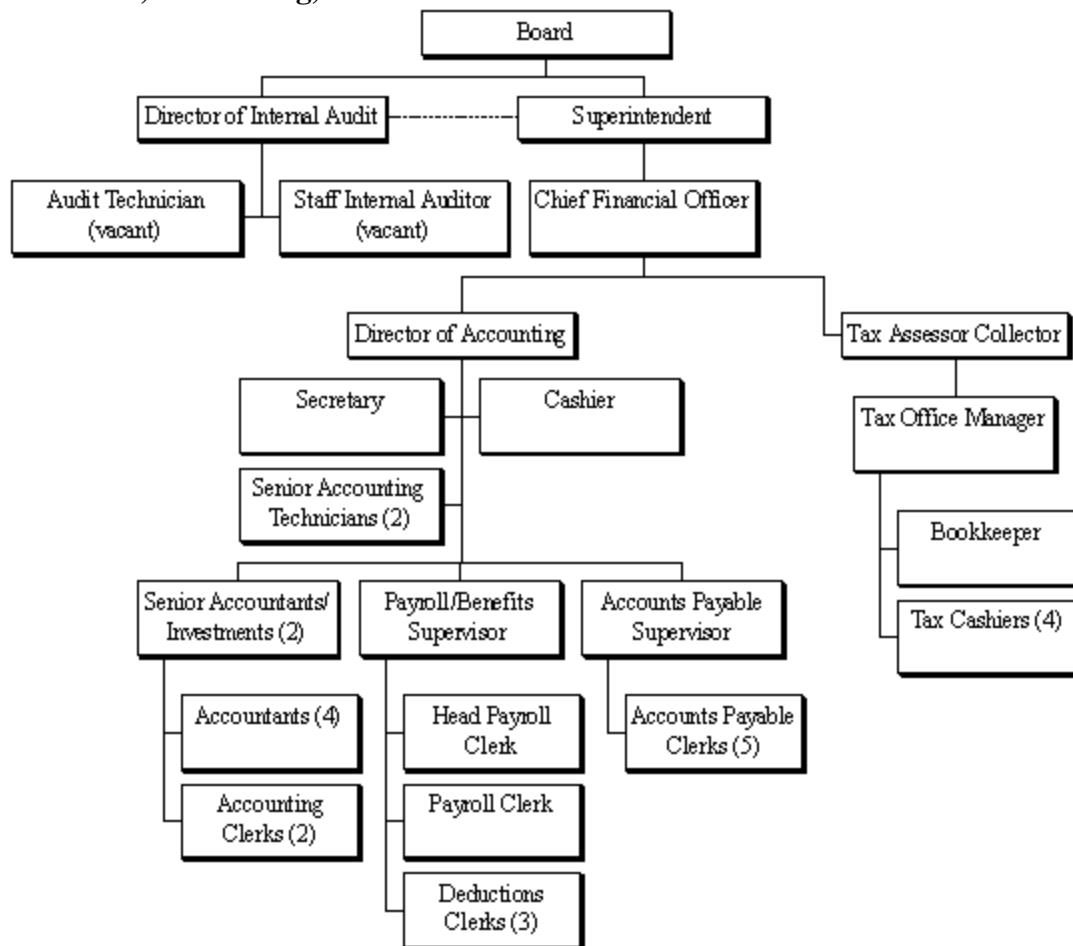
Source: LISD's Chief Financial Officer, November 2001.

The chief financial officer, who has been with the district for more than six years, has overall responsibility for the areas shown in **Exhibit 7-5**. He is a Certified Public Accountant, holds master's degrees in business and accounting and teaches governmental accounting at a local university. The chief financial officer reports directly to the superintendent. He also works closely with the school board's finance and audit committee.

In addition to the above functions, the chief financial officer also supervises the purchasing and procurement function and those information

technology employees who maintain the management information system. These sections are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Prior to a reorganization effective in October 2001, the chief financial officer also supervised the transportation, food services, risk management and fixed assets functions.

Chapter 7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. FUND BALANCE

Government entities report equity in governmental and trust funds as fund balance. Fund balances operate similar to savings accounts and are the difference between governmental fund assets and liabilities reported on the balance sheet. Fund balance in the general fund is particularly significant since the general fund is the main fund that finances most functions and the fund that includes state aid and local maintenance taxes.

Not all governmental fund balances are available for expenditures. Some are reserved and earmarked to pay specific future uses, for example, a reserve for encumbrances. Unreserved fund balances include designated funds, earmarked for planned future purposes but not actual commitments. The remainder of the fund balance is undesignated and unreserved and is a measure of funds available to finance monthly operating expenditures.

TEA's FASRG provides a computation of the optimum fund balance for a district's general fund. TEA recommends that the optimum general fund balance be equal to the total reserved fund balance, total designated fund balance, an amount to cover Fall cash flow deficits and one month of average cash disbursements for the nine months following the fiscal year.

FINDING

LISD has aggressively pursued partnerships and sold WADA credits to increase revenues and improve fund balance. School districts in Texas with property wealth exceeding the equalized wealth level of $300,000 have several options to achieve the equalized wealth level. One option is the purchase of WADA credits. Under this option, property poor school districts in Texas are able to receive payments for WADA credits sold to property wealthy school districts to reduce the wealthy district's property wealth per student. These partnerships are authorized under Chapter 41 Subchapter D of the Texas Education Code, which specifies the detailed formula for calculating allowed WADA payments.

Laredo ISD partnered with Deer Park ISD in 2000-01, resulting in an additional $2.6 million in revenues. For 2001-02, LISD has contracts with four districts for an estimated $4 million in additional revenues. The four districts are Deer Park ISD, La Porte ISD, Plano ISD and Texas City ISD.

COMMENDATION

LISD has aggressively pursued potential partners to sell WADA credits to, resulting in increased revenues and improvements in fund balance.

FINDING

LISD established a general fund balance goal that exceeds the guidelines established by the TEA and is advancing toward that goal following the instructions established by the board.

LISD board policy CA (LOCAL), issued September 20,1999, sets a goal of attaining an unreserved, undesignated fund balance of at least two months' operating costs within five years. To meet that goal, the policy instructs the superintendent and business manager to implement the following steps:

- develop and submit for board approval a balanced budget with input from site-based decision making (SBDM) committees and instructional programs.
- develop staffing patterns and funding formulas based on a per pupil basis.
- restrict any surplus funds towards unreserved, undesignated fund balance.

In the management letter for the district's 1998-99 external audit, the auditor commended the district for adopting the policy requiring maintenance of at least two months of operating expenditures as unreserved, undesignated fund balance. The auditor further encouraged the board to support management in complying with the policy. The 2001 external audit commends the board and staff for increasing the district's unreserved, undesignated fund balance from $1.1 million in 1998 to $10.6 million in 2001.

COMMENDATION

LISD's establishment of a general fund balance policy including a specific goal and guidelines to achieve the goal has enabled the district to increase its fund balance substantially in a three-year period.

Chapter 7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. BUDGETING AND REPORTING

Texas school districts must comply with state financial reporting requirements in TEA's FASRG. Effective budgeting helps districts allocate dollars based upon instructional needs. An effective budget process also enhances the district's and the public's ability to evaluate performance according to financial and educational benchmarks.

LISD's budget cycle for the 2001-02 fiscal year began in November 2000 after the chief financial officer developed preliminary funding estimates. In February and March 2001, Accounting Department staff conducted individual and group training workshops with principals, department heads and site-based decision-making budget committees. Campuses and departments submitted final budget requests by the deadline of March 23, 2001. From February 2001 to May 2001, the superintendent, chief financial officer and other cabinet members held various budget meetings with campus and department staff.

The 2001-02 budget was initially presented to the board on July 9, 2001. The superintendent's accompanying budget message to the board contains detailed information on assumptions used in the proposed budget, on revenue projections, on legal requirements pertaining to the budget process and on future implications. The 2001-02 staff proposed a balanced budget, as it had been for the previous two years. Board budget workshops were held on four days in late July and early August 2001. A public hearing was held and the Board approved the budget on August 16, 2001.

LISD publishes a detailed budget calendar, with key steps and deadlines in the budget process. The calendar for the 2001-02 budget process is posted on the district's Web site. **Exhibit 7-6** presents selected information from the 2001-02 budget calendar.

Exhibit 7-6
LISD Budget Calendar Highlights
2001-02

Date(s)	Activity
November - December 2001	Planning and scheduling of budget process. Assessment of formats and tools needed.

January 17, 2002	Meeting with program directors, directors, division of Instruction and Human Resources Department.
February 11, 2002	Overview of budget preparation process and coding structure. Present *Budget Instruction Manual* (with all reports, requests, and requirements for budget request submission) to campus budget teams and administrators responsible for budget requests.
February 11 - March 22, 2002	Campus and department training. Six Finance Department teams providing onsite budget preparation assistance.
February - March 22, 2002	Needs assessment by site-based decision-making committees. Campuses asked to reference their needs assessment reports and campus improvement plans when developing the mission, goals and objectives of the campus and allocating funds to different programs and grade levels.
March 2002	Budget meeting with Finance Committee on personnel matters. Target for teachers' salary recommendations to board.
March 22, 2002	Deadline for principals and department heads to submit completed budget request forms and program plans.
March 25 - April 8, 2002	Finance Department prepares draft budget for superintendent's review.
April 9 - May 17, 2002	Superintendent and cabinet review individual budget requests with campus committees and departments. Suggested revisions discussed and agreed to by campus budget committees.
June 2, 2002	Proposed budget presented to board.
June - early August 2002	Budget workshops on operating fund, debt service fund, athletic fund, construction fund and food service fund.
August 20 - August 30, 2002	Notice for public hearing.
August 30, 2002	Public hearing. Budget adopted by board.

Source: LISD Budget Calendar, Annual Budget 2001-2002.

Increases or decreases in a functional area's budget require board approval. Budget amendments are periodically submitted to the board during the year. Budget changes not affecting the functional area total are reviewed and processed by the chief financial officer. In addition, the superintendent reviews and approves transfers more than $10,000 within the same

function. Campus and departmental administrators have online access to their budgets and receive a monthly report from the Finance Department.

FINDING

The Laredo ISD Finance Department has emphasized and improved its reporting processes and has repeatedly received national recognition. LISD received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for fiscal years 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000. LISD also received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its comprehensive annual financial reports for fiscal years ending August 31, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000.

The GFOA established its financial reporting award program in 1945 "to recognize and encourage excellence in financial reporting by state and local governments." To receive recognition from the GFOA, governments must submit comprehensive annual financial reports that meet requirements in the following areas:

- reporting in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles;
- compliance with finance-related legal and contractual provisions;
- completeness and clarity of transmittal letter and statistical section;
- use of standardized terminology and formatting conventions;
- thorough disclosure and sufficient detail;
- minimizing ambiguities and potential for misleading inferences;
- cohesiveness and internal consistency;
- implementation of prior year comments and suggestions for improvement; and
- reader appeal.

GFOA established its budget award program in 1984 "to encourage governments to prepare budget documents of the highest quality to meet the needs of decision-makers and citizens." Criteria for the budget award address requirements in the areas of the policy document, financial plan, operations guide and communication.

COMMENDATION

LISD has improved its financial reporting and budgeting process to qualify for awards presented by the Government Finance Officers Association.

FINDING

Although LISD's preliminary budget estimates are based upon past expenditures, the district is moving toward a performance-based budgeting process. Site-based decision-making committees conduct needs assessment as part of the budget process. The process includes referencing campus mission, goals and objectives to the needs assessment reports and campus improvement reports. Allocation of funds to grade levels and programs is then based upon need. The district is beginning to integrate performance measures into the budgeting process.

COMMENDATION

LISD is moving toward performance-based budgeting by incorporating needs assessment and performance measures into the budget process.

FINDING

The chief financial officer has implemented financial reporting formats that provide useful information to a variety of audiences. The finance committee and other board members receive detailed monthly financial reports, including comprehensive unaudited financial statements, an investment report, an administrative cost ratio schedule, other pertinent information and a message from the chief financial officer highlighting important items and trends in the report. A summary of this report is prepared in a PowerPoint presentation for discussion at the board meeting and is subsequently posted on the district's Web site.

The chief financial officer has also implemented a user-friendly format for summarizing, analyzing and presenting data on important topics such as health insurance, investments, monthly financial statements and construction projects. These single-page updates allow administrators and board members to quickly examine critical issues, causative factors, conclusions drawn and further actions that may be indicated.

COMMENDATION

Innovative financial reporting formats and presenting them on the LISD Web site increase the usefulness and accessibility of financial information.

Chapter 7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

C. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDITING

Internal and external audits assure management and citizens that school district funds are spent appropriately in compliance with the law. TEC Section 44.008 requires school districts to undergo an annual external audit of their financial statements. The code specifies that external audits must be performed by a certified public accountant and that the audit must comply with GAAP. The external audit is conducted on an organization-wide basis and includes all fund types and account groups that are the district's accounting responsibility. The external audit is financial in scope and intended to provide reasonable assurance that the district's financial statements fairly present the district's financial position, operating results and cash flow in conformity with GAAP and other relevant criteria.

District employees or auditors under contract to the district perform internal audits. Internal audits generally consider the adequacy of internal controls, compliance with relevant criteria (laws, regulations, policies and procedures) and operating efficiency and effectiveness. All state agencies that receive appropriations are required to have an internal audit function. Texas State Auditor's Office Report No. 3-010 recommends that all school districts with annual operating expenditures in excess of $20 million and with more than 5,000 students have an internal audit function.

Internal auditors are expected to comply with standards for the professional practice of internal auditing as promulgated by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Independence and objectivity are the standards' key components, and auditors should avoid conflicts of interest such as responsibility for operating functions. Internal auditors should not assess operations for which they were previously responsible.

The function of the LISD internal audit department, according to its mission statement, is "to assist administrators and staff in the effective discharge of their responsibilities by furnishing them with analyses, appraisals, recommendations, counsel and information concerning the activities reviewed and by promoting effective and efficient internal controls at a reasonable cost."

The previous Internal Audit director resigned in August 2000, and the vacancy was not filled until March 2001. The current Internal Audit director has more than seven years of experience in internal auditing in the governmental sector and is in the process of obtaining official certification as a certified Internal Auditor from the Institute of Internal Auditors.

The board approved an additional staff internal auditor position in 1998, but that position was not filled due to budget constraints. The Internal Audit director has obtained approval to fill the staff auditor position and the audit technician position. Filling the vacant positions will allow the Internal Audit Department to more effectively fulfill its mission.

The previous Internal Audit director developed a five-year audit plan, which was approved by the board in 1998. The current Internal Audit director is in the process of revising this plan and will request board approval of the new plan during this fiscal year.

Padgett, Stratemann & Co., L.L.P. performed LISD's annual financial and compliance audits for the years ended August 31, 2001, 2000 and 1999. Gonzalez, Farias, Guerra & Flores, P.C. performed the audit for the previous several years. All audit reports reviewed contained unqualified audit opinions. An unqualified audit opinion is one in which the auditor found no significant problems that would impact the accuracy of the financial statements. In other words, the district's annual financial report could be relied upon as being materially accurate. None of the reports identified any major material weaknesses but some included a number of comments pertaining to relatively minor concerns. **Exhibit 7-7** summarizes comments contained in the management letters prepared by the auditors in conjunction with the annual audits.

Exhibit 7-7
LISD Management Letter Comments
1997-98 through 2000-2001

Audit Date	Comments
Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 2001	• Regarding oversight of construction activity, recommends that all purchasing activities should continue to be centralized and monitored through the central purchasing department. • Recommends that the internal audit function include "construction audits" in its audit plan and obtain specialized training in the construction area. • Commends the board and staff for the growth in fund balance and recommends that this mindset continues. • Commends the district for efforts in seeking new revenue sources and partnerships, i.e., sale of WADA credits. • Notes that prior year comments have been resolved. • Provides information on GASB Statement Number 34 and proposed GASB Statement Number 14 and presents the current status of key activities to implement GASB

	Statement Number 34.
Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 2000	• Recommends the district prepare a formal plan for implementing GASB 34. • Notes that the district had been without an internal auditor since August 2000 and recommends the district hire an internal auditor as soon as possible. • Reconciliation of fixed assets subsidiary ledger to the general fixed asset account group in the general ledger continues to be a problem (prior-year finding). • Fixed assets purchased with federal funds not identified separately (prior- year finding).
Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1999	• Commends district for adopting fund balance policy requiring district to maintain at least two months of operating expenditures as unreserved, undesignated fund balance. • Encourages the board to support management in complying with the policy. • Reconciliation of fixed assets subsidiary ledger to the general fixed asset account group in the general ledger continues to be a problem (prior year finding). • Fixed assets purchased with federal funds not identified separately. • Service records in personnel files not updated (prior year finding).
Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1998	• Continuing problems reconciling the general ledger to the subsidiary ledger for fixed assets (prior year finding). • Food service inventory count was properly performed, but food service personnel lacked training in certain areas. • Notes district's internal auditor continued to perform audits of campus and student activity funds and staff, the internal auditor and campus administrators paid quick attention to problem areas. • Employee service records not updated, and salary calculations not standardized. • Recommends developing a formal written plan addressing Y2K technological issues.

FINDING

The Internal Audit director has been designated as the district's records management officer, which limits independence and eliminates the possibility of an objective review of the records management function. This role includes approving campus and departmental requests to dispose of records. Requiring the Internal Audit director to perform operating functions reduces the resources available for the internal auditing function. In addition, professional standards and guidance promulgated by the Institute of Internal Auditors require the internal audit activity to be independent.

The Internal Audit director or any staff auditors should not have operational responsibilities that could impair independence. According to the Institute of Internal Auditors *Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing,* Attribute Standard 1100, internal audit activity should be independent. Implementation Standard 1130.A1 recommends that internal auditors not assess operations for which they have had previous responsibility within the previous year. Implementation Standard 1130.A2 requires that someone outside the internal audit activity oversee functions supervised by the chief audit executive.

Recommendation 60:

Designate an employee outside of internal audit as the district's records management officer.

To achieve the independence desired, the district should consider staff from Human Resources, legal or other central administration staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Internal Audit director and superintendent review requirements and duties for the district's records management officer.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent designates another employee as the district's records management officer.	June 2002
3.	The new records management officer assumes duties from the Internal Audit director.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not have a formal policy to track the status of audit recommendations and ensure appropriate recommendations are implemented. Various types of audits can occur at Texas school districts. Audits of the financial statements and required supplementary information performed by qualified certified public accountants are required each year. External auditors issue a management letter each year with issues noted during the annual audit. Internal audits identify opportunities for improvement throughout the year. TEA's Division of School Audits periodically reviews school district attendance audits. All types of audits, reviews and consulting engagements include recommendations for school district action.

Without a system to track and report on the status of recommendations, LISD runs the risk of failing to take needed action. For example, external auditors repeatedly identified the fixed asset system as a problem several years in a row. Board members and district administrators need periodic information on the current status of previous recommendations in order to hold district personnel accountable for implementing those recommendations.

Recommendation 61:

Adopt a formal policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of audit recommendations made to LISD.

Critical components include assigning responsibility for initial identification of audit recommendations, frequency and format for reporting to administrators and the board, management responsibilities for implementing audit recommendations and assigning responsibility for periodically reporting the status of audit recommendations. Although responsibility for implementing recommendations rests with district management, the internal audit department is the most appropriate organizational unit to collect information on recommendation status and prepare periodic reports.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, chief financial officer and Internal Audit director meet to discuss requirements for the audit recommendation tracking and reporting system.	May 2002
2.	The Internal Audit director and chief financial officer	June 2002

	design a proposed audit recommendation tracking and reporting system.	
3.	The board's finance and audit committee approve the audit tracking and reporting system.	July 2002
4.	The LISD internal audit department prepares an initial report.	August 2002
5.	The boards' finance and audit committee and the full board review and discuss the results of the initial tracking report.	September 2002
6.	District management and the Internal Audit director track audit recommendations and report on the current status of recommendations to the board quarterly.	September 2002 and quarterly thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The LISD internal audit charter has not been formally reevaluated since the board first approved it in 1995. According to internal auditing standards, every internal audit department should have a charter.

An internal audit charter establishes the department's position within an organization, authorizes the records that the auditor has access to, and defines the scope of internal auditing activities. It is important because it represents the contract between the internal auditing department and the organization.

The LISD internal audit department has a charter with appropriate provisions. However the board approved the current charter in 1995 and has not reviewed it since that time. Since organizations and professional practices change, the internal audit charter should be revisited periodically and revised if needed.

Recommendation 62:

Review the internal audit charter and revise if necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Internal Audit director reviews the current internal audit charter and identifies provisions that may need to be updated.	May 2002

2.	The Internal Audit director proposes changes to the charter, if any changes are needed.	June 2002
3.	The Finance and Audit committee reviews the changes, if any are needed, and submit to the board for approval in open meeting.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

D. TAX COLLECTION

The Texas Education Code Section 45.002 authorizes school boards to levy and collect annual ad valorem taxes for the maintenance of district schools. LISD contracted with Webb County to collect its taxes until 1987. Collections ranged from 73 percent to 79 percent during the 1980s and, dissatisfied with the level of collections, LISD established its own tax office in 1987. Collection rates have steadily risen, and the current goal is a 96-percent collection rate. The actual collection rate for tax year 2001 was 95.21 percent.

School districts deal with three types of tax rates. The *effective rate* is the rate needed to generate the same amount of revenue as the previous year, based upon current values of property taxed the previous year. The *rollback rate* is the effective rate plus $.08 plus the current debt rate as established in the Texas Tax Code Section 26.04. The *proposed rate* is the rate necessary to generate the amount the district estimates is needed for the coming year. If the proposed rate is below the previous adopted rate, the proposed rate becomes the adopted rate when approved by the board. If the board approves a rate above the rollback rate, the district must hold a rollback election for the adopted rate to have final approval.

Tax rates consist of a maintenance and operations (M&O) component and an interest and sinking fund (I&S) component. The M&O component is used to cover general operating expenses of the district. The I&S component is used to pay principal and interest on the district's debt obligations. LISD currently has an M&O tax rate of $1.35 per $100 valuation, 11.1 percent less than the state maximum allowed of $1.50. An election was held November 17, 2001 to increase the limit by $.15, but the proposal did not pass.

Taxpayer discounts for early payment were eliminated about five years ago.

Exhibit 7-8 shows the district's tax rate compared to the state average and the district's adjusted total tax levy for the years 1995 through 2001. The LISD tax rate has remained well below the state average tax rate.

Exhibit 7-8
LISD Tax Rate and Adjusted Total Tax Levy
1996 through 2001

Tax Year	LISD Tax Rate Per $100 Valuation	State Average Tax Rate Per $100 Valuation	LISD Adjusted Total Tax Levy
1996	1.265	1.430	$15,323,342
1997	1.185	1.497	$14,166,069
1998	1.225	1.540	$15,143,118
1999	1.326	1.512	$16,552,059
2000	1.386	1.475	$17,838,670
2001	1.426	Not Available	$18,814,743[1]

Source: TEA, AEIS 1996-97 through 2000-01 and LISD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ending August 31, 2000.
Note 1: Adjusted total tax levy as of November 30, 2001.

LISD's property value per pupil has risen from $53,626 in 1996-97 to $57,520 in 2000-01, an increase of 7.3 percent. During the same period, however, the state average has risen 24.6 percent, from $172,673 in 1996-97 to $215,232 in 2000-01. LISD property value per pupil is only about one-fourth of the state average and has declined as a percentage of the state average over the last five years. These data are provided in **Exhibit 7-9**.

Exhibit 7-9
LISD Property Value per Pupil
1996-97 through 2000-01

Year	LISD Property Value per Pupil	State Average Property Value per Pupil	LISD Property Value per Pupil as a Percentage of State Average
1996-97	$ 53,626	$ 172,673	31.1%
1997-98	$ 53,257	$ 182,154	29.2%
1998-99	$ 54,988	$ 190,769	28.8%
1999-2000	$ 55,907	$ 198,090	28.2%
2000-01	$ 57,520	$ 215,232	26.7%

Exhibit 7-10 compares 2000-2001 property value per pupil for LISD to its peer districts. None of the districts met the "wealthy" district threshold. Only two peer districts, Harlandale ISD and Edgewood ISD, both located in San Antonio, had property value per pupil below that of LISD.

Exhibit 7-10
LISD and Peer District
Property Value per Pupil
2000-01

District	Property Value per Pupil
Laredo	**$ 57,520**
United	$137,182
Edinburg	$ 92,331
Harlandale	$ 50,892
Edgewood	$ 37,928
Eagle Pass	$ 63,403
State	$ 215,232

Prior to January 2002, the LISD tax office staff consisted of the tax assessor/collector, the tax office manager, a bookkeeper, and four tax cashiers who receive tax payments. One of the cashiers is designated as the head cashier and also serves as a liaison to the delinquent tax attorney. The tax assessor/collector and tax office manager were both registered tax assessor-collectors and meet continuing professional education requirements. The tax assessor/collector had also been serving as the interim fixed assets manager. The tax office manager, who holds a bachelor's degree in economics and has been with the LISD tax office since 1990, essentially was directing the tax office. Employees are cross-trained to cover absences as needed.

In December 2001, the tax assessor/collector retired and tax the office manager was promoted to tax assessor/collector. The chief financial officer stated that the tax office manager position would not be filled and the budget for the position would be transferred to the department of Operations to fund a fixed asset manager to perform the fixed asset duties previously performed by the tax assessor/collector.

The bookkeeper monitors cashier activity and collects cash and checks whenever a cashier has received more than 25 separate payments or has more than $10,000 in the cash drawer. Cash is kept in the vault during the day and picked up daily by an armored car service for bank deposit. The bookkeeper also performs periodic cash counts, and the tax office has had unannounced internal audit cash counts. A daily collections report goes to the accounting department for entry into the general ledger. A monthly report on tax collections is prepared for the finance committee and other board members.

The fiscal 2001-02 budget for the tax office totals $574,851. The major components are $280,000 budgeted for tax appraisal costs and $266,689 for payroll.

FINDING

The LISD tax office emphasizes customer service and friendliness and clearly communicates these expectations to employees. The tax office educates taxpayers on the benefit of local taxes to LISD students, tying local collections to increased state funding. A proposed delinquent tax notice postcard notes, "For every $1 collected by Laredo ISD, the state of Texas sends $8 to Laredo ISD to educate our Students!"

Exhibit 7-11 presents the tax office collections since 1992.

Exhibit 7-11
LISD Tax Collections For
Tax Years 1992 to 2001

Tax Year	Tax Collections	Percentage Collected
1992	$8,190,439	88.34%
1993	$8,576,980	90.04%
1994	$10,798,318	90.98%
1995	$11,280,756	91.58%
1996	$12,455,873	90.25%
1997	$14,270,245	93.13%
1998	$13,559,076	95.72%
1999	$14,312,047	94.51%
2000	$15,677,007	94.71%

2001	$16,985,143	95.21%

Exhibit 7-12 presents tax office costs since 1996-97. The Webb County Appraisal District performs property valuation for all taxing entities in Webb County. Fees charged by the Webb County Appraisal District are not under the district's control.

Exhibit 7-12
LISD Tax Office Expenditures
For the Fiscal Years 1996-97 to 2000-01

Fiscal Year	Appraisal District Fees	Other Expenditures	Total Expenditures
1996-97	$168,784	$249,341	$418,125
1997-98	$190,301	$267,791	$458,092
1998-99	$224,694	$281,114	$505,808
1999-2000	$236,121	$277,748	$513,869
2000-01	$323,108	$284,421	$607,529

The tax year and fiscal year represent overlapping but different time periods. However, **Exhibit 7-11** and **Exhibit 7-12**, show that LISD tax office collections have risen approximately 36 percent since 1996, while expenditures other than appraisal district fees have risen only 14 percent since 1996-97.

COMMENDATION

The LISD tax office has focused on holding controllable costs down while dramatically increasing its tax collection rate.

FINDING

The LISD tax office has implemented a check verification service at its payment windows. The service provides immediate credit to the LISD bank account for checks written on accounts with sufficient funds. The system identifies checks written on accounts with insufficient funds before

the cashier accepts the payment. The tax office is also in the process of developing credit card and online payment options.

COMMENDATION

The LISD tax office has implemented processes to streamline tax collection and provide alternatives to taxpayers.

Chapter 7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

E. ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS

The Accounting Department at LISD is responsible for maintaining official accounting records, processing transactions in accordance with district policies and procedures, paying employees and vendors, preparing required reports for auditors and the TEA, preparing and monitoring annual budget and receiving and reconciling cash. Cash management is discussed in Chapter 6, Asset and Risk Management, of this report.

Including the chief financial officer, the Accounting Department has a total of 25 authorized positions. There are 10 other LISD bookkeepers, not considered part of the Accounting Department, that manage campus and student activity funds at middle and high schools. The Accounting director has been with LISD for five years and has a total of 20 years experience in governmental entity accounting. The Accounting director supervises the cash receipts, accounting, investments, payroll and accounts payable functions. One senior accountant is designated as the district investment officer and manages cash and investments, reconciles the operating account and handles debt service funds. The other senior accountant serves as backup for the investment officer and handles operating, athletic and vocational education funds. Both senior accountants hold degrees in accounting and supervise the other four accountants. Each accountant is assigned specific duties. For example, one accountant handles the special education funds, while another is designated for construction and debt funds.

Exhibit 7-13 presents the Accounting Department's budget for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2002.

Exhibit 7-13
LISD Accounting Department Budget
For Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 2002

Expenditure Category	Amount
Professional Salaries	$ 467,797
Para-professional Salaries	438,914
Insurance and Retirement	87,960
Audit Services	35,000
Other Professional Services	52,500

Other Purchased Services	13,615
Supplies and Materials	12,500
Travel Within District	8,280
Travel Outside District	9,844
Miscellaneous Operating Costs	8,156
Capital Outlay	500
Utilities and Building Maintenance	40,025
Total	**$1,175,091**

Source: LISD Expenditure Summary Report FAR4010A, 10/31/01.

Exhibit 7-14 presents actual expenditures for the accounting department for 1997-98 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 7-14
LISD Accounting Department Actual Expenditures
1997-98 through 2000-2001

Year	Expenditures
1997-98	$ 1,070,138
1998-99	$ 1,010,624
1999-2000	$ 981,354
2000-01	$ 1,075,821

Source: LISD 2000-2001 Annual Budget 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and LISD Expenditure Summary Report FAR4010A for 2000-01.

FINDING

LISD's payroll system does not currently interface with the human resources system. Staff of the human resources department enter employee information into the human resource system when employees are hired and the information is updated when changes to employee information is necessary. Certain information maintained in the human resources system is also needed by payroll staff in order to process payments to employees. Employee information contained in the human resources system and needed by the payroll staff however cannot be electronically transmitted to

the payroll system. The information needed for processing payrolls must be reentered by payroll staff into the payroll system.

Entering the same information more than once into the district's computer system is inefficient. Each time the same information is entered also increases the potential for errors that have to be found and corrected. The district plans to upgrade its financial management system that includes both a human resources component and a payroll component.

The district's payroll and human resources are currently maintained on a version of the Software for Administrators in Government and Education (SAGE). Plans are for the district to upgrade to a new version of the SAGE software, SAGE Millennium, which provides a Financial Management System with five major subsystems, a Human Resources System with four major subsystems and a Record Maintenance System for Public Education Information Management System information.

Recommendation 63:

Ensure that the new management information system provides for electronic interfacing of human resources and payroll information.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The chief financial officer and the executive director for Human Resources ensure that planned software changes will allow information entered in the human resources system to be electronically submitted to the payroll system.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer prepares a report to the superintendent and the board on the status of the interface.	June 2002
3.	The chief financial officer and internal auditor verify that the new system is operating as planned.	During Implementation

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8
PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE SERVICES

This chapter reviews the Laredo Independent School District's (LISD) purchasing and warehousing services in three sections:

A. Purchasing
B. Textbooks
C. Warehousing

Efficient purchasing and warehousing requires management processes to ensure that supplies, equipment and services vital to the school system's education mission are purchased from the appropriate source, in the correct quantity, at the best value and are properly stored and promptly delivered to the specified location in the requested amount of time. These criteria should be met for each purchase without sacrificing quality and timely delivery.

BACKGROUND

Purchasing, textbooks and warehousing functions operate in three separate divisions of the district: Fiscal Standards and Accountability; Custodians and Textbooks; and Operations. The Purchasing Department is a part of the Fiscal Standards and Accountability Division managed by the chief financial officer. Textbook management includes textbook warehousing and operates under the Custodians and Textbooks Division. Warehousing for inventory other than textbooks is shared among the Operations, Fixed Assets and Child Nutrition Departments in the Operations Division. **Exhibit 8-1** describes the warehousing responsibilities of these departments and their related divisions.

Exhibit 8-1
LISD Purchasing and Warehousing Department Responsibilities
2001

Function	Department	Division
Purchasing	Purchasing	Fiscal Standards and Accountability
Textbook management	Textbooks	Custodians and Textbooks
Textbook warehousing	Textbooks	Custodians and Textbooks
Furniture and equipment	Fixed Assets	Operations
Instructional supply	Operations	Operations

warehousing		
Custodial supply warehousing	Operations	Operations
Food and kitchen supply warehousing	Child Nutrition	Operations

Source: LISD chief financial officer and organizational charts, November 2001.

Chapter 8
PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE SERVICES

A. PURCHASING

The Texas Education Code (TEC) outlines nine methods for school districts to competitively purchase goods valued at $25,000 or more or multiple like items with a cumulative value of more than $25,000 in a 12-month period, as shown in **Exhibit 8-2**.

Exhibit 8-2
Competitive Procurement Methods

Purchasing Methods	Method Description
Competitive bidding	Requires bids to be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms and conditions contained in the request for bids, bid prices offered by suppliers and pertinent factors affecting contract performance. Negotiation of prices for goods and services occurs after proposal opening.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding, but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and process after proposal opening.
Request for proposals	Generates competitive sealed proposals and involves several key elements, including newspaper advertisement, notice to proposers, standard terms and conditions, special terms and conditions, a scope of work statement, an acknowledgment form/response sheet, a felony conviction notice and a contract clause.
Catalog purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software and services only.
Interlocal contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity to both design and construct a project.
Job order contracts	Provides for the use of a particular type of contract for jobs (manual labor work) for minor repairs and alterations.
Construction	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter or

management contracts	repair facilities using a professional construction manager.
Reverse auction procedure	Provides for either a real-time or short bidding period of less than two weeks, in which multiple suppliers, anonymous to each other, submit bids to provide the designated goods or services.

Source: Texas Education Agency, December 2001.

The TEC also sets requirements for districts to provide a notice of bidding opportunities and to give sufficient time for prospective bidders to respond. Districts must advertise contracts for more than $25,000 at least once a week for two weeks in any newspaper published in the county in which the school district is located.

Purchases of personal property totaling $10,000 to $24,999 over a 12-month period must also be advertised in two successive issues of any newspaper in the county in which the school district is located. The advertisement must specify the categories of personal property to be purchased and solicit vendors interested in supplying items in any of the categories to the district. Before a purchase is made from a category, the district must obtain written price quotations from at least three vendors for that particular category. The purchase must be made from the lowest responsible bidder.

The TEC allows school district trustees to purchase items that are available from only one source, that is "sole-source" purchases, if the item being purchased is:

- An item for which competition is precluded because of the existence of a patent, copyright, secret process or monopoly;
- A film, manuscript or book;
- A utility service including electricity, gas or water; or
- A captive replacement part or component for equipment (those that are specific to a particular piece of equipment and are not available from more than one vendor).

LISD's purchasing policies authorize the superintendent to delegate responsibility for procurement to the Purchasing Department, provided that no employee may legally bind the district to any contractual obligation without the superintendent's approval. Specific responsibilities of the LISD Purchasing Department include:

- Processing requisitions;
- Issuing purchase orders;

- Assisting in preparation of bid specifications;
- Preparing bid packages and overseeing the bid process;
- Receiving, tabulating and analyzing bids;
- Resolving problems with vendors' orders and deliveries;
- Maintaining the database of vendor contracts;
- Obtaining quotes for the acquisition of goods and services; and
- Coordinating with the warehousing operations on delivery of goods within the district.

The district's policies and procedures set forth dollar limitations and approval levels for purchases. **Exhibit 8-3** presents purchasing thresholds and requirements.

Exhibit 8-3
LISD Purchasing Thresholds and Requirements
November 2001

Dollar Amount	Purchase Requirements
Greater than $25,000	Competitive bidding.
$15,000-$24,999	Written sealed quotations from at least three vendors.
$500-$14,999	Telephone or faxed quotations from at least three vendors.
Less than $500	Purchased directly by Purchasing director or business manager.

Source: LISD Purchasing Manual, November 2001.

The Purchasing director, who reports to the chief financial officer, is responsible for the day-to-day management of eight full-time staff members. **Exhibit 8-4** presents the Purchasing Department's organization chart.

Exhibit 8-4
LISD Purchasing Department Organization Chart
2001-02
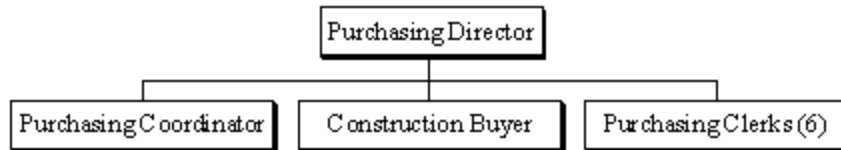
Source: LISD Purchasing Department, November 2001.

The Purchasing Department recently added the construction buyer position to accommodate the purchasing needs of the district's $175.9 million construction program, and anticipates that this addition will prevent delays in the processing of purchase requests.

For 2001-02, the department has a $333,180 operating budget, of which 95.3 percent is salaries. **Exhibit 8-5** summarizes the department's operating budget for 1999-2000 through 2001-02.

Exhibit 8-5
LISD Purchasing Department Operating Budget
1999-2000 through 2001-02

Category	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Payroll	$277,393	$300,947	$317,568
Professional & Contracted Services	4,394	4,996	5,130
Supplies & Materials	3,965	3,270	2,821
Other Operating Expenses	8,517	7,212	7,661
Debt Service	1,208	574	0
Capital Outlay	1,402	0	0
Total	**$296,879**	**$316,999**	**$333,180**

Source: LISD Annual Budget, 1999-2000 through 2001-02.

The LISD Purchasing Department's mission is to stimulate competition by advertising purchasing needs related to large expenditures, then purchasing in large quantities that will result in lower costs in either per unit items or in the aggregate. The department's goals are to:

- Attain the best pricing of work, materials and services for LISD;
- Maximize resources and utilize sound fiscal planning;
- Decrease the gap between expenditures and revenues; and
- Develop a staff development program to improve purchasing knowledge in the district.

The procurement process begins with an identified need and ends with the fulfillment of that need through the delivery of goods or the performance of services. Requestors initiate purchase requisitions and link each requisition in writing on the document to one of the district's three goals: students will read on grade level by third grade; students will complete their course of study and graduate; and graduates will enroll in post-secondary study or seek employment. The department heads or campus

management, or their designees, approve all purchase requisitions and forward them to the Purchasing Department where they are processed. The Purchasing Department obtains approval for all requisitions of $25,000 or more from the Board of Trustees. For requisitions less than $25,000, the superintendent or designee approves.

FINDING

LISD began placing bid invitations and requests for proposals on its Web site in September 2001. The Purchasing Department submits the bid invitations and requests for proposals to the district's Web site administrator. Bidders may download the specifications from the Web site. According to the Purchasing Department director, the department maintains a vendor's list of approximately 8,000 potential vendors. In the past, bid invitations were mailed out to all applicable vendors. The department continues to mail bid packets to vendors but expects the use of the Web site to reduce the printing and postage costs associated with mailing bid invitations to prospective bidders as they begin downloading bid invitations and requests for proposals from LISD Web site.

COMMENDATION

The Purchasing Department maximizes use of the district's Web site in the bid process.

FINDING

LISD is installing an accounting software upgrade that will be ready by August 2002, but the Purchasing Department has not developed a plan to implement the improved online requisitioning capabilities. Currently, all campuses, except the Lara Academy, request instructional supplies through the district's online requisitioning capabilities. However, custodial supplies and supplies needed by other departments, such as the Purchasing or Accounting Departments, are requested on a paper requisition form and manually entered into the system by a warehouse clerk. Manual entry is necessary to update supply inventories. Once the software upgrade is implemented, the district plans to replace paper purchase requisitions and purchase orders with online requisitioning, which will eliminate the need for manual entry by the warehouse clerk. However, the majority of users have no experience in using an online requisitioning system.

Furthermore, some responsibilities that are now performed by purchasing clerks, such as manually entering purchase requisitions into the accounting system, will be eliminated. Other responsibilities, such as reviewing the accuracy of the purchase request coding information, will require additional effort.

Two clerks enter requisitions in the Purchasing Department. The Purchasing director estimates that districtwide implementation and use of the online requisitioning process may reduce the department's staffing needs by one full-time clerk position, but no plans are in place to take such action.

Lack of an implementation plan could result in delays in use of the online processes, a large number of errors or both.

Districts often use an implementation plan when implementing an accounting system, which is a written plan that outlines how a new system will be implemented. The plan includes a timetable for completion, who is responsible for each activity, cost estimates and task milestones.

The plan is developed through coordination of management, accountants and experts so that all components of an implementation are appropriately addressed. The basic components of a systems implementation plan are developing and testing software, preparing and testing the electronic infrastructure and selecting and training personnel. An implementation plan also contains strategies for addressing risk factors that could prevent or slow a successful implementation. An effective accounting system training as training that includes hardware and software training in addition to training on new policies and procedures.

Recommendation 64:

Develop an implementation plan to use the accounting system's improved online requisitioning capabilities.

The district should consider the end users of the online requisitioning system, their level of comfort with hardware and new software applications and any changes in organizational structure that will occur as a result of new responsibilities. The district should also identify other risk factors that may delay implementation and develop strategies to address them. Further, LISD should develop a training program based on user needs, comfort levels, computer literacy and adaptability of district personnel to new accounting systems.

Any changes in staffing and staff responsibilities should be addressed in the implementation plan. This includes the elimination of one Purchasing clerk due to the reduction in data entry demands of the Purchasing Department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Purchasing director identifies internal control, training	May 2002

	staffing and other issues relating to use of online requisitioning.	
2.	The chief financial officer and Purchasing director obtain plan approval and review the plan with affected departments.	July 2002
3.	The Purchasing director coordinates with other departments through the chief financial officer as outlined in the implementation plan.	July 2002 and Ongoing
4.	The Purchasing director recommends the elimination of one full-time clerk position to the superintendent.	July 2002
5.	The superintendent recommends to the board the elimination of one full-time clerk position and the board approves.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Development and coordination of the implementation plan can be implemented with existing resources. The Purchasing Department would save $36,559 annually with the elimination of one full-time clerk position. The clerical position cost of $36,559 includes $31,628 salary and $4,931 in benefits. Benefits equal $2,280 fixed benefits plus $2,651 variable benefits at 8.3822 percent (.083822 x $31,628 = $2,651).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop an implementation plan to use the accounting system's improved online requisitioning capabilities.	$36,559	$36,559	$36,559	$36,559	$36,559

FINDING

The Purchasing Department does not maximize its use of purchasing cooperatives when buying custodial and instructional supplies and as a result, may be incurring unnecessary administrative costs or missing out on pricing discounts. A purchasing cooperative is a partnership among several organizations that enables members to take advantage of pricing discounts and to reduce administrative costs associated with competitive solicitation activities. The lead organization performs the competitive bidding services and establishes contracts for commonly used items on behalf of the cooperative's members. Custodial and instructional supplies, such as toilet paper, detergents, cleansers and general office supplies, are commonly used items.

Although the district is a member of the Texas Building and Procurement Commission and Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) purchasing cooperatives, the Purchasing director only authorizes purchases from a cooperative when requests are received for supplies that were not included in the district's annual custodial and instruc tional supply contracts, and for which time does not allow a competitive solicitation. The Purchasing director bids out the district's custodial and instructional supply needs annually, and does not compare needs or pricing to supplies available through the cooperatives prior to or during this process. LISD's accounting system is not organized to differentiate between purchases made through cooperatives and purchases made on LISD contracts.

United ISD, a neighboring district, and one of LISD's peer distric ts, uses regional purchasing cooperative vendors for approximately 50 percent of its purchasing dollars through its membership in six purchasing cooperatives: Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative (Region 2), Texas Association of School Business Officials Purchasing Cooperative, Texas Building and Procurement Commission, Harris County Department of Education, Houston Galveston Area Council and the Child Nutrition Program - South Texas Cooperative.

Kingsville ISD expended $1.7 million on purchases through purchasing cooperatives during 2000-01. Like United and Laredo ISDs, Kingsville ISD participates in the Texas Building and Procurement Commission cooperative and the Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) purchasing cooperative. Kingsville schools order items using a purchase order form and clearly mark on the order form when orders are made through cooperatives. Items purchased through cooperatives are tracked in the district's accounting system.

Recommendation 65:

Increase the use of purchasing cooperatives when purchasing custodial and instructional supplies.

The Purchasing director should evaluate the effect of pricing discounts by requesting data or catalogs from Region 1 and the Texas Building and Procurement Commission and preparing a side-by-side comparison of pricing data obtained from the 2001-02 supply contract bids, or from the Maintenance and Operations Department. This would help the district to evaluate the historical cost of supplies purchased through competitive solicitations with those offered by purchasing cooperatives.

Administrative costs should also be calculated in a separate analysis by estimating the time required to conduct a competitive solicitation for items identified in the evaluation of pricing discounts. An average salary and

benefits package should be used to calculate the administrative cost savings of using purchasing cooperatives rather than competitive solicitations. By adding the total pricing discount of the purchasing cooperative to the administrative cost savings, the Purchasing director should evaluate the impact of using purchasing cooperatives, when available, over competitive solicitation.

The chief financial officer should develop an account code that would allow the district to track purchases made through cooperatives over the year. Periodically, throughout the year and at year-end, the chief financial officer and Purchasing director should compare the total cost savings to prior years in which cooperatives were not used.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Purchasing director compares pricing discounts and administrative costs of items that are normally bid to items that can be purchased through the purchasing cooperatives.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer develops a coding that will allow the district to track purchases made from cooperatives and monitors the savings and benefits of increasing participation in the cooperatives.	May 2002 and Ongoing
3.	The Purchasing director maximizes membership in purchasing cooperatives by only soliciting bids for items that cannot be purchased through the cooperatives.	August 2002
4.	The Purchasing director provides department heads with a list of the items that will be purchased through cooperatives.	August 2002
5.	Department heads request that items be purchased from cooperatives and indicate on the requisition that the item is from a purchasing cooperative.	August 2002 - May 2003
6.	The chief financial officer reports results to the Purchasing director.	May 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8
PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE SERVICES

B. TEXTBOOKS

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is responsible for selecting and purchasing most of the textbooks used by Texas school districts. TEA buys textbooks from publishers and lends them to districts. TEA provides districts with a listing of recommended textbooks each year, and each district's textbook adoption committee then selects the textbooks that will be adopted and ordered. The number of books allowed per subject and grade level is based upon student enrollment information submitted to TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

Each district is responsible for returning its textbooks. If textbooks are lost during the school year, the district either recovers the cost of the book from the student, parent or textbook custodian, or the district compensates the state for the loss itself. The LISD has historically compensated the state for all lost books from its general fund, but began holding students, teachers and campuses accountable for lost textbooks beginning in 1998-99. Lost textbooks that cannot be paid for by the student or parent are now covered by the campus budget where the student is enrolled rather than the district's general fund. During 2000-01, the district reported 1,637 lost textbooks totaling $63,186.

LISD's Textbook operations responsibilities are shared by four staff members of the Custodians and Textbooks Division and seven full-time campus textbook clerks, who combine their regularly assigned duties with responsibility for the campus textbook inventory. The district's administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks manages the district's textbook operations and is supported by a lead clerk and two warehouse clerks. Additionally, each campus selects one textbook custodian who is responsible for accepting, issuing and inventorying that school's textbooks.

The primary responsibilities of Textbook operations are:

- Assisting the Textbook Adoption Committee with the textbook review and adoption process;
- Estimating the number of textbooks needed each year;
- Requesting needed textbooks;
- Preparing supplemental orders of additional books from TEA;
- Receiving textbook deliveries at the textbook warehouse at the administrative annex;

- Taking inventory of books and distributing books to schools;
- Tracking lost books and returning surplus books to TEA; and
- Training campus custodians on textbook inventory and management procedures.

In January 2002, the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks began coordinating unannounced inventory audits at campuses to encourage textbook accountability. In addition, the warehouse clerks began assisting the administrative assistant in training campus textbook custodians, providing information for the textbook review process and conducting unannounced and annual inventory audits.

FINDING

The district does not require textbook verifications during the school year. Although the district has implemented a number of standards and controls that have increased textbook accountability, it has not reduced the amount of lost textbooks. As shown in **Exhibit 8-6**, the value of lost textbooks increased from $34,486 during the 1999-2000 physical inventory to $63,186 in 2000-01, with the majority of losses at the high school level.

Exhibit 8-6
Comparison of Lost Textbooks
1999-2000 through 2000-01

Schools	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Increase/(Decrease)
Elementary	$3,844	$7,660	99.3%
Middle	17,399	16,318	(6.2%)
High	13,243	39,208	196.1%
Total	**$34,486**	**$63,186**	**83.2%**

Source: LISD Textbook Physical Inventory Report, 2000-01.

The district did not take annual physical inventories of the district depository prior to the 1999-2000 school year. When the administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks first took the inventory in 1999-2000, the losses identified did not agree with the amount that was paid for lost books from the general fund in the accounting system. Since the losses were compensated from the general fund, reconciliation is important to ensure that the school has paid an accurate amount for the lost textbooks.

Wimberley ISD reduced the number of lost textbooks without delaying other textbook operations by assigning a specific number of textbooks to each teacher. The teacher signs for the books at the beginning of the year and returns them to the principal at the end of the year. In addition, at least once every six weeks, students are required to bring their textbooks to class on a specific day for a "book check" and charged for any textbooks not returned.

Recommendation 66:

Create procedures for textbook accountability including conducting periodic textbook verifications.

LISD should continue issuing textbooks as it does now but require teachers to conduct textbook verifications at mid-year prior to the winter break, in addition to the year-end verification. Students who have lost a textbook should continue to be charged for the textbook as they are now. Report cards should be held for those students who do not compensate the district for the book, or provide the cost of a replacement book from a discount textbook vendor, if available, or arrange for a payment plan. LISD should outline a clear procedure for this process and include the procedure in the student handbook.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Custodians and Textbooks develops procedures for a mid-year textbook verification and payment plan for lost books.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent approves mid-year textbook verification and inclusion of the procedures in the student handbook.	May 2002
3.	Principals disseminate procedures to teachers and students in the student handbook.	August 2002
4.	Teachers conduct regular textbook verifications at mid-year and hold report cards until settlement arrangements are agreed upon.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8
PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE SERVICES
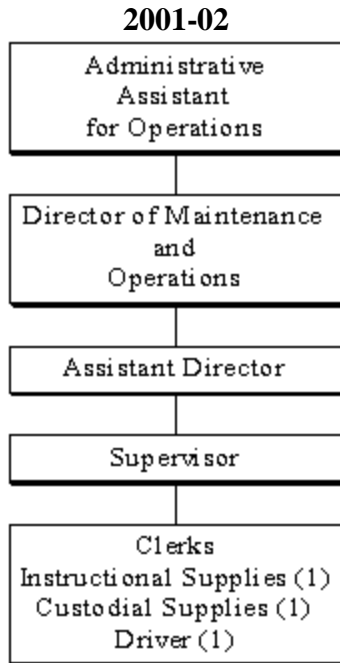
C. WAREHOUSING

An efficient warehouse operation should ensure that all purchases and deliveries to schools and units are complete and timely; inventory levels are sufficient to meet requests for supplies; property and equipment are accounted for properly; and surplus or obsolete property is disposed of properly and removed from district records. LISD maintains six warehouses, which are managed by four departments in two divisions. The Maintenance and Operations, Fixed Assets and Child Nutrition departments operate warehouses for the Operations Division, and the Textbook Department operates the textbook warehouse for the Custodians and Textbooks Division.

LISD's central warehouse, managed by the Operations Division, spans 10,064 square feet. All Operations Division warehouse staff is housed in this facility. Most materials, supplies and equipment are delivered to this location, verified to purchase orders and delivered to the schools. The warehouse inventories instructional materials and supplies, custodial supplies and maintenance and repair parts.

As of November 2001, the warehouse had one vacant area of approximately 2,034 square feet that previously warehoused textbooks, which are now located at the administrative annex. The LISD-owned central warehouse staff is shown in **Exhibit 8-7**.

Exhibit 8-7
Warehousing Function's Organizational Chart

2001-02

```
        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │   Administrative    │
        │    Assistant        │
        │  for Operations     │
        └─────────────────────┘
                  │
        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │ Director of Maintenance │
        │        and          │
        │    Operations       │
        └─────────────────────┘
                  │
        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  Assistant Director │
        └─────────────────────┘
                  │
        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │     Supervisor      │
        └─────────────────────┘
                  │
        ┌─────────────────────────┐
        │        Clerks           │
        │ Instructional Supplies (1) │
        │  Custodial Supplies (1) │
        │       Driver (1)        │
        └─────────────────────────┘
```

Source: LISD Operations Division, November 2001.

Before the 2001-02 school year, textbooks were warehoused and managed by the Maintenance and Operations Department at the central warehouse. In 2001-02, textbook warehousing was reassigned to the Custodians and Textbook Division, and textbooks are now warehoused at the administrative annex. This warehouse is 8,000 square feet and maximizes space with floor to ceiling steel shelving to organize books by grade level. The Textbook Department receives and inventories all textbooks.

The Fixed Asset Department is responsible for the management of the fixed asset warehouse, located in the administrative annex in a separate location from textbooks. The Child Nutrition Program manages the other three warehouses; including paper and cleaning products, dry food storage and frozen food storage. The storage area for paper and cleaning products is located at the central kitchen facility. Dry and frozen food storage are in two separate locations. Dry commodities are stored in a warehouse across the street from the central kitchen facility, while frozen foods are stored at U.S. Cold Storage where the district leases space. The Child Nutrition Program employs the personnel responsible for these warehouse functions. Vendors deliver supplies and commodities directly to these warehouses and storage facilities.

FINDING

LISD's supplies are warehoused too long before being used. The LISD Purchasing Department purchases custodial and instructional supplies in

bulk at the beginning of each year and warehouses unused supplies for up to six months or more before inventories are depleted and reordered. On December 17, 2001, the district had $303,000 of instructional supplies and $261,402 of custodial supplies in inventory. A sample of LISD supply items in inventory as of December 2001 is listed in **Exhibit 8-8**.

Exhibit 8-8
LISD Custodial and Instructional Supply List Excerpts
December 2001

Inventory Items	Quantity
Cleaners-all purpose, chalkboard, glass, gym floor and neutral floor	4,378
Tropical deodorizer	1,289
Toilet tissue-big and regular roll	1,234
Clear safety glasses and safety goggles	2,507
Brooms-various types	768
Data binder clips-small, medium and large	6,595
Paper-8 1/2" x 11"-white and colored	9,636
Legal Pads-three sizes, white and yellow	9,858
Post-It-note pads-two sizes	8,600
Metric rulers-12"-clear and assorted	12,186
Paintbrushes-stubby and tapered	6,440
Liquid Paper-four types	2,837
Plastic clipboards, neon colors	1,300
Construction paper 9" x 12"	4,236
Poster board, assorted colors	18,715

Source: LISD Supply Inventory Lists, December 17, 2001.

Excluding the Child Nutrition Program's lease with U.S. Cold Storage, the district spends $124,756 on warehousing costs each year as shown in **Exhibit 8-9**. Custodial and instructional supply inventories each use 5,032 square feet of central warehouse space owned by LISD. All other warehouse needs are met with leased space.

Exhibit 8-9
LISD Leased Warehouses
December 2001

Warehouse	Square Footage	Monthly Rate Per Square Foot	Annual Warehouse Lease Cost
Central-Custodial and Instructional	10,064	N/A	$0
Administrative Annex-Fixed Assets	22,000	$.23	$60,720
Fixed Assets	7,452	$.16	$14,308
Administrative Annex-Textbooks	8,000	$.23	$22,080
Child Nutrition-Commodities	9,216	$.25	$27,648
Total	**56,732**		**$124,756**

Source: LISD Warehouse needs spreadsheet, Director of Operations, January 2002.

LISD employs one supervisor and four clerks to operate the instructional and janitorial supplies warehousing. This costs the district $115,171 annually as shown in **Exhibit 8-10**.

Exhibit 8-10
LISD Instructional and Custodial Supply Warehousing Personnel
October 2001

Position	Annual Salary	Fixed Benefits	Variable Benefit Rate	Variable Benefits	Total Annual Salary and Benefits
Supervisor	$33,465	$2,442	13.6422%	$4,565	$40,472
Instructional Supplies Head Clerk	$17,640	$2,442	13.6422%	$2,406	$22,488
Custodial Supplies Head Clerk	$14,930	$2,442	13.6422%	$2,037	$19,409
Clerk/Driver	$19,616	$2,442	13.6422%	$2,676	$24,734
Clerk/Driver	$6,025	$1,221	13.6422%	$822	$8,068
Total	**$91,676**	**$10,989**	**-**	**$12,506**	**$115,171**

Districts often use just-in-time inventory systems to maximize monies that could otherwise be invested. Just-in-time means that supplies are ordered and delivered to the district only as they are needed, rather than being delivered in bulk. Robstown ISD implemented just-in-time delivery of supplies and materials. It does not operate a central warehouse facility. Instead, items are ordered when the need arises and are delivered directly to the originator of the request or to the central administration office where the mail clerk delivers them to campuses. Robstown ISD avoids the personnel, maintenance and utilities costs of operating a warehouse facility.

Recommendation 67:

Develop procedures to phase-in the purchase of custodial and instructional supplies on a just-in-time basis.

The directors of Maintenance and Operations and Purchasing, along with the administrative assistant for Operations and the chief financial officer, should develop procedures for purchasing and delivering supplies on a just-in-time basis. The district should investigate with its vendors the possibility of ordering and contracting for supplies, with the delivery of the supplies occurring throughout the year, rather than at once. During 2002-03 and 2003-04, the district should phase out the warehouse operation and use the supplies and materials on hand. The district should analyze the items in inventory and eliminate all of them that can be acquired on a just-in-time basis, while continuing to acquire any specialty items in the current manner.

Space previously occupied by supplies could be filled with other items, such as textbooks, and the district could reduce its overall cost of leased warehouse space. When supplies are needed, the Purchasing Department should order them. Deliveries should be made directly to the campus or department requesting the supplies. Each school and department should assign an existing employee to receive and verify receipt of goods requested.

In 2004-05, the district should eliminate the 10,064 square feet of space used for custodial and instructional supplies. Since this warehouse space is owned, the district could use this space for other needs. The district should also eliminate the five warehousing staff in 2004-05.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance and Operations, the director of Purchasing, the administrative assistant for Operations and the chief financial officer develop procedures and revise contracts for a just-in-time delivery of supplies.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent presents the change in the warehousing process to the board and the board approves.	June - July 2002
3.	The director of Purchasing and administrative assistant for Operations evaluates the inventory to determine which items can be more appropriately phased in as a just-in-time purchase.	June 2002
4.	The director of Maintenance and Operations, or designee, updates the procedures handbook and trains district personnel on the just-in-time system.	July 2002
5.	Principals assign an existing staff member to receive requested goods.	July 2002
6.	The administrative assistant for Operations recommends the elimination of the five instructional and custodial supply warehousing staff positions to the superintendent.	May 2004
7.	The superintendent recommends elimination of the warehouse staff positions to the board and the board approves.	June - July 2004

FISCAL IMPACT

With the implementation of a just-in-time system, the district could use the 10,064 square feet currently used by the custodial and instructional supplies for other warehousing needs, such as textbook storage. Textbooks are currently housed in 8,000 square feet of space at $.23 per square foot. By moving the textbooks to the central warehouse, the district could save $22,080 each year beginning in 2004-05 since the lease ends on May 31, 2004 (8,000 square feet x $.23 per square foot x 12 months).

The district could also eliminate staff positions that currently manage the custodial and instructional supply warehouse, realizing a salary savings of $115,171 each year, as shown in **Exhibit 8-10**, beginning in 2004-05. The total savings to the district annually beginning in 2004-05 would be $137,251 ($22,080 lease + $115,171 personnel).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07

Develop procedures to phase-in the purchase of custodial and instructional supplies on a just-in-time basis.	$0	$0	$137,251	$137,251	$137,251

Chapter 9
FOOD SERVICES

This chapter examines the Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) Child Nutrition Program in three sections:

A. Organization and Management
B. Meal Participation
C. Financial Management

School Food Services operations are responsible for providing students and staff with an appealing and nutritious breakfast and lunch at a reasonable cost in an environment that is safe, clean and accessible. Each of these tasks must be accomplished in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations as well as local board policy.

BACKGROUND

The Child Nutrition Program has been a department of the Operations Division since November 2001. Prior to an organizational restructuring, the program was a department of the Finance Division. The LISD Child Nutrition Program has operated profitably in each of the last five years and has budgeted for an accumulated fund balance of more than $4.6 million for the period ending August 31, 2002, as shown in **Exhibit 9-1**.

Exhibit 9-1
LISD Child Nutrition Revenues and Expenditures
1996-97 through 2001-02

	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual	1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Budgeted
Revenues						
Local	$456,921	$270,703	$489,277	$302,006	$351,440	$287,500
State	$467,826	$96,482	$376,100	$101,701	$107,378	$96,000
Federal	$6,143,832	$6,706,585	$6,422,557	$7,312,713	$8,133,368	$7,621,000
Total	**$7,068,579**	**$7,073,770**	**$7,287,934**	**$7,716,420**	**$8,592,186**	**$8,004,500**
Expenditures						
Payroll	$3,281,607	$3,452,275	$3,463,783	$3,302,137	$3,405,092	$3,903,336
Contract Services	$546,531	$480,300	$408,630	$408,282	$528,225	$392,000

Supplies and Materials	$2,832,043	$2,859,784	$3,140,488	$3,261,474	$3,450,164	$3,496,664
Other Operating	$142,257	$196,348	$3,389	$15,926	$12,099	$16,500
Capital Outlay	$0	$0	$189,944	$152,626	$218,262	$196,000
Debt Service	$0	$1,763	$3,535	$2,967	$1,259	$0
Total	**$6,802,438**	**$6,990,470**	**$7,209,769**	**$7,143,412**	**$7,615,101**	**$8,004,500**
Net Profit (Loss)	**$266,141**	**$83,300**	**$78,165**	**$573,008**	**$977,085**	**$0**
Beg. Fund Bal.	**$2,630,393**	**$2,896,534**	**$2,979,835**	**$3,049,920**	**$3,622,928**	**$4,600,013**
End. Fund Bal.	**$2,896,534**	**$2,979,835**	**$3,049,920**	**$3,622,928**	**$4,600,013**	**$4,600,013**

Source: LISD Revenue and Expenditure Summary Reports, 1996-97 through 2000-01 and LISD Annual Budget, 2001-02.

While the LISD Child Nutrition Program fund balance has increased $1,703,479 or 58.8 percent over the last five years, the district has experienced a decline in student enrollment of 440 students, or 1.9 percent of the Child Nutrition Program's sales base during the same time period. LISD student enrollments for the last five years are shown in **Exhibit 9-2**.

Exhibit 9-2
LISD Student Enrollments
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1996-97	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**	**2000-01**	**Percent Change**
Enrollment	22,987	22,651	22,601	22,524	22,556	(1.9%)

Source: TEA Student Enrollment Reports 1996-97 through 2000-01.

Even though student enrollments have declined, the program's growing fund balance is largely the result of the 25.7 percent increase in meal participation from the 1997-98 school year through the 2000-01 school year as shown in **Exhibit 9-3**.

Exhibit 9-3
LISD Meal Participation
1997-98 through 2000-01

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change
Breakfast	869,915	958,748	1,023,314	1,457,633	67.6%
Lunch	2,841,329	3,007,135	3,064,012	3,208,201	12.9%
Total	**3,711,244**	**3,965,883**	**4,087,326**	**4,665,834**	**25.7%**

Source: LISD Child Nutrition Program director, December 2001.

The district has increased meal participation by taking advantage of Provision II of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are authorized by the National School Lunch Act to provide free- and reduced-priced meals to eligible students identified through an annual application process. Students who live in households where the total income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive a reduced-price meal. Students with household incomes of less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive a free meal. The federal poverty level for a four-person family in 2001 was $17,650, as determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines. The average family size for Laredo, Texas as determined by the 2000 Census of Population and Housing is 4.05. The average per capita income in Laredo is approximately $15,000 as reported by the Texas State Comptroller's Office report, *Bordering the Future*.

Schools may apply for three alternative provisions to the National School Lunch Act. The provisions were designed to reduce the local paperwork normally associated with processing eligibility applications for free and reduced lunches. Provision I allows free eligibility to be certified for a two-year period; Provision II allows schools to establish claiming percentages and to serve all meals at no charge for a four-year period; and Provision III allows schools to receive the same level of federal cash and commodity assistance each year for a four-year period. Provisions I and II have been available options since 1980. Provision III has been available since 1995.

LISD applied and was approved for Provision II beginning with the 1998-99 school year. The first year of the provision is classified as the base year. During the base year, the district makes eligibility determinations as usual and takes meal counts by type by campus. Campuses do not make any eligibility determinations and count only the total number of reimbursable meals served at each location per day for the next three years.

In addition to the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, the LISD Child Nutrition Program participates in the following activities and operations:

- Summer Meal Program;
- Snack program;
- Breakfast in a Bag;
- Concessions and catering;
- Special programs including Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) breakfast;
- Food service production contracts with two private schools; and
- Warehouse operations.

Chapter 9
FOOD SERVICES

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The district requires each department and campus to develop its own individual campus improvement plan annually. A campus improvement plan outlines the department's mission, goals and objectives for the upcoming year. The LISD Child Nutrition Program adopted the following mission statement as a reflection of its purpose and goals:

"The mission of the Laredo Independent School District is to support student learning by providing every student quality, nutritious and aesthetically appealing breakfast and lunch in a safe and nurturing environment using all available resources at the lowest possible cost while maintaining a sound financial basis and to provide nutrition and education information to students, staff and parents."

The mission statement embodies seven goals that further define daily operations:

- Food served will meet the Nutrient Standard Menu Guidelines.
- Food served at the school will be safe, temperature appropriate, aesthetically appealing and served in the appropriate quantities and containers.
- All staff will be trained in proper food handling techniques and in the prevention of food borne illness.
- Improve customer service relations to students and school staff.
- Staff will be able to effectively communicate information on the Nutrient Standard Menus, the American Dietary Guidelines and the Food Guide Pyramid to students, district staff and parents.
- Communicate and work effectively within the Child Nutrition Program and with other LISD departments.
- The Child Nutrition Program will continue providing Breakfast in a Bag to ensure that each child has a nutritious breakfast in order to perform better in class and promote student learning and behavior.

LISD's food service and delivery is organized around a central kitchen that produces and delivers breakfast, lunch and snacks to all but three of the district's campuses -- Cigarroa Middle School, Cigarroa High School and Martin High School. The Cigarroa Middle School and High School campuses share a full-service kitchen where all food preparation, production, service and clean up are taken care of for both campuses. The Martin High School campus prepares and produces all meal items except
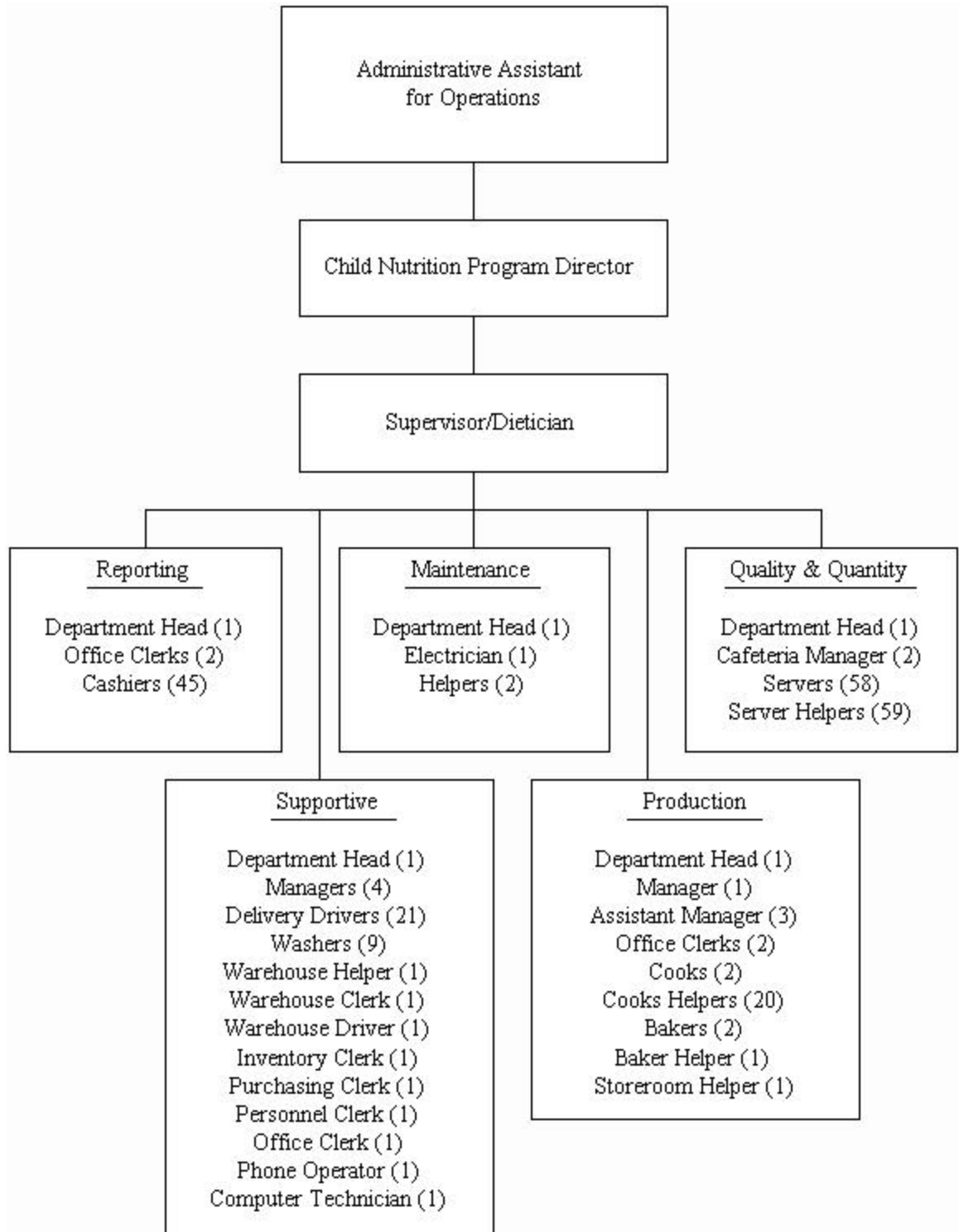
casserole-type dishes, which are produced by the central kitchen and delivered to the campus.

The Cigarroa Middle/High School kitchen and the Martin High School kitchen each staff a full-time cafeteria manager. All other campuses use a dual management reporting chain in which the campus principal or assistant principal provides on-site supervision of the servers and cashiers. In addition, the servers report to the manager of the Child Nutrition Program's Quality and Quantity Department, and cashiers report to the program's Reporting Department manager. Both the Quality and Quantity Department manager and the Reporting Department manager make periodic visits to all campuses.

The Child Nutrition Program is organized into five functional departments as shown in the organizational chart in **Exhibit 9-4**.

Exhibit 9-4
LISD Child Nutrition Program

2001-02

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Administrative Assistant   │
│        for Operations        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Child Nutrition Program Director │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Supervisor/Dietician    │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

Reporting	Maintenance	Quality & Quantity
Department Head (1)	Department Head (1)	Department Head (1)
Office Clerks (2)	Electrician (1)	Cafeteria Manager (2)
Cashiers (45)	Helpers (2)	Servers (58)
		Server Helpers (59)

Supportive

Department Head (1)
Managers (4)
Delivery Drivers (21)
Washers (9)
Warehouse Helper (1)
Warehouse Clerk (1)
Warehouse Driver (1)
Inventory Clerk (1)
Purchasing Clerk (1)
Personnel Clerk (1)
Office Clerk (1)
Phone Operator (1)
Computer Technician (1)

Production

Department Head (1)
Manager (1)
Assistant Manager (3)
Office Clerks (2)
Cooks (2)
Cooks Helpers (20)
Bakers (2)
Baker Helper (1)
Storeroom Helper (1)

Source: LISD Child Nutrition Program Organizational Chart and Staffing Pattern, 2001-02.

LISD's Child Nutrition Program employs 252 personnel. The central kitchen location houses 78 personnel. The remaining 174 cafeteria managers, food servers and cashiers are located at assigned campuses throughout the district. The hours and positions for the Child Nutrition administrative and support staff and the direct food production and service staff are as shown in **Exhibits 9-5** and **9-6**.

Exhibit 9-5
LISD Child Nutrition Administrative and Support Staff
2001-02

Title/Department	No. Of Staff	Hours Worked	Days Worked	Total Hours
Administrative				
Computer Technician	1	8	220	1,760
Phone Operator	1	8	220	1,760
Purchasing Clerk	1	8	220	1,760
Inventory Clerk	1	8	220	1,760
Personnel Clerk	1	8	220	1,760
Office Clerk	1	8	183	1,464
Supportive Department				
Supportive Department Head	1	8	220	1,760
Transportation Manager	1	8	210	1,680
Delivery Drivers	21	8	183	30,744
Washing Area Manager	2	8	230	3,680
Washing Area Helpers	5	8	183	7,320
Washing Area Helpers	2	8	210	3,360
Washing Area Helpers	1	8	220	1,760
Washing Area Helpers	1	8	230	1,840
Warehouse Driver	1	8	183	1,464
Warehouse Helper	1	8	210	1,680
Warehouse Inventory Clerk	1	8	220	1,760
Maintenance Department Head	1	8	230	1,840
Maintenance Helpers	2	8	220	3,520

Title/Department	No. of Staff	Hours Worked	Days Worked	Total Hours
Electrician	1	8	220	1,760
Food Production Department				
Office Clerk	1	8	220	1,760
Office Clerk	1	8	183	1,464
Storeroom Helper	3	8	220	5,280
Reporting Department				
Bookkeeper	1	8	220	1,760
Office Clerk	1	8	220	1,760
Total	**54**			**86,456**

Source: LISD Staffing Pattern, 2001-02.

Exhibit 9-6
LISD Direct Food Production and Service Staff
2001-02

Title/Department	No. of Staff	Hours Worked	Days Worked	Total Hours
Administrative				
Director	1	8	226	1,808
Supervisor	1	8	220	1,760
Food Production Department				
Production Department Head	1	8	220	1,760
Manager	1	8	220	1,760
Assistant Manager	3	8	210	5,040
Cook 1	1	8	220	1,760
Cook 2	1	8	183	1,464
Cook Helper	18	8	183	26,352
Cook Helper	1	8	183	1,464
Cook Helper	1	8	183	1,464
Baker	1	8	210	1,680
Baker	1	8	183	1,464
Baker Helper	1	8	183	1,464

Quality and Quantity Department				
Quality & Quantity Department Head	1	8	220	1,760
Cafeteria Manager	2	8	183	2,928
Server	41	8	183	60,024
Server	9	7	183	11,529
Server	3	6	183	3,294
Server	3	5	183	2,745
Server	2	4	183	1,464
Server Helpers	59	3	181	32,037
Reporting Department				
Reporting Department Head	1	8	220	1,760
Cashier	12	8	183	17,568
Cashier	24	7	183	30,744
Cashier	1	6	183	1,098
Cashier	2	5	183	1,830
Cashier	6	4	183	4,392
Total	**198**			**222,413**

Source: LISD Staffing Pattern, 2001-02.

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Program's supervisory structure does not provide effective management of cashiers and servers. With the exception of the Cigarroa Middle/High School and Martin High School campuses, the district's 31 cafeterias are not supervised by cafeteria managers. Instead, all Child Nutrition staff at a campus report to the respective campus principal or assistant principal. In addition, cashiers at all campuses report to the Child Nutrition Program's Reporting Department manager, and cafeteria servers report to the program's Quantity and Quality Department manager. The two managers visit all campuses on a revolving basis to monitor compliance, suggest improvements and stay aware of staff needs and issues. However, both managers are housed at the central kitchen facility with additional supervisory responsibilities, and neither provides daily supervision of cafeteria operations. Daily supervision is shared in varying levels with campus principals or assistant principals, but rarely do

principals or assistant principals become involved in daily cafeteria operations.

The reporting structure supports the district's move toward site-based decision-making by involving principals in cafeteria operations on their campuses, and the absence of higher-paid cafeteria managers supports the district in its goal to manage expenditure levels; however, the lack of a supervisory presence has had documented negative affects on personnel. The Reporting Department manager records the results of each visit to campus staff in a spiral notebook during the year. The notebook documented instances such as staff disagreeing about job responsibilities, tardiness and persuading another staff member to clock out for the group so they could leave early without realizing a cut in pay. Addressing issues such as these involves the time of the principals, the Child Nutrition Program director and two managers.

Some districts, such as Crystal City ISD, have addressed this issue by promoting employees to managerial positions and providing specialized training. The promotions and training promote success as managers and the district's efforts to increase employee satisfaction, reduce turnover and improve the overall working environment in its Child Nutrition Program. The Crystal City model uses the opportunity for upward mobility as an incentive for employment and to increase overall employee satisfaction. The district offered permanent positions to qualified individuals who had previously worked as substitutes as those positions became available. As permanent employees, individuals who met job requirements were given opportunities to be promoted into management.

While LISD's model would differ somewhat to accommodate its employees who are already hired into permanent positions, the district does have the flexibility to promote existing cashiers or servers into managerial positions.

Recommendation 68:

Designate a cafeteria manager at each campus to provide a more effective supervisory structure for Child Nutrition Program staff located at campus cafeterias.

The Child Nutrition Program director should promote a cashier at each campus to a designation of cafeteria manager who would report to the Child Nutrition Program supervisor. The cafeteria manager would supervise the daily cafeteria operations at an assigned campus and act as a liaison between the campus principal and the respective Child Nutrition Program manager. Having a full-time supervisor at each cafeteria would deter tardiness and similar personnel issues, while continuing visits by the

Quantity and Quality and Reporting Department managers could focus greater attention on making suggestions for improvements in work environment, procedures and compliance standards. The department managers would discuss suggestions with Child Nutrition Program supervisor and coordinate with the cafeteria managers and the supervisor to implement those suggestions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program director and Reporting and Quality Department managers develop job descriptions and identify cafeteria personnel who can be promoted to cafeteria management positions.	May 2002
2.	The Child Nutrition Program director and Reporting and Quality Department manager obtain superintendent and board approval for promotions.	June 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program director coordinates with the Human Resources Department to promote selected personnel to management positions.	August 2002
4.	The cafeteria managers report to the Child Nutrition Program supervisor weekly and as needed to address immediate issues.	ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Promoting 27 cashiers to cafeteria managers will cost the district an amount equal to the difference between the midpoint salary for pay grade two and the minimum level for a pay grade five plus benefits, or $39,771 annually. The annual midpoint cost for a pay grade two employee is $16,018 (salary of $11,946 plus benefits of $4,072). Benefits include a fixed amount of $2,442 plus a variable amount of $1,630 which is based on 13.6422 percent of salary ($11,946 x .136422). The annual minimum cost for a pay grade five employee is $17,491 (salary of $13,242 plus benefits of $4,249). Benefits include a fixed amount of $2,442 plus a variable amount of $1,807 which is based on 13.6422 percent of salary ($13,242 x .136422). The annual difference is $1,473 ($17,491 - $16,018 = $1,473). For 27 positions, the total cost is $39,771 ($1,473 x 27 = $39,771).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Designate a cafeteria manager at each campus to provide a more effective supervisory	($39,771)	($39,771)	($39,771)	($39,771)	($39,771)

structure for Child Nutrition Program staff located at campus cafeterias.					

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Program's solicitation of feedback from students about quality, taste, variety or quantity of menu items served at the campuses is limited. The department distributes a student food survey with new menu items in which students rate items by placing a check mark beside their level of satisfaction with the food. Students have the option of "liked very much," "liked," "ok," "disliked," "disliked very much" or "no opinion." Students may also provide written comments and answer the question of whether they would like to see the item served again.

The Child Nutrition Program conducted a student survey of 245 elementary classrooms and 37 secondary students in February 2001. The dietician distributed the survey to a sample of elementary classrooms, and cafeteria workers handed them out in the cafeteria at the secondary level. All secondary students were given the option of completing a survey. The survey identified the top ten items liked by students categorized by entrees and side dishes at elementary and secondary schools. The survey also asked students whether food was served at the appropriate temperature.

Campuses do not provide for customer comment boxes. Seven out of the ten food service comments obtained during public forums conducted by TSPR related to the need for balanced or nutritious meals. **Exhibit 9-7** summarizes the results of the TSPR survey question relating to food appeal. The question specifically asked participants to comment on the level of agreement with the statement that the "cafeteria's food looks and tastes good."

Exhibit 9-7
TSPR Survey Results: Food Appeal
October 2001

Survey Group	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
Parents	52.1%	37.5%	10.4%
Teachers	43.8%	41.7%	14.6%
Students	21.8%	55.7%	22.6%
Principals	66.7%	29.6%	3.7%

Source: Appendix B, D, E and F, October 2001.

Recommendation 69:

Obtain additional feedback from students, teachers and administrators about the quality, taste, variety and quantity of menu items served.

The department should develop a complete program for obtaining feedback from students, teachers and administrators that gathers comments about quality, taste, variety and quantity of menu items served at the campuses. The program should expand the use and facilitation of surveys by placing the survey on the district's Web site so that district staff can easily comment. The surveys should be used to identify the food currently served that the students like and what they do not. In addition, the surveys should allow for students to indicate what kinds of food they would prefer or what kinds of food they would like the cafeterias to serve. All surveys should allow for comments on how the Child Nutrition Program can improve the food quality and its operation in general. The district should make a comment box available to obtain feedback from students when formal surveys are not facilitated.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program dietician develops a plan for obtaining a broader base of feedback from students, parents, teachers and administrators.	May 2002
2.	The Child Nutrition Program dietician administers surveys as scheduled in the plan, gathers input from the comment box, analyzes results and reports to Child Nutrition Program director and Production manager.	August 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program director, dietician and Production manager develop strategies for addressing concerns identified from the feedback.	September 2002 and ongoing
4.	The Child Nutrition Program director, dietician and Production Department manager implement strategies designed to address concerns and requests.	September 2002 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Of the Child Nutrition Program's 252 personnel, the absence rate for the 44-day period of September and October 2001 was 6.2 percent or 688 reported absences of 11,088 working days. On average this means that 16 employees were absent per day. The standard used by many training firms and experts is in the range of three to four percent.

Absenteeism is reported in two ways. Personnel are instructed to call into an automated phone system to report that they will be absent on a given day. However, all employees do not use this system according to interviews with the Child Nutrition Program director. The Child Nutrition phone operator also takes verbal reports from campuses. The operator then enters the additional absentees into the system.

Comal and Killeen ISD have both instituted actions to reduce absenteeism in their districts. Comal ISD uses employee incentives to encourage attendance and counseling for those with high rates of absenteeism. Killeen ISD uses an Employee-of-the-Quarter Awards Program with awards such as a certificate of appreciation, employee pin and a sign posted on campus marquees and gift certificates to encourage attendance. Other options include plaques and bonus pools. Plaques cost an average of $20 each while $1,000 is a conservative bonus pool that could be shared among Child Nutrition Program employees at a high attendance campus.

Recommendation 70:

Monitor kitchens' absentee rates and implement corrective action plans including disciplinary action for those with excessive absences and an incentive program to encourage attendance.

The Child Nutrition Program director and Human Resources Department should develop incentives such as a bonus pool, employee awards, certificates of appreciation, employee pins and other recognition that reward employee attendance. Disciplinary action should also be addressed. The director may choose to develop a new policy that would include increasing levels of discipline for unexplained or unjustifiable absences. Such absences may be termed "unexcused," and the policy may be that one unexcused absence results in a verbal warning from the immediate supervisor; two results in a written warning and meeting with the supervisor; three introduces a written note to the personnel file and four may be grounds for dismissal.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program director and Human Resources Department develop incentives to recognize and reward attendance and policies to address excessive absences.	May 2002

2.	The Child Nutrition Program director and Human Resources Department obtain the superintendent's approval for the new incentives and policies.	June 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program director and Human Resources Department prepare and distribute policies to affected staff regarding the new leave policy.	July 2002
4.	The Child Nutrition Program director monitors employee attendance and takes immediate action when necessary.	ongoing
5.	The Child Nutrition Program director holds an awards ceremony presentation to acknowledge excellent attendance.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is dependent upon the monetary and recognition award LISD Child Nutrition Program finds appropriate. Providing a bonus pool to cafeteria staff for campuses with the lowest absenteeism would not be expensive. For example, the Child Nutrition Program could award a $1,000 bonus pool to the three campuses with the lowest absenteeism rate at the end of the year. This would cost the district $3,000. In addition, recognition of employees in the form of plaques and certificates could be provided with the pool to the employees with perfect attendance. The cost is estimated at $20 per plaque or certificate for 80 percent of the 252 staff. This would cost the district $4,040. The total annual cost of the program would be $7,040.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Monitor kitchens' absentee rates and implement corrective action plans including disciplinary action for those with excessive absences and an incentive program to encourage attendance.	($7,040)	($7,040)	($7,040)	($7,040)	($7,040)

FINDING

The district does not use a Meals-Per-Labor-Hour (MPLH) standard to measure productivity of its food service operations. MPLH is a standard performance measure of efficiency for school districts, hospitals, restaurants and other food service operations. MPLH is the number of meal equivalents served in a given period of time divided by the total hours worked during that period and may be reduced by decreasing the number of staff or the hours worked per employee.

Meal equivalents are lunches plus an equivalent number of breakfast and a la carte sales. LISD does not offer a la carte items but does offer snacks. The following conversions for meal equivalents are appropriate for the type of food production system used in LISD.

• Breakfast	All locations	2 breakfasts = one meal equivalent
• Lunch	All locations	1 lunches = one meal equivalent
• Snacks	All locations	4 snacks = one meal equivalent

Based on the district's meal participation for 2000-01 and the meal equivalents above, LISD's meal equivalents for 2000-01 were 4,009,112 as shown in **Exhibit 9-8**.

Exhibit 9-8
LISD Meals Equivalents
2000-01

	Meal Participation	Equivalency Ratio	Meal Equivalents
Lunch	**3,208,201**	1.00	3,208,201
Breakfast	1,457,633	.50	782,817
Snack	72,375	.25	18,094
Total	**4,738,209**		**4,009,112**

Source: LISD meal participation composites, 2000-01 and LISD equivalency rates, 2000-01.

MPLH may be calculated under a conventional or convenience system. The conventional system includes the preparation of food from raw vegetables on the premises (using some bakery bread and prepared pizza and washing dishes). The convenience system uses the maximum amount of processed food and disposable items, such as canned foods and disposable plates and utensils. The conventional generally requires more preparation and clean-up time than the convenience system and the standard MPLH is thus lower than the standard for the convenience system. TSPR used the conventional system to evaluate food service productivity since it is a more conservative approach than the convenience

system. **Exhibit 9-9** shows the recommended MPLH for the conventional and convenience system.

Exhibit 9-9
Standard MPLH

| Number of Meal Equivalents | Meals Per Labor Hour | |
| | Conventional System | Convenience System |
	Low/High	Low/High
Up to 100	8/10	10/12
101-150	9/11	11/13
151-200	10-11/12	12/14
251-300	13/15	15/16
301-400	14/16	16/18
401-500	14/17	18/19
501-600	15/17	18/19
601-700	16/18	19/20
701-800	17/19	20/22
801-900	18/20	21/23
901+	19/21	22/23

Source: Managing Food Services Programs: Leadership for Excellence by Josephine Martin and Martha T. Conklin, 1999.

LISD's MPLH is 18.03 or 4,009,112 meal equivalents (**Exhibit 9-8**) divided by 222,413 hours as calculated in **Exhibit 9-6**. At 18.03 MPLH, LISD's Child Nutrition Program MPLH is lower than recommended.

Recommendation 71:

Establish meals-per-labor-hour standards to evaluate productivity and guide staffing levels at each campus.

The Child Nutrition Program director should develop a means for calculating meals per labor hour on a monthly basis to measure productivity in meal preparation. The director should review the data, which could be prepared by either the program's Reporting Department or Personnel clerk and discusses with the Production Department manager.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program director develops MPLH standards for each cafeteria and does not fill vacant positions.	June 2002
2.	Staff is reduced based on MPLH standards for each cafeteria.	August 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program director quarterly calculates the MPLH for each cafeteria and compares the results to the standard for each cafeteria.	November 2002
4.	The Child Nutrition Program director makes necessary staffing adjustments when necessary.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

To meet the industry standard of 19 meals per labor hour the LISD Child Nutrition Program needs to reduce its labor hours by 11,413 hours annually. This number of hours represents 5 percent of the total labor hours (222,413) in the Child Nutrition Program. The Child Nutrition Program employs 252 employees. To reduce the program's labor hours by 5 percent would mean a reduction of 13 positions.

The lowest salary, pay grade one, in the Child Nutrition Program including benefits is $14,724 (salary of $10,808 plus benefits of $3,916). Benefits include a fixed amount of $2,442 plus a variable amount of $1,474 based on 13.6422 percent of salary ($10,808 x .136422). By meeting industry standards, LISD would save $191,412 (13 positions multiplied by $14,724) each year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Establish meals-per-labor-hour standards to evaluate productivity and guide staffing levels at each campus.	$191,412	$191,412	$191,412	$191,412	$191,412

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Program uses manual counting as the primary means of determining meal participation. The department purchased Café Terminal, a point-of-sale (POS) system and implemented it at Cigarroa High and Middle school cafeterias, but continues to use manual counting at the other campuses. The system has been in use since the beginning of the 2000-01 school year. Three cashiers have been trained in its operation.

A Child Nutrition Program computer technician serves as the system administrator and is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the system.

Campus principals provide the computer technician with student identification codes, names, addresses and phone numbers, and the technician uploads the data into the system. Students pick up their trays, then stop at a table with a cashier and punch their student identification code into a numeric keypad. A picture of the student and the information listed above appear on the screen. The cashier accepts the information, and the next student proceeds similarly. According to the Child Nutrition director, the district plans to implement the point-of-sale system at all campuses over the next several years beginning with the elementary schools followed by the middle and high schools.

In schools that do not use the POS system, an employee stands at the head of the cafeteria line and uses a clicker counter to track the number of meals served. Meals do not need to be tracked by full- and reduced-price or free due to the district's participation in Provision II of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. Cashiers must rely on their ability to recognize students in order to monitor those who go through the line twice.

Districts like Killeen ISD have implemented a district wide POS system to take advantage of improved accounting controls and improved management reporting. Although Killeen ISD differs from Laredo ISD in that it does not participate in Provision II of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, it has recognized benefits that could also be achieved by Laredo ISD. The Killeen ISD campuses that used the POS system had improved cash accounting controls including more accurate meal counts and reduction in cash account and recording errors, as well as, reduced opportunities for theft.

Recommendation 72:

Immediately implement a point-of-sale system at all campuses.

The Child Nutrition Program director should continue working with the Purchasing Department to outline bid specifications for computers and printers. The Purchasing Department should place the items on bid to obtain competitive pricing and coordinate with the Child Nutrition Program to select a vendor. After the computers and equipment are purchased, the Child Nutrition Program's computer technician should obtain assistance from the Information Technology Department to install the computers, software and printers. The software provider should be contacted to provide training to all staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program director works with the Purchasing Department to outline bid specifications for software, computers and printers.	May 2002
2.	The Purchasing Department places the items on bid to obtain competitive pricing.	July 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program's computer technician obtains assistance from the Information Technology Department to install the computers, software and printers.	October 2002
4.	The software provider conducts training staff.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The primary cost of implementing the system is the cost of a moderate grade computer, software and printer, which would be approximately $1,500 per combined purchase. Each of the remaining 42 cashiers would require the equipment.

The cost of 42 computers, printers and required software will run approximately $1,500 per unit. With 42 remaining cashiers, the equipment needed to implement the POS system will have one time cost to the district of $63,000.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Immediately implement a point-of-sale system at all campuses.	($63,000)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Program's energy costs are not closely monitored to identify measures that would reduce utility bills. According to the Child Nutrition Program director, LISD's Energy Department conducts a monthly audit of energy bills, to compare costs from month to month. The district does not conduct onsite audits for ways to improve energy efficiency. For example, the delivery door to the central kitchen's temporary cold storage area, which is maintained at approximately 50 degrees Fahrenheit, is damaged with a large gap at the bottom that allows cool air to escape.

One district that closely monitors energy usage and management procedures is Tyler ISD. The energy manager regularly visits campuses to monitor energy management practices and utility systems. The energy manager also distributes information on energy conservation to campuses.

Recommendation 73:

Monitor the Child Nutrition Program's energy management practices.

The LISD Energy Department manager should visit the Child Nutrition Program monthly and provide suggestions for improving energy efficiency. The visit could be in the form of a monthly on-site energy audit.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program director requests the Energy Department to perform monthly energy audits.	May 2002
2.	The LISD Energy Department manager performs monthly on-site energy audits of the Child Nutrition Program's energy management and conservation procedures and provides suggestions for improving energy management practices.	August 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program director implements recommended energy management practices.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9
FOOD SERVICES

B. MEAL PARTICIPATION

Participation in the district's breakfast and lunch programs is affected by several things: participation in Provision II of the National School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs, closed campuses and the use of special programs. Provision II provides free breakfasts and lunches to all students in the district and reimburses the district at a fixed rate for each meal served. Of the district's 21 elementary, four middle school and three high school campuses, all but the high school campuses are closed, meaning students are not permitted to leave campus during the day to buy their meals or snacks at area stores or restaurants. **Exhibit 9-10** provides the enrollment, average daily attendance (ADA) and participation rates for lunch and breakfast from 1999-2000 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 9-10
ADA and Daily Meal Participation Rates
1997-98 through 2000-01

	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change
Average Daily Attendance	21,813	21,765	21,736	21,803	0.0%
Average Breakfast Participation	4,350	4,794	5,127	7,288	67.5%
Breakfast Participation Rate	19.9%	22.0%	23.6%	33.4%	67.8%
Lunch Participation	14,207	15,036	15,320	16,041	12.9%
Lunch Participation Rate	65.1%	69.1%	70.4%	73.6%	13.1%

Source: LISD Reimbursement Claims, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 and AEIS Data, 1998-2001.

Reimbursement during the three-year period is determined by applying the percentages of free, reduced-price and paid meals served at each campus during the corresponding month of the base year to the total meal count for the claiming month. **Exhibit 9-11** gives the federal reimbursement rates for the district's Food Nutrition Program.

Exhibit 9-11
Reimbursement Rates
2000-01

Reimbursement Rates	
Reimbursable Breakfasts:	
• Full Price: • Reduced-Price: • Free:	$1.12 $0.82 $0.21
Reimbursable Lunches:	
• Full Price: • Reduced-Price: • Free:	$2.02 $1.62 $0.19
Reimbursable Supplements/Snacks:	
• Full Price: • Reduced-Price: • Free:	$0.55 $0.27 $0.05

Source: Texas Department of Human Services, December 2001

LISD has taken advantage of its opportunity to apply for a four-year extension of Provision II. A school is eligible to apply for four-year extensions; using the same reimbursement rates as determined in the base year as long as the income level of the population remains stable.

Due to implementation of Provision II and the district's closed campus policy, 71.1 percent ofthe LISD student enrollment regularly ate lunch in the cafeteria during the 2000-01 school year and 32.2 percent ate breakfast. The average daily participation of LISD and its peer districts is shown in **Exhibit 9-12**.

Exhibit 9-12
LISD and Peer Districts Meal Participation Comparison
Month Year

District	Average Daily Breakfast Participation	Average Daily Lunch Participation
Eagle Pass	4,497	9,878
Edgewood	7,783	11,030
Edinburg	15,400	18,106
Harlandale	9,245	12,052
Laredo	**7,288**	**16,041**
United	7,488	20,318

Source: Peer Surveys, December 2001.

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Program uses marketing products received from food vendors for student prizes. The program also purchases stuffed animals such as an 18-inch Harlem Globe Trotters stuffed bear, a 14-inch stuffed Garfield and other items. Prizes are dispersed to each campus and raffled to students by attaching a winning number or color to the bottom of one breakfast tray. The cafeteria servers or cashiers then announce the winning tray and the student claims the prize.

COMMENDATION

Awarding prizes to students using a raffling program helped the Child Nutrition Program increase participation at breakfast between 1997-98 and 2000-01 by 67.7 percent.

FINDING

Despite the fact that the district uses a revolving menu and substitutes new items periodically, there is little variation in meals served. The same 15 lunch entrees and 17 breakfast entrees were served repeatedly during the first quarter of the 2001-02 school year. Cookies were served twice, super doughnuts were served five times and peanut butter sandwiches were served as breakfast entrees three times during the first quarter of the 2001-02 school year. The district has one dietician, but she is only involved in the planning of special diet menus based on doctor's recommendations.

The department's production director is the lead developer of the menu. The Child Nutrition Program did respond to a request from parents to put more traditional items on the menu, which includes breakfast tacos, tamales or burritos for breakfast one to two times each week.

The district has a school nutrition, education and promotion plan that includes a monthly newsletter that provides nutrition information, facts about the Child Nutrition Program, and food features of the month. The newsletter is made available to employees, teachers, parents and students. Dietetic interns also give monthly nutrition presentations, and the district observes National and Texas School Breakfast weeks, National and Texas School Lunch weeks. Unfortunately, the nutrition education and promotion plan is not integrated into the district's educational curriculum.

The Texas Food Service Association's third Standard of Excellence is that school food service meets the nutritional needs of students and promotes the development of sound nutritional practices. Excelling at this standard includes the use of menus that include a variety of foods, temperatures, colors, textures, tastes, consistencies, shapes and preparation methods and the evaluation of menus for student acceptance.

Recommendation 74:

Expand menu items and the nutrition, education and promotion plan.

The Child Nutrition Program director and the dietician should coordinate with the Production Department manager to expand menu items and with teachers to expand the nutrition, education and promotion plan into curriculum. The department could introduce a "new foods month" in which each menu has at least one new menu item or a variation of existing menu items. The dietician would gather feedback on the new items through a survey and report results to the Child Nutrition Program director and Production Department manager. Additionally, the dietician could work with teachers to make monthly presentations to student on the importance of a nutritionally balanced diet.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Child Nutrition Program director, dietician and Production Department manager identify items to expand the district's menus.	August 2002
2.	The Child Nutrition Program announces the introduction of the "new foods month," and the dietician collects feedback on new items.	December 2002
3.	The Child Nutrition Program dietician and Production	February 2003

| | manager create menus with the preferred menu items. | and Ongoing |

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9
FOOD SERVICES

C. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Child Nutrition Program has an annual operating budget of more than $8 million for 2001-02. Revenue to support operations comes from federal, state and local monies. Expenditures have increased 17.7 percent since 1996-97. The greatest increase in Child Nutrition expenditures, excluding capital outlay, from 1996-97 to 2001-02 was for supplies and materials. This was due to increased meal participation, since food items are included in this account. **Exhibit 9-1** summarizes actual LISD expenditures from 1996-97 through 2000-01 and budgeted expenditures for the 2001-02 school year.

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Program has increased the fund balance by keeping expenditures less than revenues, increasing participation in the breakfast and lunch programs and increasing revenues through private contracts. Expenditures ranged from 92.6 to 99.0 percent of revenues from the period 1996-97 through 2000-01 as shown in **Exhibit 9-13**.

Exhibit 9-13
LISD Expenditures as a Percent of Revenues
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1996-97	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**	**2000-01**
Revenues	$7,068,579	$7,073,770	$7,279,854	$7,716,420	$8,592,186
Expenditures	$6,802,438	$6,990,469	$7,209,769	$7,143,412	$7,615,101
Expenditures as a Percent of Revenues	**96.2%**	**98.8%**	**99.0%**	**92.6%**	**88.6%**

Source: LISD Revenue and Expenditure Summary Reports, 1996-97 through 2000-01.

In addition, LISD contracts with Saint Peter's Memorial School and Our Lady of Guadalupe School, two private schools within the district, to make and deliver meals to the two schools at a cost of $2 per meal. LISD's Child Nutrition Program produces approximately 200 meals daily for Saint Peter's Memorial School at a cost of $41,172 annually and

approximately 100 meals daily for Our Lady of Guadalupe School at a cost of $26,443 annually. The district has also increased its meal participation by enrollment in Provision II and through the use of incentives to encourage students to eat breakfast.

COMMENDATION

The Child Nutrition Program has generated a significant fund balance while offering free meals to all students.

FINDING

The LISD Child Nutrition Program's fund balance exceeds the threshold specified for participation in the National School Lunch Program. The threshold is an amount equal to three months of operating expenditures. While the Child Nutrition Program has been successful in increasing its fund balance, section 1.3.2.4 of TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* states that a school district may not have a fund balance exceeding three months' average food service operations expenditures. Additionally, balances must be used exclusively for allowable child nutrition program purposes.

The three-month requirement is the result of a provision of the National School Lunch Program Act that requires participating schools to operate a non-profit food service program. Schools that exceed the threshold have the option to reduce the balance by increasing the quality of meals, reducing meal prices or purchasing and maintaining adequate and necessary supplies, services and equipment used in storing, preparing or serving meals to children. Schools that do not comply with this requirement may not be eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program. Three month's expenditures for LISD is equivalent to $2,284,530 ($7,615,101 divided by 10 months x 3 months) based on the 2000-01 school year expenditures in **Exhibit 9-1**.

The Child Nutrition Program director plans to use the fund balance to make equipment purchases for the program. Additionally, the district plans to build a new central kitchen beginning with the 2002-03 school year. Although the district has issued bonds for the purpose of financing most of the district's building and renovation projects, it is anticipated that the Child Nutrition Program fund balance will be used to fund at least one-half of the cost of the new central kitchen facility. Food service cash may not be used to pay for the acquisition or construction of buildings but may be used to make major equipment purchases necessary as the result of the new facility.

Recommendation 75:

Develop a process to ensure that the Child Nutrition Program fund balance does not exceed three months of operating expenditures after the central kitchen is completed.

The chief financial officer and Child Nutrition Program director should identify that portion of the existing fund balance reserved for retrofitting kitchen equipment. The chief financial officer provides reports to the Child Nutrition Program director on a monthly basis to monitor fund balance levels in excess of the amount reserved for the new facility. The Child Nutrition Program director should request budget modifications to ensure excess fund levels do not exceed three months operating expenditures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The chief financial officer and Child Nutrition Program director should identify that portion of the existing fund balance that is reserved for purchasing new kitchen equipment.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer provides financial reports to the Child Nutrition Program director monthly to monitor fund balance levels in excess of the amount reserved for the new facility.	August 2002 and monthly thereafter
3.	The Child Nutrition Program director should request budget modifications to ensure excess fund levels do not exceed three months operating expenditures.	As needed

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 10
TRANSPORTATION

This chapter examines the Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) Transportation Department in three areas:

A. Organization and Management
B. Bus Routing and Scheduling
C. Fleet Maintenance

The Texas Education Code authorizes but does not require Texas school districts to provide transportation for students between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations and for extracurricular activities. In the area of transportation services, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also requires a school district to treat students with disabilities the same way as it treats students in the general population. In addition, IDEA requires school districts to provide transportation to students who must travel to receive special education services.

BACKGROUND

Texas school districts are authorized, but not required, by the Texas Legislature to provide transportation for students to and from school and for extracurricular events. However, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDA) requires districts to provide transportation to students with disabilities if they also provide transportation for the general student population, or if disabled students require transportation to receive special education. The LISD Transportation Department provides transportation for both general population students and special education students in its 13.83 square mile service area.

Texas school districts receive state funding for transporting regular and special education students. In 2001-02, the state pays LISD $1.43 for each regular student and $1.08 for each special education student. These rates are based on funding rules established by the Texas Legislature. The regular student transportation allocation is limited to students who live two or more miles from their school or who face hazardous walking conditions. For example, crossing a four-lane or wider roadway without a traffic signal or crossing guard would be considered a hazardous walking condition. Districts may transport students who live within two miles of their schools and who do not face hazardous walking conditions, but the district must pay the cost of transporting these students from local funds.

The state provides funds to school districts for regular education students according to a formula that incorporates the district's linear density. Linear density is the ratio of two numbers, annual ridership and annual miles. The first number, annual ridership, is the sum of the average number of eligible riders on a route who live outside 2 miles of their assigned school, multiplied by the total number of days transported. The result of that calculation is then divided by total annual miles, which is the sum of eligible daily miles outside two miles of an assigned school by route multiplied by the total number of days operated.

LISD annual ridership is 545 students times 180 days, or 98,100 students. Annual miles are 188 daily route miles times 180 days, or 33,840 miles. The linear density is, therefore, 98,100 divided by 33,840, or 2.90. Texas school districts are assigned to one of seven funding groups based on linear density. For 2001-02, LISD is assigned to group seven, which entitles the district to reimbursement of $1.43 per student for regular education transportation, although the actual cost is $6.33 per student. **Exhibit 10-1** shows the linear density groups and allotment per mile for each group.

Exhibit 10-1
Linear Density Groups
2000-01

Linear Density Group	Allotment Per Mile
2.40 and above	$1.43
1.65 to 2.40	$1.25
1.15 to 1.65	$1.11
.90 to 1.15	$0.97
.65 to .90	$0.88
.40 to .65	$0.79
Up to .40	$0.68

Source: TEA Handbook on School Transportation Allotments, revised May 2000.

The Texas Legislature sets reimbursement rates for special education students; they are not based on linear density. All transportation for special education students, except certain field trips, is eligible for state

reimbursement limited to $1.08 per mile per student. In 2000-01, LISD transportation cost for special education students was $5.09 per mile.

In 1999-2000, LISD received $266,931 in transportation allocation funding from the state. This figure represents 10.9 percent of total annual operations costs, which is the lowest percentage among peer districts. **Exhibit 10-2** compares the total state funding allocated to LISD and selected peer districts.

Exhibit 10-2
State Transportation Funding
Peer District Comparison
1999-2000

Cost Category	State Funding	Total Annual Operating Costs	Percent of Total Operating Cost
Edgewood	$217,023	$795,554	27.3%
Edinburg	$1,951,482	$4,747,875	41.1%
United	$1,825,703	$5,393,616	33.8%
Harlandale	$377,604	$1,572,571	24.0%
Eagle Pass	$643,207	$2,669,320	24.1%
Laredo	**$266,931**	**$2,442,922**	**10.9%**

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Report 1999-2000.

Chapter 10
TRANSPORTATION

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The LISD Transportation Department provides student transportation and also maintains all school buses and all other district vehicles except those operated by the Child Nutrition Program. The Transportation Department operates from one primary facility located within the district but also is temporarily storing 15 buses at a district elementary school construction site.

Exhibit 10-3 presents the organizational structure of the Transportation Department. There are a total of 131 budgeted positions in the Transportation Department. The department's administrative staff includes the Transportation director, two secretaries, two clerks and three supervisors.

The Transportation Department is divided into three main areas: administration, maintenance and operations. The Transportation director reports to the chief financial officer pending reorganization. Three supervisors report to the director: the fleet supervisor, operations supervisor and road/field supervisor. The Transportation director reports to the administrative assistant for Operations.

Exhibit 10-3
LISD Transportation Department
Organizational Chart

2001-02

```
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │   Director   │
                          └──────┬───────┘
            ┌──────────────┐     │
            │ Secretaries  ├─────┤
            │     (2)      │     │
            └──────┬───────┘     │
            ┌──────┴───────────┐ │
            │Transportation Clerks│
            │       (2)         │
            └───────────────────┘
   ┌─────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
┌──┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐
│Fleet Supervisor│ │Supervisor/ │ │Road/Field  │
│ and Trainer   │ │ Dispatcher │ │ Supervisor │
└──┬──────────┘ └─┬──────────┘ └─┬──────────┘
┌──┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐
│ Auto Parts  │ │Transportation│ │Clerk/Video │
│   Clerk     │ │Dispatcher II │ │Programmer/Viewer│
└──┬──────────┘ └─┬──────────┘ └─┬──────────┘
┌──┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐
│ Mechanics   │ │ Bus Drivers│ │ Custodians │
│    (5)      │ │   (66)     │ │            │
└──┬──────────┘ └─┬──────────┘ └─┬──────────┘
┌──┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐ ┌─┴──────────┐
│ Bus Washers │ │ Bus Aides  │ │  Security  │
│    (2)      │ │   (42)     │ │   Guard    │
└─────────────┘ └─┬──────────┘ └────────────┘
                ┌─┴──────────┐
                │Bus Monitors│
                │    (3)     │
                └────────────┘
```
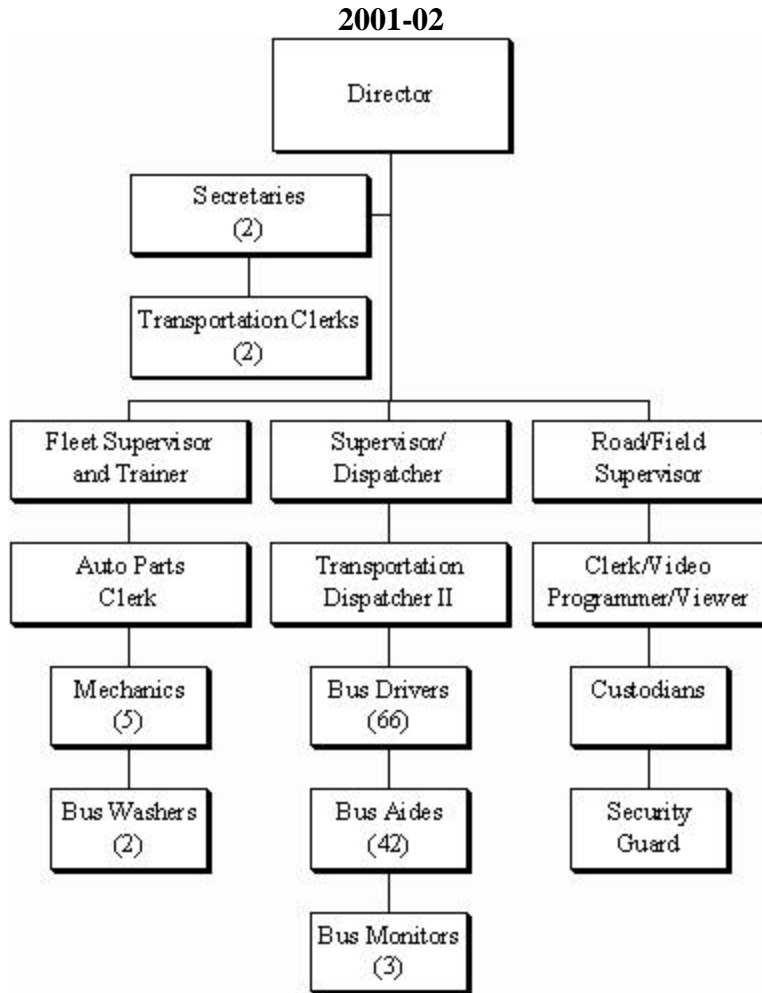
Source: LISD Transportation Department, November 2001.

The fleet supervisor is responsible for maintaining all district vehicles except Child Nutrition Program vehicles. He supervises four mechanics, one head mechanic, one auto parts clerk and two bus washers. The fleet supervisor is responsible for obtaining licenses for new vehicles and ensuring that new vehicles are added to the district insurance policy. The fleet supervisor also trains bus drivers. The fleet supervisor attended train-the-trainer classes at Texas A&M University along with seven other Transportation Department employees in October 1997. Six of the eight are still employed by the Transportation Department.

The operations supervisor/dispatcher has been employed by LISD for 16 years. He has worked as a bus driver, dispatcher/driver and now as a dispatcher. He supervises one Dispatcher II, 66 bus drivers, 42 bus aides and three bus monitors. He spends approximately 80 percent of each morning on the phone with parents and on the radio with drivers trying to get the drivers to their locations on time.

The road/field supervisor is responsible for custodial services, security and maintenance for the Transportation Department facilities and operations of cameras installed on school buses. The road/field supervisor also monitors bus routes on a daily basis by driving the routes to observe the drivers, students, local traffic and road conditions.

FINDING

LISD pays a competitive wage rate for school bus drivers and mechanics. Bus drivers and mechanics are paid between $9.05 and $13.01 per hour depending on longevity with the district and the Transportation Department.

Transportation Department employees said that the level of pay was a prime factor in deciding to work for the district. **Exhibit 10-4** compares minimum, midpoint and maximum driver and mechanic pay rates for LISD and its peer school districts. LISD salaries are higher than the peer group average in all categories except the midpoint pay rate for mechanics.

Exhibit 10-4
Driver and Mechanic Pay Rates per Hour
2001-02

District	Driver			Mechanic		
	Minimum	**Midpoint**	**Maximum**	**Minimum**	**Midpoint**	**Maximum**
Edinburg	$8.60	$10.40	$12.60	$9.35	$10.70	$13.35
Eagle Pass	$7.20	$9.10	$10.97	$10.41	$11.62	$12.82
Edgewood	$7.51	$9.15	$10.80	$8.78	$10.71	$12.64
Harlandale	$10.00	$12.00	$14.00	$10.40	$12.40	$14.40
United	$7.50	$9.44	$11.13	$8.18	$9.97	$11.76
Peer Average	$8.16	$10.02	$11.90	$9.42	$11.08	$12.99
Laredo	**$9.05**	**$11.03**	**$13.01**	**$9.05**	**$11.03**	**$13.01**
Percent Different from Average	10.9%	10.1%	9.3%	(3.9%)	(0.5%)	0.2%

The district regularly monitors driver and mechanic pay rates in the area and adjusts them as needed. Pay rates are based on longevity. Drivers also are assigned extracurricular and out-of-town trips on a rotating basis, but drivers can elect whether to be on the assignment list or not. Drivers are paid the same rate for regular trips as for extracurricular and out-of-town trips. However, by driving additional trips, drivers are eligible for overtime pay.

COMMENDATION

The district regularly adjusts pay rates for school bus drivers and mechanics to provide a competitive wage.

FINDING

The Transportation Department has a full-time security officer responsible for patrolling the bus yard from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. when the area is also patrolled by the Laredo Police Department. The Transportation Department also contracts for security service for weekends and holidays. Several surveillance cameras, an eight-foot security fence as well as continuous lighting of the area provides additional security.

Recommendation 76:

Eliminate the Transportation Department security guard position.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent obtains board approval for the elimination of the security guard position.	June 2002
2.	The Transportation director eliminates the security guard position.	June 2002
3.	The Transportation director meets with the director of Risk Management, who supervises all security guards, and the Laredo police chief to discuss increasing the frequency of patrols without additional cost.	July 2002
4.	The Transportation director monitors the incidence of criminal activity affecting Transportation Department facilities and works with the Laredo Police Department to ensure district personnel, assets and resources are adequately protected.	July 2002 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The security guard's salary is $17,383 per year. In addition, the security guard is paid $600 for longevity. Health insurance for para-professionals is $2,442 per year and other benefits are 13.6422 percent of gross salary. Eliminating the security guard position will save the district $17,983 in salary and benefits of $4,895 ($17,983 x 0.136422 = $2,453 plus $2,442 health insurance). Total annual savings would be $22,878.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Eliminate the Transportation Department security guard position.	$22,878	$22,878	$22,878	$22,878	$22,878

FINDING

Mechanics are frequently required to fill in as bus drivers when substitutes are not available. This creates two problems. Mechanics are paid more than bus drivers, and repairs on buses are delayed while mechanics are driving buses. In 2000-01, bus drivers were absent from work a total of 213.5 driver-days. Since drivers work 183 days per year, this represents an average of more than one driver absent each working day of the year.

The district attempts to maintain a substitute pool of four drivers, but substitute drivers are difficult to recruit since they are seeking full-time permanent employment. Due to driver absences, substitute drivers regularly work full time. When absences are high, available drivers may drive more than one route. Even this approach does not always fill the vacancies, however, and mechanics are used to drive routes.

Recommendation 77:

Hire permanent, part-time drivers to drive the routes of absent full-time drivers.

Part-time drivers, who work 20 hours per week, could drive regular morning and afternoon routes. They would not be required to drive extracurricular or out-of-town trips. Since they work only 20 hours per week, the district would not incur additional health insurance benefits costs. Hiring part-time drivers would enable the district to have drivers trained and available if full-time vacancies occur. When this happens, part-time drivers could become full-time drivers, and replacement part-time drivers could be hired and trained.

Additional drivers would alleviate the need to use bus mechanics, who would then be able to work on buses full time so that district resources are utilized more efficiently.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director submits a request to the administrative assistant for Operations for approval to hire two part-time bus drivers.	May 2002
2.	The Transportation director meets with the executive director of Human Resources to recruit, hire and train two part-time bus drivers.	June 2002
3.	The Transportation director and his staff provide training and assign the bus drivers as needed.	August 2002
4.	The dispatcher assigns the part-time drivers to routes as absences occur.	August 2002 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The beginning salary for bus drivers in LISD is $9.05 per hour. Benefits for part-time bus drivers include 13.6422 percent of gross salary for required federal taxes and insurance as the district's variable benefit rate. Hiring two additional bus drivers would cost $13,322 for the salary (two drivers x $9.05 per hour x 4 hours per day x 184 days) and for benefits of $1,817 (0.136422 variable benefit rate x $13,322). The total annual fiscal impact would be $15,139 ($13,322 + $1,817).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Hire permanent, part-time drivers to drive the routes of absent full-time drivers.	($15,139)	($15,139)	($15,139)	($15,139)	($15,139)

Chapter 10
TRANSPORTATION

B. BUS ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

The Transportation Department has 62 full-time and four substitute drivers transporting more than 2,081 students on regular and special education routes in the district. Three supervisors oversee the routing and scheduling. LISD transports students who live more than two miles from their school, as well as students who live within the two-mile area of schools with routes that are considered hazardous by TEA guidelines.

The LISD Transportation Department has a cluster-stop policy for most of its regular transportation routes. Students are picked up along the bus routes at designated cluster locations throughout the communities. Each cluster stop is selected to ensure that no student has to walk more than three blocks to be picked up. When parents register students at each school, attendance officers notify the parents of cluster stops in their neighborhood and provide students with a schedule of pick-up times and locations.

Bus routes for special education students are designed to go to each student's home, rehabilitation center or daycare center.

The district manually prepares the annual bus routes by reviewing prior-year routes and making adjustments based on experience and input from parents.

FINDING

The district uses a manual routing and scheduling system for transportation of both regular and special education students but is in the process of purchasing an automated routing system. Manual routing and scheduling is labor intensive and is not the most efficient way to improve transportation service and control costs. For example, the total capacity of the district's bus fleet is 4,737 students, while daily ridership is 2,081. This reflects a 43.9 percent utilization rate.

The district is acquiring Edulog software, which is an automated bus routing and scheduling software used by many Texas school districts. The software is expected to be operational for the 2002-03 school year. The cost to purchase and install the automated system is estimated to be $36,500 for hardware and software. Other school districts have realized operational efficiencies after implementing automated bus routing and scheduling software and have reduced operating costs, if LISD can reduce

their operational costs based on 2000-01 expenditures by one-percent using an automated system, LISD will realize an annual operational costs savings of $32,925.

COMMENDATION

LISD's purchase and implementation of an automated route scheduling system should reduce operating costs and improve the district's transportation system.

FINDING

LISD Transportation Department has the second highest operating costs per mile of its peer districts for regular education students and the highest for special education. Operating costs per mile are a function of both annual miles driven and annual operating costs. **Exhibit 10-5** compares LISD transportation costs per mile to peer districts for both regular and special education students.

Exhibit 10-5
Comparison of Cost per Mile for Peer Districts
1999-2000

Peer District	Regular Education Cost/Mile	Special Education Cost/Mile
Edgewood	$1.11	$1.87
Edinburg	$1.92	$1.94
United	$1.95	$2.74
Harlandale	$3.41	$3.36
Eagle Pass	$2.26	$1.43
Laredo	**$3.21**	**$4.41**
Peer Average	$2.31	$2.63
Statewide Average	**$2.05**	**$2.20**

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1999-2000.

A large part of the cost of transporting students is the acquisition and maintenance of an adequate number of buses, both regular and special education. Each district is responsible for the actual capital cost of purchasing school buses. Districts may purchase school buses through the

Texas Building and Procurement Commission under a state contract, or they may lease-purchase.

In addition to routine operating costs, the Transportation Department bears a large portion of the annual debt of a recent bond sale. LISD issued $2,800,000 of bonds in 1998. The Transportation Department is annually charged 21 percent of the bond costs since $595,146 of the bonds are for the benefit of the Transportation Department. In 1999-2000, the Transportation Department debt service expense was $499,493.

Miles driven are proportional to the linear density of the district. The greater the linear density, the fewer miles buses are driven to transport students within the district. A district with high linear density will have fewer annual miles than a district with low linear density.

Exhibit 10-6 compares the linear density of LISD to peer districts.

Exhibit 10-6
Comparison of Linear Density for Peer Districts
2000-01

Peer District	Linear Density
Edgewood	2.348
Edinburg	1.610
United	1.345
Harlandale	1.800
Eagle Pass	1.471
Laredo	**2.899**

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 2000-01.

Since LISD has a high linear density, it would likely have a higher cost per mile. However, the transportation operating costs per mile of LISD should not differ significantly from districts with the same ridership.

Exhibit 10-7 compares the cost per rider of LISD with peer districts. Districts with small ridership are likely to have high operating costs per rider.

Exhibit 10-7
Comparison of Costs per Rider for Peer Districts
1999-2000

Peer District	Operating Costs	Annual Riders	Cost per Rider
Edgewood	$795,554	38,160	$20.85
Edinburg	$4,747,875	1,674,720	$2.84
United	$5,393,616	1,256,580	$4.29
Harlandale	$1,572,571	62,640	$25.10
Eagle Pass	$2,669,320	579,780	$4.60
Laredo	**$2,442,922**	**100,260**	**$24.37**

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1999-2000.

LISD spent more than $2.4 million in 1999-2000 for Transportation Department expenses.

Exhibit 10-8 provides the Transportation Department operating expenses for 1999-2000. More than 60 percent of the costs were for salaries.

Exhibit 10-8
LISD Transportation Department
Costs
1999-2000

Cost Category	Amount	Percent of Total
Salaries	$1,483,271	60.7%
Contracted Services	$67,879	2.8%
Supplies	$143,064	5.9%
Other Costs	$36,424	1.5%
Debt Service	$499,493	20.5%
Capital Outlay	$212,791	8.7%
Total	**$2,442,922**	**100.0%**

Source: LISD Transportation Department budget 2000-01.

Exhibit 10-9 provides greater detail of transportation operating costs reported to TEA from 1997-98 through 1999-2000. LISD Transportation Department salaries and benefits have increased by more than 17 percent during the three-year period from 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 10-9
LISD Transportation Costs by Major Object of Expenditure
(Excluding Capital Outlay and Debt Service)
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Major Object	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Increase (Decrease)
Salaries and Benefits	$1,263,224	$1,349,919	$1,483,271	17.4%
Purchased/Contracted Services	59,459	$84,757	$67,879	14.2%
Supplies and Materials	87,633	$99,617	$143,064	63.3%
Other Expenses	34,315	$32,957	$36,424	6.2%
Total Costs	**$1,444,631**	**$1,567,250**	**$1,730,638**	**19.8%**

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

The primary reason salary costs have increased is due to the increase in the number of Transportation Department employees from 86 employees to 131 since 1999-2000. This growth represents a more than 52-percent increase in three years.

LISD Transportation Department has the lowest number of riders per employee of its peer districts. **Exhibit 10-10** compares LISD Transportation Department employees per rider with peer districts.

Exhibit 10-10
Comparison of Number of Employees per Rider for Peer Districts
2001-02

Peer District	Number of Employees	Annual Riders	Number of Riders per Employee
Edgewood	27	38,160	1,413
Edinburg	164	1,674,720	10,212

United	217	1,256,580	5,791
Harlandale	62	62,640	1,010
Eagle Pass	115	579,780	5,042
Laredo	**131**	**100,260**	**765**

Source: TSPR peer survey, November 2001.

The Transportation Department employs 111 persons to drive buses or serve as bus aides or monitors. Such a large number of employees is necessary because of the large number of short routes required to deliver students to all campuses at the same time. The district does not have staggered bell times. Under site-based management, LISD principals have the flexibility to set their own bell times. They also set the time for subsidized breakfast service and decide when students may enter the schools.

Recommendation 78:

Implement staggered bell times at district campuses.

Because the Transportation Department is not involved in coordinating bell times, routing and scheduling are not efficient. If bell times were better coordinated, more schools could be combined on routes, and the same bus could pick up more students. Uncoordinated bell times increase costs because the Transportation Department must operate more routes and employ more drivers, bus aides and bus monitors than necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, Transportation director and campus principals develop coordinated, staggered bell times throughout the district.	June 2002
2.	The Transportation director and campus principals implement staggered bell times.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent and the board approve the policy for staggered bell times.	July 2002
4.	The Transportation director develops an efficient routing system to accommodate the staggered bell times.	July 2002
5.	The principals inform parents of the new bell times.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT Implementing staggered bell times could conservatively reduce the number of regular routes by 10 percent. LISD operates 35 regular bus routes including hazardous routes. By reducing the number of routes by three, the district would require three fewer drivers and three fewer buses. The average pay rate for a bus driver is $11.03 per hour plus benefits. A 71-passenger bus costs approximately $61,000. The district replaces buses after 10 years of service.

The salary savings of reducing the number of bus routes by three would be $48,355, which includes salary of $36,531 (3 drivers x 184 days x 6 hours per day x $11.03 per hour), health insurance benefits of $6,840 (3 drivers x $2,280) and other benefits of $4,984 ($36,531 x .136422).

Annual savings from reducing the number of buses by three is $18,300 (3 buses x $61,000/10 years). Total annual savings would be $66,655 ($48,355 +$18,300).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement staggered bell times at district campuses.	$66,655	$66,655	$66,655	$66,655	$66,655

FINDING

The district does not charge user departments the actual costs of transporting students for cocurricular and extracurricular activities. Departments are charged $1.43 per mile plus the driver's salary regardless of the actual cost of the trip.

Sound fiscal policy, as well as generally accepted accounting principles, require a proper allocation of costs to the appropriate user department. LISD's Transportation Department not only transports students to and from campuses but also to extracurricular and cocurricular events. These trips are at the request of various departments and campuses within the district.

Exhibit 10-11 provides 1999-2000 operations and performance data for regular transportation that includes cocurricular and extracurricular transportation as well as special education transportation.

Exhibit 10-11
LISD Operations and Performance Data
All Routes
1999-2000

Performance Data	Regular Education	Special Education
Daily Student Riders	1,490	591
Miles	431,485	239,942
Operating Costs	$1,384,464	$1,058,458
Cost per Mile	$3.209	$4.411

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Reports, 1999-2000.

Twenty-nine percent of the LISD Transportation Department's annual mileage is for transporting students for extracurricular and cocurricular activities. Cocurricular activities are those activities considered a part of the required curriculum, which occur during the school day and are part of the regular driver requirements such as transporting students between campuses for instruction or instruction-related activities, such as field trips during the school day. Extracurricular activities occur after school and on weekends. These trips consist primarily of transportation to and from University Inter-scholastic League athletic events and field trips.

The impact of cocurricular and extracurricular transportation costs on total transportation costs has decreased since 1998-99 from 63 percent of total mileage to 29 percent in 2000-01 as shown in **Exhibit 10-12.**

Exhibit 10-12
LISD Miles of Service
Regular Education
1997-98 through 1999-2000

Annual Mileage	1997-98	Percent of Total Mileage	1998-99	Percent of Total Mileage	1999-2000	Percent of Total Mileage
Regular Route Mileage	121,087	36.6%	202,914	61.6%	302,297	70.1%
Co/Extracurricular Mileage	206,648	62.5%	122,706	37.3%	125,088	29.0%
Other Mileage	2,813	0.9%	3,600	1.1%	4,100	1.0%
Gross Annual Mileage	**330,548**	**100.0%**	**329,220**	**100.0%**	**431,485**	**100.0%**

Although LISD cocurricular and extracurricular mileage has decreased since 1997-98, LISD still had the third highest percentage of extracurricular miles of peer districts for 1999-2000, which is the latest information available from TEA. **Exhibit 10-13** compares LISD's extracurricular miles to peer districts for 1999-2000.

Exhibit 10-13
Peer Districts' Extracurricular Miles
1999-2000

District	Total Miles	Extracurricular Miles	Percent Extracurricular
Edgewood	405,165	289,597	71%
Edinburg	2,181,803	588,405	27%
United	2,101,538	882,136	42%
Harlandale	225,660	37,228	16%
Eagle pass	1,080,159	231,535	21%
Laredo	**431,485**	**125,088**	**29%**

Source: TEA School Transportation Reports for LISD and peer districts.

By not allocating total costs to the user departments the actual cost of extracurricular and cocurricular trips is not being realized.

Recommendation 79:

Charge user departments a rate that reflects actual transportation costs.

A pre-determined extracurricular and cocurricular transportation cost per mile should be used during the budgeting process that represents the actual costs of transporting students to and from activities. By applying this rate to all extracurricular and cocurricular trips, the district expenditures will more closely reflect the actual costs of instruction and related activities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

| 1. | The Transportation director calculates the operating cost per | November |

	mile based on data included in the annual School Transportation Operation Report.	2002 - ongoing
2.	The Transportation director provides the calculated cost per mile to district educational departments for use in preparing annual budgets.	March 2003 - ongoing
3.	The chief financial officer prepares a memo for all departments providing instructions on the new policy on extracurricular and cocurricular transportation rates.	March 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The net effect of this recommendation would be zero since costs are being shifted from one district department to another.

Chapter 10
TRANSPORTATION

C. FLEET MAINTENANCE

LISD operates and maintains a fleet of 72 buses. **Exhibit 10-14** shows the age of the bus fleet inventory. The Transportation Department has a bus replacement schedule, but annual implementation of the schedule is contingent upon available funds. The Transportation Department attempts to perform preventive maintenance on buses using a manual service tracking system.

Exhibit 10-14
LISD Bus Fleet by Age and Type

Vehicle Age	Number
Less than 5 years	39
5 to 10 years	12
Older than 10 years	21
Total	**72**

Source: LISD Vehicle Inventory List, November 2001.

FINDING

LISD has begun building additional Transportation Department facilities to alleviate overcrowding at its parking and maintenance facility. This construction project is part of a capital improvement bond program approved by the board and district voters in May 1999. Funds from the bonds will be used to build new replacement schools, upgrade campuses and improve Transportation Department facilities.

The current Transportation Department facility's available space for parking, maintenance and administrative offices is severely limited. The Transportation facility occupies one city block in a residential area of narrow streets and heavy traffic. There is only one entrance/exit for buses. In addition to housing 72 operating buses the facility accommodates two buses used to store parts and supplies including tires and batteries and provides maintenance operations and administrative offices for the Department. The estimated cost of constructing a new facility is $682,969. Construction is scheduled to be complete in December 2003.

Beginning February 2002, the new facility was paved to allow for parking of school buses to alleviate the overcrowded situation at the existing facility.

The new Transportation Department facility will be built on land already owned by the district at the intersection of Park Avenue and Santa Isabel streets. The existing Transportation Department facility will continue to be used to service and repair buses.

COMMENDATION

LISD board members and district administrators have implemented a long-range planning process to address district transportation facility needs.

FINDING

The LISD Transportation bus purchasing policy is to purchase buses with more capacity than the district needs.

One of the reasons LISD has high operating costs per mile and per rider is that the district buys full-size buses for routes with few riders. Only eight of the district's 72 buses have a capacity less than 59 students. These smaller buses are used to transport special education students. Fifty of the regular-route buses are 71-passenger buses or larger. All of the 20 regular buses purchased since 1999 are 71-passenger buses or larger. The capacity of the Transportation Department bus fleet is 4,737, while daily ridership is 2,081, reflecting a 43.9 percent utilization rate. Larger buses are more expensive to purchase, burn more fuel and are more difficult to maneuver on city streets.

Recommendation 80:

Implement a policy of purchasing buses based on student transportation needs.

Sound fiscal policies include matching transportation resources with the district needs. For example, instead of purchasing 71 passenger buses that each cost $61,300, the district should purchase 59-passenger buses that cost $50,000 while still accommodating the district's student ridership.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director evaluates the transportation needs of the district to determine the optimum mix of small, medium and large buses required to transport students in safely and	July 2002

	efficiently.	
2.	The Transportation director develops bid specifications for a request for proposals (RFP) to purchase school buses.	July 2002
3.	The Transportation director in coordination with the Purchasing director solicits bids through the RFP process.	August 2002
4.	The Transportation director and the Purchasing director evaluate the bids and select the winning proposal.	September 2002
5.	The Transportation and Purchasing directors, with the approval of the superintendent and the board, purchase the appropriate size and quantity of school buses to replace older, obsolete units.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The 2000-01 utilization rate of LISD school buses was 43 percent, which means that less than half the bus capacity was used because the buses were too large. A conservative estimate of appropriate bus mix is that 25 percent of the bus fleet should be 48-passenger buses or smaller. The district operates 72 buses. To achieve a 25-percent mix of smaller buses, the district would purchase 14 smaller buses to replace its aging larger buses.

The district's bus replacement policy is to replace buses older than 10 years, or 10 percent of the fleet each year. Ten percent of 72 buses is seven buses per year. To achieve the proper mix of buses, seven smaller buses would be purchased in each of the next two years and two smaller buses in succeeding years. Forty-eight-passenger diesel buses with air conditioning cost approximately $50,000 each. In the first two years the savings would be $79,100 (7 buses x $61,300 - $50,000). Each year after that, the savings would be $22,600 (2 buses x $61,300 - $50,000).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement a policy of purchasing buses based on student transportation needs.	$79,100	$79,100	$22,600	$22,600	$22,600

FINDING

The Transportation Department relies on a manual, index-card system to record and maintain inventory transactions and vehicle maintenance.

The department has limited available storage space for its parts inventory. For example, two old buses are used to store part of the inventory. Many

parts are ordered as needed, which is often problematic because often they must come from as far away as San Antonio and Dallas. When an emergency exists, parts are often taken from other broken-down buses.

The shop foreman records inventory levels on manual index cards. Records are updated manually as parts are received from vendors or used in maintenance. The manual inventory tracking system is labor intensive and does not prompt the inventory clerk when supplies are low or when there is excess inventory levels.

Austin ISD uses an automated fleet maintenance software to ensure that preventive maintenance is performed on the buses as required by mileage standards. A vehicle's mileage is recorded each time a work order is entered into the system and whenever the vehicle is fueled. Preventative maintenance is important in properly maintaining the district's fleet. Performing regular oil changes and brake checks minimize vehicle break downs and accidents, which provides better safety and service to students. The system also gives a current and accurate picture of the fleet's mileage.

Recommendation 81:

Purchase and implement an automated vehicle maintenance information system.

The manual inventory and vehicle maintenance tracking system is labor intensive and does not provide continual information on the levels of critical parts nor a current history of individual vehicle maintenance.

The district has more than $6 million invested in buses and other vehicles. These vehicles must be serviced regularly, and parts must be available to accomplish this task. An automated vehicle maintenance information system would provide immediate information on the maintenance needs of each vehicle and the status of required parts and supplies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director, in coordination with the director of Information Technology, determines the computer upgrades necessary to operate Vehicle Maintenance Information System (VMIS) software.	June 2002
2.	The Transportation director includes the required specifications in a Request For Proposal.	July 2002
3.	The Transportation director submits the request for computer upgrades to the chief financial officer.	July 2002

4.	The director of MIS installs the computer upgrades.	August 2002
5.	The Transportation director, the inventory clerk and the director of Information Technology install the VMIS system.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation includes the purchase of the software, computer upgrade, training and software maintenance. A VMIS system can be purchased for approximately $3,000. A computer upgrade may require an additional $1,500 to enable the existing Transportation Department computer to operate the VMIS system. Employee training is estimated to be $1,100 per employee, and a software maintenance program can be purchased for $510 per year.

The first-year cost of $6,110 includes the $3,000 purchase price, $1,500 for a computer upgrade, $1,100 for training and $510 for software maintenance. Subsequent years costs include only the software maintenance.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Purchase and implement an automated vehicle maintenance information system.	($510)	($510)	($510)	($510)	($510)
One-time investment for equipment	($5,600)	$0	$0	$0	$0
Net (Costs)/Saving	($6,110)	($510)	($510)	($510)	($510)

FINDING

LISD operates two vehicle maintenance facilities, one for the Child Nutrition Program and one for all other district vehicles.

The Child Nutrition Program maintains 34 vehicles including pickups, vans, trucks and delivery service vehicles. The department employs one mechanic and maintains a service facility just for its vehicles. The department mechanic performs minor repairs such as water pump replacement, brake servicing and oil changes. The mechanic is employed 220 days per year at an annual salary of $13,042. The Child Nutrition Program buys its own vehicles, parts and supplies.

Recommendation 82:

Consolidate all district vehicle maintenance into the Transportation Department.

The Transportation Department maintenance facility will have more space for parking buses in February, 2002. Consolidating the Child Nutrition and Transportation vehicle maintenance departments will eliminate duplication of certain functions such as parts purchasing, training for mechanics and inventory tracking.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation and Child Nutrition directors meet to discuss the maintenance needs of all district vehicles.	June 2002
2.	The Transportation director coordinates with the Facilities director and the chief financial officer to determine the maintenance facilities needed as well as the funding required to consolidate maintenance.	July 2002
3.	The superintendent presents a plan to the district board consolidating district maintenance.	July 2002
4.	The chief financial officer prepares budget amendments necessary to transfer budgeted funds from the Child Nutrition Program to the Transportation Department.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources because it involves the administrative transfer of responsibilities and reassignment of personnel.

FINDING

LISD does not require mechanics to be Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)-trained or certified as a condition of employment. ASE certification training increases a mechanic's knowledge of the latest and best vehicle maintenance techniques. The only training that the district's mechanics and supervisors receive now is from vendors. ASE certification training is available from trade schools, community colleges and through books and software found in bookstores and on the Internet.

Qualified mechanics are needed to maintain a fleet of school buses, and ASE training is an excellent tool to ensure quality maintenance. In many cases, warranties can be voided if a mechanic who is not properly certified performs certain work.

Registering in ASE courses and passing the recommended tests can lead to certification. After tests are completed successfully, a mechanic must demonstrate two years of relevant work experience to become certified.

Recommendation 83:

Provide ASE certification training to all LISD mechanics.

ASE certification would raise the level of efficiency and the quality of work performed. Incentives for mechanics to achieve certification would yield a higher level of work.

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director, with assistance from the fleet supervisor, prepares a training schedule for district mechanics that does not interfere with normal working hours.	July 2002
2.	The Transportation director determines the funds necessary to reimburse employees for the certification classes and submits the necessary budget amendments.	August 2002
3.	The Transportation director and fleet supervisor discuss the training schedule with employees and arrange a schedule for completion.	September 2002
4.	The Transportation director and fleet supervisor monitor the progress of the mechanics to ensure they complete the course successfully.	September 2002 and ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of registration and test fees for five mechanics at $45 per mechanic is $225. The recommendation could be implemented for $450 for 2002-03. This cost would not require a change in the Transportation Department budget and can be provided with existing resources.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Provide ASE certification training to all LISD mechanics.	($225)	($225)	($225)	($225)	($225)

Chapter 11
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter examines Laredo Independent School District's (LISD's) computers and technology in the following three sections:

A. Organization, Staffing and Budgeting
B. Policies, Procedures and Planning
C. Infrastructure, Software, Hardware and Operations

The responsibilities of the information technology (IT) units of Texas public school districts vary. Some IT units support administration only, while others support administration, instruction and technology curricula. Generally, IT offices are responsible for the district's IT infrastructure, including implementation, support and administration of the district's wide area network (WAN), support for each school's local area network (LAN) and administrative offices and, in many cases, the district telephone system.

BACKGROUND

IT can be used to standardize processes, automate transactions, identify information sources, obtain data, improve communications and eliminate non-productive actions. Additionally, IT provides the capability to efficiently capture information on business and educational trends and retain business and educational data for future use. IT provides a diverse universe of teaching aides and sources of information. More importantly, it provides the framework for students to acquire skills and develop knowledge of the world external to their local community. This knowledge will significantly influence the students' views as citizens and affect their future economic opportunities. Accordingly, the development of an effective, integrated network of software, hardware and telecommunications is a major and technically complex endeavor. To achieve this result, visionary leadership, clear organizational goals, effective assignment of responsibilities and the commitment of sufficient resources, both financial and personnel, are required. A significant imbalance in these key ingredients can result in the expenditure of substantial resources without achieving the intended goals.

LISD's strategic plan has five main goals upon which its *2001-2004 Technology Plan* is based:

- LISD will have total community commitment to rigorous standards and student success;

- LISD will have a challenging and relevant curriculum and standards-based instruction;
- LISD will have safe and orderly schools;
- LISD will have a highly effective site-based decision-making process focused on student learning; and
- LISD will maximize fiscal and human resources and use sound fiscal planning.

To support this strategic plan, the *2001-2004 Technology Plan* calls for a technology investment of $28.1 million to achieve objectives in four major areas that were initiated in the *Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996-2010*. These four major areas are: Teaching and Learning, Infrastructure, Educator Preparation and Development and Administration and Support Services. This sizable investment follows the *1997-2002 Technology Plan*, which recommended a technology investment of $30.1 million.

Chapter 11
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

A. ORGANIZATION, STAFFING AND BUDGETING

To reach its technology-related goals, a school district must be organized to use and support existing and new technologies in its curriculum and administrative operations. Effective organizations evolve from a clear assignment of responsibilities supported by the authority and resources required to execute assigned responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

LISD's IT tasks are summarized in **Exhibit 11-1** and are assigned to either the Instructional Technology or Information Technology Departments.

Exhibit 11-1
LISD IT Tasks
2001-02

Information Technology	Instructional Technology
Oversight of LISD's administrative applications (accounting, personnel, payroll, inventory and fixed assets, budgeting systems, student information and transportation etc.).	Development, delivery, oversight and assessment of training for instructional technology for teachers and staff.
Implementation, programming and maintenance for administrative software applications.	Determination of computers and peripheral equipment for classroom, educational requirements.
Staff training for administrative applications.	Identification of software for use as learning tools.
Coordination of Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data and submissions to the Texas Education Agency.	Coordination of technology grant writing initiatives and management of TEA and grant funds allotted for technology expansion.
Planning, maintenance and oversight of local area networks and wide area network.	Promoting use of the Internet as a learning tool.
Operational support of visual distance learning/teleconferencing and the hardware	Promoting use of visual distance learning and

supporting administrative software, including daily startup, setup, scheduling, operator support and database backups.	automated library operation and reference software.

LISD accomplishes these IT tasks under the director of Information Technology, the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology and the school principals, who direct the actions of the 31 campus trainers.

LISD employs 67 IT personnel. Twenty-eight employees are assigned to support the Information Technology infrastructure, and 39 are assigned to Instructional Technology to integrate technology into the classroom.

Exhibit 11-2 provides the organization chart for the IT Department. The director of the Information Technology Department reports to the chief financial officer and is supported by 27 staff positions.

Exhibit 11-2
Information Technology Department

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │       Director          │
                    │ Information Technology   │
                    └────────────┬────────────┘
                    ┌────────────┴────────────┐
                    │   Assistant Director     │
                    │ Information Technology   │
                    └────────────┬────────────┘
        ┌────────────────────┐   │
        │     Secretary      │───┤
        └────────────────────┘   │
   ┌──────────────────┐   │   ┌──────────────────┐
   │ Systems Analyst  │───┼───│ System Analyst   │
   │   (Students)     │   │   │   (Finance)      │
   └──────────────────┘   │   └──────────────────┘
   ┌──────────────────┐       ┌──────────────────┐
   │Programmer Analyst│       │ Programmer (2)   │
   │      (4)         │       │                  │
   └──────────────────┘       └──────────────────┘
   ┌──────────────────┐   │   ┌──────────────────┐
   │    Network       │───┼───│  Operations      │
   │  Administrator   │   │   │   Manager        │
   └──────────────────┘   │   └──────────────────┘
 ┌──────────────────┐     │   ┌──────────────────┐
 │  Communications  │     │   │  Operator (4)    │
 │   Specialist     │──┐  │   └──────────────────┘
 └──────────────────┘  │  │
   ┌──────────────────┐ │  │
   │   PC/Software    │ │  │
   │Support Specialist│ │  │
   │       (9)        │    │
   └──────────────────┘    │
   ┌──────────────────┐    │
   │   Web Master     │────┘
   └──────────────────┘
```
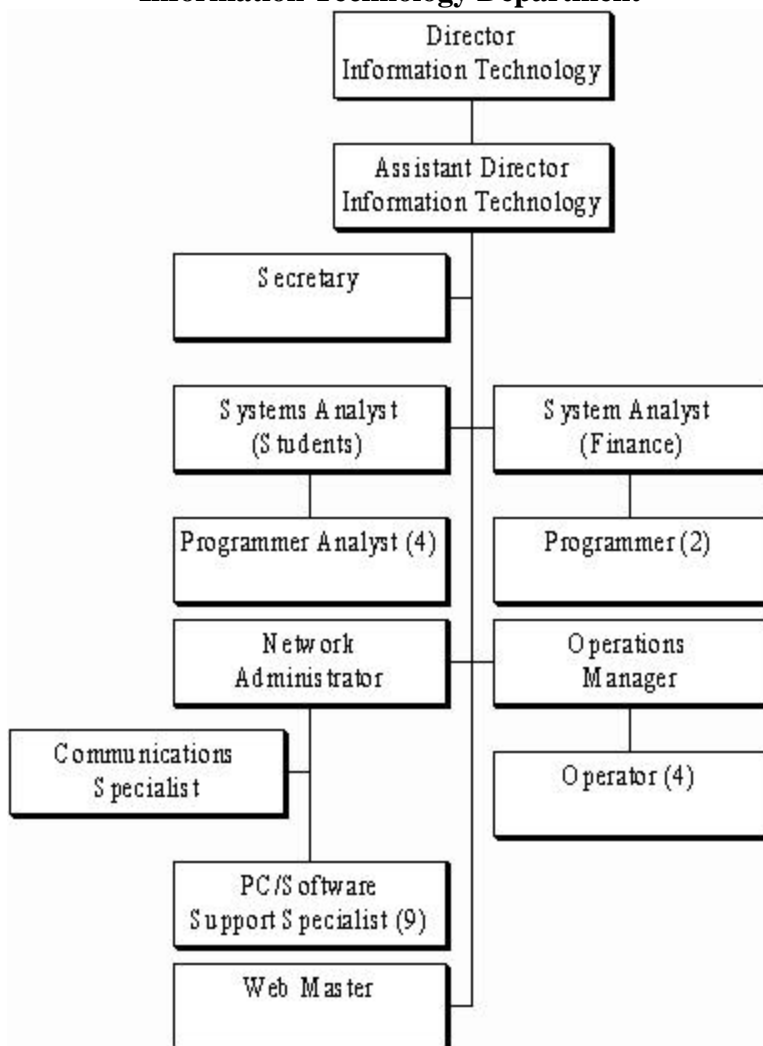
Source: Director of Information Technology, November 2001.

Exhibit 11-3 provides the organization chart for the Instructional Technology Department. The administrative assistant for Academics-Technology reports to the superintendent and is supported by seven staff positions.

Exhibit 11-3
Instructional Technology Department
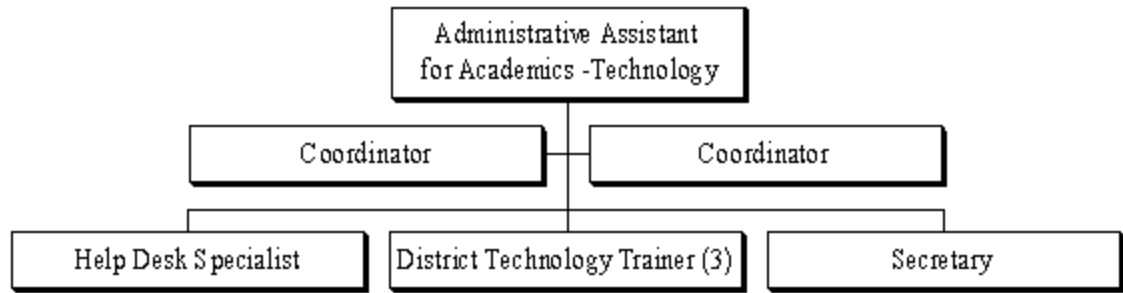
Source: Instructional Technology Department, November 2001.

Exhibit 11-4 provides the campus trainer-to-student ratio for LISD elementary schools.

Exhibit 11-4
Campus Trainer-to-Student Ratio by LISD Elementary School
2001-02

School	Number of Campus Trainers Assigned	Students Enrolled (9/12/2001)	Campus Trainer-to-Student Ratio
Bruni	0.5	484	1:968
Buenos Aires	0.5	633	1:1,266
Daiches	1	592	1:592
Dovalina	0.5	608	1:1,216
Farias	1	949	1:949
Hachar	0.5	410	1:820
Heights	0.5	297	1:594
Kawas	0.5	540	1:1,080
Leyendecker	1	708	1:708
Ligarde	0.5	590	1:1,180
Macdonell	0.5	452	1:904
JC Martin	1	669	1:669
Milton	1	892	1:892
Sanchez/Ochoa	1	655	1:655

A. Pierce	1	975	1:975
Ryan	1	921	1:921
Santa Maria	0.5	334	1:668
Santa Nino	1	859	1:859
K Tarver	0.5	534	1:1,068
Zachry	1	642	1:642
Total	**15**	**12,744**	**1:881.3**

Source: Instructional Technology Department, November 2001.

Exhibit 11-5 provides the campus trainer-to-student ratio for secondary schools.

Exhibit 11-5
Campus Trainer-to-Student Ratio by LISD Secondary School
2001-02

School	Number of Campus Trainers Assigned	Students Enrolled (9/12/2001)	Campus Trainer-to-Student Ratio
Christen	2	1,581	1:791
Lamar	2	1,361	1:681
Cigarroa	2	1,245	1:623
Memorial	1	612	1:612
Cigarroa High	2	1,497	1:749
Martin High	3	1,852	1:617
Nixon High	3	2,251	1:750
Lara Academy	1	38	1:38
Total	**16**	**10,437**	**1:607**

Source: Instructional Technology Department, November 2001.

Campus trainers report to the school principals who select and evaluate campus trainers. The administrative assistant for Academics-Technology provides guidance and goals to campus trainers for helping teachers use

technology in their curricula and assist students with school projects involving technology.

FINDING

The IT Department's Network Administrator Section is not sufficiently organized and staffed to operate, maintain and support LISD's large and decentralized IT infrastructure, which LISD has spent more than $30 million on since 1997.

The network administrator has organized the existing 10 specialists into five functional areas based on technician skills and technical knowledge. Four specialists repair computers and printers; two install and upgrade software on school personal computers; two support communications and related switches and routers; one is assigned to server support and one specialist is assigned to research Microsoft software patches and upgrades for LISD computers and software. However, the ongoing correction of the Nimda virus, which has infected LISD's computers, has made this organizational structure inoperable. All specialists are currently required to support a school-by-school reformatting of each personal computer's hard drive, reloading software to eliminate the Nimda virus.

LISD's computer specialists must support 42 district locations consisting of a highly decentralized network of hardware and software that includes:

- at least eight different operating systems, such as Windows 95, 98, NT 4.0 server and work station versions, 2000 server and work station versions and Windows XP as well as Macintosh operating systems;
- both Claris and Microsoft Office 2000 office software suites;
- installation and evaluation of educational software;
- distance learning equipment;
- approximately 6,800 computers based on varying configurations by Apple, Dell and other manufacturers;
- approximately 1,500 printers, mostly Hewlett-Packard and Lexmark models; and
- a number of CISCO Corporation switches and routers linked to T1 and DS3 telephone lines.

The 10 assigned specialists have a range of required technology skills, and each specialist supports an average of 1,000 pieces of equipment. As a result of the insufficient organization of Network Administrator staff, LISD has experienced:

- significant disruptions of network service, including diminished Internet capability and the contraction of a major virus (Nimda)

that has caused district printing problems and required a complete reload of every connected computer's software to eliminate the virus;

- poor network/computer response times and lack of recorded data;
- long waits for action on IT work orders, including personal computer and printer repairs and services such as relocation of hardware;
- decreased capability to support student computer courses such as keyboarding skills and Web site design;
- lack of support for upgrade and resolution of problems with instructional software;
- acquired but uninstalled instructional software at several schools;
- acquired but uninstalled hardware at several schools; and
- insufficient capacity to reconfigure school computers and networks as LISD teachers, campus trainers and their principals identify better equipment arrangements for student instruction and use.

The IT Department's inability to provide adequate service causes major frustration among teachers, campus trainers, principals, staff and students. As a result, principals have redirected campus trainers to maintain adequate technical support for their schools. This shift has reduced the time that campus trainers can work with teachers and students on technology integration in the classroom. The limited technical resources of the Network Administrator Section are severely strained and able to support only emergency requirements.

LISD's average technician's salary of $26,861 is low compared to the average campus trainer salary of $38,829 and the average salary for the administrative assistant of the Instructional Technology Department's trainer specialist of $42,363. These positions have considerably less technical knowledge requirements and, by IT industry standards, are paid less than technicians who must have extensive knowledge of hardware, software and trouble-shooting procedures. LISD has reversed the IT industry standard and pays approximately $12,000 to $15,500 more for less technical positions.

Recommendation 84:

Reorganize the Network Administrator Section into four areas and hire 10 more specialists.

Ten additional specialists and adequate salary levels are needed to repair computer equipment, support instructional software implementations, relocate equipment, perform IT systems administration and provide sufficient staff to allow training. Sections should be established based on

the geographic layout of the district and staffed with four to six technicians, depending upon schools and district offices supported.

Exhibit 11-6 provides the recommended organization of the Network Administrator Section of the IT Department and associated average salary levels. Salaries displayed are averages for the positions listed. Any given position may be paid more or less based on skill levels and needs of the IT Department. The director of the Network Administrator Section is not included in the 20 positions listed or in the $704,000 salary cost, nor are benefits included.

Exhibit 11-6
Proposed Organization and Average Salaries
Network Administrator Section of the IT Department
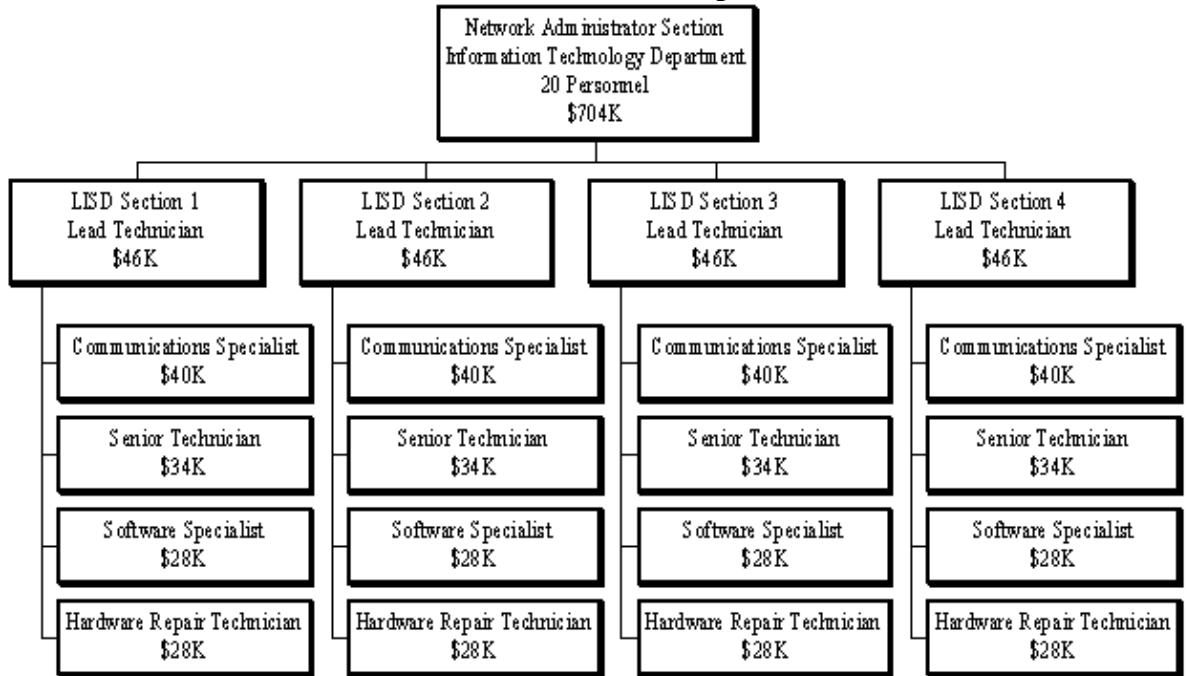
Source: TSPR.

Organizing technician resources by section will allow technicians to become thoroughly familiar with the configuration and requirements of the assigned schools. With fewer schools for technicians to cover, emergency and high priority requirements should receive expeditious responses. More importantly, technicians will become accountable for the support of their school customer base and develop working relationships that will improve communications with school staff and campus trainers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Information Technology drafts new position descriptions for technicians in communications, software deployment and hardware maintenance as well as the qualifying technical requirements; drafts a request to reassign or hire 10 new specialists; develops a plan for establishing four sections for IT support; and submits this documentation to the chief financial officer for review.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews and recommends approval of the reorganization to the superintendent.	July 2002
3.	The superintendent reviews and submits the reorganization to the board for approval.	August 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources screens the current staff of campus trainers for possible reassignment as technicians and recruits the remaining technicians or new campus trainers as appropriate.	September 2002
5.	The director of Information Technology establishes the new technology service sections and makes technician assignments in district schools.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated fiscal impact is based on four geographic sections with five personnel in each section composed of a lead technician, a communications specialist, a senior technician, a software specialist and a hardware repair technician. Benefits are based on a fixed amount of $2,442 per position plus a variable amount of 8.3822 percent of salaries.

Positions	Salary Rate	Total Salaries	Benefits	Total
4 - Lead Technicians	$46,000	$184,000	$25,191	$209,191
4 - Communications Specialists	$40,000	$160,000	$23,180	$183,180
4 - Senior Technician	$34,000	$136,000	$21,168	$157,168
4 - Software Specialist	$28,000	$112,000	$19,156	$131,156
4 - Hardware Repair Technician	$28,000	$112,000	$19,156	$131,156
Subtotals		$704,000	$107,851	$811,851
Less - Current 10 positions		$281,501	$48,016	$329,517
Total Annual Cost Increase		**$422,499**	**$59,835**	**$482,334**

The annual cost of adding 10 specialists and reorganizing the network administrator section will be $482,344.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Reorganize the Network Administrator Section into four areas and hire 10 more specialists.	($482,334)	($482,334)	($482,334)	($482,334)	($482,334)

FINDING

The district has too many campus trainers who provide inconsistent training.

LISD has 31 campus trainers for 22,556 students. Sixteen campus trainers support secondary schools (1:607 students), and 15 support elementary schools (1:882 students). The primary mission of campus trainers is teacher-oriented. Teachers are ultimately responsible for teaching their students, and campus trainers are responsible for training and assisting teachers. When campus trainers are expressed as a ratio to LISD's 1,283 teachers, LISD has one campus trainer for approximately every 41 teachers.

The district has mandated an annual requirement of 12 hours of formal technology training for teachers. This technology training occurs through after-hours classes or formal classroom training provided by the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology. The district reinforces this training through campus trainers who assist teachers with the integration of technology into their course curricula and assist students with projects.

Despite the support provided by campus trainers over the last three years and substantial numbers of teachers attending the district's in-house technology training, technology integration into LISD's curriculum has been slow. The following are some of the reasons for this slow progress:

- Campus trainers report to their school principals and respond to their principals' requirements. Some of these requirements include building PowerPoint presentations, keying data into databases, typing documents and helping develop campus improvement plans or reports. While important to the school, these are not the duties that are spelled out in the campus trainer's job description.

- Skills and technology knowledge of the 31 campus trainers varies greatly. This is a result of school principals selecting or hiring campus trainers based on varying criteria. Most are former teachers with a technology interest, and their motivation to serve is great. However, some of their technical skill levels are insufficient for LISD's technically complex IT infrastructure. Further, there are no special training requirements or common evaluation criteria for these positions.
- The small number of teacher-free periods and the varied timing throughout the school day severely limits campus trainers from efficiently interacting with teachers. As a result, most support is on a "one-to-one" basis. Even so, only 25 percent of the district's teachers are designated "focus" teachers. Focus teachers are the most technology-advanced teachers in the district and are most likely to integrate technology into their curriculums.
- There are no penalties for teachers who do not advance their technology skills or incentives for teachers to increase their technology skills.

Placing increased emphasis on teachers' IT skills is crucial to providing students with greater exposure to information technology. Ultimately, teachers must be accountable for the district's investment in their IT knowledge level. Campus trainers can be a catalyst in this overall process.

Recommendation 85:

Assign campus trainers to the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology and reduce the number of trainers from 31 to 20, organized in four geographic areas.

With 20 campus trainers, there would be one campus trainer for every 64 teachers, of which 25 percent are designated as technology focus teachers. This ratio should be adequate to maintain the instructional technology gains achieved to date and will focus campus trainers on their intended roles and not on the short-term requirements of any particular school.

Exhibit 11-7 provides the recommended organization for campus trainers after reassignment to the Instructional Technology Department.

Exhibit 11-7
Proposed Organization for

Campus Trainers Section of the Instructional Technology Department

	Campus Trainer Section Instructional Technology Department 20 Personnel		
LISD Section 1 Lead Campus Trainer High School Experience	LISD Section 2 Lead Campus Trainer Junior High School Experience	LISD Section 3 Lead Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience	LISD Section 4 Lead Campus Trainer High School Experience
Campus Trainer High School Experience	Campus Trainer High School Experience	Campus Trainer High School Experience	Campus Trainer Junior High School Experience
Campus Trainer Junior High School Experience	Campus Trainer High School Experience	Campus Trainer High School Experience	Campus Trainer Junior High School Experience
Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience	Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience	Campus Trainer Junior High School Experience	Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience
Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience	Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience	Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience	Campus Trainer Elementary School Experience

Source: TSPR.

The background experience level must be considered when selecting campus trainers. The ability to relate to student knowledge levels and teacher needs will be key to the success of technology integration into the curriculum.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent obtains board approval to assign campus trainers to the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology.	May 2002
2.	The administrative assistant for Academics-Technology reviews and revises campus trainer position descriptions and establishes the qualifying technical requirements, drafts a request to reassign or eliminate 10 campus trainer positions, develops a plan for establishing four sections for Instruction Technology training support and submits this documentation to the superintendent for approval.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent reviews and submits the documentation to the board for approval.	July 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources screens the 31 campus trainers for qualifications and reassigns non-qualifying campus trainers as teachers or to other available district positions. If more than 10 campus trainers are unqualified, the Human Resources Department recruits the remaining campus trainers.	August 2002

5.	The director of Information Technology establishes the new Instructional Technology training sections and campus trainer assignments.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is based on eliminating 11 campus trainer positions with the lowest salaries, averaging $33,941 plus fixed benefits of $2,442 and variable benefits of $2,845 ($33,941 x 8.3822 percent) equaling $39,228 x 11 for a total of $431,508.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Assign campus trainers to the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology and reduce the number of trainers from 31 to 20, organized in four geographic areas.	$431,508	$431,508	$431,508	$431,508	$431,508

FINDING

Communication between the director of IT, the superintendent and the 30 district principals is inadequate to ensure that vital IT information is provided to the district's senior decision makers in a timely manner.

The director of IT reports to the chief financial officer (CFO) and communicates with the CFO daily regarding the district's IT network. Every Monday, the CFO conducts a meeting of the finance department directors and includes the director of IT. The first item discussed is the IT network and LISD's Web page.

The CFO attends the superintendent's biweekly cabinet meeting and presents any major IT items to the superintendent and his cabinet. Typically, papers on requirements and issues are developed for each meeting and constitute the agenda items discussed. Depending on the time allocated, the number of issues and extent of discussion, issues are reviewed and either approved or disapproved. Issues not addressed become part of the agenda for future cabinet meetings. Approved items are then distributed in notebooks to the school principals for their review and action or scheduled for a future school board meeting. In the interim, the director of Information Technology addresses the impact of decisions made or not made and the associated consequences with the CFO only.

In addition, essential information on the operational status of the LISD's IT infrastructure, the status of ongoing corrective actions or requirements for action by the schools are not being communicated to the superintendent and the school principals on a daily basis as needed for effective district operations. For example, the district contracted the Nimda virus in mid-September 2001, but the first formal communication on the virus and general plan of corrective action is dated October 12, 2001. No formal schedule, priority list of schools for cleanup or cleanup status reports were located or provided to substantiate communications on this vital IT matter that afflicted the district's users for months.

Visits to Cigarroa High School, Martin High School, Memorial Junior High School and Santa Maria Elementary confirmed that the virus recovery plan and schedule for cleanup of their schools' computers as well as the magnitude of resources consumed may not have been clearly understood by staff. The hard drives of all the connected personal computers had to be erased to eliminate the virus.

In addition, the director of IT did not provide a plan of corrective action or a tentative schedule or sequenced list of schools for cleanup. The estimated completion date provided to the review team varied from the end of November 2001 to the end of March 2002. The virus cleanup was scheduled for completion in January 2002, after the CFO authorized overtime in December to expedite cleanup efforts.

With every computer in the district infected, the recovery workload was enormous and severely impacted customer work order support and confidence. While both the superintendent and CFO were aware of the virus problem during interviews, neither addressed it as significant, nor did they address the current status of recovery, resources expended or impact on the schools. The Nimda virus was the district's largest single IT problem in the 2001-02 school year to date, and the district's handling of the problem clearly underscores the lack of effective communication at all levels in the district on IT matters.

Recommendation 86:

Create a chief information officer position that reports directly to the superintendent and serves as a member of his cabinet.

The chief information officer would provide timely advice on IT plans, problems and requirements. Further, the chief information officer would be positioned to receive information directly from the superintendent on major concerns and initiatives. This knowledge would help the IT Department anticipate IT requirements and the district's future needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent submits a request to create a chief information officer to the board for approval.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer, with assistance from the director of IT and the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology, gathers position descriptions, qualifications and salary requirements from several school districts, reviews and drafts a chief information officer position description and qualification requirements and submits a request for establishment of a chief information officer position and the corresponding budget requirement to the superintendent.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Human Resources to conduct an internal and external search for a chief information officer.	July-August 2002
4.	Upon review of candidate applications and interviews, the superintendent, with recommendations from his cabinet and the approval of the school board, hires a chief information officer for the district.	September-October 2002
5.	The chief information officer begins employment.	November 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is based on an estimated annual salary of $85,000 plus fixed benefits of $2,442 and variable benefits of $7,125 ($85,000 x 8.3822 percent) equaling $94,567. Cost for 2002-03 are based on costs for 10 months ($94,567/12 x 10).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create a chief information officer position that reports directly to the superintendent and serves as a member of his cabinet.	($78,806)	($94,567)	($94,567)	($94,567)	($94,567)

FINDING

The district IT Department's programmer/analyst personnel are not effectively organized to manage the implementations and upgrades to

LISD's key software applications and are not cross-trained to maximize support across software applications.

The IT Department has programmer/analyst staff assigned to three sections. One section of five programmer/analysts supports the student system, another section of three programmer/analysts supports the business system and one programmer/analyst supports LISD's Web site development and maintenance. These three sections report to the director of IT and his assistant director.

The separation of these three sections aligns resources by the type of system supported; however, it does not maximize resources when workloads by system vary, or does it provide contingency plans for unexpected personnel losses. Further, programmer/analysts become one-dimensional and are less likely to improve their skills and increase their proficiency in software development and maintenance. This limitation severely lessens their ability to integrate new or upgraded software applications, which employ client/server or Web technology. These newer applications are more likely to use multiple programming languages as well as third-party software applications. New software applications often require flexible and knowledgeable programmer/analysts for effective implementation and maintenance.

LISD has upgraded the student system and is on the verge of upgrading its business system to client/server applications. Lead programmer analysts categorized the primary programming work as writing data extraction and report programs. LISD staff prefer to have the programmer/analysts write, run and deliver their reports, even when the users could generate the reports themselves online. The nine programmer/analysts who support the student and business systems and the district's Web site are just one less than the 10 technicians that support 170 servers, 6,800 computers, 1,500 printers at 30 district schools and 12 district office sites. Further, San Angelo Independent School District, a district that has more than 16,000 students, has just one lead programmer/analyst and three programmer/analysts for its student and business systems and Web sites.

Recommendation 87:

Create a Software Systems Section, eliminate three positions and require users to use online menus to select reports.

Consolidation of the IT Department's software programmer/analysts into an effective and mutually supporting team will be important when the district implements the SAGE Millennium software for business applications, such as accounting, purchasing, human resources management and more and a Computerized Pupil Transportation and

Boundary Planning System for transportation management planned for the latter part of 2001-02 school year.

Exhibit 11-8 provides the proposed organization for the software systems section of the IT Department.

Exhibit 11-8
Proposed Organization for the Software Systems Section
IT Department
(Before Staff Reduction)

Source: TSPR.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of IT drafts a new position description for the supervisor of the Software Systems Section with the qualifying technical requirements; drafts a request to reassign the assistant director of the IT Department to this position; revises the department's organization chart and submits this documentation to the chief financial officer for approval.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews and submits the reorganization to the superintendent for approval.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent reviews and submits the reorganization to the board for approval.	June 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources reassigns the assistant director of IT to supervise Software Systems Section.	July 2002
5.	The director of IT distributes the new Information Technology Department organization chart and programmer/analyst assignments.	July 2002
6.	The director of IT evaluates positions in the Software Systems Section that become vacant and fills only critical positions.	July 2002 through February 2003

7.	The director of IT directs the development of computer programs that enable users to produce their own reports.	July 2002 through February 2003
8.	The director of IT reviews programmer workloads, determines appropriate staffing reductions and submits to the chief financial officer for approval.	February 2003
9.	The chief financial officer reviews and recommends approval of the proposed staffing reduction to the superintendent and board.	March 2003
10.	The executive director of Human Resources notifies the three personnel, if a reduction has not resulted from staff turnover, that their positions are eliminated.	April 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

The district can reduce its programming costs by establishing a set of standard reports and requiring district users to select the reports from an online menu. Selected reports can be automated to extract, create and route the reports to the user. Savings are based on the salaries of lowest paid systems analyst, programmer/analyst and computer programmer.

The annual fiscal impact of $166,133 is based on eliminating salaries for one systems analyst, one programmer analyst and one programmer totaling $146,525 ($42,752, $47,145 and $56,628) plus benefits of $19,608 (fixed benefits of 2,442 x 3 and variable benefits of 8.3822 percent of salaries). Position reductions and cost savings are calculated to begin in May 2003 to enable the district time to enhance computer programs that enable users to produce reports without computer programmer intervention. Savings for 2002-03 of $55,378 is based on four months of estimated annual savings ($166,133/12 times 4).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create a Software Systems Section, eliminate three positions and require users to use online menus to select reports.	$55,378	$166,133	$166,133	$166,133	$166,133

FINDING

The network administrator's workload is too large, and his responsibilities overlap with the operations manager's duties.

The operations manager is responsible for the operation of the central administration server room at 1702 Houston Street. The central server room is the nerve center of LISD's telecommunications network, with all school T1 communication lines connected to this complex. In addition, the district's external T1 line for Internet access is connected to the central server room through LISD's hardware/software firewall.

Until recently, the operations manager and staff of four operated two Hewlett-Packard (HP) 3000 series computers, which hosted the district's Software for Administrators in Government and Education (SAGE) for administrative/business support and the Technology and Information Educational System (TIES) for student management and record keeping. During summer 1999, the district replaced its non-Y2K compliant student system with TIES. The upgraded TIES software required a client/server environment and was installed on a Dell server. The Dell server and client server environment do not require continuous computer operator support, eliminating the need for one of the two old computer operator-controlled HP 3000 systems. The second HP 3000 is scheduled for replacement later in the 2001-02 school year by a client/server version of SAGE (Sage Millennium), which will be installed on a Dell server. After implementation, LISD's second HP 3000 will be shut down and there will no longer be a need for full-time computer operators.

The network administrator is responsible for operation, software support and equipment maintenance for about 170 Dell servers, 6,800 personal computers, 1,500 printers, the supporting T1/DS3 telecommunication lines located at 30 schools and the 12 district administration sites and the video teleconferencing system located at each of LISD's 30 schools.

Before October 2001, the network administrator position in the Information Technology Department had been vacant for 18 months. During this period, the operations manager performed both jobs described; however, the size of LISD's LAN/WAN infrastructure mandated a full-time network administrator. With the hiring of a network administrator and upon completion of the upgrade of the Administrative/Business and Student software systems, the operations manager's role is significantly reduced to troubleshooting at the central server room and performing daily backups of the SAGE and TIES databases. These roles would not require current staffing and created overlapping responsibilities for T1/DS3 telecommunication lines service and troubleshooting.

Additionally, the network administrator's responsibilities are excessive, based on the significant amount of computer equipment, the diversity of hardware/software employed and the 42 sites for which service must be provided. As a result, the network administrator's workload is excessive while the operations manager's workload is declining.

Recommendation 88:

Eliminate the operations manager position and four operator positions; create a video teleconferencing technical manager position; and consolidate all responsibilities under the network administrator.

This change will eliminate overlapping telecommunication responsibilities between the network administrator and the operations manager. Additionally, this will provide a dedicated video teleconferencing technical manager and relieve the network administrator of the significant daily workload associated with scheduling and establishing connectivity to support school teleconference linking through Laredo Community College.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of IT drafts a new position description for the video teleconferencing technical manager and the qualifying technical requirements, drafts a request to abolish the operations manager and four operator positions and submits documentation to the chief financial officer for approval.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews the documentation and recommends approval to the superintendent.	June 2002
3.	he superintendent reviews the documentation and submits it to the board for approval.	July 2002
4.	The executive director of Human Resources notifies personnel that their positions will be eliminated and abolishes the Operations Management Section positions.	August 2002
5.	The director of IT completes the screening of the current operations manager's qualifications for the video teleconferencing technical manager position and either initiates action to reassign the manager to this position or hires someone else for the position.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

If the operations manager qualifies for the video teleconferencing technical manager position, the impact will be the reduction of four computer operator positions. Of these four positions, one is vacant and has been identified by the CFO as a cost offset for the recent board-approval of Lexmark's district printer support proposal; thus, only three positions will be calculated as savings.

Salaries for the three positions total $83,470 and benefits of $9,439 produce annual estimated savings of $97,793. Benefits include fixed

benefits of $2,442 and variable benefits of $6,997 (salaries of $83,470 x 8.3822 percent).

No savings are anticipated in the 2002-03 period because of the uncertain date for the shut down of the LISD's last HP 3000 mainframe computer. Further, it is assumed that the operations manager will qualify as the video teleconferencing technical manager position and therefore no savings will be realized.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Eliminate the operations manager position and four operator positions; create a video teleconferencing technical manager position; and consolidate all responsibilities under the network administrator.	$0	$97,793	$97,793	$97,793	$97,793

Chapter 11
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

B. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PLANNING

An effective organization requires clear policies, detailed procedures and coordinated planning to achieve its goals and objectives. Clear policies provide the interpretation of the organization's vision and provide the basis for establishing the goals, objectives and activities. Detailed procedures provide the specific steps to guide the organization through its daily activities and to ensure compliance with its policies. Coordinated planning is key to the organization's ability to change with its environment, budget for adequate resources and revise or develop policies and procedures.

LISD's information technology vision, mission statement, goals, objectives and funding recommendations are detailed in its *2001-2004 Technology Three Year Plan*. This plan supports both Information Technology and Instructional Technology. The district's *Policy Reform Issues for 2001-2002* further supplement LISD's policy on Instructional Technology.

FINDING

LISD has been aggressive and effective in securing grant funds for its technology needs. From 1997-98 to 2001-02, the district has obtained more than $11 million through grants.

While there is no full-time grant writer, the chief financial officer, the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology and the director of Information Technology have established a team that communicates and works well together to identify and obtain grant funding. **Exhibit 11-9** displays LISD's Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) and Technology Integration in Education (TIE) grants, and supplemental funding from E-rate.

Exhibit 11-9
Grants and E-rate Funding Received
1997-98 through 2001-02 Academic Years

Grant Source	Purpose	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
TIF- Project Ideas	Internet access and video conference	$1,787,103	0	0	0	0

	equipment					
U.S. Department of Education Challenge Grant - Project kids	Distance learning equipment, video server, training	0	$200,000	0	0	0
TIE - Virtual District	VTEL visual equipment and computers	0	$257,000	0	0	0
TIF - PS 6	Computers, monitors and additional Internet drops	0	0	$238,053	0	0
TIF - PS 8	336 desktop computers, distance learning equipment, library automation	0	0	0	$595,964	0
TIF - LB 5	Library automation - Alexandria software and scanners	0	0	0	$70,000	0
TIF - Discovery	Laptops	0	0	0	$30,800	0
TIF - Nostros/ Discovery	Computers	0	0	0	$22,304	0
TIF - PS 9	Wireless labs for six elementary schools	0	0	0	0	$240,000

Pre-Kinder Grant	Computers, supplies, desks and teacher salaries				$2,902,553	$3,022,348
Intel and Microsoft	Online training	0	0	0	0	$97,500
Universal Service Administration Company - Schools and Libraries (E-rate)	Discount for internal connections	0	0	$543,868	$687,393	$1,070,874
Totals		**$1,787,103**	**$457,000**	**$781,921**	**$4,309,014**	**$4,430,722**

Source: Director of Information Technology Department, November 2001.

COMMENDATION

The district has developed an effective process for technology grant identification, selection and writing that has provided the district with funding to wire schools with fiber-optic cable and install an extensive server network.

FINDING

The IT Department has neither the resources required nor has it performed the planning necessary to ensure successful execution of the district's 2001-02 software upgrade plans.

Software implementations are labor-intensive activities that require extensive planning and coordination and are generally disruptive to daily routines. The district has requests for quotes, contract proposals or executed contracts for the implementation of three major software systems during the latter part of the 2001-02 school year. The three systems are:

- Software for Administrators in Government and Education (SAGE Millennium) which provides a Financial Management System with five major subsystems, a Human Resources System with four major subsystems and a PEIMS Record Maintenance System. These systems are all supported by an Oracle database;
- Computerized Pupil Transportation and Boundary Planning System with six major subsystems or tools and the FLEETPRO

Fleet Maintenance/Parts Inventory Management System with six subsystems; and

- Alexandria Library System with the Texas Library connection for selected LISD secondary school libraries.

The most important and complex of these implementations is SAGE Millennium. While the district runs an old version of SAGE, the upgrade is far more sophisticated and complex than the COBOL language-version that is on LISD's Hewlett Packard 3000 mainframe. SAGE Millennium is a client/server-based software that is written in one or more fourth-generation languages and employs one or more third-party software tools. It also is linked to the powerful and extremely complex Oracle database management system, which will store the district's data, such as contract, payroll and employee information.

The implementation plan provided in late January 2002 for the SAGE Millennium software is a good start; however, it constitutes little more than a plan of action with milestones. It still lacks the identification and commitment of resources as well as the specific test plan, test data and measuring point to ensure that the new software is implemented successfully.

LISD is not prepared to implement a system of this complexity and magnitude. A new hardware configuration for SAGE millennium must be identified and provided to the vendor for review and approval, as required by paragraph 5.5 of the proposed contract. Thereafter, it must be acquired and installed prior to implementation. No formal training has been identified for the current supervisor and two COBOL language programmer/analysts who support the existing SAGE business system. They will not be able to maintain the new system without training.

The district has not developed implementation and test plans.

Additionally, the following significant issues need to be addressed to ensure successful implementation of SAGE Millennium:

- How will the new system be tested to verify the vendor's claim that SAGE Millennium meets all of the vendor's warranted specifications? Paragraph 4.1b of the proposed contract requires the district to pay 60 percent of the licensing fees upon the vendor's demonstration that the software can run on the district's hardware. "Can run" and successfully implemented are two different conditions. "Can run" just means that the software will run on the district's server, under certain conditions. Implementation means that the software is fully functional in the district's actual operating environment, all data converted and data

loaded to the database, IT personnel and users trained and all aspects of the software being run under varying conditions. At the "can run" step, the district will have paid 85 percent of the licensing fees without assurance of successful implementation.

- How much of the district's data will be converted and loaded into the new database and how much will be sampled to ensure that the district's historical data has been transferred without error or omission? It is extremely important that the data, such as personnel records, payroll information, district contracts and vendor payment information be accurately converted. Especially since the vendor offers no guarantee of compatibility of the district's current version of SAGE to the new SAGE Millennium. In fact, paragraph 5.6 of the proposed contract states that the vendor will not be liable for business interruptions, loss of information or any other direct, consequential or incidental damages from use of or the inability to use their software.
- Will the district continue running the old SAGE system with the new SAGE Millennium system to ensure that the new system is performing properly? If so, how long will the parallel processing be conducted and what will be done to ensure that the two systems are in synch?
- Has the district identified the resources, staff and overtime needed to support parallel processing and validation of checkpoint data?
- How will the district comply with paragraph 6.5 of the proposed contract, which requires that system hardware, firmware and software is maintained at the latest-required revision level and that a backup procedure for reconstruction of lost data and programs be maintained?

The district is moving to implement the SAGE Millennium system without the planning, testing and training required to ensure success. The SAGE Millennium system will control all of the district's key financial, contracting and personnel processes and data. Any failure of the new software could dramatically impact the district's ability to determine its financial status, award a contract, run payroll or pay bills. This would have a detrimental impact on the district and its senior leadership.

Recommendation 89:

Delay implementation of SAGE Millennium and any other major softwa re packages until detailed implementation and test plans are developed and resourced.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

| 1. | The chief financial officer, with the assistance of the director | May 2002 |

	of Information Technology, reviews all awarded software contracts for penalty clauses or specific performance requirements and determine options for delaying or, if necessary, modifying them.	
2.	The chief financial officer briefs the superintendent and, if appropriate, the school board, on the need to delay software implementations to allow for detailed planning.	May 2002
3.	The chief financial officer, with the superintendent's approval, develops an implementation and users group for each major software implementation.	May 2002
4.	The director of Information Technology assigns coordinators for each major implementation and meets with the functional user representatives to discuss implementation and test plans.	June 2002
5.	The Information Technology Department's implementation coordinators meet with their respective user groups to review system features, develop implementation and test plans and validate proposed training.	June 2002 - Ongoing until completed

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The IT Department does not have detailed procedures for key IT processes. IT Department processes should be thoroughly planned and documented. Detailed documentation helps obtain consistency in operation as well as rapid recovery from various IT network and architecture failures. Potential problems range from contraction of a virus to equipment failure or facility damage. The following are specific processes that require planning and detailed procedures.

- The current Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plan consists of four sections: 1) Purpose and Scope; 2) Recovery Team; 3) Preparing for a Disaster; and 4) Recovery Procedures. The plan is generic, skeletal and almost totally dependent upon bringing in outside support and buying or installing new hardware. The report does not say what the IT Department can do to help itself and the district. Items not included are:
    - o Location and listing of spare parts, tools and key electronic supplies available;
    - o Plans with requirements for the establishment of an alternative computing site for the key business and student systems;

- o Development and maintenance of software server images by school in order to create rapidly reload server software;
  - o Potential alternative computing strategies with other local educational institutions, local government or business entities or regional computing centers or peer school districts ; and
  - o IT architecture that provides sufficient redundancy to provide viable alternative computing options within the district's existing resources.
- The IT Department does not have a formal backup plan for server backup and backup data storage, but is performing and storing backups in accordance with industry standards. However, backups are only performed for the business and student systems and databases on a daily basis. The remaining servers are not backed up. A detailed plan for backing up these critical disaster preparedness products is not available.
- There is no plan or procedure that identifies the software loaded on the district's servers or the prioritization of that software with regard to periodic reviews of Web sites for patches and modifications. These cost-free software upgrades are important to correct deficiencies in vendor software under certain operating conditions or hardware/software configurations. More importantly, some of these modifications are critically required to maintain the security and integrity of the IT network. If the Information and Technology had such procedures and the staffing to execute them, LISD may not have contracted the Nimda virus. One of the main reasons LISD became infected with the Nimda virus was that the Information Technology Department was unaware of Microsoft Internet Explorer deficiencies and had not incorporated important security patches into LISD's versions of this product. The department also was not tracking and updating LISD's Inoculan virus detection software, by Computer Associates, with the latest releases to detect new viruses.
- While the district has a procedure for schools to submit Software and Hardware Work Orders, the IT Department has no written procedures for logging, tracking, prioritizing or completing the Hardware and Software Work Orders submitted. In fact, it keeps no central files and has no information on work orders outstanding or completed. Likewise, there are no formal trouble call procedures.
- The procedures for notifying the schools of scheduled requirements for taking the LISD IT Network down, a school's LAN down or the district's Internet access down for maintenance need to be improved to cover multiple means including maintenance schedules, advance memorandums, e-mails, telephone calls and network broadcasts to logged-on users.

The IT Department is operating in a reactionary mode. Both fundamental and incremental improvements are necessary. The consequence is that the district's multi-million dollar investment in IT infrastructure is under-performing and only marginally supporting the needs of the district's students.

Recommendation 90:

Write detailed procedures for key undocumented IT processes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Information Technology meets with his supervisors and identifies key undocumented processes; nominates personnel to write the required procedures; establishes target completion dates; determines any overtime requirements; and drafts a plan for the chief financial officer.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews, approves and establishes status briefings to monitor progress in procedure development. In addition, the chief financial officer determines the amount of overtime that could be provided.	May 2002
3.	The director of Information Technology reviews progress at least weekly, edits proposed procedures and audits implementation, training and follow-on execution of the new procedures.	June 2002 until completion

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact results from an estimated 400 hours of overtime at an average of $42.36 per hour, based on the eight personnel most likely assigned to write the procedures (400 hours x $42.36 per hour). Average per hour rate is calculated based on $26.05 per hour for actual salaries multiplied by 1.5 for overtime plus 8.3822 percent for variable fringe benefits [($26.05 x 1.5) + ($39.08 x 8.3822 percent)].

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Write detailed procedures for key undocumented IT processes.	($16,944)	$0	$0	$0	$0

Chapter 11
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

C. INFRASTRUCTURE, SOFTWARE, HARDWARE AND OPERATIONS

LISD has a complex, decentralized infrastructure of hardware, software and telecommunications switches, routers, phone lines and cabling. It is made up of a central server complex for LISD's Internet gateway, the business and student systems and linkage to the campuses. Four servers support each campus and major office buildings in the district.

Exhibit 11-10 provides the configuration of LISD's central server site and its connection to a typical school.
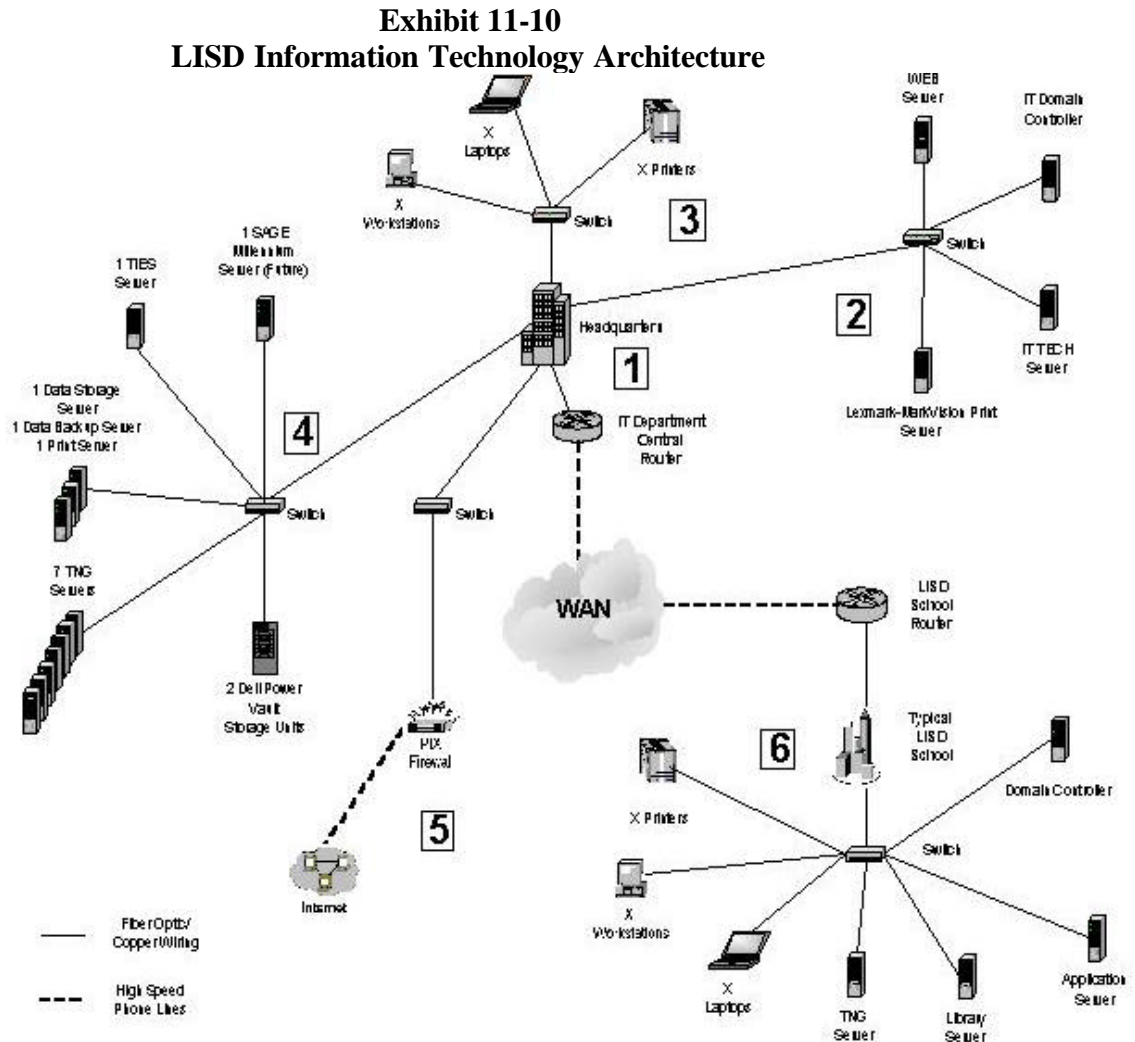
Exhibit 11-10
LISD Information Technology Architecture

LISD's IT Infrastructure is divided into six areas. Five areas describe the central server complex and the sixth one describes a typical school installation.

Area one consists of the central router at 1702 Houston Street. This is the focal point for handling communications between district offices and school sites through high-speed telephone lines and/or fiber optic cable and the school's router. Computers and special devices, at both the district and school level, are connected to their supporting router through CISCO switches.

Area two consists of four special-function servers. The most important of these for network operations is the IT domain server, which identifies district administration users and the router servicing them. It also makes it easier to control and track users who get access to the Internet. The Web server provides the home and resources for LISD's Web site. The Lexmark printer server contains the Lexmark printer sites and their unique network addresses. The IT Tech server provides support for the IT Department, including technician support.

Area three consists of the district administration's desktop computers, laptops and printers connected to the central district router and capable of accessing the applications in section four. Further, based on user privilege, IT personnel can access various servers in sections two and four to modify the operating parameters of the network. In this manner, users can save data that they have been modifying or print that data and not have to know which server is processing their specific action.

Area four consists of the district's student application system (TIES) server and is where the future server for the district's business system (SAGE Millennium) will be connected. The next key server group includes three servers for data backups and an additional printer server. The next seven servers support Computer Associates' The Next Generation (TNG) software owned by the district. This software provides major support for virus protection, central configuration management of the network, including personal computers connected and automatic and pushed software updates of the network's servers and personal computers. Finally, two power vault storage units provide storage capacity for the district's databases.

Area five provides the district's access to the Internet. The district's network of routers and servers is protected by CISCO Corporation's PIXS firewall. The PIXS firewall consists of both hardware and software for the

purpose of keeping unauthorized personnel from accessing LISD's network from the outside and to prevent LISD users from reaching objectionable Web sites.

Area six provides the typical configuration of an LISD school. Each school has its own router, which identifies the school and its domain of users. All of the school's desktop computers and laptops are connected through switches to the school's router. The router connects the users to the district's network, the school's applications software or their printers. Four servers support the typical district school and include the:

- domain controller server, which maintains the identification of connected school computers and the identification and passwords of authorized users.
- printer server, which contains the addresses of all of the school's printers. It directs print requests from classroom computers to the printer supporting the user's classroom.
- Library server, which supports the Alexandria library software installed at several schools in 2001. Many schools are supported by a MacIntosh-based library index system and its associated local area network.
- applications server, which provides the school's educational software, including Accelerated Reader, STAR Reader, STAR Math, Plato, Lexia and Heartbeeps. Schools have also acquired many additional software applications.

The LISD network consists of more than 170 servers, 6,800 computers, 1,500 printers, numerous routers and switches and at least eight different server and computer operating systems. The LISD IT infrastructure spans 30 schools and 12 district office locations. LISD is connected by one high-speed T1 telephone line to the Internet and a number of high speed/high capacity DS3/T1 telephone lines between the district's central router and the 42 district school and office sites.

FINDING

LISD has a decentralized IT architecture to support site-based decision-making that is resource-intensive to operate, does not support disaster recovery at the school level and is not performing effectively to meet district goals or student needs.

The district's IT architecture is based on maximizing local decision-making. According to the director of IT, the district did not want a failure at the central district IT site to take the whole district offline. Therefore, small groupings of four servers were installed at each of the 30 district schools and connected to the central IT site by high-speed telephone lines.

With this architecture, a problem at the central site could result in the loss of Internet access; however, every school would continue to be supported by its local network and its installed educational software. With this architecture, each school was connected to the central site in a hub-and-spoke relationship. From a disaster preparedness view, a central site failure or a single school failure would be accommodated through contractor support and the emergency acquisition of replacement hardware. In concept, this strategy supports decentralized decision-making and a reasonable approach to disaster preparedness.

This strategy is flawed. It concentrates on protecting school IT capability and insulating it from central IT capability to the greatest extent possible. However, it has actually made schools even more dependent upon the IT Department for successful operation. The following are just some of the conditions that exist in the district and how they would be different under a more centralized network.

Simple problems, like a power surge that momentarily takes the school's servers off-line, requires an IT Department technician to go to the specific school and reboot the servers. The chance of that happening within a class period is remote. However, under a more centralized server system, the servers could be rebooted within minutes and still support the class that encountered the difficulties.

Repairs under the decentralized server system could be accomplished in less time if centralized because the servers would be near the technicians. Travel time would be eliminated, and troubleshooting would not require more travel time for repair parts, tools or technical manuals. This would mean greatly improved IT Department response times and significantly reduced repair times.

LISD's decentralized network requires at least 170 servers to operate effectively. This number is a huge IT Department workload from a hardware and software maintenance perspective. For example, the elementary school educational software, Accelerated Reader, must be installed on 20 different school servers. In a more centralized system, Accelerated Reader would be installed on no more than four servers. Further, a more centralized server system would only require approximately 20 capable servers, compared to the current 170 servers. This would mean less hardware to maintain and fewer software configurations to manage. The San Angelo Independent School District (SAISD) recently converted from 43 decentralized servers to five. SAISD has about 16,000 students.

Because of the large number of district servers, LISD's servers are placed in inadequate facilities. At schools, servers are placed in closets without

air conditioning, installed in class labs without separation from students or locked in small rooms. Further, the district's central server room is located in the basement of 1702 Houston Street, below street level, and is subject to flooding. In addition, it is cramped, overloaded with equipment, used for storage of computer supplies and stacked with manuals and drawings of the IT infrastructure. Servers placed in inadequate spaces have higher mechanical failure rates and lower equipment life expectancies due to restricted airflow, heat build-up and accidental damage. In a more centralized system, fewer server-friendly facilities are required and because of the smaller number of servers, the size of those facilities does not have to be large.

Another consequence of LISD's decentralized network is that daily backups of servers and databases are only performed for the student system (TIES) and the business system (SAGE). No backups of 30 school databases for educational software or office software, like Word, Excel or PowerPoint are performed due to the lack of IT Department staff. This means that teachers and students must back up their data, projects and reports with floppy disks or risk the loss of their data. Under a more centralized server system, there would be no more than four sites for daily backups, and IT Department staff would perform this vital work.

Furthermore, the district does not have a program for replacement or upgrade of the district's 170-server network. The district uses a computer lease program to maintain the latest technology and replace computers every three years. In a pending Dell lease to acquire approximately 2,400 desktop computers, LISD will receive new computers with 1.6 to 2.0 gigahertz computer processors. Many of these new computers will be connected to servers with 400-megahertz or less computer processors, which are at least four times slower than these new, high-speed computers. IT response time and technical capability are limited to the weakest, slowest and least capable link in an IT network. Since servers handle hundreds of desktop computers simultaneously, the district could realize the best performance improvement for its IT dollar by modernizing its servers and running the latest technology over high-speed/capacity telephone lines.

Unfortunately, the district has equated maximizing local decision-making to maximizing the decentralization of IT servers and computing capability. Despite the district's $30 million IT infrastructure investment, it has not established a reliable and responsive network for student use and integration of technology into LISD's curriculum. Developing a reliable and responsive network is not really related to maximizing local decision-making. It is a matter of matching capability desired with resources available and developing a flexible, affordable and efficient IT architecture that can be maintained and modernized in the future.

There are several options for centralization that balance performance, cost and risk of disaster. The four-server site configuration consists of two major server sites and two minor server sites. For ease of reference, this model will be called the "Two-by-Two" model. In this model or variations of the configuration, the architecture provides the redundancy required to offset the significant disasters of fire, flooding or tornado. The advantage is that the loss of one site only degrades the network response time and does not take the entire district off line. This provides the time required to assess and economically restore the damaged site.

Exhibit 11-11 provides a simplified schematic of a "Two-by-Two" IT architecture.

Exhibit 11-11
"Two by Two"-Centralized Server Model
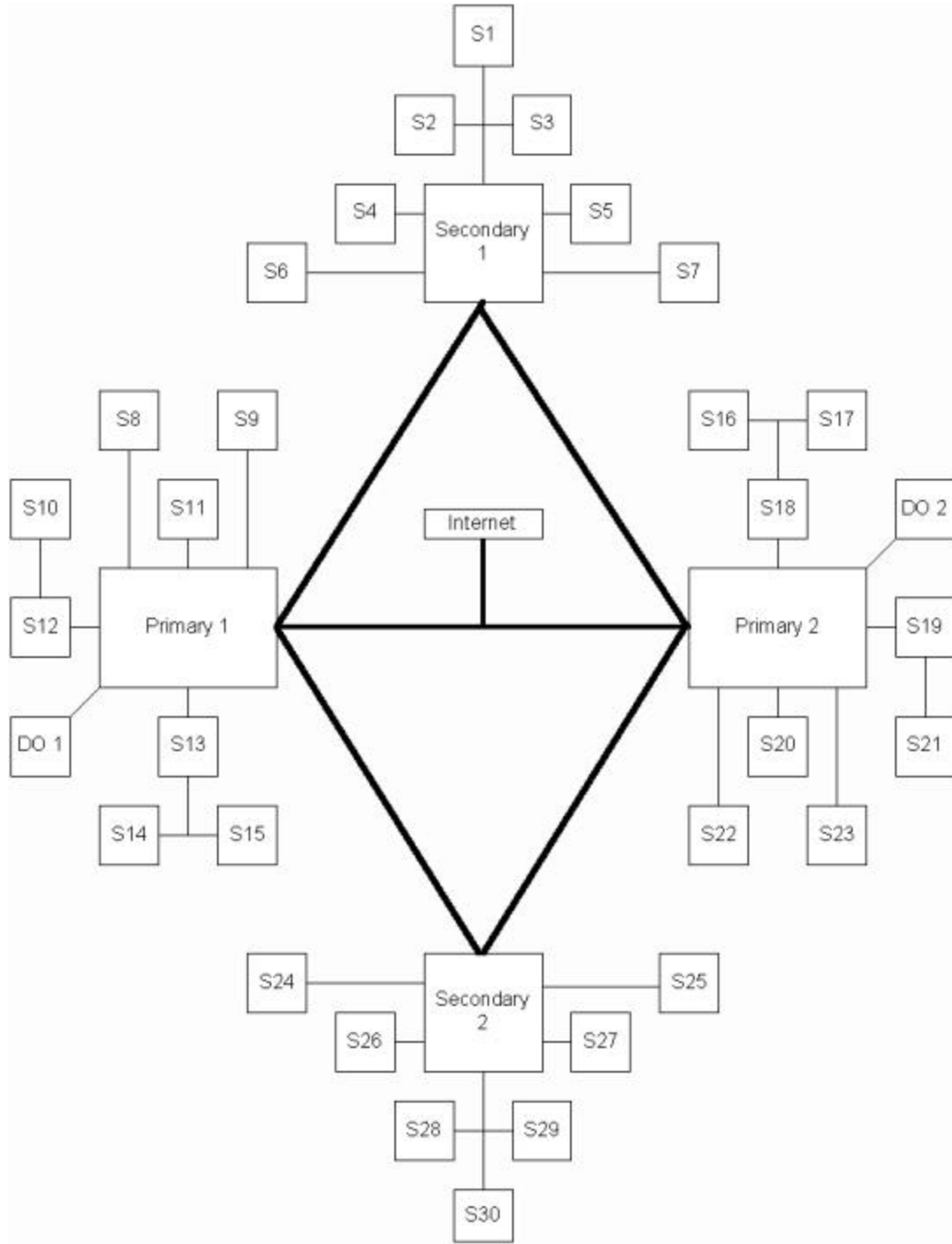
Source: TSPR.

A "Two-by-Two" architecture divides a network into four sections. A server site provides service to its respective section. Two of the server sites are primary sites and two are secondary sites.

In the "Two-by-Two" model above, high capacity/high speed telephone lines, represented by the thick lines, connect all server sites to each other. Schools are generally connected to server sites by high-speed telephone lines, represented by thin lines, unless high-capacity lines are required.

Primary sites would have four roles: services to connected schools and district offices, including the student and business systems; execution of network protocols, like anti-virus protection, and maintenance of desktop computer/server configurations; providing access to the Internet through the district's firewall; and providing emergency backup in the event of a loss of a secondary server site or the other primary server site. The primary server sites would be mirror images of each other and would be configured with the capacity to run the essential district programs and provide service to all of the district's schools at performance degradation from zero to 50 percent depending upon the funds available.

Secondary sites would provide service only to their connected schools. Normally, secondary site one is connected to primary site one, and secondary site two is connected to primary site two. However, either secondary site can connect to its alternate primary site if an emergency is encountered. Secondary sites are configured with the number of servers to support their connected schools and are not necessarily mirror images of each other. Schools, represented above as S1 - S7 and S24 - S30, would be connected to the secondary server sites in a manner that provides desired performance at the least cost.

In the "Two-by-Two" model, schools are protected by multiple connections to alternative server sites, the district is protected by an IT architecture that takes disaster preparedness into consideration, and the number of district sites with servers is reduced from 31 to four. This reduction in server sites reduces maintenance costs, improves performance and provides daily backups for all district data.

Recommendation 91:

Develop a technology architecture plan that provides for server replacement and consolidation.

The key to which is right for LISD is dependent upon facilities and funding available. The "Two-by-Two" model is easier to implement because it can be accomplished in phases. Facility requirements would be smaller and more likely to fit within existing district plans. For example, secondary server sites could be incorporated into the building plans of new elementary schools and a primary server site into the renovations of Nixon High School or Lamar Middle School at minimal cost. Further, the *LISD Technology Plan, 2001-2004*, already includes a $2 million item for a new

building in 2001-02. According to the director of IT, these funds are for the construction of a new IT building and data center. This location could serve as primarily a server site.

The district needs to begin replacing a portion of its servers within a year, based on the age and slow speed of some servers. The older servers are slower, less capable servers and generally have a computer processor of 400 megahertz or less. According to the director of Information Technology, there are 10 to 15 servers that are four years old, 70 to 75 that are three years old, and 70 that are one to two years old. The *LISD Technology Plan, 2001-2204*, shows computer lease funding of $2,245,104 for 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-2004, so some funds could be prioritized for the purpose of acquiring more powerful servers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Information Technology analyzes district requirements and drafts a technology architecture plan with cost estimates.	July 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews the plan and briefs the superintendent and his cabinet.	August 2002
3.	With the superintendent's approval, the chief financial officer and the director of Information Technology host a meeting of key school personnel, principals and campus trainers, brief them on the plan and seek comments and recommendations for improvement.	September 2002
4.	The director of Information Technology incorporates useful recommendations into the plan, provides responses to all recommendations and forwards the updated plan to the chief financial officer.	September 2002
5.	The chief financial officer reviews the updated plan and recommends its approval to the superintendent.	October 2002
6.	The superintendent reviews and submits the plan to the board for approval.	November 2002
7.	The chief financial officer and the director of Information Technology create a plan of action and milestones and begin implementation.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district is not meeting the Texas guideline of one computer for every three students.

In LISD's *Technology Plan, 1997-2002*, the district identified a computer-to-student ratio of 1:5.51 for the 1997-98 school year. This was based on a student enrollment of 23,336 and 4,247 computers. However, many of the computers were eight or nine years old according to the director of IT. The district administration and school board developed a computer lease strategy to stay abreast of rapidly changing personal computer technology.

At the beginning of the 2001-02 school year, the district completed its first three-year lease program with the Dell Corporation. Approximately 2,400 computers were replaced with Dell Optiflex GX computers. Rather than incur the cost of the residual values to retain this old technology and to avoid paying return shipping charges, the district made all of the computers operational and conducted a sale to parents, teachers and para-professionals. All units were sold for about $200 each and funds transmitted to Dell. This was a tremendous boost to a largely disadvantaged community because it put technology into the homes of students that otherwise could not have afforded to purchase a computer.

The analysis of LISD's IT inventory and the review of the new Dell lease contract reveals several areas that could be modified to reduce costs and acquire more computers for LISD students.

First, there is no specific computer distribution plan that matches user requirements with computer capabilities. The key features of new computers, like faster processors, greater capacity hard drives and improved video performance, are beneficial primarily for stand-alone performance applications and do not improve response times because of the limitations of the computer's connection to the LISD network and the Internet. Accordingly, new computers have the most value to secondary schools where students are taking Web site design or digital video classes and working complex class projects. Based on LISD's computer inventory, LISD's elementary schools have received 1,266 of the new computers, middle schools received 285 and high schools received 676. This did not maximize the benefits of new computers to LISD's students.

Second, the district is acquiring 15-inch, flat screen, liquid crystal displays instead of traditional monitors. This significantly raises the cost of the district's standard computer. Third, LISD's computer standard for students does not specify memory requirements for a video card and only requires 128 megabytes of computer memory, which is marginal for today's memory-intensive operating systems and software applications. Fourth,

external speakers are specified and increase the cost of each computer over a standard internal computer speaker.

The district's student desktop computer leasing strategy is not achieving the state's guideline of three students per computer. Based on the district's standard desktop computer standard in its *Technology Plan, 2001-2004* and Dell quotes of approximately $1,630 lease price for a three-year lease, **Exhibit 11-12** projects the funding required to meet the Texas standard. Assuming a student enrollment of approximately 22,500 and three students per computer, LISD must lease 7, 500 computers at an annual lease cost of $543.33 per computer.

Exhibit 11-12
Cost of the LISD Lease Strategy to Achieve a 1:3 Computer-to-Student Ratio

Computers Required	Computer Lease Cost	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	TOTAL
7,500	$543.33	$4,074,975	$4,074,975	$4,074,975	$4,074,975	$4,074,975	$20,374,875

Source: TSPR.

Based on LISD's *Technology Plan, 2001-2004*, $2,2 million is identified for computer leases. At an annual lease cost of $543.33, only 4,131 computers can be sustained in any year. Clearly, a strategy change is required if existing funding is going to be sufficient to achieve a 1:3 computer-to-student ration district wide.

Today's personal computers have more features than most users need, and the incremental changes offered by manufacturers are often not worth the cost. In addition, computer life expectancy is greater than three years that LISD is using as its adequate technology parameter. From a strictly technological stand point, the district has the ability to buffer the impact of technology advances by developing classes of user requirements.

Recommendation 92:

Revise computer standards and implement a strategy of leasing and purchasing computers to make additional computers available to students.

The IT Department should develop a combination of three-year lease and five-year purchase plan by school and computer location. While leasing is

a more expensive option for most computer acquisitions, it still makes sense to lease some types of computers, including:

- laptop computers, which dissipate heat poorly and have liquid crystal displays that are prone to failure;
- network servers, which still experience significant changes in technology and would benefit from increased computer processing speeds as network traffic increases from more IT proficient users and the district achieves the state goal of three students per computer; and
- desktop computers for technology-sensitive users and selective locations, which include:
  - classrooms dedicated to curriculums like Web site design, digital photography and video streaming;
  - computer labs and libraries at all schools;
  - high school classrooms for seniors and possibly juniors; and
  - selected staff, such as IT Department programmers and technicians, budget and tax personnel who deal with large databases and have to do extensive data manipulation to conduct the district's business

The plan should have three levels, which would provide LISD with budget flexibility and the ability to manage the age, use and technology of its computers:

- The first level would identify leased computers by locations and divided across three years and all schools. For example, if LISD's three high schools had 18 senior classrooms, 27 computer labs and three libraries, the requirement for each year would be six senior classrooms (two for each high school), nine computer labs (three per school), and one library (each year would be a different school). In this manner, one-third of the senior classrooms and computer labs at all schools would have the latest technology and libraries would get new computers every third year.
- The second level would identify computers owned by locations and divided across five years and all schools. In the same manner as leased computers, the requirements are quantified and a rotation and replacement plan would be created.
- The third level would be a mix of leased and owned computers for teachers and staff. This would be identified in three and five-year increments and would include a list of infrequently used computers. In this manner, good leased computers could be used to replace fifth-year, owned computers for a fraction of the cost of a new computer. Also, infrequently used computers could be kept

for a sixth or seventh year if funds are not available for new computers.

Exhibit 11-13 projects the funding required under a combination lease and purchase plan to achieve a 1:3 computer-to-student ratio and still have quality computers for each class of users.

Exhibit 11-13
Combination Lease and Purchase Strategy

Acquisition Method	Computer Quantity Required	Annual Computer Unit Cost	Annual Computer Extended Cost	Five-Year Computer Extended Cost	Annual Action Required
Three year lease	3,000	$452	$1,356,000	$6,780,000	Lease 1,000 @ $1,356
Buy 50% of expiring lease computers	1,000	$142	$68,000	$340,000	Buy 500 @ $136
Buy new computers (five year life)	3,500	$206.20	$721,700	$3,608,500	Buy 700 @ $1,031
Total	**7,500**		**$2,145,700**	**$10,728,500**	

Source: TSPR.

This combination lease and buy computer acquisition strategy is based on five factors:

- first, LISD's student desktop computer standard would be changed and the $1,630 lease cost reduced by $274 to $1,356 as follows:
    - substitute the conventional 15-inch monitor for the liquid crystal display for a cost decrease of $307;
    - increase computer memory from 128 megabyte to 192 megabyte for a cost increase of $17;
    - increase video card memory from 4 megabyte to 16 megabyte for a cost increase of $41;
    - substitute Dell internal speaker for Harman Kardon speakers for a cost decrease of $25;
- second, 40 percent of the district's 7,500 computers will need to be upgraded. This equals 3,000 computers, with 1,000 leased each year at $1,356.

- third, 50 percent of the 1,000 computers at the end of their lease will be purchased from Dell at an assumed residual value of 10 percent of the $1,356 price. This would result in the purchase of 500 computers at $136 each annually.
- fourth, since the 500 computers bought out at the end of their lease each year will last for two years, the effect after one year will be the equivalent of constantly having 1,000 computers in their fourth and fifth years of operation.
- fifth, based on the actions above, 700 computers must be purchased new each year at a cost of $1,031. The purchase cost is approximately $325 less than the lease cost. .

Further, the district would benefit from changing its desktop computer standards by increasing computer memory to 192 megabytes, video card memory to 16 megabytes and replacing 15-inch flat screen, liquid crystal displays with less expensive, high-quality monitors and replacing external speakers with an internal computer speaker. This would improve computer performance while decreasing costs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Information Technology drafts a plan that identifies a combination lease and purchase plan for high-capacity computers, develops an improved standard for leased or purchased computers, calculates the number of additional computers that can be purchased with budgeted funds and submits this documentation to the chief financial officer for review.	June 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews and obtains comments from the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology.	June 2002
3.	The chief financial officer recommends approval of the plan to the superintendent.	July 2002
4.	The superintendent submits the plan to the board for approval.	August 2002
5.	The chief financial officer, with the director of Information Technology, implements the new plan.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Since LISD's *Technology Plan, 2001-2004* identifies $2,245,000 for computer leases, the combination lease and purchase plan presented above generates an annual saving of $99,300 over current practices. This savings is calculated based on LISD's annual lease funding of $2,245,000 less the annual combination-funding requirement of $2,145,700.

More importantly, it provides one computer for every three students and ensures that the student learning process is supported with quality computers. Under the alternative program, 1,700 new computers are acquired for the district each year compared with the 1,377 new computers that can be leased each year under LISD's current computer lease strategy. Further, the alternative proposal is nearly $10 million less over five years than the amount required to meet the state's computer-to-student ratio under LISD's current computer lease strategy.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Revise computer standards and implement a strategy of leasing and purchasing computers to make additional computers available to students.	$99,300	$99,300	$99,300	$99,300	$99,300

FINDING

The IT Department does not have a trouble-shooting desk to record or track problems and ensure expeditious service to LISD staff and students.

While the district has a process for submitting software and hardware work orders to the IT Department, the IT Department has no central log of work orders received, technician assigned or action taken. Work orders are given to technicians for action. There is no process for follow-up or recording the results of action taken. As a result, open work orders are difficult to reconcile and there is no data to calculate an accurate response time. Regardless of the school visited, response times reported exceeded a month with many taking three to four months. A number of work orders were reported outstanding after nine or more months. **Exhibit 11-14** illustrates five work orders that are still outstanding and range in age from one to 15 months old.

Exhibit 11-14
Open Hardware and Software Work Orders from Martin High School

Work Order #	Date Submitted	Equipment	Problem
5900	08/15/2000	Dell Inspiron 7500 Laptop / 42740	Laptop 040 - Y5D6B. Laptop will not boot up. Hard drive does not function - only hear a clicking sound. Service Express Code 573-572-99

5915	12/08/2000	Lexmark Printer	Lexmark Printer. The printer is missing a spring in the last area where spooling takes place.
7461	02/21/2001	Lexmark Printer	Lexmark 1625 Engine Board, S/N 11-KY852, Type 4059-165, Configuration B01FOB, P/N 43J2638 defective.
7465	02/21/2001	Lexmark Printer	Lexmark 1255 -30317 / 11-LV843. Every print job has a black line across the paper. Please see attached sheet
13756	09/19/2001	Dell 85VF401	Computer goes into sleep mode after boot up before bios completes boot process. Computer will not turn off unless power cord is removed. When plugged back in, computer turns on automatically and goes into sleep mode.

Source: Campus Trainer, Martin High School, November 2001.

The poor response times and inability of the IT Department to track outstanding work actions, gather data on problems encountered and establish valid work order backlog and processing times has led to frustrated customers and poor service. Further, it has not provided the data to substantiate technician performance and hold technicians accountable for their actions.

Recommendation 93:

Create a single technology help desk jointly staffed and supported by commercial help desk software.

The Instructional Technology Department has a help desk, and the IT Department should also have a help desk. Establishing a single, jointly staffed help desk will assure that someone will be available to listen, record and assist customers with IT problems. More importantly, it means that a district customer has only one telephone number to call to obtain help. This is particularly important if the customer doesn't have a good IT background for determining the source of the problem.

By implementing help desk software, trouble calls can be accurately documented and monitored until completion. In addition, measurements of performance, problem trends and workload can be established. The Instructional Technology Department has purchased a Computer Associates' help desk management system called "T and G" for this purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of IT drafts a new position description for a help desk technician and the qualifying technical requirements and submits this documentation to the chief financial officer for review.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews and obtains agreement from the administrative assistant for Academics-Technology on help desk teaming.	May 2002
3.	The chief financial officer reviews and recommends approval of the help desk plan to the superintendent.	June 2002
4.	The superintendent reviews and seeks approval of the help desk plan by the LISD school board.	July 2002
5.	The executive director of Human Resources initiates the recruiting process for the help desk technician position.	July 2002
6.	The director of IT hires a help desk technician.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is the cost to hire one technician to staff the help desk. This cost would be $32,789, which consists of a salary of $28,000 plus $2,442 in fixed benefits and $2,347 in variable benefits ($28,000 x 8.3822 percent).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create a single technology help desk jointly staffed and supported by commercial help desk software.	($32,789)	($32,789)	($32,789)	($32,789)	($32,789)

FINDING

IT Department technicians in network administration do not have computers, workbenches, tools and adequate facilities for trouble shooting, preparing software upgrades or resolving the district's IT infrastructure problems.

IT Department technicians, some earning $75 per repair from Dell for on-site repairs, have no workbenches, limited tools, no filing capability for publications or information on previous repairs and no computers to aide in the performance of their tasks. When a computer is required, the

technician must search for a vacant computer, in a lab or on someone's desk, to gain access to perform troubleshooting, obtain software patches or repair bulletins and e-mail from district users. Further, the technicians lack hand-held/portable test equipment to test patch cords and the district's cabling for proper connectivity and performance. The lack of resources and poor working conditions are barriers to high technician productivity and quality service.

Recommendation 94:

Acquire adequate tools, hand-held test equipment, workbenches, cabinets and computers to aid the IT Department's technicians.

Technicians will be able to accomplish more work with the proper tools, test equipment, computers and facilities. Proper facilitation is important to ensure that the technicians are working smart and not just hard. Better-trained and better-equipped technicians will reduce work order backlogs and improve customer response times.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Information Technology determines the number of tools, portable test equipment, workbenches/cabinets and laptop/desktop computers required; develops a prioritized list with estimated costs; and submits a request for funding to the chief financial officer.	May 2002
2.	The chief financial officer reviews the equipment requirements and submits a recommendation to the superintendent for review and approval.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent reviews the proposal and submits it to the board for approval.	July 2002
4.	The director of Information Technology initiates requisitions to order approved items and submits them to the director of Procurement for acquisition.	August 2002
5.	The Purchasing director initiates purchase acquisitions to acquire the required equipment.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of this recommendation is $26,200 based on 10 technicians. The following is an estimate of requirements:

- 10 computers at $1,800 for a cost of $18,000;
- four electronic work benches at $700 for a cost of $2,800;

- eight storage cabinets at $200 for a cost of $1,600;
- eight hand held, portable computer and network testers at $250 for a cost of $2,000; and
- four computer technician tool kits at $450 for a cost of $1,800.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Acquire adequate tools, hand-held test equipment, workbenches, cabinets and computers to aid the IT Department's technicians.	($26,200)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

The LISD IT network has slow computer response times, especially on the Internet.

The network interfaces are extensive and difficult to trace and troubleshoot. Many hardware and software factors influence network and Internet response times. A good example is the hourglass, which provides a simple perspective of networks and the Internet. For the sand to move rapidly from one half of the hourglass to the other, the opening between the two halves should be very large. If the opening is made smaller, then a bottleneck occurs. The bottleneck only allows sand to pass at a fixed rate regardless of the capacity on either side.

A user's network may consist of a series of bottlenecks. Transactions, such as requests for data, are the "IT sand" in the hourglass example. This traffic can accumulate at any level or bottleneck in the network and impact response time. For example, a user printing a long document and trying to access the Internet will realize slower response time. Traffic creates an ever-larger pyramid as the volume grows from the user, to all the users at the school, to all of the users in the district, to all of the users accessing the Internet and specific Web sites.

LISD'S IT Department has determined that the district's single, high-speed (T1) telephone line is a response time bottleneck. Accordingly, a contract for additional high-speed capacity was awarded in January 2002 and should be in service by the end of January 2002. While this should improve response time overall, other network bottlenecks may become visible.

Recommendation 95:

Establish a network response time monitoring program that records response times at peak and non-peak hours for both Internet and LISD network transactions.

Establishing a network response time monitoring program would provide the IT Department with the data and trends needed to identify and resolve bottlenecks as well as plan for future requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The network administrator drafts a network response time monitoring program that defines response time goals, network measuring points, personnel measuring assignments and a database for data retention.	May-June 2002
2.	The director of IT approves the plan and directs its implementation.	July 2002
3.	The network administrator executes the plan and collects data, analyzes trends and provides periodic reports to the director of the IT Department.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Establish a network response time monitoring program that records response times at peak and non-peak hours for both Internet and LISD network transactions.

Establishing a network response time monitoring program would provide the IT Department with the data and trends needed to identify and resolve bottlenecks as well as plan for future requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The network administrator drafts a network response time monitoring program that defines response time goals, network measuring points, personnel measuring assignments and a database for data retention.	May-June 2002
2.	The director of IT approves the plan and directs its implementation.	July 2002
3.	The network administrator executes the plan and collects data, analyzes trends and provides periodic reports to the director of the IT Department.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 12
SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter examines safety and security at Laredo Independent School District (LISD) in two sections:

A. Discipline Management
B. Safety and Security

Ensuring a safe and secure school environment with minimal disruption should be of the utmost importance to board members, school officials, teachers, students and parents. The increasing incidence of school violence around the country, as well as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have created an even greater sense of urgency for providing protection and peace of mind at Texas schools.

BACKGROUND

LISD strictly enforces the student code of conduct and disciplines students who violate it. An alternative education program operates in a separate location for students who violate the code and for others who are at-risk. The district also maintains a strong security force, with 19 full-time school resource officers (SROs), who are commissioned city and county law enforcement officers that work at the schools, and between 60 and 75 security guards, depending upon need at a given time. In addition to a district safety officer, each school has a designated safety officer who monitors schools. The Operations Division maintains fire and burglar alarm systems, and school principals are responsible for managing campus security systems. The district supplements its safety program with a districtwide safety committee, a crisis management committee and an award-winning youth Crime Stoppers program.

LISD has dispersed the responsibility for discipline management, safety and security throughout the district's organization and was re-organizing and assigning duties to different employees in fall 2001. **Exhibit 12-1** shows the employees responsible for the district's safety and security.

Exhibit 12-1
LISD Safety and Security
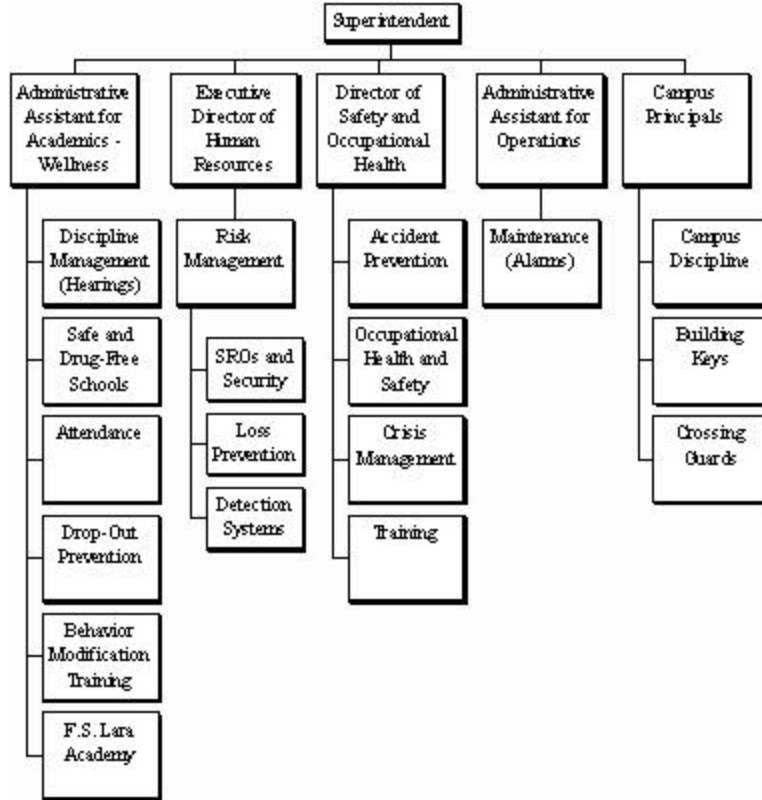
Source: LISD interviews and organizational chart, November 2001.

To provide a safe, secure and orderly learning environment, schools are advised to develop a plan that includes a variety of strategies. The Texas School Performance Review (TSPR), in *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School,* describes a model safety plan that encompasses prevention, intervention and enforcement. When districts apply these measures in a comprehensive system, they can get significant results. It is important for a district to communicate and cooperate with municipal and county services. Discipline management and alternative education programs are also critical factors. **Exhibit 12-2** is an example of an effective safety plan.

Exhibit 12-2
Keeping Texas Children Safe in School

Strategy	Steps to be Taken
Prevention	• Know your goals and objectives: where your district is going and what you want to accomplish. • Establish clear expectations for students, parents, teachers and administrators.

	• Address warning signs before they turn into trouble.
Intervention	• Look for trouble before it finds you. • Recognize trouble when you see it. • Have individuals in the right place and at the right time to intervene. • Have a plan of action appropriate for the occasion and practice it.
Enforcement	• Leave no room for double standards. • Ensure that discipline management extends inside and outside the classroom. • Alternative programs are not just a matter of compliance with the law; they are many students' last chance at success.

Source: TSPR, "Keeping Texas Children Safe in Schools," January 2000.

The Texas Legislature has worked to increase awareness of school safety issues. **Exhibit 12-3** outlines key points of several safety-related bills and resolutions:

Exhibit 12-3
Major School Safety Initiatives of the Texas Legislature
1993 through 2001

Legislation	Summary
1993 Legislature	
House Bill 23	Required information sharing between law enforcement and schools on student arrests for serious offenses; requires school principals to notify law enforcement if criminal activity occurs or is suspected on school property.
Senate Resolution 879	Encouraged collaboration between the Texas Education Agency and Department of Public Safety for recording criminal incidents in schools.
House Bills 633 and 634	Outlined the commissioning and jurisdiction of peace officers for school districts.
House Bill 2332	Authorized the State Board of Education to establish special-purpose schools or districts for students whose needs are not met through regular schools.

Senate Bill 16	Defined drug-free zones for schools.
Senate Bill 213	Created the safe schools checklist.
Senate Bill 155	Created the Texas Commission on Children and Youth.
1995 Legislature	
Senate Bill 1	Revamped the Texas Education Code and laws on safety and security in schools, and required districts to establish alternative education programs and, in counties with populations above 125,000, to establish juvenile justice alternative education programs.
1997 Legislature	
Senate Bill 133	Rewrote the safe schools provision of the Texas Education Code.
1999 Legislature	
Senate Bill 260	Allowed the expulsion of a student who assaults a school district employee.
Senate Bill 1580	Created the Texas Violent Gang Task Force.
Senate Bill 1724	Required each school district to annually report, beginning with 1999-2000, the number, rate and type of violent and criminal incidents occurring at each school and allowed them the option of including a violence prevention and intervention component in their annual school improvement plans.
Senate Bill 1784	Allowed school districts to use private or public community-based dropout recovery education programs to provide alternative education programs.
House Bill 152	Made placing graffiti on school property a state jail felony.
House Bill 1749	Encouraged school districts and juvenile probation departments to share information on juvenile offenders.
2001 Legislature	
House Bill 688	Prohibited possession of an open container or consumption of an alcoholic beverage within 1,000 feet of a public or private school.
House Bill 1088	Required that a student be removed from class and placed in an alternative education program if that student made a false alarm or terrorist threat.

Source: TSPR, 2001.

As crime in public schools continues to escalate, the responsibility for safety and security extends beyond school doors and into the community. It is up to school officials to involve all constituents in planning for safe schools and securing the resources necessary to ensure safety.

Chapter 12
SAFETY AND SECURITY

A. DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

According to the 1997 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of attitudes towards public schools, the number one problem public schools face is lack of discipline, continuing a trend set as far back as 1969. In the study, lack of discipline was identified as the top problem by the majority of respondents, followed by fighting/violence/gangs. The report further revealed that concerns about discipline far outstripped other concerns like finding good teachers or ensuring quality instruction.

Good discipline management programs set clear expectations, define penalties for misconduct and administer discipline consistently. Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires Texas schools to define their standards of behavior in a district code of conduct. This code must identify the circumstances under which a student may be removed from the classroom, campus or alternative education program, as well as the consequences for various types of misbehavior.

Texas law requires counties with populations of more than 125,000 to create a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP) to provide an educational setting for students who were expelled so they can continue their education.

Accountability for discipline management is the responsibility of the district's administrative assistant for Academics-Wellness, who reports to the superintendent. This department handles most of the duties generally considered student services, including discipline, attendance, guidance counseling, scholarships, athletics, health services and special education.

FINDING

The administrative assistant for Academics-Wellness is implementing the district's 17 standards for orderly schools. Five additional criteria are included for secondary schools. To be "acceptable," a school must meet minimal expectations; to be "recognized," a school must satisfy minimal expectations as well as additional criteria, and to be rated "exemplary," a school must also perform well on several additional measures. This procedure makes it possible for school officials to set internal goals and evaluate progress.

Exhibit 12-4 presents 10 of the 17 measures and the criteria that must be met to achieve certain ratings. Since an "unacceptable" rating has no

designated criteria, it has been eliminated from the chart. In addition to those shown, the district has also created criteria for the following measures: vision of a safe school, character education, code of conduct, dress code, tardiness, conflict resolution and peer mediation and hall passes.

Exhibit 12-4
Districtwide Standards for an Orderly School

Measures	Criteria per Rating Category		
	Acceptable	**Recognized**	**Exemplary**
Standards for student conduct	School recognizes 11 standards for behavior identified in student code of conduct.	*Add:* Standards for conduct are discussed with parents and among teachers.	*Add:* Standards are included in Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) and classroom management plans.
Intruder	School has written procedures addressing visitors.	*Add:* Visitors are expected to sign in and receive a pass.	*Add:* Campus Educational Improvement Council (CEIC) reviews strategies and initiates improvements as needed.
Crime Stoppers program	Crime Stoppers program operates on campus.	*Add:* Crime Stoppers program provides statistical data to CEIC every six weeks.	*Add:* Data indicate more students are reporting a variety of offenses, including drug-related ones.
Class management	Teachers receive staff development in class management strategies.	*Add:* CEIC receives disaggregated data on office referrals.	*Add:* CEIC takes action on data and provides additional staff development for teachers who need it.
Attendance	CEIC takes action on an attendance goal and its	*Add:* CEIC receives attendance data every	*Add:* CEIC takes action based on data.

	objectives. Attendance is at 95 percent.	six weeks. Attendance is at 96 percent.	Attendance is at 97 percent.
Fighting	School has written procedures to address students who fight.	*Add:* Procedures are communicated to parents. CEIC receives data every six weeks.	*Add:* CEIC takes action based on data.
Substance abuse	School reports consistent implementation of code of conduct.	*Add:* School has a drug prevention plan. CEIC receives data every six weeks as well as updates on the prevention plan.	*Add:* CEIC takes action based on the information presented.
After-school detention	After-school detention plan is implemented.	*Add:* Data are collected and disaggregated.	*Add:* Data are presented to CEIC timely.
Parent workshop	All parents receive the student code of conduct.	*Add:* School makes three presentations to parents on discipline, including PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System) data.	*Add:* School makes presentation to parents of students referred for discipline. CEIC receives information about sessions.
Bullying	Selected teachers participate in staff development aimed at controlling bullying.	All teachers receive relevant staff development.	*Add:* School creates anti-bullying plan; plan is presented to CEIC.

Source: LISD Standards for an Orderly School, August 2001.

Exhibit 12-5 presents the five additional measures required of high schools and criteria that must be met to achieve specific ratings.

Exhibit 12-5
Districtwide Standards for an Orderly School (Secondary)

Measures	Criteria per Rating Category		
	Acceptable	**Recognized**	**Exemplary**
Advisor-advisee program	School CEIC has discussed character education on campus.	*Add:* Administration and guidance department have discussed implementing advisor-advisee program	*Add:* Program is implemented.
School Resource Officers (SROs)	SROs are assigned to campus.	*Add:* SROs assist with implementing code of conduct.	*Add:* SROs discuss drug/violence prevention in classrooms. CEIC receives update every six weeks.
In-school suspension	School implements in-school suspension program.	*Add:* Program includes weekly counselor presentations.	*Add:* Data are collected and presented to CEIC every six weeks.
Extra-curricular/co-curricular programs	School collects data about the number of students participating.	*Add:* CEIC receives information about participation.	*Add:* CEIC receives information about the number of freshmen not participating in any program.
Surveillance cameras	School administrators study issue of surveillance cameras.	*Add:* CEIC receives information on cameras.	*Add:* CEIC takes a position on use of cameras.
Metal detectors	Metal detectors are used in compliance with policy.	*Add:* Data are collected and analyzed.	*Add:* Data are presented to CEIC, which takes action as needed.

Source: LISD Standards for an Orderly School, August 2001.

COMMENDATION

LISD has set standards for orderly schools and specified the criteria required for satisfying expectations at several levels.

FINDING

LISD's alternative education program (AEP) provides a variety of services for elementary and secondary students with special needs who are at risk of dropping out of school. Since 1995, Texas has mandated alternative education programs for at-risk students, as described in Chapter 37 of the TEC. LISD houses its high school program in a $2.1 million enclosed facility, the F.S. Lara Academy, built in 1997. The academy is equipped with computers, metal detectors and surveillance cameras.

A 1999 *USA Today* article describes the academy as a nationwide model for alternative education programs with its focus on small classes, self-paced instruction and a safe environment. Curriculum at the F.S. Lara Academy focuses on English, language arts, social studies, math and science. The school encourages non-traditional learning for students and family in order to alter at-risk behavior. The program is designed to help at-risk students who "volunteer" to attend the alternative school as well as those who have been removed from their home school and have been placed in the more structured academy for disciplinary reasons. Students with behavior problems are kept in a separate part of the building from the volunteers. A day care service is provided for students who have children.

Students may be placed in the academy for several reasons, among them disruptive behavior, violation of the student code of conduct, possession or use of tobacco, gang violence and emergency expulsion. The academy is highly structured, with an enforced dress code, routine searches with metal detectors and guards as escorts in the halls. Teachers receive a stipend of $4,000 per year to work at F. S. Lara Academy.

The F. S. Lara Academy serves both high school and middle school students, although middle school students are in a separate facility. D.D. Hachar Elementary School provides an alternative program for younger students with behavior problems. In addition, the board has entered into an agreement with the Webb County Juvenile Board for a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP), as required by state law. Students are expelled to the JJAEP for serious felonies for a minimum of 90 days and a maximum of one year. **Exhibit 12-6** illustrates the types of placement possible for various kinds of behavior.

Exhibit 12-6
Behaviors Subject to AEP Placement

Behaviors	DAEP (F.S. Lara Academy)		(JJAEP - County)	
	Discretionary Placement	**Mandatory Placement**	**Discretionary Expulsion**	**Mandatory Expulsion**
Disruptive behavior	x			
Violation of student code of conduct	x			
Serious or persistent violations of code of conduct while in AEP			x	
Conduct punishable as a felony		x		
Emergency placement/expulsion	x		x	
Possession, sale or use of tobacco	x			
Possession, sale or use of marijuana or other controlled substance		x		x (felony)
Possession, sale or under influence of alcohol		x	x	x (felony)
Abuse of glue or aerosol paint		x	x	x
School-related gang violence	x			
Criminal mischief			x	x
Retaliation against school employee (with elements of certain offenses present such as weapon or assault)		x	x	
Assault against district employee or volunteer		x	x	
Aggravated assault				x

against school district employee, volunteer or someone other than these				
Sexual assault against school district employee or volunteer				x
Public lewdness; indecent exposure		x		
Indecency with a child				x
Terroristic threat		x		
Bomb threat				x
Arson				x
Use of or possession of firearm, club, knife or other prohibited weapon				x
Murder or attempted murder				x
Aggravated kidnapping				x

Source: LISD Code of Conduct Presentation, September 3, 2001.

Students may also be removed from the classroom, pending a hearing, and be placed in in-school suspension (ISS) for up to three days for breaches of the code of conduct, such as throwing objects, leaving the school grounds without permission, using profanity or fighting. There is no limit to the number of times a student may be suspended.

School authorities claim that the removal of students from their regular campus is an effective prevention and intervention strategy because alternative programs provide additional counselors, heightened supervision and special programs like drug prevention instruction. Placement or expulsion sends a strong message to parents as well as students. In fact, fewer than 25 percent return to the alternative school, and most of those do so because they prefer the smaller classes and personalized instruction.

COMMENDATION

LISD provides a broad-based alternative education program designed for non-traditional and at-risk students, as well as those with more serious discipline or behavior problems.

FINDING

LISD mandates training for all district and campus staff on the student code of conduct and provides 45 minutes of staff development credit for elementary school staff and one hour for secondary school staff. The code of conduct presentation covers the basic laws, jurisdictions, behavior standards, discipline management techniques and requirements, guidelines for discretionary and mandatory student placement in disciplinary or JJAEPs and procedures for removing a student from a classroom. Two teams of two teachers present these and related programs in all schools. These trainers teach in the alternative education program.

Two additional teams train teachers in behavior modification techniques. As of January 2002, 10 secondary teachers and two elementary teachers per quadrant have received training. A second group will be trained during spring 2002, and training will continue into the 2002-03 school year.

COMMENDATION

LISD provides comprehensive staff development training on the student code of conduct, using teams of teachers who have been specially trained in behavior modification techniques.

FINDING

LISD's behavior and violence incident reports are comprehensive, tracking all types of code violations by school and grade and the type of response required for each offense. These reports indicate that middle school students are the most likely to be removed from classrooms for disciplinary reasons. At all grade levels, most student referrals were for classroom disruption, fighting and code of conduct violations. Most of these students received in-school suspension in 2000-01, although 61 were expelled to the Webb County juvenile justice alternative education program and 76 were placed in the district's alternative education program. Compared to previous years, LISD's high schools reported a 33 percent decline in classroom removals and alternative placements, and elementary schools saw a 28 percent decline; middle schools, on the other hand, reported a 33 percent increase. School officials claim that several programs, like the drug prevention curriculum, Communities-In-Schools and the parent education program, as well as individualized instruction

and a more structured environment all contributed to the decrease in alternative placements, particularly those that were drug-related. **Exhibit 12-7** demonstrates the kind of activity by code and the rate of incidence for each of the three school levels.

Exhibit 12-7
Incidence of Discipline Event by School Type
2000-01

Code	Event Description	Number of Incidents by School Type		
		High	Middle	Elementary
1	Campus/classroom disruption; gang membership; spitting	759	1,708	23
2	Illegal drugs (felony); theft (felony)	14	36	
4, 5	Drug possession (misdemeanor), under influence of drugs or alcohol	87	77	
7	Indecent exposure	1	2	
8	Retaliation against school employee(s)		2	
9	Conduct occurring off-campus	2	2	
12, 14	Possessed a knife or illegal weapon	2	28	5
20	Persistent misconduct in AEP		4	
21	Violation of student code of conduct not elsewhere addressed (cheating, dress code, fighting, carrying matches or lighters, ethnic slurs, profanity, computer tampering, tobacco, truancy)	408	983	34
22	Graffiti, vandalism	5	13	3
26	Terroristic threat	4	11	1
27	Assault or verbal threat to employee	4	9	
28	Assault or verbal threat to student	24	43	
29, 30	Aggravated assault		12	9
32	Sexual assault	1	3	
33	Possession of tobacco product	2	3	

34	School-related gang violence		3	
Totals		**1,313**	**2,939**	**75**

COMMENDATION

The district maintains thorough records of misconduct and violence for monitoring trends and responding to discipline problems.

FINDING

The most recent editions of the LISD student code of conduct and the student/parent handbook have several significant omissions and discrepancies. The district has made a practice of publishing the code of conduct every two years in order to include legislative updates and publishing the handbook every two years, or as needed. This causes some of the discrepancies. One of the more serious problems was the omission in the handbook of the official notification that the district uses drug-sniffing dogs to search for illegal substances and uses metal detectors to improve safety. Since the code of conduct is published every two years, LISD had to wait for a year before placing the notification in an official publication.

Publishing the student code of conduct and student/parent handbook separately and, in the most recent case, in different years increases the chance that policies will conflict and information will be needlessly duplicated. Edgewood, United and Harlandale ISDs all publish a single document each year that combines the code of conduct and handbook information, including the most recent, in one resource.

Recommendation 96:

Publish a combined student code of conduct and parent/student handbook annually.

Producing one document instead of two reduces the opportunity for error, and publishing each year makes it possible to introduce or revise polices more promptly. The school district's attorney should also review the document for substantive errors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints a committee chaired by the	May

	administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness, who is in charge of discipline, to review the student code of conduct and the student/parent handbook.	2002
2.	The committee meets and divides the publications into sections based upon topic. The chair assigns committee members various sections to review based upon their expertise.	May 2002
3.	Committee members review, research, revise and organize sections from both publications based upon input from key district personnel.	June 2002
4.	The chair and the director of Communications edit the manuscript and submit it to the LISD attorney for legal review.	July 2002
5.	The LISD attorney and superintendent review the document for accuracy, clarity and legality.	August 2002
6.	The administrative assistant for Academics - Wellness works with the director of Communications to print and distribute the revised document.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Although the cost of paper varies with demand, it is estimated that publishing the student code of conduct and the parent/student handbook as one document instead of two will cost LISD $9,945 annually. Producing the 55-page 2001-03 code of conduct cost the district $5,158 ($4,695 for 25,000 copies in English, plus $463 for 3,000 copies in Spanish). The cost of the 96-page 2000-02 handbook was $7,590 for 24,500 copies, all in English. Total cost for both printings over the two-year period was $12,748 ($5,158 plus $7,590).

Assuming a single publication could be printed in approximately 70 pages when duplicate text is removed, the print shop estimates that it could be produced for $9,945 annually ($8,845 for 25,000 copies in English, plus another $1,100 for 3,000 copies in Spanish). Over a two-year period the cost to produce two different publications has been $12,748, or an average of $6,374 per year, compared to the cost of publishing a single document, in English and Spanish, at an annual basis, of $9,945. The difference would be $3,571 a year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Publish a combined student code of conduct and parent/student handbook annually.	($3,571)	($3,571)	($3,571)	($3,571)	($3,571)

Chapter 12
SAFETY AND SECURITY

B. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Around the country, teachers, administrators, students and parents rank safety at or near the top of their list of concerns in school.Having a safety plan with goals, objectives and specific strategies can reduce liability and improve public relations, while protecting the school. More importantly, however, safe schools contribute to improved student performance, increased attendance and more substantial community support. Various forms of safety and security programs are used around the country, and there is no one best solution. Some districts employ their own police and security forces, others rely on local law enforcement to serve their needs, and some, like LISD, use a combination of school personnel and area law enforcement officers to manage their safety and security efforts.

The LISD board has moved the responsibility for occupational safety, emergency preparedness and environmental compliance directly under the superintendent. In fall 2001, the board also voted to add staff and material resources to its safety program.

FINDING

As part of its heightened emphasis on safety, the LISD board and superintendent have developed a safety policy statement, which emphasizes the district's commitment to improved safety and a reduction in the number of workplace accidents. This commitment to ensure a safe and healthy workplace includes measurable goals and objectives as well as comprehensive policies and procedures for accident prevention, inspection, trend analysis, reporting, training and improvement. **Exhibit 12-8** displays the districtwide safety objectives that relate to one of the district's safety goals.

Exhibit 12-8
Primary LISD Objectives Related to Safety
2000-05

District Goal #3	Related Objectives
LISD will have safe and orderly schools.	• Will engage in preventive programs that will result in fewer discipline referrals. • Will implement identified, research-based, effective safe school practices. • Will identify standards for orderly campuses

	that are free from distraction.
	• Will use identified, research-based intervention strategies and other locally identified strategies.
	• Will support and expect 100 percent consistent enforcement of Code of Conduct.
	• Will implement a Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program.
	• Will expand instructional opportunities through an alternative educational program.

Source: LISD Strategic Improvement Plan, 2000-05.

In addition to a district director of Safety and Occupational Health, each campus also has its own designated safety officer who conducts monthly inspections of offices, operations, food services and vehicles, using a form designed by the Texas Association of School Boards. A safety committee, composed of these officers and chaired by the district director, meets monthly to review results and recommend corrective action.

COMMENDATION

LISD developed a comprehensive school safety and accident prevention plan that includes inspection, review, analysis and prevention training.

FINDING

The Risk Management Department manages LISD security and contracts most responsibilities out to area agencies and private firms. The Webb County Sheriff's Department and the Laredo Police Department provide school resource officers (SROs), and private firms supply the security force and monitor the alarm systems.

The board is negotiating with the city and county to add more SROs under separate grants from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). However, both grants require matching funds, which the district must agree to pay. These are minimal for the first three years but the district may be required to fund at least half the costs in the fourth year, when the grants run out. The agencies will cover the balance.

In fall 2001, the district contracted with the City of Laredo for eight SROs for $349,511 and with the county for 11 SROs for $496,479. If the district endorses the COPS grants, agreeing to pick up the required match, 14 additional city SROs will be funded at $1.8 million over a three-year

period, and six more County SROs will be funded at $750,000 for the same period.

SROs are certified peace officers who assist students in dealing with conflicts, resolving problems, handling peer pressure and avoiding criminal activity. As law enforcement officers, they can take police action related to incidents in or around schools. The primary goals and objectives of the school

resource officer program, in interlocal agreements between the school district and the city and county, are as follows:

- to foster educational programs and activities that will increase student knowledge of and respect for the law and the function of law enforcement agencies; and
- to protect the health, safety and welfare of all students, employees and citizens by acting swiftly and cooperatively when responding to major disruptions and flagrant criminal offenses at school, such as disorderly conduct by trespassers, the possession and use of weapons on campus, the illegal sale and/or distribution of controlled substances and riots.

The agreement also encourages SROs to provide traffic control as needed, to attend extra-curricular activities, to report serious crimes and cooperate in investigations of juvenile crimes that occur both in and out of school. Officers and deputies are employees of their respective agencies and salaries are paid by these agencies. They must be commissioned officers with at least two years law enforcement experience and must satisfy all in-service training requirements. Law enforcement agencies provide officers with vehicles, weapons, ammunition and other supplies.

LISD also employs security guards through a contract with a private firm, County Wide Security, which is in the final year of a three-year contract. The contract specifies that all guards must be adequately trained in security techniques, properly certified and appropriately familiarized with buildings and sites before assignment. The district further requires that the firm do background investigations on all guards. Security guards assist the administration, help with crowd control, hall monitoring, parking and general surveillance of weapons, fighting, theft and other violations of the code of conduct. They are unarmed and are equipped with two-way radios.

Officers and guards are assigned to campuses in two ways: upon request by principals and on an as-needed basis, depending upon review of incident reports. In fall 2001, there were 33 guards at the middle, high and magnet schools; 16 at several pick-up bus depots and portable buildings, where they are required because of construction; four at the alternative

schools; seven at the elementary schools and three at miscellaneous locations-for a total of 63 guards and a cost of $669,842. In January 2002, LISD deployed an additional 13 guards to the remaining elementary schools for the spring semester, at an estimated cost of $75,000.

COMMENDATION

LISD effectively uses a combination of school resource officers and security guards to provide better safety and security than would be possible with security guards alone.

FINDING

LISD provides monthly staff development for SROs and security guards. The training is school-related, but may also count as credit for state-required law enforcement in-service training hours. Programs for the 2001-02 year include:

- getting to school safely;
- reacting to rumors and threats;
- stopping teasing and harassment;
- improving the school climate;
- drug intervention strategies;
- blood, chemicals and other dangers;
- developing a crisis plan;
- how to set limits with students;
- how to help others resolve disputes; and
- effective documentation of school incidents.

Meetings also cover incident statistics, trends, equipment needs and upcoming changes or new implementations, such as additional cameras, metal detectors or canine service.

COMMENDATION

LISD provides appropriate in-service training for SROs and security guards.

FINDING

LISD has a successful districtwide Campus Crime Stoppers program, coordinated by a full-time teacher for a $1,500 stipend. The program operates out of Martin High School, but each of the middle and high schools has a sponsor. Campus Crime Stoppers provides students with the opportunity to report information anonymously by phone about illegal activities at a particular campus to provide a safe and drug-free learning

environment. Basically, the program provides monetary rewards for tips that prevent or solve crimes and lead to the arrest or expulsion of offenders. Student boards at each campus determine the amount of the reward for each type of offense. The program supports itself through grant and fundraising activity and projects $86,835 in support for 2001-02.

The program was created in 1990 at one school and had expanded to all secondary schools by 1993 and to elementary schools by 1998. The goal is to work with local law enforcement and school officials to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime, create a drug-free environment and deter gang activity. During the 1999-2000 school year, the program received 225 tips that either prevented or solved a crime, paid $11,720 in rewards and recovered more than $22,000 in property. The program has received 85 tips since the beginning of the 2001-02 school year and paid out $3,000 in rewards during October. LISD credits Campus Crime Stoppers with assisting with the recovery of more than $28,000 in stolen goods in a fall 2001 robbery at Martin High School. On surveys conducted by LISD during fall 2001, students and teachers reported that they believed the program is an effective deterrent to misconduct and crime.

In 2000-01, the program was recognized at the International Crime Stoppers Conventionin Colorado with several awards. Competing against 3,500 schools in its size category, the district won first place for "most arrests," "best public service announcement" and "most cleared cases" and second place for "most drugs recovered," "most stolen goods recovered" and "most improved for most stolen goods recovered."

COMMENDATION

The LISD Campus Crime Stoppers program is effective and serves as a model for other schools.

FINDING

As of November 2001, the departments primarily in charge of safety and security were in a state of flux, and responsibilities were being clarified. A reorganization, the second in less than five years, separated some of the primary responsibilities of safety from those of security, placing them in several different departments. Generally, workplace compensation, environmental protection issues and accident prevention have become the responsibility of the director of Safety and Occupational Health, while the director of Risk Management manages security and insurance.

Under the new organization, the director of Safety and Occupational Health reports directly to the superintendent, reflecting the board's commitment to safe and orderly schools. The director of Risk

Management, who used to report to the chief financial officer, now reports to the executive director of Human Resources, most likely because he is responsible for the district's insurance policies.

While it is not uncommon for safety and security to be divided into more than one administrative unit, it is not desirable. Such a separation requires clearly outlined responsibilities, a strong spirit of cooperation, accountability for accomplishment and appropriate cross-training. The fragmentation of safety and security responsibilities can make it difficult to implement even the best plan. Therefore, it is critical that roles and responsibilities be clarified quickly and that these be communicated throughout the organization.

Recommendation 97:

Clarify responsibilities and ensure accountability for all personnel responsible for safety and security.

Specific responsibilities are not clearly delineated in the reorganization. Since safety and security responsibilities and tasks are spread throughout the organization, there is considerable opportunity for some to go unattended. Every effort should be made to monitor all activities for accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and executive director for Human Resources bring together key safety and security personnel, including the director of Safety and Occupational Health, the director of Risk Management, and the administrative assistant for Operations, as well as principals, or designee, from each of the elementary, middle and high schools to discuss the responsibilities of all Safety personnel.	May 2002
2.	The executive director for Human Resource develops job descriptions to include performance measures.	May - June 2002
3.	The superintendent takes the position recommendations to the board.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not take advantage of the many safety resources available in Laredo, such as health care or social services professionals, fire protection agents and the clergy. Although the LISD does have interlocal agreements with the Laredo Police Department and the Webb County Sheriff's Department to supply SROs, there is limited interaction with other safety professionals on a regular basis. For example, the districtwide safety committee and the crisis management team have little community representation.

Bringing together a variety of community resources concerned with school safety has a number of benefits, both for the school district and the community. School officials are introduced to various agencies and the services they can provide on a routine as well as emergency basis, and community providers learn more about the safety and security measures schools have in place as well as where they need additional resources and training. Information and resource sharing can be mutually beneficial. San Angelo ISD, for example, has created a large community-wide safety committee with service providers from a variety of health and social service agencies who meet monthly to share ideas and plan joint events.

Recommendation 98:

Create an on-going, community-wide safety committee to tap resources, review safety and crisis management procedures regularly and share input about related community concerns.

To deal with community problems that affect schools more effectively, LISD should rally community resources to share ideas. In addition to key school personnel, the group should include representatives from the police, sheriff and fire departments; social and psychological services; health care; emergency services and businesses. Creating a community safety network unites stakeholders in a common purpose.

The group should consist of 25 to 30 members to ensure that a fair number are present at each monthly meeting. The initial purpose of the meetings should be to exchange ideas about the status of the current safety and security programs as well as to determine how community members might participate and how the district might better share information. For example, law enforcement should receive copies of school floor plans and crisis management plans. Law enforcement, emergency and social services personnel might be invited to career days. Resource sharing not only provides the school district with the opportunity to tap community resources, but it makes the community aware of school needs as well.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints a task force consisting of the administrative assistant for Academics-Wellness; the Risk Management director; the director of Safety and Occupational Health and several principals to select school personnel to serve on the community-wide safety committee that would also include representatives of law enforcement, fire safety, social/psychological services, emergency services, community health care, the clergy, school principals and teachers.	September 2002
2.	The superintendent extends an invitation to potential members and explains the value to the community and follows up with a letter of appointment.	October 2002
3.	The superintendent describes the purpose of the committee and asks participants to submit issues of concern for discussion at the first meeting.	November 2002
4.	Committee members begin brainstorming, and all agencies interact to improve existing safety and emergency management practices.	December 2002
5.	Committee members continue to meet and form sub-committees as appropriate.	January 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

The district's crisis management plan has not been seriously tested. Although Laredo schools have participated in fire and bomb scare drills, there has been no coordinated effort to conduct full-scale disaster simulations. Most officials seem to know who to call in an emergency based on defined procedures, but the district has not actually practiced a disaster drill involving first responders from the school and community.

Unspecified threats to Texas schools in December 2001 make it critical that LISD officials prepare for terrorist threats, bomb scares, kidnappings, hostage-taking, the appearance of hazardous substances, assaults, shootings and gang violence. Good safety practice calls for a school district and its campuses to do more than develop crisis management plans; they must also simulate actual emergencies. Doing so reveals weaknesses in the plans and ensure plans are effective. Kingsville ISD developed a comprehensive crisis management plan that includes simulations of different crisis situations using various law enforcement

and emergency management agencies. Wall ISD and Grape Creek ISD have both carried out simulations using key community resources.

Recommendation 99:

Carry out and evaluate several relevant disaster simulations with roles and responsibilities outlined for key school and community participants.

LISD officials should discuss types of crises that would be unique to BORDER=1 cities, bring together the resource teams necessary, carry out the drills and review results to identify areas where improvement is needed.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the director of Safety and Occupational Health chooses three or four potential crises and recommends agencies and officials who should participate in planning and enacting each crisis drill.	August 2002
2.	The director of Safety and Occupational Health presents ideas to the superintendent's cabinet for input.	September 2002
3.	The superintendent and the director of Safety and Occupational Health describe plans for the simulations at spring in-service, giving only those details necessary, to ensure the drill dates are a surprise.	January 2002
4.	LISD enacts at least two simulations each semester.	Spring 2003 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not have 24-hour security except in areas affected by construction, at the bus depot and portable buildings. Despite the attention the board and school officials pay to ensuring the safety and security of staff and students, interviews with principals and teachers indicate that they did not feel safe when they respond to a campus emergency at night or when working on weekends. During 2000-01, the district reported two graffiti and five vandalism incidents and seven burglaries or thefts. During fall 2001, there were 10 incidents of vandalism and a major break-in at Martin High School in which more than $30,000 worth of equipment was

stolen and vandalized. In addition, surveys of principals, administrators, staff, teachers, parents and students revealed across-the-board concern about gangs, drugs and vandalism within Laredo schools, even with heightened security.

LISD has a substantial security force that includes both armed SROs and unarmed security guards. As additional SROs are added, it will be possible to add evening and weekend security at locations with high exposure to break-ins.

Recommendation 100:

Analyze security staffing patterns and re-deploy guards to provide 24-hour security in high-risk schools.

Once COPS grants are finalized, LISD should be able to provide 24-hour security at select, high-risk campuses on a trial basis. Once new buildings can be locked, there will be less need for security at those locations, allowing for additional modifications in assignments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Superintendent, and the director of the SRO and security guard program meet with principals and teachers to determine if 24-hour security is feasible.	May 2002
2.	An ad hoc committee reviews personnel assignments and makes recommendations to the superintendent for re-deployment of security guards to several high-risk schools on a trial basis.	June 2002
3.	Upon approval, the director of the SRO and security guard program creates a new staffing pattern and implements it on a trial basis.	August 2002
4.	The director of the SRO and security guard program, along with the ad hoc committee, evaluates the new staffing pattern and makes appropriate revisions.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

LISD does not have a districtwide policy for issuing and returning building keys. Principals handle this process at the campus level. The older schools may have chained and padlocked entrances, and teachers have keys to these locks as well as keys to their own rooms. Master keys

are rare. Replacement keys and new locks are issued only with the principal's signature. Teachers turn in keys at the end of each school year, except for coaches and principals. In some of the newer schools, coaches and administrators have codes to burglar alarms.

In studying losses of school equipment and vandalism in schools, the review team has found that most thefts either occur during the school day or are committed by individuals with key or electronic card access. An accepted security standard requires complete re-keying when 5 percent of all keys are either unaccounted for or lost. Under the current system, it would be impossible to determine when this threshold had been reached.

Recommendation 101:

Establish a districtwide policy for controlling building keys and alarm codes.

Although each campus is different and schools vary in age, LISD should develop a districtwide policy, along with accompanying procedures and reporting criteria, for issuing keys and alarm codes. This would better ensure that keys are returned as required and would set a threshold for re-keying and re-coding schools when a certain percentage of keys have been misplaced or a specific time period has elapsed. The policy should allow principals latitude for how they manage keys but should require notification to the controlling authority when thresholds have been reached. Since the district is undergoing an extensive building campaign, developing policies and procedures that would protect new and remodeled schools is even more timely and critical.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrative assistant for Operations and the Risk Management director meet to discuss current controls on alarm codes and building keys.	May 2002
2.	Principals gather information from teachers and coaches about their specific access needs.	May 2002
3.	The administrative assistant for Operations and the Risk Management director determines a process for issuing and collecting keys and alarm codes that ensures better controls but allows flexibility based upon the age and configuration of schools.	June 2002
4.	The new process is implemented and described during fall in-service.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

Appendix A
PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

As part of the review process, the review team held public forums and focus groups to obtain input. During three public forums, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members participated by writing personal comments about the major topics of review, and in some cases talking in person to review team members. Parents, teachers, principals and assistant principals also participated in small focus groups that discussed the topics under review.

The comments below illustrate community perceptions of Laredo ISD and do not reflect the findings and opinions of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team. The following contains comments received by focus area.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- I have one complaint about this district, and that is that there seems to be too many bureaucratic procedures and no results. I can attest to that because many proposals and concerns about rankings and weights have been addressed since I was a freshman, and up to today that I am a senior I have seen no results.
- Board members are only interested in their own "pet" interests - not about schools. They make knee jerk decisions without listening to staff.
- CEIC and DEIC (SBDM) is a force. No real decisions are ever made. Administrators make the decisions without really listening to input from teachers. Often campus monies are allocated for district initiatives and campuses have no say. Some of the assistant principals do not do their share of work and are lax in doing their duties. They have an "it's not my job" attitude or they are retiring and are "using up" their sick days. The superintendent is isolated from what is happening at the campus level. The cabinet only lets him know what they want. DEIC frequently has no quorum. There are 36 members now and teachers are not 2/3 of membership. Presenting issues to DEIC is a waste. Few actions are ever implemented.
- Our current superintendent is doing a great job to turn the district around. The district had hit a low in finances and morale in the previous administration and with his leadership, morale has gone up, fund balances are going up and our TAAS scores have

improved. He is very visible at all the departments, but most of all at the campuses. He allows SBDM to function effectively and he stays on top of things. He takes the time to talk to the students, administrators and custodial staff. In other words, he does not discriminate against anyone. He knows curriculum and is very knowledgeable in accountability, I think the principals have grown in this area under his administration. I think our current board has their "own" agenda and most of the times it doesn't seem to be for the best of the "children" but their own ego. They tend to want to micro-manage and since they are all "compadres" they back each other up in their votes. The employees are starting to ignore their immediate supervisors and call the board to get things they want. I don't think the board really understands our finances; this is the first board to have fax machines at home, Internet, pagers and cellulars at the district's expense. They love to say "I" this or that and in the process they are actually hurting the district.

- Some board members have been rude to the audience. My question is why? Board members are not available for discussing concerns. Even when we have asked them to attend our meetings, they give us excuses. Some of them do not answer phone calls. My question: why do they want to represent the people and yet they are too important to answer questions. Some of them do not want to hear the voices of the people. We want to know how the board members are going to vote (yes or no). Is it possible for the board members to be available for a question and answer session before they vote? I have been told by some board members that they do not want local administrators for top positions and it has been proven. Yet those same board members expect our vice-principals to excel in state mandated exams for students (ex. TAAS). Teachers have concerns, yet they are afraid to voice their opinion before the board because they fear retaliation. It's about time that the board listens to the teachers. Let's have a board/teacher monthly meeting. The superintendent requests too much data or reports from some departments yet very little from others. Why is it that some departments have "too many" secretaries while other departments do not? What is the ratio of department head to secretary?

- Why do we need a governmental person? We have enough school personnel to address issues. We do not need to spend additional money for this position. We need an organizational chart immediately to find out what each department is responsible for. Will the superintendent make this chart available? This chart has been requested for some time by many persons. I'm asking the board to open up an "open forum" during the time that specific agenda items are addressed and that questions or concerns be answered at such time. The superintendent is very repressive. He does not answer questions for the people. When I (as a teacher's

representative) go before the board to ask questions, my questions are never answered, even though I request answers. The LISD teachers want a teacher grievance committee to discuss educational issues. The superintendent did away with a teacher/superintendent committee. Both the principals and teachers have contacted me to address this issue at the public forum. Please discuss this with the superintendent. We, the teachers, and LISD taxpayers want to have a debate with the board members. What is their procedure to request the board members to participate in such debates?

- For years the school district has been a dictatorship. Site-based management is something that is put on paper and not exercised by the teachers. Meetings are held only to gain the signatures needed on documents. There are strong repercussions for any employee that speaks negatively against the district. Administrators are STRONGLY URGED to attend any public meetings and forums to paint a nice picture of the district. In reality, many people in the main office are finding new jobs, or retiring early to leave the chaotic conditions there. Morale for the district is at an all time LOW. The salaries of administrators have increased at a faster pace than that of teachers and para-professionals. Some administrators threaten to leave the district only to get more pay. This tactic worked and he got a huge raise not too long ago. Ironically, his workload and responsibilities have decreased without his salary decreasing. School teachers in the elementary grades are now mandated to tutor on Tuesday and Thursdays. This is a waste of time for teachers because it cuts down on planning time. As it is, the 45-minute planning session is taken up by Reading and Math trainers once a week. It does not give teachers enough time to plan, grade papers, conduct conferences with parents, formulate tests, write lesson plans, formulate binders for C.E.I.C. and all the campus committee organization, plug in grades in the grade books and etc. Tutoring should be directed only to the students that need the extra help. The administration bought software that should have made everyone's life much easier. Instead, they ended up purchasing a program that is not compatible to PEIMS. We are one of the three districts in the state of Texas that does not have software compatible to PEIMS. Our paperwork never decreases because there was or is no main database of information. At the present time, a teacher cannot even get a copy of a student's grades from another campus. The report card is printed out without the grades earned at the other LISD schools.
- Superintendent is overpaid! The school board members feel the taxpayers have a big bank account, that is, that it will never run dry! If those members want miracles, let them dig deep into their own pockets, not the taxpayers!

- The school board does not always make decisions that have the students' best interests at heart. They have political agendas that override the best interest of the student. The community and staff go to them instead of through the proper channels to get what they want.
- Board Governance - Board needs to be addressed as to duties and responsibilities. There is evidence of micro-management. Personal agendas. Superintendent - He's doing an excellent job. Evidence shown on TAAS scores. Strategic Planning - It started about 5 years ago, but it has helped everyone on staff to work towards same goals. Campus involvement plans seem to be aligned to strategic goals. I think SBDM has never been used and followed as well as we're doing now. The campus administration is now allowed to run their schools as they see fit.
- Site-based decision-making: Very active in all campuses. Include individuals from institutions of higher education in policy reform.
- More consistency among the four academic team leaders/liaisons' actions and methods/procedures. (wellness, communication, technology and problem solving). Good structure but more equitable pull for schools is needed. Optimal organization would have shared background between academic leaders and campuses they represent.
- Some micro-management occurring when academic leader goes over the principal.
- District divided into quadrants. Feeder campuses get input. Academic standards in place at all campuses. Data reviewed by quadrant. Lots of vertical planning.
- Single member districts have been a plus, because board representation of population is equal.
- The district policy of school (a cross section) membership on committees to come out with policy is a plus. Such was the case in the formula for custodial allocations.
- Board governance needs to prioritize on students. School management overall seems to be moving smoothly. I believe site-based decision-making is being implemented on campuses because when I've talked to teachers they are well informed and happy as to where the campus is going. I like that the superintendent is student-oriented. He is completely for academics and for getting students to learn. I like to watch him interact with students - he often visits campuses (as shown on local new and campus news). He seems very knowledgeable and has really gotten this district to move forward.
- Board members need "training" on how to be effective and on their role as "policy-makers" not administrators. Some may say they are "excellent." Those are staff who have obtained their requests by going directly to a board member and totally disregarding the

protocol and addressing the issues where they belong, at the administrative level. Never have we had such a self-serving board that does not work within its parameters.

- In my opinion, I think that the school board management has to make some changes in the ways that they handle problems in schools. For a superintendent I think they should be fair with every one that works for the district; if you're going to drug test, do it for every one to have a safer campus and schools.
- The district is trying very hard to update the new methods; however, no one is allowed to travel out of state. At least not for some departments, except the administrators at the top.
- Why have committees (all areas) if their recommendations are not followed?

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- The dyslexia program needs to be followed to be in accord with its developers.
- The dyslexia program needs teachers.
- Money needs to be allocated to the district's alternative reading program. We need teachers in this area so that our students can receive the right amount of contact time and make this program effective. This also has the possibility of decreasing our student enrollment in special education.
- They need more vocational occupation classes. For example, building trade, office duplication, electronics, plumbing, etc. We need teachers for these areas in our schools
- Of all kids taking advanced placements - none passed the final exams.
- Speech therapy and dyslexia services should be looked at more carefully. Due to lack of teachers, these children receive therapy only once a week. More therapists should be hired to serve these children.
- Our curriculum is now handled vertically which seems to help the students because the persons in charge can see the whole picture form pre-K thru 12. The doctor pushes for everyone reading to be third grade and helping our students to graduate and continue college or be gainfully employed upon graduation. I believe our TAAS scores have improved. We now not only have a fine arts magnet program but a health magnet program also.
- Reform policy issues have brought focus on a vigorous student-centered curriculum for life-long learning.
- Every teacher needs a computer with a printer in his/her classroom.
- A clear focus is evident. High standards are in place for all students. Instruction is transforming from very traditional practices

to learner-centered, real world approaches that prepare students for life-long learning.

- Curriculum has never been better. All programs targeted on student learning. District is moving forward on Academic standards. TAAS getting better. Gradually schools are raising their scores. A middle school was recognized this year--the first. Superintendent's emphasis on student learning and accountability is noticeable throughout the district. Since he started, his main focus has been on curriculum.

- I am very satisfied with the program that they have in the schools. One of the programs is that students can start going to college while they are in school so they can finish college faster. The magnet will help the student take a look at what profession they want to study.

- Fourteen percent of LISD's students are in special education. Seventy percent of these are learning disabled. I know not all of these would benefit from assistive technology, but without a doubt many would. When one considers the most basic of accommodations assistive technology in the form of tape recorders, PC, or anything else - where are these items? Where is special education money being spent? If children are taught how to use assistive technology at an early age - they would have no reason to be embarrassed for using these items later. Regular students would also be more accepting of differences if they saw at an early age, students using assistive technology.

- State law mandates a dyslexia (alternative reading program) program. When a district adopts one, the least they could do is provide the program in accordance to the indicators specified by the program. Education is about educating children. When something like the dyslexia alternative reading program is neglected so are our children. One or two days of service is wrong.

- Many Pre-kinder teachers cheat on their Pre-LAS test. This test determines if a child is limited English proficient. Many Pre-K teachers rig the test and label a non-LEP child as LEP so that he/she can qualify for the Pre-kinder. This in turn allows the teacher to have on paper a bilingual class but in reality a non-LEP class. This really does not allow the opportunity for the truly needy bilingual student a spot in a pre-kinder class.

- The Gifted and Talented program should be revamped at the elementary level. Pre-kinder student instruction is in Spanish yet the testing to enter Gifted and Talented for Kinder is in English. Testing measurement does not reflect the language student receives instruction in. Since the campuses have G/T classes, they fill the class with students who may not qualify for G/T, but put students in these classes and label them as G/T when they are not. G/T

classes should be like Special Education where only those meeting testing guidelines are labeled as such.

- The curriculum is apparently doing its job because an overall improvement in TAAS scores has been seen throughout the district. I am very satisfied that my children are being taught what they need to know and even beyond what they need to know. I have a child in special education and I have been extremely satisfied with the process and services she has been receiving. Gifted and Talented needs some work. It needs to be more of an expansion of learning, not more worksheets. I pulled my child out of this program because I feel it needs to be brought up to standards.

- The dyslexia program needs to be re-evaluated because students are not receiving the right amount of contact time. This is a serious problem because it prevents students from learning at an early age. Please give the amount of contact hour presently provided versus what should be provided. Please schedule a meeting to address this serious issue.

- Please give me a report on how the bilingual elementary student is performing as far as reading is concerned. A board member expressed that because of our bilingual students LISD will not do well in the TAAS exams. Can the bilingual director respond to this statement? Never mind who said it, just give us an answer. The Special Education programs - How are they handled at the High School level, the Dyslexia program, the pregnancy homebound program?

- Overall Cigarroa High School does well on AP classes and class size. We have many good things going on, but we have lost many teachers lately. Our class schedule has been the reason for our teachers leaving. The curriculum is the one established by the state and our programs are doing fine. I believe that the ESL program needs some extra emphasis in order to get better results. As an ex-ESL student, I can honestly say the program needs a lot of improvement.

- The Autism units and services related to the children have really taken off during the last four years. Parents are now receiving in-home training and parent training. More and frequent training should be provided for all teachers, especially those working with these children. Teachers should be exposed to different methodologies that are out there so that they can service these kids.

- The Gifted and Talented program is not being managed correctly. The classes rarely have any special education students, low English proficiency students or students with behavioral problems. Due to the low G/T count in the schools, some schools pull out the top student from the other classes and place them in the G/T class. This depletes the other classes of high achieving students. The

other classes are a mixture of low achievers, special education students, bilingual students, slow learners, and students with behavioral problems. This what happens on at least one campus-- Buenos Aires Elementary. Physical Education classes are regularly cancelled when coaches need to help administrators on campus. Bilingual Education: Until the beginning of this year, reading and math trainers did not have materials for teachers to use with the bilingual or Spanish dominant students. Curriculum: The district is working so hard in raising the standards in the curriculum; in the meantime students cannot master what is expected by the state. It is interesting to see that each year more and more students pass the state mandated test yet they cannot read and write. Schools scoring high should be spot-checked. Students with academic recognition should be evaluated at random by the state to check the accuracy of the results.

- Special education does not tell parents of services that help. Great Special program, but Cigarrora does not publicize it- Communication gap. Relies on people outside the school district to notify her of what is available.
- Parent agrees that special education groups are kept separate.
- Parent agrees special education is kept aside. Special education students taken out with other kids, but are always in presence of an aide.
- My daughter broke her leg and was placed in the 504 program--it's the disabled program. Books and meals were brought to my daughter. There is a lot of paperwork. My daughter twisted her ankle and could not get up the stairs and this affected her GPA because she was instructed in a separate room.
- The district needs to hire qualified staff to address reading disabilities.
- More activities for children in special education. Don't want to see them just sitting in class. Insufficient resources for special education. Teachers do not appear to have to make accommodations for disabled students. Expectations are low for disabled students. Someone besides special education should monitor special education. Special education received hundreds of thousands of dollars (probably millions) to assist children receiving special education services. Where is the money being spent? Why don't our learning disabled students have laptops, or tape recorders, or book of tapes, or e-books, or browser readers for access to the Internet? TAAS should not be the curriculum. TAAS handouts are used instead of Math, Science, and Social Studies textbooks.
- I've heard over and over that we should do away with basals (textbooks). However, we still have TAAS handouts, TAAS book, TAAS, TAAS... How are we to approach standards based teaching if this is still the case? The state requires an alternative reading

program--the district is complying with this mandate but not following the instructions regarding daily implementation. This needs to be corrected and children when suspected of having reading problem should be tested as early as possible.

- I think our technology program is very good. However, six hours of training per student before they receive an internet password is too much. What about those students struggling with reading--they need Internet browser reading software. This is being provided.
- Classrooms are too crowded at the high school level.
- We have too many special education students (inclusion) in our classes and no in-class support.
- Teachers at the high school level have too many students, many preparations, too many inclusion students.
- The inclusion of Fine Arts and Vocational teacher count in the staffing formula has hurt, because the principal will need to make a choice of what (subject) to fill slot available instead of what (subject) is needed. This is also true of the teachers for the Health Science Magnet.
- Academic recognitions. High number of economically disadvantaged age population, but also high level of students graduating and meeting requirements
- I would like to know how parents could maintain the interest of our children in your materials. I particularly have tried everything. I've asked my children to participate in the different activities, but there are so little opportunities now and they have been unable to participate in any activities. They do like sports and there are a limited number of children that can participate. Many children like mine do not understand the sports rules and are never selected, even though they have a big illusion to participate in these sports. Sports help our children maintain high grades.
- I think if you would invest in bilingual programs for our children, they would show more desire to study. If you would do something for the parents that understand little English, it would help us teach our children.
- We need to help the children to take field trips to Fiesta Texas and to have money to purchase items for school activities or they can make themselves with the teacher's help.
- The Educational Services, in my opinion, is very good. It helps many of our children in their education and entertains them in something. It also gives them a will to study more.
- More training is needed for teachers servicing special education. Teachers are hired for self-contained classrooms without any experience for that position. There are times the teachers aides know more than the teachers. Also all teachers should get training on computers or technology. District has a policy, but some are not allowed to attend these classes.

- Bilingual program - Marin High School has a high enrollment of recent immigrants. There is only one teacher teaching new English A - 2 classes a.m. and p.m. Speech Communication, 2nd year - One teacher aide. ESL - one teacher a.m. and p.m. Both the new English classes are over crowded. Students needs are not fully served due to high enrollment. Students need a lot of individual tutoring. Administration refuses to hire another teacher to alleviate problem. Students with low self esteem here at Martin; they feel they are behind.
- AP program - Program at MHS is a joke. Students should be enrolled all school year, not one semester. Does not prepare students for end of course exam. Concern has already been addressed by TAMIU professors. Pressure is put on teachers that teach in the AP program. Principal limits teacher to assign students to higher learning assignments. Principal feels students will be overwhelmed and drop program. Principal has retaliated to several AP teachers.
- Why don't all the schools hold a tournament where the children can demonstrate their athletic talent? Also, I heard that a magnet school during the summer held classes for the elementary school children but not all the schools had this opportunity. Why not? At other school meetings there was discussion about giving classes to parents, so that parents can help their children with their homework. Then, we can participate with them and at their school.
- Support to teachers taking the exit review.
- Special education students included in regular classes need speech therapists and diagnosticians.
- Gaining Early Awareness Readiness (GEAR UP Grant is a plus)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- I do not feel as welcome at MS. At the attendance office, parent went in and was asked why she was there. Another parent went to the attendance office to be sure her child received their medicine.
- Walk for Success: Teachers visited 50 at-risk 8[th] graders' homes on a Saturday to present information on high school plans and college awareness.
- Recently found out that her daughter was in lab since Monday. Daughter was nervous to tell her mom and confided in staff there. The staff person told the mom. Mom is glad someone cared for her daughter to help her this way.
- Where our school is located there is no cooperation from the local business owners because there is lack of communication between school officials and business owners. They too have children and they want the best for their children. If they are not willing to help,

you can call upon us, the parents. There is always communication between us.

- LISD needs to improve community involvement activities not only with the parents, but also with the business sector and other Laredo clubs and organizations.
- The District has very poor parent involvement at some schools. In a few schools they have outstanding parent/community involvement. In Oregon, they have very few para-educators because the individual schools demand parents to be involved. Many duties performed by the para-educators could be performed by well-trained parent volunteers.
- Our parent involvement department is doing an excellent job at providing services to the community. I believe we have good community relations unlike the other school district in town. We are able to have partnerships with other districts in the state, as in the sale of weighted average daily attendance, having vertical school partnerships. I believe we have good internal communication but feel we could do better on the external part. We should be promoting the good we do more than we do.
- Very few parents are involved in school and that is because they have to work. I feel some parents would want to be more involved, but their work schedules do not allow them to fulfill this wish.
- A strong community involvement component is making inroads throughout the school reform initiatives. School and community are aware of the changes being implemented and the support from parents and business community are assuring the success of these initiatives.
- More school internal communication to promote students with information on community service.
- I am an involved parent. I was given plenty of opportunity and well-notified as to how to become involved. The community overall does seem to have a concern for students so they do seem to yet involved - businesses as well. They come to the campus to offer various services - programs, tutoring, donations, etc. Again, I am and have been well informed over happenings within LISD.
- We have terrible community involvement. We don't have parents at the school unless they are suing the schools. We tried to hire a parental involvement officer but our Title 1 money was cut by 40 percent so we have none left. We are down to 6 people on the Title 1 budget and very little money left for anything else. Businesses hire our students but frequently they make them work until 2 a.m. Our students come to school to sleep. Instead of working around our schedule, students must report to work early so they have to take less classes. Communication to the community is expensive. The newspaper charges exorbitant amounts for ads. They should

give us free ad space. It costs $1000 to put an ad about a school activity. They don't give us enough publicity on the positive things.

- Excellent rapport with and support from the community. Campuses do an excellent job of addressing goal. Community and parental support by providing a myriad of opportunities for parents to become a part of the school community; Focus on parents as supporters of their child's education, as leaders and partners in learning.
- Three Schools (Cigarro MS, HS and Magnet HS) states businesses do not know the schools.
- DARE instructor gives a 45-minute session at schools. Parents get involved in the activities their child participates in. Feels welcome at all campuses.
- Christen MS and Faria Elementary: Parent Volunteer /bus aide rides buses with kids. Feels welcome at Farias. Been registered volunteer for 5 years.
- At Heights, just completed canopy drive. Awards to kids for highest ticket sales. Raised over $4,000. Parents very involved.
- Not a lot of involvement. Need more communication. Not everyone is given the opportunity to learn about the programs. It seems like the same parents are involved.
- Classes to teach parents with computers and ESL. Lot of organizations helping underprivileged kids. Mattresses, washer, dryer, stoves, dinette sets are among items provided. Community is there when they are made aware of needs.
- Business and community is very willing to donate when requested. Some of businesses that donate are Sonic, Domino's, K-Mart and others.
- Santa Maria Elementary has low parent involvement.
- Transportation of parents is one problem resulting in low involvement.
- No communication between businesses and parents.
- I have a child in Memorial. At the elementary level, parents are involved but as kids get older parents are less and less involved. By the time they are in high school, there is virtually no involvement.
- Son goes to Zachery and staff welcomes parents and is very safe. Do get contributions.
- Parent liaison for Martin HS promotes parental involvement.
- Guirro school is informing parents of scholarships. Did a walk with administrators on east side of Laredo. Bag of information on scholarships along with survey. Last year was the first year walk was done. Will do again this year. Got help from a group in Houston who had done it before and helped organization and participated in the walk

- How to Motivate Parents? 1) Hold meetings during off hours and submit reports to parents. 2) Emphasize at each meeting the importance of being knowledgeable of school activities. 3) Short meeting and always have interesting topics for the community. 4) Invite parents to visit the schools so there would exist a good relationship between parents and teachers. 5) Invite parents to serve as volunteers
- Community Involvement strong among parents, community and schools.
- Very open to community, especially DEIC input
- Neighborhood chats in community centers/schools with superintendent (also by quadrants). Would like to see greater involvement/attendance at these meetings from community.
- Lot of communication with superintendent.
- Presentations by principals through civic organizations and PTO
- Many of the problems facing education are being blamed on/or are due to dysfunctional families...etc. If this is the case, the district should address this through community involvement. For example, let the boy scouts meet at every elementary school
- Have committee of parent volunteers in different areas.
- Parent conferences
- Parental Involvement Day
- Full time parental involvement liaison at high school, conversation at a parent's house, availability of school facilities for community organizations, ESL, computer, and citizenship classes at schools
- DARE, PAL, CIS, CAPS-Numerous organizations
- SER Jobs for Progress Literacy and Daycare Services

Appendix A
PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

As part of the review process, the review team held public forums and focus groups to obtain input. During three public forums, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members participated by writing personal comments about the major topics of review, and in some cases talking in person to review team members. Parents, teachers, principals and assistant principals also participated in small focus groups that discussed the topics under review.

The comments below illustrate community perceptions of Laredo ISD and do not reflect the findings and opinions of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team. The following contains comments received by focus area.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Strengthen educational services delivery by increasing number of certified teachers at the beginning of the year (currently 129). Recruitment effort has strengthened
- Health Insurance is a problem.
- The formula for hiring personnel is not working.
- By the time that advertisements come out in the newspaper, and interviews are held, everyone knows who has the position. Sometimes one month in advance. Why bother interviewing?
- Health insurance could be improved.
- There are positions that the pay grade does not do justice to the job responsibility. Some of us are caught in a position that because we are not at a "low" pay we don't get a higher percentage of raise, i.e. this year, years of experience did not count at all. If we are making under, $10,000 we got a percentage raise," 10-20K, 6 percent; over 30K-5 percent. I don't think the board really realizes what this does to morale. They made it seem that the only way to get a raise is to file a grievance! Overall, I think the actual Human Resources personnel do the best with what the board allows.
- The salary especially for 1st year teachers is outstanding. I think compared to other districts around the state; LISD has a comparable salary scale. The district structure is easy to understand. Teachers are allowed staff development time throughout the year. I believe recruitment has improved this past

year and I would continue to work on this area to make sure LISD's is in line with United ISD.

- We have a lousy health insurance program. We use the same broker year after year but our program only gets worse. Teachers need to be healthy. We should choose our doctors. We cannot afford health insurance for our families. A single parent cannot afford to insure their families. Because teachers are working poor, we can't provide for our families under this system. We need something better.
- Health insurance is too expensive and services need to be monitored closely. Worker's compensation for the past 3 years. So we've been working hard to bring the district from an extra-hazardous employer to better. We've come a long way but we still need to do a bit more. The finance department does an excellent job on investigating practices. Thanks to the bond we will be able to build new campuses and many additions. Our students will be able to have the comfort of a gym while doing their P.E. classes.
- Health insurance is not cost effective. Too many hidden costs. Medicines are outrageously expensive. Sometimes medicines we need are not approved by the insurance company.
- Health Insurance - inadequate, Pacificare does not cover sufficient (even at state level), too expensive for service period, school year 2001-2001 district did not take bids for health insurance (someone is getting a kickback), prescription medicine too expensive.
- Job descriptions not matching jobs-some don't want to do tasks, this involves principals.
- This year is first year LISD was competitive with United ISD. More comparable salaries this year across the board. Incentives have included: sign-on bonus.
- Exchange program with other countries.
- Other teachers do not receive incentives: 35 years longevity, 37 years longevity, 40 years longevity
- Communication to administrative staff regarding salaries not provided. Not prohibited, just not offered.
- Recruitment needs to be more aggressive. United ISD beats us to the teachers. Get rid of the red tape and sign them up on the spot!
- I think the health insurance we have right now does not help the employees at all. They have rules and regulations that employees do not know about until they are stuck with a huge medical bill. I think sometimes the board makes decisions without realizing the impact on the employees.
- Insurance: The campus insurance committee representatives are not happy with our current insurance, PacifiCare. When the district went out for bids several insurance companies gave their rates. The insurance committee then polled all the people at the campuses. The majority wanted to get Humana. Even the bus drivers and

other low paid workers were polled. They preferred to pay more and have a better insurance; however, the board did not take their wishes into consideration. They decided to adopt PacifiCare as our insurance. Our year is up with PacifiCare and the district has not even gone out for bids. They employees DO NOT WANT PACIFICARE. The usage for our insurance went down and the rates went up. Campus insurance representatives are not called to meetings. The district is trying to disband the committee like they did the teacher advisory committee. They simply do not give teachers a voice.

- We (teacher) need better health insurance.
- Recruitment - Our salaries for teachers have increased which has helped to compete with other districts. Hiring Practices - Thanks to SBDM our hiring practices are 100 percent better. Salary - Although we have a pay plan developed to bring equity to all, there are cases where experience and loyalty are not a priority.
- Interview with custodial staff: inconsistent hiring practices for custodial staff.
- We have very poor health insurance coverage. The cost is too high for single parents. The fee for one child is the same for the 10 children. I feel this is outrageous.
- It seems as if all the teachers are being "ripped-off." I believe that the reason no one is going into the education field is this. Teachers at the Cigarroa campus are caring and loving, and I can attest to that. Some employees are extremely unqualified and some are extremely bright. The balance at the end is that LISD has poor decisions when it comes to hiring. Administrators get an enormous salary when teachers are underpaid.
- It is disappointing that positions which impact and address instruction (the focus of our district) are at the lower pay grade than positions that do not address instruction (i.e. hearing officer). Also, disappointing was the tabling and never addressing of recommendations made by TASB with regard to changes he felt "some people earn too much money." Apparently TASB saw the merit and the need for compensation, but the board did not!
- Salaries for "veteran" teachers are poor. The beginning salaries are a lot better, but the other steps have not increased enough. It should be significant to keep teachers with 20 plus years. When some administrative positions open, they offer paltry amounts so that veteran teachers cannot afford to make the move. As a result you get inexperienced people in administrative slots. They lose money to get some administrative positions. They offer only base salary + years experience and additional days. As a result, some principals are very incompetent. The downtown offices like Human Resources and finance have grown. Those business persons can

make more than a teacher with a master's and 15 years of teaching experience.

- Concerns at Martin High School: Several positions have been filled without following proper procedure. 1. Teacher-aide position for self contain-Special Education. Mother is the teacher and son is the teacher aide, (Aunt - sister) of teacher was program director for Special Education program. 2. Assistant registrar, the registrar was allowed to hire her sister. Principal, assistant principals formed a hiring committee consisting of themselves and the registrar. Held interviews during the summer. Position was posted during the summer; conveniently other staff members were not aware of vacant position. 3. English as Second Language or Bilingual - clerk position was given to a teacher-aide. No interviews and no posting of position. 4. Parent Involvement position was not posted. Again, there were no interviews. 5. GEAR UP Counselor position was not posted and no interviews. Per counselor, during orientation revealed to me that she had been hired by the principal. She was looking for a teacher -substitute position. No posting of job position and no interviews. Principal offered her the job.
- At Milton Elementary, hiring practices are done on a preferential basis. The school principal does not adhere to school district policies. The after school program coordinator, for instance, is not posted for all employees to apply and individual was appointed to the position. The same individual has been appointed for the past four years. This individual is a liaison for Texas A & M International University. The liaisons hold meetings during regular school hours (3:00 pm. to 3:45 pm.). Since, they are getting additional pay, the meetings with student interns from Texas A&M Inter. University should be held after 3:45 pm. Liaisons are double dipping. These practices are not in compliance with District policies.
- Martin High School Concern: Lady coaches are not extended the same teaching schedule as male coaches. Male coaches are given two athletic classes and a P.E. class. Female coaches are only given one athletic class. We are made victims of double standards. We constitute a form of discrimination because male coaches are assigned two athletics classes. Why not us?

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- Budget is small and does not meet schools' demands. Several departments need more funding to buy school supplies. It is ridiculous not to have chalk, markers and paper available for teacher use.
- The only thing that we need is more custodians because the school is too big.

- Looking forward to a rebuilt and restored campus.
- The physical plant, I believe, does a good job in maintaining all of the buildings where our children study. Buildings are in a good state so that no accidents will occur. Students have more desire to study and take care of their school.
- It may appear that we are overstaffed when it relates to custodians; however, many of our facilities are very old, very spread out and have extensive lawns which require much maintenance. Custodial staff not only provide classroom, restrooms and cafeteria maintenance, but they are also crossing guards, painters, plumbers, and gardeners.
- Many buildings are old and run down. I am so glad that the bond package passed and that improvements will be made. The community has been well informed of the planning process of these improvements. Custodial services are adequate; however there does seem to be an excess at some campuses. Hire more teachers. I think we need improvement in facilities and building capacity, we have a construction bond project going on. I realize we are a poor school district and must concentrate on student facilities and not administration, but administration is in dire need of facilities. Our custodial staff is not sufficient for the district's needs
- I would like to see more classrooms being built.
- Cigarroa High School is considerably smaller than Nixon HS and Martin HS. The school should be expanded and more facilities should be offered to students. A single cafeteria, library and an auditorium would be valuable.
- We've created an energy plan that has helped the district save money. Although we have cut down on custodial staff, we still need to work on this area. Also, custodial staff attitude needs to be addressed. Nobody wants to walk the extra mile.
- Central office needs an adequate building with parking. All should be housed under one roof.
- We need to privatize custodial services. We waste a lot of money on people just standing around. They do lousy cleaning and they use lousy materials. They do not clean. We need to have our A/C ducts cleaned. We have mold in our walls. They don't take care of it. We have A/C that is controlled by a computer 150 miles away. We have terrible A/C. It's always too hot or too cold. Thermostats don't work. If it's 59 degrees at 8 a.m. the heater turns on. By noon, it's 85 degrees and the heaters are still on. Computer system is stupid! We don't have adequate storage for teachers in their rooms.
- As a concerned parent, I want to be assured that Cigarroa High campus is ADA compliant particularly in the bathrooms, labs and all instructional classrooms. At this time they only have one

accessible bathroom in the campus. They need to strategically locate the ADA restrooms throughout the campus.

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- School taxes are too high! Every year they increase.
- The budget process is a farce. The old way made sure instructional areas got the money. We stopped watering our plants to save money. All the plants died. They returned over $20,000 to the campus because of all the water savings but our campus looks like a deserted field. They are wasting money to build gardens for the temporary buildings but they refuse to invest in maintaining the campuses at the permanent buildings. No one is really keeping track of how much money is spent on instructional materials on the core areas. They keep raising taxes but they don't spend the money wisely.
- School taxes are low here compared to other places this size.
- Case practices seem to be fair. I do not worry about it or investment - I feel all has been handled well. The bond package seems to have (so far) been distributed fairly.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- The budget is not adequate for instruction. More monies are spent on uniforms for band and cheerleaders and football than for instruction. It looks like they were buying instructional materials but look at the invoices and they are not. We are spending a lot on technology but not comparable on 4 core areas. Gifted and Talented has no money. We spent more than $30,000 on one special education student who has a very aggressive parent constantly harassing the district yet we don't even get $5 dollars for Gifted and Talented student for instructional materials. We get very little money for classroom books, workbooks and instructional materials. We have computers but no ink cartridges. We cannot print anything. How can we do well in TAAS when they don't' fund instruction?
- Money is allocated where necessary
- We used to have former commissioner of education as advisor for our cash and investment practices, but the former administration did not see the need for him and our fund balance sank to an all-time low.
- Under our present chief financial officer excellent practices for accountability of monies are in place. Office staff is always very helpful.
- Financial reporting is a bit complicated and given to community in a format that is hard to understand. The budgeting has improved

over the past few years from a negative fund balance. This is great. Keep up the good work. I cannot comment on the internal audit because I am not familiar with this area.

- We are coming along and greatly improving in our financial management. The finance department has won numerous awards for the fine job they are doing. I believe the internal audit department should be independent of any influence. The current board wants to give out the assignments and approve the audit before it actually begins. If this is the case, principals or directors who are their friends will never be audited.

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

- The funding for library books at Nixon High is very low. The allotted budget for library books does not reflect the student population. Nixon High spends the lowest amount on library books. Its inventory is also very low. Nixon High has the highest student population but the lowest/smallest library budget of all the high schools in LISD. A limited library collection makes for limited student resources which is terrible when you have the highest student population.
- More textbooks, workbooks and resource materials are needed for students to receive a respectable education. I understand many books are lost by students, but I think there should be extra books bought. Having to get to the point of withdrawing issued books for an AP class to give/lend to another campus is ridiculous.
- I feel they can do a better job at getting a better deal.
- We developed a purchasing policy some years back that has helped us follow the bid process for contracted services.
- The Physical Education Department - Who purchases their uniforms, including shoes?
- Our purchasing department is doing a great job at abiding by the law and following the correct process.
- I cannot comment on Purchasing or competitive bids or contract process because I am not familiar with these areas. I know the campus where my children attend has had problems with the textbooks. Last year, my daughter did not receive her science book until the 6th -sixth week period! Other books were also very delayed. I know I let my concern be known to teacher, principal, and they just got the run-around from the textbook department. This is unsatisfactory. How can a teacher be expected to teach 24 children without the necessary materials?!

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Schools get new computers that sit in boxes in the halls for months, no one knows how to use them.
- Great computers labs, trainers, Technology Master Teachers.
- I am 65 years old. I have trouble walking and lifting heavy items. I am the guardian of a ten year old boy who qualified for assistive technology. He has a full size computer and monitor at home. When the equipment malfunctions, I have to find someone to carry the equipment to the elementary school to get it fixed. This is not right. Technicians should do house calls or my child should be provided a laptop or something anyone should be expected to carry.
- There is a lack of computers in Special Education. The computer to student ratio is 3 to 19.
- There has been some very incompetent computer purchases. They buy the wrong stuff so we wind up paying thousand of dollars to correct their mistakes. We get lousy low bid stuff that doesn't work or doesn't last. We never follow-up on very faulty stuff. We spend double because the first hole puncher breaks. We need knowledgeable people to buy paper towels that absorb, garbage bags that don't break, ballasts for lights that don't have to be replaced every 6 weeks. We should have virus software in our computers to protect our equipment rather than waste man-hours and materials re-imaging every single computer in our district.
- I believe that having computers in the class has helped a lot of students in their studies and to advance in all the new technology that we have.
- You have extremely incompetent people running technology. They have made so many costly mistakes and they don't fire them. We have to do paper and pencil tallies because our stupid computers cannot do reports. They bought lousy computer programs but they don't make those people service the account to produce the copies of reports we need. We have not been able to print in any technology lab this entire school year. Our students cannot print their work (assignments). Teachers have to check their work on the screen. Technicians cannot fix computers. Our lease/purchase contract says they're supposed to replace broken computers. They don't. We have a computer virus in our network. The school techies cannot fix anything. We need competent people. We don't have money to buy instructional software. We have computer labs that have never been set up right in four years. We need knowledgeable people. Fire all of these useless ignorant people. Teachers cannot use computers. They just sit "pretty" in the rooms. The computers are a wasted $2,000 purchase. Lots of waste for computers that don't work -- just sit there.
- This area is controversial in our district due to the great amount of money invested in it and the small results obtained. It is great that

the district is trying to get us to be computer literate, but how can this be achieved if we are always infested with viruses? In the last year, the student's use of the Internet was limited since I-Gear was cancelled, we ran out of the ink cartridges, and the system was down all the time. The class of 2000 had to apply to college without rankings since the system was not functioning and no one was able to operate it! I give this a 3 on a 1-10 scale.

- The technology department is substandard. The new computers have a virus that erases everything on the desktop. The district still cannot provide the teachers with a uniform software to use for a grade book. The technology classes on campus have no software for the students to use. There is no direction for them there. Students have to rely on the teacher to teach basic skills. For years the teachers at the elementary level have been asking for an efficient typing program for the lower grades. Students get to the fifth grade without knowing how to properly use the keyboard. There are no longer lab managers in the campus on a daily basis.

- Many duties have shifted from campus technology trainers to the librarians. The technology trainers are getting additional stipends, yet video conferencing responsibilities have been shifted totally to the librarian. If the campus librarians are getting additional responsibilities, should they not be receiving additional training and stipends to reflect the additional technology responsibilities?

- I am happy that both my children have access to computers in their classrooms as well as a separate computer class. Both are learning how computers are not only helpful in everyday life but also fun. One of my children needs assistive technology. I was so excited to know that the district has many programs and hardware that she is able to use and that I can check out.

- We have a great technology department. I see the programs the children learn in their curriculum and they are the skills they need to advance whether continuing their education or in the workforce. The district makes our teachers go to computer training which some of our older teachers do need. These classes, which are also made available to other employees, are very informative and anytime we need help with software or hardware, they are willing and able to help.

- The district's technology program has come "a long way the past few years." Much teacher training has taken place. Computers and Internet available. Now we just need to work on total classroom integration of technology in instruction.

TRANSPORTATION

- Some students get picked up later than others when bus routes cover more than 1 campus. Sometimes miss after-school activities or are late. (Magnet school)
- Why do you not have a route to El Azteca? There are children that do not have transportation during bad weather. They must be on time to school.
- Back in the 1960's there was no free transportation. Students living far from school paid their own way. Student living close by walked. Thus taxes were lower.
- Cigamora and Nixon do not hold to tardiness/ISS policy when due to bus transportation.
- I am very satisfied with the transportation of this district. I always observe when I drive by what is going on inside each school bus LISD & UISD. I have always noticed students in LISD are well behaved and seated. I think this is due to bus drivers. I attended the school bus safety transportation week proclamation and was delighted that my Pre-K student was able to take her 1st school bus trip and that it was such a positive experience for her. I felt she was in good hands.
- Scheduling of buses for magnet school students in adequate. Availability of buses is provided.
- Busing Issues - Special education students are leaving campus before the end of the educational day in order to accommodate busing schedules. At times, these same students are on the bus for over an hour at a time. Something must be done to remedy the situation.
- On Transportation, I have to say that whenever buses are needed, they are available. I am content with the way our busing system works. The only complaints about it could be that some buses have been deteriorated by students and that occasionally some inept drivers are hired. Besides that everything is in fair condition.
- Transportation is needed in the middle and high school area from the colonias or the zones that are 5 miles from school. Transportation for sports events.
- I believe we have a good transportation dept. for the amount of buses we have and children we transport regularly. We have a good safety record.
- Every effort is made to provide efficient, safe transportation for all students.
- School buses are used to transport regular students as well as special education students. The difference is that special education gets buses without air conditioning, and there have been times that buses have been parked all day and the children with braces are burned from the hot braces, as some are in buses longer than 1 hour.
- More Buses

- Santa Maria - ratio of students to buses are held to certain level and this results in some kids staying and waiting or getting to school earlier than normal.
- Bus drivers have multiple routes while kids are transported to other schools.
- No bussing-only for Special Education.

FOOD SERVICES

- In your school, when the children are served and they do not like the food, the cafeteria ladies get mad and scold the children for not eating their food.
- I would like for the food that is served be of a better quality. When I go to the school meetings it is mentioned that the food is nutritious, but I ask myself. How nutritious is bread, milk, and fruit and furthermore, the milk and fruit are canned similar to the fruit juice? Overall, the children that participate in sports leave their homes at 6 a.m. and don't return home until 8 p.m. with a lot of hunger. After a competition, some don't eat all day until they return home.
- The employees are suffering because of lack of adequate conditions where they are working (so I've been told). Please check for safety standards at the food service dept. Check for air-conditioning where needed. Check to see if the students are eating what it is being served. We have a department for wellness. Please describe the duties of the wellness program. How has the wellness scored with the LISD Board? Did the supt. evaluate the food service program? What was the outcome? Were there any recommendations for this year in reference to the menu and students' input for meals? Are the meals properly balanced? Who prepares the balanced meals?
- The meals that are offered, I feel, are not balanced meals. They do not follow the food pyramid. They are too high on carbohydrates. Not enough vegetables are part of the diet. Also the meals do not reflect student choices.
- The food that is offered to the children does seem well-balanced. I like that there is a variety. The quality seems very good. The equipment seems clean. Many cafeterias here are small. However I hear that with the bond package that was passed, many will be brought up to standards. I very much like that all children are offered breakfast and lunch free of charge because most may have trouble with finances.
- We have a good food service program, balanced meals, quality and nutrition. We have a good number of students participating in the lunch program.

- Parents are concerned that not enough vegetables are served, counting some starches as vegetables.
- Breakfast in a bag - some parents wanted to see more traditional warm breakfast
- Special needs addressed - some concerns with 504 special needs- no breads.
- Central kitchen currently prepares all foods-campuses keep warm. New kitchens will be more complete.
- Ice cream Wednesdays-kids like.
- We need better food. Sometimes the food is really bad. The meals may not be balanced if they run out of an item. They should cater to student tasters. Sometimes it is really bad. Maybe they need more money invested but just fix it. For some students this is the only place to eat.
- Food service is adequate. Salads look good. No fixed costs.
- Back in the 1960's, there was no free food; therefore taxes were a lot lower.
- Food Service is extremely bad. We have no variety. The menu is limited to very few selections. I do not know if the problem is the budget or something else, but the problem needs to be solved. We cannot keep on going on chicken nuggets every Monday and cheeseburgers on Fridays. A complaint, I had was that last year it seemed as if the foam dispensable plates were being washed and reused. That was disgusting and sometimes it even kept me from eating.
- One parent will not eat there. Hamburgers are ok. No one likes the chicken. There is a need to change the menu. Kids eat breakfast in rooms but hate cereal. Parents are not allowed at Farias. At Nixon parents are not allowed in the cafeteria. In the San Antonio schools parents can attend parent/child meals, no such thing in Laredo. Cereal and chicken is served many times during each week in November. They are very strict at lunch. Kids can't talk at lunch. If a child spills something, the school gets after them. My daughter brings her lunch bag; the cafeteria staff won't let her get the milk or fruit. Newer campuses have better equipped kitchens. My kids tell me that they don't like the food.
- Kids get choices.
- All meals are free-great.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Need more security because it's a big campus, but overall feels very comfortable.
- Too many people have master keys and there is a lot of thieving.
- Drug sniffing dogs don't come in to schools as they should.
- New policies resulting from September 11 Events.

- I think the discipline policies in our school districts are working very well. I'm a security guard, so I know a lot about discipline. One thing is the pay we all have. We get paid $5.15 an hour and the hard work we do, for that pay, is not enough! I hope you take it under consideration, and maybe help us get paid more! We deserve it!
- Standards for safe schools in place; Goal III of strategic plan specifically addresses safe and orderly schools issues.
- Please give the community a report on how safe all our schools are in case of any emergency (ex. Such as drug abuse in the schools). I hear that there are drugs in our schools. Give us a report on all these violations and what are the schools doing to prevent drugs in our schools.
- My children attend an LISD elementary campus. I am satisfied with the safety and security at them and in general all the campuses. Gates are closed regularly in all areas except by the main office so anyone who comes to the school must check in to the office. Fire drills are also regular. During the recent tragedy at NYC, I felt my children were safe at their campus. Discipline policies and procedures were well defined at the beginning of the year. I like the DARE program and I like that even in Kinder my child was learning to say No to drugs and able to ask me questions regarding class discussions. Law enforcement seems to be very involved in visiting students. I especially like that constables and officers help control traffic regularly mornings and afternoons to ensure students are safely picked up, and in monitoring traffic flow over major streets. I am overall satisfied with the safety and security of my child in this district.
- I believe we have good discipline policies and the people involved in these departments know their duties, i.e. Hearing Office. We have good relations w/ both the police and sheriff's departments. Our DARE program has received awards.
- Some schools do not report. For example, Christen has vandalism in school, drug problems that are not reported because everyone knows the families, and if the family is well-known, it is covered up.
- How safe are our students in the bus? To my understanding some bus drivers need a refresher course in public relations so that they will not be rude with para-professional and other persons.
- Safety plan at each campus and shared with parents. Phones very helpful.
- Four crossing guards hired this year; parents request paid for crossing guards.
- Middle school and high school officers on campus, crisis plan.
- Every campus has a security officer.
- Metal detectors at secondary campuses.

- Nixon and Martin-additional security (24 hour) during time around rivalry football game. 24-hour security not standard.
- Previously (1-2 years ago) had night security no longer.
- Principal called to check campus if intruder alarm goes off.
- Safety Meetings, Cabinet Meetings.
- Security is needed in the night. Enforce the discipline by hiring professional to get the students in the right profession.
- Schools are not safe. We need Identification for everyone and enforcement. Security guards are incompetent. We waste money having these uniformed robots walking around the building. They don't see anything, don't stop anything, don't serve. We need to arrest students like the law says. Principals often don't report drug seizures to police "if it's only one cigarette or a small bag." There should be zero tolerance always. All rules should be enforced. Arrest vandals. It will improve a lot of attitude.
- School campus safety is not competent due to the fact that our disciplinarians seem not to care in correcting the student but getting rid of him. I believe that in order for discipline to improve at Cigarroa, Nixon, or Martin stronger punishment is needed. Students easily get away with being late to class, simply because the only form of punishment they obtain is attending in-school suspension. In ISS all they do is meet their friends and cause more problems and I seriously believe that until stronger punishment is implemented the safety of our schools will not improve.
- Could have more security. Christen is a four acre campus and has 2 guards. Many security guards and police on campus. Kids respect. When crime increased in the area more money was allocated to security at Christen. The elementary schools have good security. If someone is on campus that shouldn't be, the campus knows. At schools, parents have the right to say when something is wrong and schools listen. Extra security was available during transition period when fence was not available. Some campuses have metal detectors but are used randomly. Crimestoppers are hooked to all campuses. LISA received awards. It works well. Won't even tell parents of kids who gave tips to the police. There are no or few women security guards at Cigarroa MS. Many girls in fist fights in bathroom. Security calls sheriff to go help. More females are applying for sheriff positions. Martin has only one female officer. Yesterday, 11/7/01, a kid put something into another kid's drink. Dress code needs greater enforcement at MS and HS.

Appendix B
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS
Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

Laredo Independent School District Management And Performance Review

n = 50

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer		
		44.0%	48.0%	8.0%		

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		2.0%	2.0%		84.0%	0.0%	2.0%	10.0%

3.	How long have you lived in Laredo ISD?	0-5 years	6-10 years	11 or more	No Answer
		20.0%	6.0%	64.0%	10.0%

4.	What grades levels(s) does your child(ren) attend?				
Pre-Kindergarten	**Kindergarten**	**First**	**Second**	**Third**
12.0%	18.0%	22.0%	20.0%	18.0%
Fourth	**Fifth**	**Sixth**	**Seventh**	**Eighth**
14.0%	16.0%	16.0%	14.0%	18.0%
Ninth	**Tenth**	**Eleventh**	**Twelfth**	
18.0%	16.0%	16.0%	12.0%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	12.5%	43.8%	27.1%	12.5%	4.2%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	16.7%	39.6%	14.6%	22.9%	6.3%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	31.3%	45.8%	8.3%	12.5%	2.1%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	27.1%	39.6%	18.8%	4.2%	10.4%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	20.4%	46.9%	10.2%	16.3%	6.1%	
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials they believe are most effective.	18.4%	42.9%	18.4%	14.3%	6.1%	
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	10.2%	42.9%	28.6%		10.2%	8.2%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	8.2%	46.9%	36.7%	6.1%	2.0%	
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:						

	a) Reading	28.6%	53.1%	6.1%	8.2%	4.1%
	b) Writing	28.6%	49.0%	4.1%	14.3%	4.1%
	c) Mathematics	28.6%	53.1%	6.1%	8.2%	4.1%
	d) Science	24.5%	53.1%	8.2%	12.2%	2.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	24.5%	55.1%	8.2%	8.2%	4.1%
	f) Computer Instruction	27.1%	50.0%	6.3%	12.5%	4.2%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	24.5%	51.0%	10.2%	12.2%	2.0%
	h) Fine Arts	24.5%	51.0%	10.2%	8.2%	6.1%
	i) Physical Education	28.6%	40.8%	10.2%	14.3%	6.1%
	j) Business Education	20.4%	42.9%	20.4%	14.3%	2.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	25.0%	47.9%	14.6%	6.3%	6.3%
	l) Foreign Language	22.9%	39.6%	16.7%	14.6%	6.3%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	22.9%	52.1%	4.2%	16.7%	4.2%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	22.4%	46.9%	8.2%	20.4%	2.0%
	c) Special Education	20.4%	55.1%	10.2%	14.3%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	26.5%	51.0%	14.3%	8.2%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia	16.3%	22.4%	40.8%	16.3%	4.1%

program					
f) Student mentoring program	12.5%	39.6%	25.0%	22.9%	0.0%
g) Advanced placement program	18.4%	49.0%	16.3%	16.3%	0.0%
h) Literacy program	10.2%	51.0%	22.4%	14.3%	2.0%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	14.3%	42.9%	20.4%	18.4%	4.1%
j) Summer school programs	26.5%	53.1%	12.2%	6.1%	2.0%
k) Alternative education programs	22.4%	55.1%	16.3%	2.0%	4.1%
l) "English as a second language" program	18.8%	62.5%	8.3%	4.2%	6.3%
m) Career counseling program	12.5%	47.9%	18.8%	16.7%	4.2%
n) College counseling program	12.2%	44.9%	26.5%	12.2%	4.1%
o) Counseling the parents of students	14.9%	31.9%	21.3%	23.4%	8.5%
p) Drop out prevention program	17.0%	36.2%	25.5%	12.8%	8.5%
11. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	22.4%	26.5%	16.3%	24.5%	10.2%
12. Teacher turnover	8.5%	23.4%	44.7%	19.1%	4.3%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	is low.					
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	12.5%	33.3%	29.2%	14.6%	10.4%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	10.4%	33.3%	22.9%	27.1%	6.3%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	23.4%	42.6%	12.8%	14.9%	6.4%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	27.1%	41.7%	6.3%	12.5%	12.5%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	28.6%	59.2%	6.1%	2.0%	4.1%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	12.5%	29.2%	18.8%	29.2%	10.4%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	20.8%	43.8%	8.3%	18.8%	8.3%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	14.6%	45.8%	20.8%	14.6%	4.2%

C. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with	18.4%	44.9%	14.3%	14.3%	8.2%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	parents.					
22.	District facilities are open for community use.	14.3%	26.5%	24.5%	30.6%	4.1%
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	14.3%	28.6%	20.4%	28.6%	8.2%

D. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	16.7%	25.0%	22.9%	27.1%	8.3%
25.	Schools are clean.	18.4%	40.8%	4.1%	26.5%	10.2%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	16.3%	44.9%	4.1%	24.5%	10.2%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	10.2%	44.9%	12.2%	22.4%	10.2%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	10.2%	36.7%	26.5%	18.4%	8.2%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	10.2%	38.8%	26.5%	14.3%	10.2%

E. Asset and Risk Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	6.1%	28.6%	32.7%	18.4%	14.3%
31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of	6.1%	28.6%	28.6%	20.4%	16.3%

| | | | tax dollars. | | | | | | |

| | | tax dollars. | | | | | |

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	8.3%	33.3%	37.5%	14.6%	6.3%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	6.1%	30.6%	36.7%	16.3%	10.2%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	8.2%	30.6%	26.5%	24.5%	10.2%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	14.6%	31.3%	29.2%	16.7%	8.3%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	14.3%	55.1%	12.2%	14.3%	4.1%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape.	14.3%	40.8%	16.3%	18.4%	10.2%
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	16.7%	54.2%	4.2%	14.6%	10.4%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	14.3%	16.3%	24.5%	30.6%	14.3%
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	37.5%	52.1%	8.3%	0.0%	2.1%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	18.8%	33.3%	10.4%	22.9%	14.6%
42.	Food is served warm.	18.8%	41.7%	10.4%	20.8%	8.3%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	12.2%	49.0%	8.2%	16.3%	14.3%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	18.4%	59.2%	6.1%	8.2%	8.2%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	8.2%	34.7%	14.3%	24.5%	18.4%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	16.3%	40.8%	24.5%	10.2%	8.2%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	14.3%	46.9%	14.3%	10.2%	14.3%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	20.4%	46.9%	18.4%	2.0%	12.2%

I. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	10.2%	22.4%	34.7%	16.3%	16.3%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	6.3%	20.8%	58.3%	8.3%	6.3%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	4.2%	31.3%	58.3%	4.2%	2.1%
52.	The drop-off zone at the	10.6%	31.9%	40.4%	8.5%	8.5%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	school is safe.					
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	6.1%	22.4%	57.1%	8.2%	6.1%
54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	6.3%	33.3%	52.1%	4.2%	4.2%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	4.2%	31.3%	52.1%	10.4%	2.1%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	6.3%	27.1%	54.2%	6.3%	6.3%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	2.1%	23.4%	63.8%	8.5%	2.1%
58.	Buses are clean.	8.3%	25.0%	54.2%	6.3%	6.3%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	13.0%	34.8%	47.8%	4.3%	0.0%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	14.6%	41.7%	37.5%	4.2%	2.1%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	16.7%	35.4%	8.3%	31.3%	8.3%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	12.8%	31.9%	25.5%	19.1%	10.6%
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	8.3%	27.1%	12.5%	35.4%	16.7%
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	8.2%	18.4%	18.4%	38.8%	16.3%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	8.2%	24.5%	10.2%	40.8%	16.3%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with	12.2%	40.8%	24.5%	10.2%	12.2%

	Survey Questions					
	principals and teachers.					
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	14.3%	38.8%	18.4%	16.3%	12.2%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	26.5%	34.7%	24.5%	6.1%	8.2%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	16.3%	36.7%	18.4%	16.3%	12.2%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	10.2%	18.4%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	18.4%	51.0%	14.3%	8.2%	8.2%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	22.4%	55.1%	12.2%	8.2%	2.0%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	16.3%	51.0%	10.2%	10.2%	12.2%
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills	16.7%	54.2%	8.3%	10.4%	10.4%
75.	Students have easy access to the Internet.	10.2%	36.7%	30.6%	14.3%	8.2%

Appendix B
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of parent survey respondents.

- The only thing is giving our children tickets without parent's knowledge. They should advise us so we are the one paying for the fines. It happened twice to me and one was given to me but the other one I just found.
- There needs to be more public discussions scheduled and at hours after work. The parents need to be made more aware of the programs being given.
- The computers are not up-to-date!
- At Farias Elementary, you principals - vice principals are very arrogant, they talk down to parents and treat them as if they were children and they seem to have a superiority complex.
- Sometimes principals have preference for some teachers because of their time working together and not knowing or do not want to see that teacher's bad habits, like treating a student that doesn't know much like they are ignorant, and saddest of all is that they tell it to the student's face. I personally have seen it in my children's elementary. I tried to let the principal know but instead the principal went against me, and I work with the district.
- More teachers with high level of education.
- Parents and teachers are given the opportunity to express opinions however their opinions are never taken into consideration. Board does what they want. Surveys are constantly being filled out by teachers on yearly calendar, timelines, insurance and at the end of the board's votes for what they want. District not considered on teacher or teacher aide raises. However, administration at the main office are often considered for pay hikes, as if they needed more.
- As a whole LISD is a good school district, however the superintendent many times has a deaf ear to parent's concerns. It seems only those who can afford lawyers are listened to. The school my child attends is having a lot of problems with the principal and many complaints have been filed. Selling candy during lunch, long lines at lunch, very dangerous bus stop and many others yet he doesn't address the problem because it's been going on for three years. We are also not allowed to talk to the principal, etc. If you call and ask, he will know what school your talking about.

- To whom it may concern: I agree to everything teach at school. Only one problem is when a child needs to go to restrooms they have to be permitted when going in at all times. My child had an accident one time and was afraid to tell me. Please pay more attention to this situation.
- Sometimes the students are left alone. I been hearing some teacher that some classrooms the teacher is not with the students. The students left alone and fight.
- Homework: Afterschool detention should be enforced in middle schools. Teachers always complain students do not do homework. Just like MacDonald Elementary--Great Procedure!
- Students were told at MacDonald Elementary they would not pass if they did not know multiplication tables. What about reading?
- Students should not pass if they don't know how to read. Students are very weak in reading - even though they are in middle school. Do not know how to read! Ridicules! Students are not fit, do not exercise enough!
- Discipline problem kids especially (Question B #10-O)
- Some teachers are not teaching in their field. They teach whatever subject where needed.
- Teachers should educate their student how to behave when there is a sub. Leave extra work not enough work is left so sub is blamed that is totally unfair. Then they should put teacher aides in sub places. Not all substitute teachers should be judged the same.
- Some teachers do not discipline their students.
- Should have parents of problems kids volunteer to help their own kids.
- In our child's education, please try to better and support substitute teachers main concern: substitute teachers are ignored. They never have orientations for them at beginning of school year. Yet, a lot is expected from them. They are kept until 4 pm. (like teachers aides) and are never advised on what procedures to follow nor never advised on new techniques to learn. So please make possible to improve substitutes. So the district will look better and the quality of education will also be better. Everybody will be more confident working for LISD.
- I think substitute teachers should be given an evaluation form to see how they are performing in class. I have walked into my child's classroom and the substitute is just sitting down letting the children do what they want. No discipline at all.
- Well in my opinion, I think that the school nurse should be at campus everyday. 5 days a week. In case of an emergency situation on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday. There's no school nurse, only on Tuesday and Thursday. I feel that there's suppose to be a nurse 5 school days.

- My only concern is for the bilingual program the district has, because my daughter is in the 7th grade. She is enrolled in Spanish and cannot write it so she has a 70 in the class. I would like to the district would have already addressed why our students cannot read and write in their home language. I am saying that she cannot read and write only that she does not have a strong foundation in either. I hope that the district always keep in mind that our students should succeed in both languages.
- Personnel not qualified. Provide two vests for children to go to restrooms (there is only one) Use hat caps when going to P.E.
- First the textbooks are all read with bad words. Second, you are getting substitute teachers or teachers from any place even just because they just finished school and just pasted the test you give them and not even studied for a teacher. The teacher leave it all in the classes to the teacher aides in most schools like Sanchez-Ochoa Elementary. They go to the office or teacher lunchroom to get a cup of coffee or 2.
- The teachers teach the child well.
- Programs for teenagers and college.
- This is my first year of having one of my children attend school. I joined the PTA at my daughter's school and I have witnessed good things. So far, I feel confident and satisfied with the educational performances.
- Education is very good.
- My oldest child is MR. I believe that we need more Special Education staff to handle these students.
- My child only gets 1/2 hour a week of speech therapy; as a parents need to see for our children's future. The children need more speech therapy assistance. We just feel that our children need to be in school and learn as much as possible.
- Leyendecker is short on teachers and teacher-aides. Why?
- There is no computer teacher at Leyendecker. Why? For that matter, there also is not a music teacher. Why? Why aren't the children getting the well-rounded education they're suppose to. LISD is very ineffective and does not provide quality instruction for my children.
- The computer instructors at the high school level are especially poor and lack knowledge. I am not happy at all with what I am getting for my tax dollars. Although my children are in the Gifted and Talented classes, I feel they are not taught what they need to know to be successful.
- Teachers lounges are dirty and smelly especially at Christen Elementary. Unable to eat, too small.
- The schools are clean.
- Yes, but do not listen. At times.

- Our secondary level science labs need to be upgraded and supplied with all the materials necessary to teach science hands-on.
- As you may know LISD is a poor school district and our financial officer does an outstanding job, we are still lacking in funds. A recent bond election provided monies to improve some schools and rebuild others, but the monies were not enough to do all that was needed.
- Should get better menu. Food students will eat and not throw away.
- Just to improve the food. Have more nutritious foods and bit more time for children to eat. So little time. Serve a hot and better cooked meal. Food is cooked badly and the children are frustrated.
- The cafeteria food is sometimes not warm enough. The children only have 15 -20 minutes for lunch and I think the menu should have a variety of choices instead of every Friday hamburgers.
- The food is not prepared properly. Kids don't like spiders and roaches in their food. The food should be balanced (too many fat boys). Please use milk 2% low fat (not frozen). Please do not serve chicken with blood.
- The food is good.
- Why are parents not allowed into the cafeteria with their children?
- It is great to know you have an interest.
- Sorry we don't' pay property taxes cause we rent the house.
- The drug problem is everywhere. The gang problems too. But as a parent, we have to teach our children in and out of school. It is our responsibility to know that the children what kind of friends they have.
- Students drugged or under influence of alcohol are caught and released--Christen mainly.
- Principals, Vice Principals are never seen on campus always in office.
- Only given warning. Then do it again.
- The schools are safe. The staff have the capacity to handle any type of emergency.
- More police in middle school and high school. So the students are watched during the school.
- There are not security guards at Leyendecker. Why?
- There should be more programs for drug abuse on children. There is a lot of drugs sold on school grounds, especially pills.
- Students at the age of 17 considered adults at school, but they if they have to go to court they are considered minors. So what are they? They are supposed to be considered the same at both places.
- The drop off in middle school is where the street is so heavy in traffic.
- Students are dropped off in the middle of the streets.
- We need more teacher-aides on the buses.

Appendix C
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

Laredo Independent School District Management And Performance Review

n = 45

Demographic Data

1.	Gende r (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer			
		20.0%	71.1%	8.9%			

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		2.2%	0.0%		88.9%	0.0%	2.2%	6.7%

3.	How long have you been employed by Laredo ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer
		22.2%	22.2%	13.3%	13.3%	26.7%	2.2%

4.	Are you a(n):	Administrator	Clerical Staffer		Support Staffer		No Answer
		15.6%	17.8%		57.8%		8.9%

5.	How long have you been employed in this capacity by Laredo ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer
		26.7%	20.0%	17.8%	11.1%	15.6%	8.9%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	11.6%	67.4%	14.0%	7.0%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	11.9%	59.5%	16.7%	11.9%	0.0%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	31.8%	50.0%	4.5%	13.6%	0.0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	32.6%	39.5%	16.3%	11.6%	0.0%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	18.6%	58.1%	7.0%	16.3%	0.0%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	25.0%	63.6%	11.4%	0.0%	0.0%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	16.3%	46.5%	20.9%	7.0%	9.3%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	46.5%	46.5%	2.3%	4.7%	0.0%
9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials they believe are most effective.	25.0%	45.5%	13.6%	15.9%	0.0%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	13.6%	61.4%	20.5%	4.5%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	15.9%	52.3%	22.7%	9.1%	0.0%

12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	20.9%	62.8%	9.3%	7.0%	0.0%
	b) Writing	20.9%	65.1%	7.0%	7.0%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	23.3%	65.1%	9.3%	2.3%	0.0%
	d) Science	20.9%	67.4%	9.3%	2.3%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	20.9%	62.8%	9.3%	7.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	23.3%	65.1%	7.0%	4.7%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	20.9%	60.5%	11.6%	7.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	18.6%	55.8%	16.3%	9.3%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	20.9%	60.5%	9.3%	9.3%	0.0%
	j) Business Education	18.6%	48.8%	27.9%	4.7%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	20.9%	53.5%	18.6%	7.0%	0.0%
	l) Foreign Language	18.6%	44.2%	30.2%	4.7%	2.3%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	16.3%	55.8%	18.6%	9.3%	0.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	27.9%	58.1%	9.3%	4.7%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	27.9%	53.5%	11.6%	7.0%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	21.4%	52.4%	21.4%	4.8%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	20.9%	39.5%	23.3%	14.0%	2.3%
	f) Student mentoring program	19.0%	40.5%	23.8%	14.3%	2.4%
	g) Advanced placement program	25.6%	39.5%	30.2%	4.7%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	16.7%	40.5%	21.4%	19.0%	2.4%

	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	23.8%	45.2%	16.7%	14.3%	0.0%
	j) Summer school programs	30.2%	55.8%	9.3%	4.7%	0.0%
	k) Alternative education programs	27.9%	48.8%	14.0%	9.3%	0.0%
	l) quot;English as a second language" program	23.3%	51.2%	14.0%	11.6%	0.0%
	m) Career counseling program	25.6%	41.9%	20.9%	11.6%	0.0%
	n) College counseling program	23.3%	41.9%	23.3%	11.6%	0.0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	20.9%	30.2%	23.3%	25.6%	0.0%
	p) Dropout prevention program	18.6%	51.2%	14.0%	16.3%	0.0%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	20.9%	39.5%	18.6%	18.6%	2.3%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	7.0%	39.5%	30.2%	23.3%	0.0%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	9.3%	38.5%	18.6%	32.6%	0.0%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	7.0%	39.5%	18.6%	34.9%	0.0%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	11.6%	32.6%	16.3%	34.9%	4.7%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	11.6%	41.9%	27.9%	18.6%	0.0%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	23.3%	51.2%	14.0%	11.6%	0.0%
21.	The student-teacher ratio	16.3%	39.5%	20.9%	14.0%	9.3%

	is reasonable.				
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	32.6%	53.5%	4.7%	7.0%	2.3%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	16.3%	48.8%	18.6%	11.6%	4.7%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	7.0%	25.6%	16.3%	32.6%	18.6%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	9.1%	52.3%	13.6%	20.5%	4.5%
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	4.7%	32.6%	37.2%	20.9%	4.7%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	9.1%	45.5%	20.5%	22.7%	2.3%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	11.4%	29.5%	25.0%	29.5%	4.5%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	20.9%	53.5%	14.0%	11.6%	0.0%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	31.8%	59.1%	6.8%	2.3%	0.0%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	13.6%	25.0%	22.7%	29.5%	9.1%
32.	Employees who perform	6.8%	31.8%	29.5%	31.8%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.					
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	7.0%	44.2%	27.9%	18.6%	2.3%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	7.0%	11.6%	7.0%	25.6%	48.8%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	16.3%	67.4%	4.7%	11.6%	0.0%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	30.2%	55.8%	4.7%	9.3%	0.0%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	14.0%	30.2%	20.9%	34.9%	0.0%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	9.3%	46.5%	30.2%	14.0%	0.0%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	11.4%	45.5%	22.7%	20.5%	0.0%
40.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	9.1%	43.2%	36.4%	11.4%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41.	Schools are clean.	13.6%	54.5%	9.1%	20.5%	2.3%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	11.6%	51.2%	9.3%	25.6%	2.3%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	6.8%	50.0%	9.1%	29.5%	4.5%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	20.5%	52.3%	13.6%	13.6%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	19.5%	46.3%	22.0%	12.2%	0.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	16.7%	50.0%	26.2%	7.1%	0.0%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	14.6%	34.1%	34.1%	17.1%	0.0%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	12.2%	48.8%	31.7%	4.9%	2.4%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	9.3%	32.6%	18.6%	34.9%	4.7%
50.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	7.0%	48.8%	23.3%	20.9%	0.0%

	Survey Questions					
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	7.0%	44.2%	34.9%	11.6%	2.3%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	13.6%	68.2%	15.9%	2.3%	0.0%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	11.9%	52.4%	19.0%	16.7%	0.0%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	9.3%	67.4%	20.9%	2.3%	0.0%
55.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources for students.	23.3%	55.8%	9.3%	9.3%	2.3%

H. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	9.1%	13.6%	20.5%	52.3%	4.5%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	9.1%	6.8%	15.9%	52.3%	15.9%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	9.1%	4.5%	15.9%	59.1%	11.4%
59.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	18.2%	45.5%	25.0%	9.1%	2.3%
60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	16.3%	34.9%	27.9%	16.3%	4.7%
61.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	22.7%	63.6%	11.4%	2.3%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	22.7%	45.5%	20.5%	11.4%	0.0%

I. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	30.2%	55.8%	7.0%	4.7%	2.3%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	30.2%	51.2%	11.6%	7.0%	0.0%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	20.9%	51.2%	14.0%	14.0%	0.0%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	32.6%	55.8%	7.0%	4.7%	0.0%
67.	The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	30.2%	55.8%	7.0%	7.0%	0.0%
68.	The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	23.3%	44.2%	23.3%	9.3%	0.0%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	27.9%	39.5%	16.3%	16.3%	0.0%

Appendix C
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of administrative and support staff survey respondents.

- I believe that when it comes to tech/computers classes they need to fix problems at a faster rate, especially the one used in the classes.
- Overall, we (Special Education) need computers that actually work. We definitely need to improve our technology dept. in setting up.
- As far as administration goes excellent attitude and they have good communications with teachers and staff.
- I'm personally very satisfied with the district or else I would not have lasted 22 years. Our superintendent has done an excellent job and highly respected by all.
- LISD students could be doing better if they had more support from an over-worked and stressed-out administration. There are too few administrators to help the campus educators. There are too many meetings at the superintendent's request and sometimes he's not even there. And even with all those meetings, teachers don't have a chance to speak out and be listened to. Teachers need to have their voices heard. By the way, we are drowning in data. Principals, in particular, are stressed out. I have never seen morale so low. Way too much is expected and the ones who will suffer are the students. HELP!
- We just don't feel appreciated by a superintendent that's not from here and has no loyalties to Laredo ISD. A young inexperienced superintendent needs to listen to older, wiser and experienced educators from time to time.
- Need to improve communications, morale is low.
- The district as a whole is pleasant to work for but the central office should be checking the principals more closely. In many cases the chief administrator of the campus play favorite among the faculty.
- There is a growing concern among district staff that decisions made by the school board are neither systematic nor fair. Too many instances attest to decisions made on the basis of individual agendas, due to personal interactions between board members and specific persons. On numerous occasions, the board has introduced agenda items that are clearly administrative in nature yet administration was not consulted.

- Morale has never been at this low level. Yet Board continues to move on personal favorites in total disregard of administrative procedures.
- The school board hinders and/or interferes in the business of administration, often rendering the superintendent ineffective.
- Very disturbing, however, is the behavior of the board which more and more appears grossly unethical and unfair. Board agendas demonstrate their arrogant disregard for administration and for the process that expects administration to administer and board to set policy. Individual agendas and personal bias have become the rule at LISD. The majority of this board has brought "patron" politics back into LISD.
- The superintendent is the best we have had.
- The superintendent and central office administration do an exceptional job of creating a positive image. However, for those of us who have been with the district and under previous administrators, it is easy to see that their work ends there.
- For those of us who were born here and have no plans to move away, for those of us who love the children and want them to succeed because the future of our hometown depends on their academic success, it is disheartening to see that in their quest to look good, the superintendent and his cabinet make decisions that are detrimental to the education of the children.
- While in other districts the size of Laredo ISD the Division of Instruction and Curriculum is headed by one assistant superintendent or any other administrator equivalent to an assistant superintendent, in LISD this department is headed by three administrative assistants all at pay grade 11. (This is a waste of taxpayer's money). To make matters worse, the department has been divided into three areas: communications, problem solving and wellness. This creates the misconception that communication occurs only through language arts and social studies while problem solving and wellness are interdisciplinary. As if this was not bad enough, the person heading the communications team has only primary grades teaching experience. The reading trainers are not reading specialists and the language arts coordinator is an elementary certified teacher who has taught at the middle school level. Consequently, the district's reading program is lacking and the high school language arts program has been neglected.
- The head of the wellness team has devoted much of the district's time to pursue public office commitments and has even involved her staff who is also paid by taxpayers' money in fulfilling her public office obligations. For instance, she received lengthy documents through the department's fax of things she needed to review, assigned the review task to a director under her, had one of her secretaries deal only with all of her public office commitments

and currently uses the district's equipment to duplicate handouts that she uses in her teaching job at a local university.

- Two-way communications has been severely restricted by the superintendent. He sent to all administrators a written directive that no one is to send memorandums or e-mail to principals. Any correspondence that is to be addressed to the principals first needs to be cleared by the superintendent and cabinet. Prior to the current superintendent, principals could call in and place items on the agenda for the principals meetings. That is no longer the case. The superintendent makes up the agenda and no one is allowed to deviate from it. So principals are not allowed to raise issues of concern to them. For over 15 years, LISD had a superintendent's advisory council that met once a month. At these meetings, teacher representatives from each school could bring issues and concerns to them and to their individual campuses. The current superintendent canceled this council. The superintendent had not visited some of the district's departments until he learned that there was going to be a state performance audit.
- Educational motivation and achievement I feel needs to be promoted and executed in my district and community.
- Teachers are being asked to make paper work for the administration instead of teaching. The school district is not what it used to be years back; teachers would enjoy coming to work now days teachers are under stress. Not only teachers are under stress but every employee who works for the school district.
- The special education department seems to always be overlooked when it comes to computers and monies for supplies. Special education is so important and very much taken advantage of, especially when dealing with TAAS.
- We recognize those factors which hinder our student population and are focused on remedies also.
- (Regarding effectiveness of student mentoring program) Not a systemic effort.
- (Regarding special programs) We rate our work as more than adequate on most of these programs, but also underscore that the school district is severely short-staffed in each and every one of these programs, where central office support is concerned.
- The educational performance of LISD is certainly impressive, given the severe disadvantages which characterize the majority of our children and the low property wealth of the district.
- While technically programs and processes are in place, many of the things that you will see are in place on paper only but not in reality. You will hear from administrators, teachers and even some parents as to how well the district is doing as reflected on student performance on the state assessments (TAAS).

- While TAAS scores appear to have improved, this has been accomplished by massive exemption of students. Retention rates have drastically increased, especially at the ninth grade. Those who are not likely to pass the exit level TAAS are retained. When you test only those that you think will pass, the likelihood of getting higher scores increases. Students who are retained see themselves as failures and are more likely to drop out. More and more students are being channeled into Special Education to keep them from taking the TAAS. Some schools in the state designated "Exemplary" status are not exemplary at all. MacDonell Elementary falls under this category. Check the percentage of exemption and the number of retentions in the lower grades.
- While the district has substantially increased the number of students participating in Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement courses, the reality is that students are channeled into these classes simply because principals have been told that they have to meet a quota. In many instances the content in these classes is the same as that of a regular class.
- Much work has been done in the development of academic standards. However, because experienced teachers are so turned off, some of the ones who participated in writing them were first year teachers who still lack teacher certification. The administrators leading the standards movement lack knowledge and understanding in the concept and process. The quality of some of the standards is questionable. No one in the district has yet been able to say what are the consequences to students not meeting the standards.
- Much fanfare has been made about the district's instructional model, yet many teachers do not fully understand it or lack knowledge about some of its components.
- Rigid instructional timelines and their rigid implementation have resulted in the teaching of skills in isolation.
- Also causing serious concern: recent $500,000 allocation for substitutes and a $250,000-$400,000 approved expenditure to remodel a perfectly useful board room, primarily to remove superintendent from the board area (because as they say - they are the boss) and relegate him to the common floor. These two expenditures, neither recommended by administration, will total almost a million dollars in unnecessary expenditures.
- A central kitchen is much needed.
- The district is in need of more classrooms and cafeterias are small for the enrollment of the schools.
- Division of Operations Maintenance staff are sent to jobs and take an inordinate time to complete their assignments, much of the work that they used to do is assigned by the principals and

department heads to the custodians because the work needs to be done and the response time takes so long.

- I agree with education performance that the district is doing and the support of the Texas Comptroller.
- Some of our new employees got an 8 percent raise while others just got a 4 or 5 percent. Last year we all got a .03 percent, and we had to fight for it for about three months. I think all of us should get an equal percent. I also think they should go back to two teacher-aids per teacher instead of five or six teachers per aide.
- Pay day should be the same each month. We are never sure when we will receive our checks. Before we knew it was always the last Friday of each month.
- The school district is losing many loyal and experienced educators to the other district. Instead of hiring from within (as in the case with a recent high school principal), a principal from a small neighboring town was hired. This is a turn-off to those who have invested their careers and lives to the school district. We were educated at LISD and wish to dedicated our lives to Laredo ISD.
- Need to improve salaries.
- A serious concern also exists with regard to staffing decisions. A carefully developed staffing study conducted by TASB was tabled because of the board's obvious bias against top management. The result: individuals meriting equity and/or pay grade adjustments were left in limbo. Our administrative cost ration is at an all time low (6 percent vs. 11percent at the state level).
- I feel more emphasis should be placed on keeping teachers in the classrooms. Many leave due to low pay and increased workload. Teachers do so much in school and then take home just as much work. Papers to grade, compositions to read and more.
- The Human Resources Department has grown staff-wise; however, the services rendered leave much to be desired.
- We need better electronics for auditoriums. Especially for UIL Drama competition.
- The library needs to update books and materials especially the one at Milton. They have a very low selection and the librarian should have a better attitude when it comes to children's needs.
- No budget for teacher aide to purchase supplies.
- There is much waste in the purchase of janitorial supplies. Too many chemicals are purchased when in essence the district could do a better job with just the main ones. Chemicals are not tested for efficiency, custodial staff have no input in the selection of chemicals and supplies. Chemicals are purchased based on the lowest price and many times they are so ineffective that much waste occurs.
- I want to thank you for letting me participate in this questionnaire in my district. Although I do not work in a classroom I am concern

about the safety and well being of the students, staff and community.

- As time goes by (teachers) even risk their lives at work. With all this violence, aggressive children carry weapons and threaten teachers. It takes a lot to be a teacher.
- The only thing I can say is, if we all get together to try and make our schools better and the community help stop gangs, vandalism, drugs. Have the teachers and parents work together and there would be a big change in our schools. And our students will turn proud to us if they have the opportunity.

Appendix D
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS
Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

Laredo Independent School District Management And Performance Review

n = 48

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer
		37.5%	58.3%	4.2%

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		4.2%	0.0%	91.7%	0.0%	2.1%	2.1%

3.	How long have you been employed by Laredo ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer
		29.2%	25.0%	4.2%	4.2%	37.5%	0.0%

4.	What grade(s) do you teach this year?				
	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third
	8.3%	6.3%	4.2%	10.4%	8.3%
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
	14.6%	6.3%	8.3%	8.3%	6.3%
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth	
	29.2%	31.3%	27.1%	29.2%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	11.1%	44.4%	26.7%	11.1%	6.7%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	10.6%	48.9%	14.9%	21.3%	4.3%
3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	12.8%	48.9%	31.9%	6.4%	0.0%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	15.2%	43.5%	13.0%	21.7%	6.5%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	20.8%	45.8%	14.6%	16.7%	2.1%

B. District Organization and Management (continued)

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	16.7%	43.8%	27.1%	8.3%	4.2%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	6.5%	43.5%	13.0%	23.9%	13.0%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	10.4%	47.9%	14.6%	20.8%	6.3%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	8.3%	41.7%	31.3%	14.6%	4.2%

C. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	41.7%	43.8%	0.0%	10.4%	4.2%

11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials they believe are most effective.	21.3%	31.9%	4.3%	34.0%	8.5%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	16.7%	35.4%	16.7%	22.9%	8.3%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	8.3%	37.5%	20.8%	25.0%	8.3%
14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	29.2%	52.1%	8.3%	8.3%	2.1%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	22.9%	43.8%	8.3%	20.8%	4.2%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	25.0%	41.7%	6.3%	22.9%	4.2%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	20.8%	54.2%	6.3%	12.5%	6.3%
	b) Writing	16.7%	54.2%	12.5%	12.5%	4.2%
	c) Mathematics	25.0%	58.3%	6.3%	6.3%	4.2%
	d) Science	20.8%	58.3%	10.4%	8.3%	2.1%
	e) English or Language Arts	25.0%	52.1%	12.5%	8.3%	2.1%
	f) Computer Instruction	16.7%	47.9%	14.6%	16.7%	4.2%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	18.8%	56.3%	12.5%	10.4%	2.1%
	h) Fine Arts	17.0%	53.2%	12.8%	12.8%	4.3%
	i) Physical Education	25.0%	47.9%	10.4%	10.4%	6.3%
	j) Business Education	14.9%	29.8%	42.6%	8.5%	4.3%
	k) Vocational (Career	10.6%	31.9%	31.9%	12.8%	12.8%

	and Technology) Education					
	l) Foreign Language	14.9%	38.3%	34.0%	8.5%	4.3%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	18.8%	47.9%	18.8%	10.4%	4.2%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	25.0%	45.8%	6.3%	14.6%	8.3%
	c) Special Education	22.9%	50.0%	10.4%	8.3%	8.3%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	20.8%	33.3%	43.8%	0.0%	2.1%
	e) Dyslexia program	17.0%	44.7%	17.0%	17.0%	4.3%
	f) Student mentoring program	10.4%	43.8%	22.9%	18.8%	4.2%
	g) Advanced placement program	18.8%	39.6%	20.8%	14.6%	6.3%
	h) Literacy program	17.0%	36.2%	23.4%	19.1%	4.3%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	14.6%	39.6%	20.8%	14.6%	10.4%
	j) Summer school programs	22.9%	52.1%	14.6%	6.3%	4.2%
	k) Alternative education programs	19.1%	42.6%	29.8%	6.4%	2.1%
	l) 'English as a Second Language' program	21.3%	46.8%	14.9%	8.5%	8.5%
	m) Career counseling program	10.9%	39.1%	23.9%	19.6%	6.5%
	n) College counseling program	12.5%	39.6%	29.2%	10.4%	8.3%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	8.5%	40.4%	21.3%	25.5%	4.3%
	p) Drop out prevention program	15.2%	34.8%	21.7%	21.7%	6.5%

	Survey Questions					
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	16.7%	43.8%	10.4%	20.8%	8.3%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	12.8%	23.4%	17.0%	29.8%	17.0%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	12.8%	36.2%	6.4%	27.7%	17.0%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	10.6%	31.9%	8.5%	38.3%	10.6%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	4.2%	10.4%	10.4%	39.6%	35.4%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less-than-satisfactory performance.	2.2%	28.9%	33.3%	26.7%	8.9%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	25.0%	52.1%	8.3%	12.5%	2.1%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	12.5%	39.6%	6.3%	29.2%	12.5%
27.	The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	10.4%	35.4%	4.2%	33.3%	16.7%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	22.9%	54.2%	10.4%	8.3%	4.2%

D. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	20.8%	10.4%	43.8%	25.0%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	2.1%	59.6%	12.8%	21.3%	4.3%
31.	Temporary workers are	6.3%	29.2%	27.1%	27.1%	10.4%

	Survey Questions					
	rarely used.					
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	2.1%	35.4%	14.6%	37.5%	10.4%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0.0%	41.7%	22.9%	20.8%	14.6%
34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	10.4%	37.5%	14.6%	22.9%	14.6%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	33.3%	60.4%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	2.1%	16.7%	18.8%	41.7%	20.8%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	2.1%	35.4%	27.1%	29.2%	6.3%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	2.1%	38.3%	36.2%	10.6%	12.8%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	2.1%	6.3%	0.0%	18.8%	72.9%

E. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	10.4%	60.4%	6.3%	22.9%	0.0%
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	10.4%	72.9%	6.3%	10.4%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	2.1%	27.1%	16.7%	47.9%	6.3%
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	8.5%	48.9%	19.1%	21.3%	2.1%

F. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	4.3%	17.4%	19.6%	50.0%	8.7%
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	4.2%	39.6%	22.9%	27.1%	6.3%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	2.1%	31.9%	44.7%	10.6%	10.6%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	2.1%	19.1%	51.1%	19.1%	8.5%
48.	Schools are clean.	4.2%	47.9%	2.1%	29.2%	16.7%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	4.2%	41.7%	4.2%	37.5%	12.5%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	4.2%	27.1%	6.3%	39.6%	22.9%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	6.3%	54.2%	12.5%	20.8%	6.3%

G. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	12.5%	41.7%	10.4%	25.0%	10.4%
53.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	16.7%	37.5%	25.0%	10.4%	10.4%
54.	Financial reports are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	10.6%	38.3%	19.1%	19.1%	12.8%

H. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	4.3%	29.8%	8.5%	40.4%	17.0%
56.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	4.2%	37.5%	27.1%	18.8%	12.5%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	4.3%	32.6%	23.9%	23.9%	15.2%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	8.5%	27.7%	34.0%	19.1%	10.6%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	16.7%	62.5%	4.2%	8.3%	8.3%
60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	14.6%	45.8%	2.1%	20.8%	16.7%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape.	19.1%	59.6%	6.4%	8.5%	6.4%
62.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	18.8%	45.8%	10.4%	16.7%	8.3%

I. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	2.1%	41.7%	14.6%	16.7%	25.0%
64.	Food is served warm.	6.4%	59.6%	14.9%	8.5%	10.6%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	10.4%	77.1%	8.3%	4.2%	0.0%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes	10.4%	47.9%	8.3%	29.2%	4.2%
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	14.6%	62.5%	6.3%	14.6%	2.1%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	25.0%	56.3%	4.2%	12.5%	2.1%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	25.0%	52.1%	6.3%	12.5%	4.2%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	14.9%	57.4%	4.3%	17.0%	6.4%
71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	6.3%	18.8%	16.7%	43.8%	14.6%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	6.3%	10.4%	10.4%	50.0%	22.9%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	6.3%	12.5%	10.4%	43.8%	27.1%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	10.6%	51.1%	25.5%	6.4%	6.4%
75.	Security personnel are	6.5%	43.5%	28.3%	15.2%	6.5%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	respected and liked by the students they serve.					
76.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	16.7%	56.3%	16.7%	8.3%	2.1%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	16.7%	54.2%	4.2%	18.8%	6.3%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	13.0%	26.1%	15.2%	32.6%	13.0%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	22.9%	56.3%	2.1%	16.7%	2.1%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	22.9%	50.0%	0.0%	18.8%	8.3%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	20.8%	52.1%	4.2%	18.8%	4.2%
82.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	29.2%	56.3%	4.2%	6.3%	4.2%
83.	The district meets students' needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	13.0%	67.4%	2.2%	13.0%	4.3%
84.	The district meets students' needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	12.8%	42.6%	17.0%	23.4%	4.3%
85.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	10.4%	50.0%	4.2%	14.6%	20.8%

Appendix D
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of teacher survey respondents.

- More parent involvement and community involvement at the Middle and secondary levels would increase that productivity and the education Level.
- LISD is a great district however we as teachers have concerns over technology. The internet is very slow, there is only one server for the size of district. The I-gear system messes up the internet. The TV cable wiring is old. Teachers have proposed to the district to do proper wiring, a meeting was called over three years ago and the chief budget officer of the district did not show up. He did not feel this was important matter. The district needs install the Time Warner Road Runner system in our schools.
- Teachers have more and more paperwork every year. This could be avoided if the district and administrators computerize all information they will be needing. We are asked constantly for reports and information by administrators, counselors, etc. for data that could easily be obtained from a computer report.
- Way behind in technology!!! Administration are not familiar with 'new' products available: CD burners, Digital Cameras, etc. They do not push teachers to use hi-tech and refuse to spend monies for technology. In today's job market, All technology should be introduced in high school at least.
- No E-mail??? From Yahoo, Excite, etc. This is extremely insulting to all teachers and staff! I feel insulted for not being allowed to receive E-mail from Excite or Yahoo due to one or two bad apples who abused this privilege. The district needs to punish those bad apples and not the whole district.
- I feel that schools can be better equipped and run better. I have seen schools up north with less problems because people that are from there are better prepared. We do not have good communication or social skills with administration. All of this is just political.
- Superintendent has done away with the Teachers Superintendent Advisory Board. I feel that was a bad move on his part!
- This is a true cry for help. Many Laredo ISD teachers are harassed, humiliated, and/or intimidated by principals. Teachers are the lowest paid and most worked. The principal has no empathy for the teacher. Teacher morale is down!!! Site-based decision-making is

not working; the principal does not take teacher feedback into account. What she says goes and that's it. If one does not like it, 'there's the door'! Many teachers have chosen the door unfortunately, many good teachers. Principals have also been known to ridicule teachers in the presence of colleagues and/or parents. The superintendent and central staff (human resources) are aware of this situation and no one has done anything to remedy the problem and teacher suffering continues. Maybe the state can help.

- Assistant principals or assistant administrator should be evaluated by teachers from their campus not by the school principal because the principal is not always in school to check how assistant administrators work or not work, is rude or polite towards students, parents and/or teachers. Other times, work that is suppose to be done by the assistant administrator is being force to teachers and if not done properly and timely, she intimidates teacher by letting us know that she's the one filling your annual evaluation. Some of these assistant administrators and diagnostician supervisors are being paid for not doing any work.

- This district is run by the 'compadre' system...politics...administrators are selected by 'who' you know not for the betterment of the students, our future. Unfortunately our children are the ones who are paying the consequences. Very very sad, but true.

- It would be better and work better if you did away with site based management. Principals are always trying to be better or be ahead of the other. That really affects teachers with pressure from them. Also, an evaluation should be done by the teachers on their principals. We the teachers are the ones that work with them. The superintendent evaluates them on student's test results, which I think is wrong. Another thing that we see wrong is that principals are always threatening us, by saying remember your PDAS or look elsewhere. I don't think that is right. We are as good as the principal or better.

- Our district has a very effective superintendent that has a shared vision of empowering everyone with the success necessary to achieve our goals. Everyone works diligently to strive for success.

- Some past board members have voted on issues that directly favored them personally (like tax decrease). Look at the tax decrease at LISD (I believe in 1996). Two members were part of the tax payers league. So if our performance is average or below average (for the nation) who's fault is that?!

- Best in the area.

- As a whole, LISD has good performance, like every other district we are not perfect but we try our best to meet the needs of our students. I wish we had better reading programs in place for our overaged non-readers.

- In career and applies technology area, there is lack of support from central staff and from the SBDM Administration as well. Because of this lack of support, programs have suffered in recruitment. No new moneys or programs have been added and some programs have been closed. Students have been pulled from these programs and placed in more science and math without consideration of those students and at the expense of their failure in those classes that they may not be able to handle. Trying to make everyone go to college is not the answer.
- (Regarding teacher opportunity to suggest effective programs and materials) Not with site-based.
- What ever happen to less less less paper work for teachers? Now, we need to turn in more and more reports to the main office, as well as at our local school. Too much testing during the six weeks - Not enough time to teach! What ever happen to going back to the basics? I wonder why teachers are going into other careers?
- We have state adopted math book for grades 6-8. The district has implemented a curriculum 'Connected Mathematics,' which the teachers must follow. In my own personal survey I see that most teachers do not or are uncomfortable to use it. It requires extensive training to do all activities in it. Never have I seen or heard so much controversy over a math curriculum.
- Overall performance is acceptable.
- LISD is a good district with a difficult situation. Low socioeconomic backgrounds of our students sometimes makes it difficult to attain the standards that are required.
- More attention to vocational programs and fine art programs would also benefit this population by making them more marketable when they graduate. Not all students are AP/GT and graduating with a skill is just as important as AP programs especially in this community.
- Overall the Laredo ISD's educational performance is on the right track considering all the Mexican students that we have legal or illegal.
- I believe that the educational performance of the Laredo ISD is average for a district of comparable means. However, I believe that the school board limits and has limited (in the past) the educational needs of the students.
- Educational classes such as English, Math, Science are highly regarded at LISD. But if you teach a Business or a CAT Education Class your students and their teachers are a second class citizens and they load up your classes with Special Ed. Students. Regular students NAP. Students are discouraged to take vocational classes.
- Cafeteria foods need to be improved big time!
- Cafeteria food is frozen and maybe stored for a long time of period in the freezer (chicken and hamburger meat) and at times, what is

given on Monday and there's more of, it is also given on Tuesday. In addition to this, frozen salad and other food that was left through the year, is given towards the end of the school year, repetitiously.

- We need new menus at our school.
- Teachers do a lot of the cleaning as well.
- I am a proud LISD employee.
- Teachers in general are given so many more job requirements (paperwork) and yet our salaries do not seem to compensate the extra work that is placed upon us. When will the state of Texas realize that teachers are a very valuable resource? Why are people hired for teaching positions when they are not certified? Requirements are becoming more difficult for students and people are being hired without much education in the field. How can we help our kids with people who are not fully trained?
- Low salaries for teachers. Improper health care, very bad benefits!
- Teachers deserve a much better raise than the 'one' given this year. Insurance package is terrible. Service by Pacificare is awful and benefits are almost non-existent.
- Something could be done about improving insurance benefits.
- LISD needs to hire more teachers for many classrooms have more than 22 students which is ridiculous. Also, Special Education teachers have same problem with some teachers having 10 to 13 students, four in wheelchairs, and others having to be spoon fed or tube fed because of their disabilities with one or two teacher aides because the district doesn't have funds to hire personnel. Special Education needs to train its staff more for our in-services are a real joke! Finally we need to be paid like educators not servants or hired help and be provided with better insurance coverage for LISD has Pacific Care and they give everyone the run-around - it's really bad! You all better wake up some or else Texas is really going to see one even greater shortage of teachers!
- Teacher salary at LISD is one of the lowest in state. Benefits at LISD are not competitive like in other districts (i.e. no dental, no vision, very little coverage with $180.00 monthly premium for employee and dependents w/ spouse it costs $230.00 approximately).
- The Texas Legislature should pass a bill to adopt a better health insurance for all Texas State employees. An attractive salary increase for teachers would help keep quality teachers in the schools.
- The lack of adequate health insurance is my greatest concern. There seems to be no end to the increasing rates and decreasing benefits.
- There is a great need to get science equipment for school labs of which my school does not have because there is not enough

monies allocated to buy microscopes, slides, and experiment supplies of which teachers have to get on their own or request from parents of which at times are unable to provide. Monies should also be allocated to purchase school supplies to help provide a free education to all. You know at the beginning of the year and during the year a child needs basic school supplies.

- As an early childhood teacher, I would like to see that teaching resources would be bought for our grade level. We are not provided with the necessary materials to teach, many things we have to purchase ourselves. We need more teacher resources, especially since we do not have textbooks like the upper grades.

- Laredo ISD is doing a very good job in implementing the states expectations. The quality of education is excellent. Everyone involved in the education process are totally dedicated to the implementation of effective educational programs that will achieve the student's highest potential.

Appendix E
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS
Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

Laredo Independent School District Management and Performance Review

n = 134

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer
		45.5%	52.2%	2.2%

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		1.5%	0.0%	94.0%	0.0%	1.5%	3.0%

3.	What is your classification?	Junior	Senior	No Response
		38.1%	59.7%	2.2%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	14.7%	52.7%	16.3%	14.7%	1.6%
2. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	8.7%	49.6%	24.4%	15.7%	1.6%
3. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a) Reading	22.3%	60.0%	10.8%	6.9%	0.0%

b) Writing	22.7%	59.1%	9.1%	8.3%	0.8%
c) Mathematics	30.8%	56.2%	6.9%	5.4%	0.8%
d) Science	23.8%	56.2%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%
e) English or Language Arts	30.3%	56.1%	7.6%	6.1%	0.0%
f) Computer Instruction	24.4%	51.1%	10.7%	9.9%	3.8%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	19.8%	55.7%	16.0%	7.6%	0.8%
h) Fine Arts	19.7%	56.1%	16.7%	6.8%	0.8%
i) Physical Education	18.9%	54.5%	19.7%	4.5%	2.3%
j) Business Education	21.2%	46.2%	19.7%	11.4%	1.5%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	20.5%	52.3%	15.9%	8.3%	3.0%
l) Foreign Language	16.7%	52.4%	16.7%	7.1%	7.1%
4. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a) Library Service	13.8%	45.4%	19.2%	15.4%	6.2%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	22.6%	52.6%	15.8%	4.5%	4.5%
c) Special Education	20.5%	50.8%	23.5%	3.0%	2.3%
d) Student mentoring program	12.3%	40.0%	31.5%	11.5%	4.6%
e) Advanced placement program	25.8%	50.0%	16.7%	5.3%	2.3%
f) Career counseling program	20.3%	44.4%	18.8%	12.0%	4.5%
g) College counseling program	17.3%	47.4%	19.5%	12.8%	3.0%
5. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	23.1%	53.0%	9.7%	9.0%	5.2%
6. Classrooms are seldom	11.9%	26.9%	31.3%	21.6%	8.2%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	left unattended.					
7.	The district provides a high quality education.	15.7%	49.3%	17.9%	9.7%	7.5%
8.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	14.2%	40.3%	25.4%	13.4%	6.7%

B. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	5.2%	37.3%	19.4%	23.9%	14.2%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	7.6%	40.2%	22.0%	19.7%	10.6%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	6.8%	32.3%	22.6%	24.1%	14.3%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled in a timely manner.	12.0%	41.4%	26.3%	11.3%	9.0%

C. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	11.2%	30.6%	11.9%	29.9%	16.4%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	8.3%	53.0%	16.7%	15.9%	6.1%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape.	7.5%	18.0%	14.3%	31.6%	28.6%
16.	The school library meets students needs for books and other resources.	13.4%	38.8%	13.4%	23.1%	11.2%

D. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	32.1%	53.7%	10.4%	1.5%	2.2%
18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	4.5%	17.3%	22.6%	21.1%	34.6%
19.	Food is served warm.	4.5%	28.6%	23.3%	21.1%	22.6%
20.	Students have enough time to eat.	8.2%	37.3%	10.4%	16.4%	27.6%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	14.9%	58.2%	11.2%	8.2%	7.5%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	7.5%	34.3%	11.2%	26.9%	20.1%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the schools cafeteria.	9.7%	56.0%	18.7%	11.9%	3.7%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	15.7%	47.0%	23.9%	8.2%	5.2%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	16.4%	47.0%	24.6%	6.7%	5.2%

E. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	4.6%	9.2%	33.8%	20.0%	32.3%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	2.3%	16.8%	68.7%	6.1%	6.1%
28.	The length of the bus ride is reasonable.	3.8%	16.0%	73.3%	3.8%	3.1%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	4.6%	21.4%	62.6%	6.9%	4.6%
30.	The bus stop near my	3.1%	15.3%	75.6%	2.3%	3.8%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	house is safe.					
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	2.3%	12.3%	77.7%	4.6%	3.1%
32.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	3.1%	13.8%	73.1%	5.4%	4.6%
33.	Buses arrive early enough to eat breakfast at school.	1.6%	15.6%	77.3%	1.6%	3.9%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	3.1%	9.4%	79.7%	6.3%	1.6%
35.	Buses are clean.	0.8%	12.3%	70.8%	7.7%	8.5%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	1.6%	24.8%	69.0%	1.6%	3.1%

F. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	9.8%	44.4%	15.0%	21.8%	9.0%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	8.3%	44.7%	25.8%	17.4%	3.8%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	12.1%	31.1%	25.0%	18.2%	13.6%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	5.2%	21.6%	28.4%	22.4%	22.4%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	4.5%	12.0%	21.8%	30.8%	30.8%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	5.3%	32.3%	32.3%	14.3%	15.8%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	3.0%	26.1%	29.1%	20.9%	20.9%

	Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.		6.0%	40.6%	36.8%	8.3%	8.3%
45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.		9.1%	30.3%	25.0%	20.5%	15.2%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.		8.3%	26.3%	36.1%	18.0%	11.3%

G. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	19.4%	36.6%	8.2%	24.6%	11.2%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	15.7%	36.6%	20.9%	18.7%	8.2%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	24.6%	47.0%	13.4%	11.9%	3.0%
50.	The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	14.9%	42.5%	17.9%	14.9%	9.7%
51.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	15.2%	40.2%	15.9%	16.7%	12.1%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	14.9%	37.3%	11.2%	20.1%	16.4%

Appendix E
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of student survey respondents.

- The computers are the better ones but the internet never works when ever we need to do research but they don't work.
- I believe that there should be more computers in the classrooms. So that we can be able to learn more.
- My comment is about the Internet. While I was doing a research paper in the health field, and surfing the internet it blocked my surfing. I think the districts security on the internet is overrated. I hope you take my comment into consideration, and change a little of the internet access. Thank you, anonymous from Martin High School.
- Need more computer technicians, real experts.
- I feel we need more computers cause we as seniors were asked to write a research paper. The only time we can go to the library is on Fridays with the whole class we need the computers and there are about five computers for 32 students in our class itself. Imagine how are we going to finish an 8-page research paper...?
- Computers are always broken.
- Well, a couple of months ago when I got my report card I was denied a credit for absences. My teacher will mark us absent for being late and will forget to correct it. I talked to my councilor and she didn't do anything about it she told me talk to administration. So I did but till this day I haven't received my credit.
- Education is good although some teachers do not teach well and don't care about the students. But that's only a few teachers. The rest teach good. Sometimes there is favoritism, that is teachers like some students and not others.
- It basically is a good district just that we need more and better teachers and enough classrooms.
- The educational program is ok, but it's not always the students. Some teachers complain that we don't know the material that we should of have learned last year or so!
- The need for teachers is in great demand, but it shouldn't have to come down to just picking anyone for the job.
- Well as a new student I think it's a great school. But one thing that probably needs to be worked on is the attitude of the attendance department. If someone brings in an excuse the person running the

department should be courteous and not rude and degrading. Nixon H.S.

- I feel that we need more computer classes. Everything today is done by computers and everything here is being taught the old fashioned way.
- Need more computer courses to better understand further things in computers.
- Computer training is atrocious! Can't the district have classes on C++ or Visual Basic! These are real, REAL computer skills, not merely typing and turning the machine on and off. I learned Excel on my own when I was in middle school - on my own! One more thing classes on HTML are a must, real HTML that doesn't use the "point and drop" interface.
- I believe that the counselors should be more attentive to the need of every student not just the future graduates of Martin High. Suggestion: Put more counselors to work and just concentrate on the people that are still here (the left overs)!!!
- Senior Counselor should be more patient w/ students and should learn to win the student by her good attitude, not otherwise. Teachers and staff are very helpful and teach us the best they can.
- We should have shorter classes.
- Teachers are cool, most of them, some don't even care, just by the way they talk to us and act with us.
- Some teachers do not teach what they should teach. LISD takes to long to do something right. For example, they say report cards are going to be given on a certain day and when that day comes the school gives them a week later.
- Well my comments are good because they have everything we needed to learn and Graduate. We have in campus what we want to do in life.
- Some teachers teach very well but some they just don't give a damn about it.
- The educational program is good right now...
- There is a lot of positive staff in LISD. Clubs and organizations are well funded. Tutorials occur for the TAAS. After school help by teachers is often there. LISD is really good right now.
- I believe everything is screwed up in LISD and I believe we are not getting the education at the level we are suppose to.
- The LISD provides good stuff like teaching us having several programs to keep students from doing drugs. They also have programs like playing basketball, volleyball, tennis, softball, football and many more things.
- There are some teachers that do teach good. But the problem is that some teachers are more interested in some student. For example, some teachers pay more attention to the football players and

another kind of athletics. What I think would make a school better if every teacher would be tough with their student.

- I think that we have a lot of programs in school for students to go and share their feelings. But it's up to the student to go to the programs. These are the good things.
- I think LISD is doing a great job. It offers several different programs for kids in different subjects.
- What I like about the LISD program is because we have so many good programs and have fun with the students. What I mean about that is that we have the band, team sports and lots of events were we students have fun and exciting things happen. We have the stricter programs like ISS were we have the trouble maker all day there so they would learn a lesson.
- The LISD educational is great because the teachers help us the students with problems. It has it's up and down but it is great go to are class and learn. Overall, go to a LISD school is ok for me those were my comment about the education performance of Laredo ISD.
- The education at ISD is totally different from the LSD. In ISD the education is not that advance and the teachers don't really care if you do your work or not. They will say it is not my problem if you don't do your work. I'll still get paid. And for sure you'll be here next year. So the students won't do their work because the teachers don't show like they care. The education of ISD is kind of sad. They are not that advanced.
- I think that is good because it offers us everything we need to be better students and it has programs; like the tutorial TAAS and other special programs that benefit the students, teachers and the school. I'm agreeing with all of those things that LISD gave to us because it helps us too much to learn. I think we have a good education and good services.
- That LISD have a lot of programs in a three schools in that campus. At school they have all this different types and good programs during and after school hours. These programs provides of all students to get out of all gang relative. These programs will provided their study skills and maintain good grades. The students learn all this different programs to get a new hobby in life.
- Well in my computer class "BCIS" my teacher never gets up from her chair never helps us and always playing around with another student. For you to tell the teachers to help more some.
- Education is good. Some teachers are good & others don't show respect.
- Lunch is good.
- Also I think that they should change the cafeteria food. The food sometimes is cold when served, and sometimes doesn't taste like what it should be. We should also change the lunch hour. I believe

our lunch is to early. 11:30 am is too early, by this time I am not even hungry. When we come back from lunch is when I really get hungry, and they don't ever give permission to buy food from machines. It should also be a little longer, because we always enter late to our 3rd block for the reason of such a short lunch.

- I feel that the school food is horrible and distasteful. I hope you take into consideration to remove this food because it's cold. I hope you put real food.
- The lunch menus could be a lot better.
- Have better food in the cafeteria.
- The food is so cold.
- In cafeteria they just give 25 min. to get the plate, if not you don't eat.
- I feel that the cafeteria food should be a bit warmer and cooked better.
- LISD, some of the teacher stupid. I believe we should get money to get good food in the cafeteria because the food is ugly.
- The food can be better.
- I think my only problem with school is lunch. I hardly go but I don't think the food is not good and tasty. I think that the people who make food for LISD. should put a little bit of love into it and maybe it will be better and it is always cold.
- We need more time for lunch cause some of us live far from school and it takes us 20 min. to get there.
- The food is cold.
- No comments but one. We need more lunch time. UISD enters at 8:45 am and come out at 3:45 pm, but they have the same time at lunch. We LISD enter at 8:00 am and come out at 3:45.
- I think that the food really sucks. It tastes gross. Maybe you all should buy fast-food meals.
- Food is not good at all, that is why students leave school grounds to go out somewhere else.
- I think that the food should be served warm. It doesn't taste very good. I don't like to eat here because I don't like the food. You should serve food like in Houston. You should have enough of the same food to serve to everybody because they're serving one kind of food then it finishes and they serve another kind of food.
- Better cafeteria food that is well served!!
- I have no comments what so ever. We just need more time for lunch.
- The restroom for the girls are clean, there is no problem with that, this is what I can say about the education performance of Laredo ISD.
- The schools need work. Physically! Teachers and staff work well but the buildings need work.

- Also, the school needs better maintained because the restrooms are all dirty and have marks on the wall. They don't even have doors for when you really have to go.
- In Laredo ISD I think is very bad, I think in the school restrooms are not clean...
- The restrooms are in a bad way. The restroom smell like pee. There are no paper in there and there are no door.
- The Boy's Restroom is a problem here in school, it is a very dirty restroom. But other than that the education here is good.
- I just think that school should be cleaner like the restrooms.
- Bathrooms should be cleaner and safer.
- I also think that there should be some shade and more benches for people who stay in lunch. The sun is really bright. You should put canopies.
- Bathrooms are unsanitary.
- One thing I don't like is that the restrooms are not clean. The school needs to be re-modeled. This school needs big changes.
- I think you need to care more about your restrooms.
- Campus must be kept cleaner...
- Don't really like surveys, prefer being asked in person.
- LISD is trying to make things better but still not trying hard enough to make everyone happy.
- I think in any kind of school there are bad things and good thing there is know such thing has a bad school or a good school. In all the schools there has to be something bad and good.
- I believe that LISD can do better than UISD.
- Please pay more attention to our District.
- It's all good! I guess.
- Well I think that ISD can do a lot better. I think the Principal and other should get paid more than do more than you think. Teacher should be trained more.
- I think that the money school gets should be use in think that are needed like a good paint job, computers, desk, better books and food, cleaner restroom. I strongly agree that this school needs a better thing. They should remove it. Fast!!
- I think we should have more books in all our classes. Sometimes they are not enough books and we fail that class because the lack of them.
- I think that the books that we have are not enough books for everyone. Can you imagine how we work with the book if we don't have enough book and the books we have are all ugly.
- Some textbooks are in very bad conditions...
- ...and of course the library does not have many books on what we research on like Breast Cancer.
- I fill that LISD schools are safe and all but I feel that it can be improve for newer kids.

- It is good, there are not much fights in here, there are but there are just two people fighting, there are not gangs fighting.
- Also we need better security.
- I hate it when the security guards at school try to act all big even when you have proved to them that you have a hall pass in the case being. Some of them are like that and I think that all security personnel have to get acquainted to teenagers before they get a job in schools. Some of them are cool.
- And there are too many disciplinary rules and actions that are being taken place.
- Too much security, we can't wear bandanas if we have long hair. It's a new style. Security stops people too much.
- This program doesn't give any discipline to the delinquents or gang members. Vandalism is a big problem in a certain high school. The security staff think they attend high school instead of patrolling. The District should change the securities and the sheriffs. The LISD does not do many things well.
- I think we need better security for our school Martin High School. Well, because the securities never see anything or do anything. They are always sitting down or wonder off that some students just get out of school.
- The education of LSD is sometimes good because they have security they can help with the fight our when sometimes they are bad attitude with some person at school but is a good school and good district.
- ...and the securities are bad and some teachers too.
- In LISD you have a lot of good programs to maintain school safe like we have ISS in school suspension we have sheriff securities we have program to keep students away from drugs and we have some bad things like drugs, gangs, vandalisms too.
- ...and the security is on top of everything. As the year progresses, I know that more problems will occur.
- These days I really don't worry about drugs or gangs. It's controlled for the most part. Everything is pretty much ok.
- The bad things are drugs and weapons. That's why the school suggests for the guys to have their shirts tucked in and not have cellular phone in school.
- Me, personally feels secure and safe at school. For instance, we have security and sheriffs on campus. We also have good programs such as crimestoppers to help stop violence and gangs.
- I think that I, as a student, feel very safe here at school. We have security and sheriffs all around campus keeping our school safe.
- Security guards should respect students the way they want to be respected.
- The security guys and girls are always sleeping on the job that's all I have to say to you all.

- The LISD has good programs such as ISS and after school training and as well as crimestoppers...
- The student must be kept in line!
- I know that there is a lot of vandalism going on.
- Securities don't act like kids. The sheriffs are the only ones that do their job. Gangs are not a problem, but conflicts are.
- Securities should be well enough in shape. We need better securities.
- More securities that are in shape!!
- Security guards need to be trained better!!
- I have a comment about the Nixon security guards are very mean to the good people and nice to thugs.
- Buses sometimes are not clean and the bus drivers are impolite.

Appendix F
PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

Laredo Independent School District Management And Performance Review

n = 27

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer
		22.2%	66.7%	11.1%

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		0.0%	0.0%	92.6%	0.0%	0.0%	7.4%

3.	How long have you been employed by Laredo ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response
		0.0%	11.1%	3.7%	18.5%	66.7%	0.0%

4.	What grades are taught in your school?				
Pre-Kindergarten	**Kindergarten**	**First**	**Second**	**Third**
59.3%	63.0%	63.0%	66.7%	63.0%
Fourth	**Fifth**	**Sixth**	**Seventh**	**Eighth**
66.7%	63.0%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%
Ninth	**Tenth**	**Eleventh**	**Twelfth**	
18.5%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	22.2%	48.1%	3.7%	14.8%	11.1%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	14.8%	48.1%	11.1%	14.8%	11.1%
3.	School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	3.7%	37.0%	14.8%	37.0%	7.4%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	14.8%	18.5%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	11.5%	42.3%	7.7%	23.1%	15.4%
6.	Central administration is efficient.	7.4%	48.1%	7.4%	25.9%	11.1%
7.	Central administration supports the educational process.	14.8%	55.6%	3.7%	18.5%	7.4%
8.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	7.4%	44.4%	18.5%	25.9%	3.7%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	37.0%	55.6%	0.0%	7.4%	0.0%
10.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	22.2%	55.6%	7.4%	11.1%	3.7%
11.	The needs of the	25.9%	44.4%	3.7%	25.9%	0.0%

	college-bound student are being met.					
12.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	18.5%	44.4%	11.1%	18.5%	7.4%
13.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	29.6%	48.1%	3.7%	18.5%	0.0%
14.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	25.9%	48.1%	0.0%	25.9%	0.0%
15.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	22.2%	48.1%	3.7%	25.9%	0.0%
16.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	25.9%	59.3%	7.4%	7.4%	0.0%
	b) Writing	11.1%	51.9%	7.4%	29.6%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	29.6%	48.1%	7.4%	14.8%	0.0%
	d) Science	14.8%	51.9%	7.4%	25.9%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	22.2%	63.0%	3.7%	11.1%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	18.5%	59.3%	3.7%	14.8%	3.7%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	7.4%	59.3%	7.4%	25.9%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	11.1%	55.6%	11.1%	18.5%	3.7%
	i) Physical Education	11.1%	63.0%	3.7%	18.5%	3.7%
	j) Business Education	7.4%	40.7%	40.7%	7.4%	3.7%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	7.7%	38.5%	34.6%	7.7%	11.5%
	l) Foreign Language	7.4%	55.6%	33.3%	0.0%	3.7%
17.	The district has effective special programs for the					

	following:					
	a) Library Service	7.4%	55.6%	14.8%	18.5%	3.7%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	14.8%	59.3%	11.1%	14.8%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	18.5%	63.0%	7.4%	3.7%	7.4%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	7.4%	51.9%	40.7%	0.0%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	14.8%	59.3%	7.4%	18.5%	0.0%
	f) Student mentoring program	3.7%	55.6%	25.9%	11.1%	3.7%
	g) Advanced placement program	11.1%	66.7%	14.8%	7.4%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	3.7%	55.6%	25.9%	14.8%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	7.4%	48.1%	11.1%	18.5%	14.8%
	j) Summer school programs	11.1%	74.1%	3.7%	11.1%	0.0%
	k) Alternative education programs	18.5%	66.7%	7.4%	7.4%	0.0%
	l) "English as a second language" program	11.1%	59.3%	14.8%	11.1%	3.7%
	m) Career counseling program	11.1%	48.1%	22.2%	11.1%	7.4%
	n) College counseling program	11.1%	48.1%	25.9%	11.1%	3.7%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	7.4%	51.9%	11.1%	18.5%	11.1%
	p) Drop out prevention program	11.1%	51.9%	22.2%	11.1%	3.7%
18.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	23.1%	50.0%	0.0%	23.1%	3.8%
19.	Teacher turnover is low.	8.0%	44.0%	16.0%	32.0%	0.0%
20.	Highly qualified	0.0%	29.6%	7.4%	55.6%	7.4%

	Survey Questions					
	teachers fill job openings.					
21.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	3.7%	25.9%	11.1%	51.9%	7.4%
22.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	7.4%	70.4%	3.7%	14.8%	3.7%
23.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	11.5%	38.5%	3.8%	42.3%	3.8%
24.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	22.2%	70.4%	0.0%	7.4%	0.0%
25.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	14.8%	63.0%	3.7%	18.5%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	3.7%	44.4%	7.4%	18.5%	25.9%
27.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	7.7%	53.8%	7.7%	23.1%	7.7%
28.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	3.7%	51.9%	7.4%	37.0%	0.0%
29.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	7.4%	40.7%	14.8%	29.6%	7.4%
30.	The district has an effective employee	3.8%	30.8%	3.8%	50.0%	11.5%

	recruitment program.				
31.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	11.1%	55.6%	3.7%	25.9%	3.7%
32.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	30.8%	65.4%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%
33.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.0%	18.5%	11.1%	40.7%	29.6%
34.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	14.8%	48.1%	11.1%	22.2%	3.7%
35.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	14.8%	59.3%	14.8%	3.7%	7.4%
36.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	0.0%	7.4%	3.7%	51.9%	37.0%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	18.5%	55.6%	14.8%	11.1%	0.0%
38.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	3.7%	40.7%	7.4%	44.4%	3.7%
39.	District facilities are open for community use.	22.2%	55.6%	7.4%	11.1%	3.7%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	11.1%	51.9%	7.4%	25.9%	3.7%
41.	Schools are clean.	7.4%	66.7%	3.7%	18.5%	3.7%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	7.4%	63.0%	7.4%	18.5%	3.7%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	3.7%	59.3%	0.0%	33.3%	3.7%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	7.4%	63.0%	3.7%	22.2%	3.7%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	25.9%	59.3%	3.7%	7.4%	3.7%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	11.1%	55.6%	7.4%	18.5%	7.4%
47.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	22.2%	63.0%	0.0%	14.8%	0.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

48.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	7.4%	55.6%	11.1%	25.9%	0.0%
49.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	7.4%	55.6%	7.4%	25.9%	3.7%
50.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	11.1%	63.0%	11.1%	14.8%	0.0%
51.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	14.8%	66.7%	3.7%	14.8%	0.0%
52.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	7.4%	55.6%	3.7%	25.9%	7.4%
53.	Textbooks are in good shape.	11.1%	77.8%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
54.	The school library meets students needs for books and other resources.	25.9%	59.3%	0.0%	7.4%	7.4%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	3.7%	63.0%	3.7%	29.6%	0.0%
56.	Food is served warm.	14.8%	70.4%	7.4%	7.4%	0.0%
57.	Students have enough time to eat.	18.5%	74.1%	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%
58.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	14.8%	74.1%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
59.	Students wait in food lines no longer than	11.5%	69.2%	0.0%	19.2%	0.0%

	10 minutes				
60.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	18.5%	59.3%	3.7%	14.8%	3.7%
61.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	25.9%	55.6%	7.4%	11.1%	0.0%
62.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	18.5%	81.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

I. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	3.7%	44.4%	7.4%	33.3%	11.1%
64.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	22.2%	70.4%	0.0%	7.4%	0.0%
65.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	11.1%	74.1%	3.7%	7.4%	3.7%
66.	Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	3.7%	63.0%	18.5%	11.1%	3.7%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	29.6%	59.3%	7.4%	0.0%	3.7%
68.	School disturbances are infrequent.	22.2%	66.7%	0.0%	7.4%	3.7%
69.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	7.4%	29.6%	22.2%	37.0%	3.7%
70.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	3.7%	22.2%	11.1%	55.6%	7.4%
71.	Vandalism is not a	3.8%	19.2%	11.5%	53.8%	11.5%

		problem in this district.				

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
72.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	16.0%	56.0%	12.0%	12.0%	4.0%
73.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	16.0%	40.0%	20.0%	24.0%	0.0%
74.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	29.6%	63.0%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%
75.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	18.5%	81.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
76.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	3.8%	57.7%	15.4%	15.4%	7.7%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77.	Students regularly use computers.	25.9%	55.6%	0.0%	14.8%	3.7%
78.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	25.9%	66.7%	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%
79.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	25.9%	74.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
80.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	22.2%	55.6%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%
81.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer	23.1%	50.0%	3.8%	19.2%	3.8%

	skills.				
82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	22.2%	48.1%	11.1%	18.5%	0.0%
83.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	22.2%	55.6%	3.7%	14.8%	3.7%

Appendix F
PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

NARRATIVE RESPONSES

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of principal and assistant principal survey respondents.

- There are no volunteers, LISD does not like the parents to be at school. LISD schools are not available (for community use). Some principals have denied the use at night. Only for the LCC English classes are available.
- Most teachers know nothing or very little about computers. They do not attend the classes as is written in policy. Some teachers aides are the ones that run the technological devices and/or the computers.
- The central office staff is not in touch with what is needed at the high schools. They are prima donnas.
- The district chooses school principals on politics basis and not on sound practices. Often, this results in very poor choices of school principals. Good luck kids, you'll need it. There is a lot of discord. The school board is clickish with one or two persons making motions and the rest followers.
- There is a lot of politics in our district. Only employees whose relatives are known in the district are the ones who get promotions. Promotions are not site-based decisions. It's who the superintendent wants.
- Too many forms to fill out; too many meetings.
- The superintendent is very data driven and constantly reminds his administrators that student data (results) is essential when making decisions that impact students lives.
- The superintendent always talks to principals with games/children activities, to parents he reads a child's story, to the board he presents an oral language lesson for grade K. He also concentrates on the curriculum and someone else handles business, and he is in charge of everything, or should be.
- Some things are right, but there is a lot of room for improvement. We need to stamp out some of the abuses of power. Nepotism is rampant and needs to go. We have some wonderful people, but most are afraid to say anything. There are more things right than wrong. If we could fix some of the wrong ones, it would be perfect!
- I think the district is really trying to meet the needs of our students by providing academic standards in each content area and grade level.

- The majority of college bound students need to take remedial courses. The vocational courses are limited and most of the time are special education. There is no counseling - there is guidance, on credits, change of subjects, etc.
- Many subjects are taught by uncertified teachers, and substitutes. There are no rewards, I have never heard of a growth plan for a teacher. One time a teacher was suspended with pay for a year, he came back to teach, his case was vanished from court. Teacher's aides are used as "teachers."
- The district prides itself in working toward a rigorous curriculum that will ensure student success in college. It is a data driven standard and performance based. Assessments are conducted in all content areas to ensure students are prepared for the future. Academic TEA's standards training has been provided at all levels so that curriculum instructions and assessments are aligned.
- Overall, we have great supporting instructional main office colleagues.
- Too much emphasis is placed on doing extremely well on the TAAS test. We have too many assessments, district and state, and not enough time to teach. Teachers are constantly preparing pupils for assessments and filling out all necessary paperwork on assessments. Some teachers don't want to participate or would rather not want to be part of the SBDM. The paperwork reduction act is non-existent. We have too much paperwork to fill out and not enough time to monitor the instructional process.
- Some Kindergarten classes eat at 10:30 am.
- There appears to be a shortage of office space. Buildings were bought that are not safe for occupancy. The district pays an inordinate amount of money renting spaces. For example, JC Penney, and 1701 Farragut and 1719 Farragut. Why can't LISD build a place and accommodate everybody? That is, say, a floor for accounting, a floor for special education, etc.?
- I believe the problems are presently being addressed by the district. We are better than we used to be. I know the district continues to try to make it better so we can have exemplary campuses.
- "Think recognized." Our goal this year is to become a "Texas Recognized School District." We want to ensure that all of our students are provided with the best quality education enabling them to develop to their fullest potential and becoming productive members in our society.
- We have a great school district.
- As a taxpayer and employee of the district, I feel that monies for technology are not used adequately.
- We have a very high turnover of teachers and principals (4 in last 2 years). The quality of teaching suffers.
- The district needs good insurance.

- There is no consistency in guidelines or procedures when it pertains to promotions.
- There is advertisement, but personnel has already picked the employee they want when they hold interviews. They travel to Germany, Spain, Colorado to recruit. Waste of money, when they can cross the bridge to Mexico and recruit.
- We need more certified teachers so instruction can be more effective. Though we have excellent teachers, the excess amount of students in a classroom has become overwhelming.
- I feel that the district should provide more professional development for all administrators and not just a selective few. Central staff should be more supportive as to the needs of the campus administrators. Promotions are politically motivated. Experience, dedication, knowledge and competence is not taken into account.
- As far as promotions, rumors are always on target even before interviews.
- There is favoritism, so some schools have a lot, others little.
- We have a drug problem but no person is assigned to coordinate and help. Too many special ed. Students are sucked into the problem.
- Drugs are a problem, but they keep police and media out. Vandalism is high. Security is not respected, all depends whose son/daughter was caught doing something wrong.