Zapata County Independent School District

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June 14, 2005

Mr. Romeo Rodriguez, Jr.
Superintendent, Zapata County Independent School District

Dear Mr. Rodriguez:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Zapata County Independent School District's (ZCISD's) educational, financial, and operational functions.

The report's recommendations will help ZCISD improve its overall performance as it provides services to students, staff, and community members. The report also highlights model practices and programs being provided by ZCISD.

The staff of the Legislative Budget Board appreciates the cooperation and assistance that your staff and Texas Public School Consulting, Inc. provided during the preparation of this report.

The report is available on the LBB website at http://www.lbb.state.tx.us.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Parr
Assistant Director
Legislative Budget Board

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Zapata County Independent School District's (ZCISD's) school review report noted 7 commendable practices and made 98 recommendations for improvement. The following is an Executive Summary of the significant accomplishments, findings, and recommendations that resulted from the review. A copy of the full report can be found at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The superintendent conducts a weekly Instructional Joint Team Meeting to keep key staff informed, involved, and focused on achieving the district's instructional goals. These meetings ensure the entire team is involved in relevant decision-making and improve the team's communication and support of one another.

- ZCISD has actively pursued grant opportunities. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment coordinates the writing and submission of grant proposals with the district grant writer and the director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

- ZCISD's Child Nutrition specialist communicates the activities of the Child Nutrition office widely within and outside the district. Newsletters, staff meetings, student committees, and surveys are used to inform the staff, parents, students, and community.

- The district places the majority of maintenance workers on the campuses so that preventive maintenance and repairs can be completed quickly and with minimal paperwork. Repairs are addressed when identified so that minor problems do not become major repairs due to a lag in response time.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- ZCISD board members have not received adequate training on the budget process and have not taken an active role in budget development and monitoring.

- ZCISD does not have a plan for managing their fund balance causing large fluctuations between fiscal years.

- The district's Business office is not organized in a functional and efficient manner.

- ZCISD does not employ local or industry standards for staffing and is overstaffed in several employee groups, which has caused

financial constraints and difficulty in offering competitive teacher salaries.

- ZCISD does not have a districtwide comprehensive curriculum development and management system to guide the district on how to use curriculum materials and how to measure student progress in mastering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

- ZCISD lacks a plan to monitor and reduce the retention rates in grades K-7.

- ZCISD's Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department is not organized in a functional and efficient manner.

- The district does not have a replacement schedule and lacks the necessary number of instructional computers to support student learning.

- ZCISD is not complying with state regulations governing competitive procurement.

- ZCISD has no system to manage contracts creating a liability for the district in dealing with vendors.

- The district's security program lacks central coordination, planning, oversight, and program evaluation.

- ZCISD does not have a formal fleet replacement policy and is operating several buses that are excessively old.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation: Require board member training on the budget process and implement a process for board participation in budget development.** ZCISD board members have not received adequate training on the budget process and have not taken an active role in budget development and monitoring. Even though most board members have met or exceeded the required continuing education training hours in the area of assessed need and framework for school board development, they have not received adequate training on the basics of school funding or on the board's role in budget development and monitoring of district finances. Board members have relied upon the expertise of the former Business Services director and the recommendations of the superintendent in budget development, implementation, and monitoring. The board should participate in workshops with a facilitator

to increase its awareness of the board's role in budgeting and improve its skills in aligning resources to improve student performance. The board, superintendent, and business officials should attend training on the budget process and adopt a budget calendar that incorporates the required reporting and planning activities as well as staff input for the board to make informed budgetary decisions.

- **Recommendation: Develop a plan to actively manage the fund balance.** ZCISD does not have a plan for managing their fund balance, causing large fluctuations between fiscal years from a high of $8.6 million in 1998–99 to a low of approximately $149,000 in 2003-04. Sound financial management requires accumulating a fund balance in the General Fund in an amount that is adequate to cover net cash outflows that occur during most of the fiscal year. The plan should consider the district's long-range needs and the possibility of tax shortfalls due to the fluctuation in appraised values. In addition, budget development should include a review of how budget decisions will impact fund balance. The administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a presentation for the board on the status of the fund balance. After receiving the report, the board, superintendent, and administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a fund balance management plan. The plan should include a procedure for informing the board of the impact on the fund balance of budget amendments. The procedure should include providing the board and superintendent with a report showing the beginning fund balance, the impact of the budget amendment, and the ending fund balance. In this manner, the staff would monitor the fund balance and make the board aware of the district's financial position on an ongoing basis.

- **Recommendation: Reorganize the Business office, eliminate the staff accountant position, and replace it with a coordinator of Business.** The ZCISD Business office is not organized in a functional and efficient manner. At the time of the review, Business office personnel reported to the Business Services director and were responsible for accounting, financial reporting, auditing, accounts payable and receivable, bank reconciliation, investments, purchase order processing, competitive bidding, and fixed assets. The Business Services director did not delegate duties to subordinates and assigned most tasks to himself, not completing many of them. Other problems have resulted

from not having a more qualified staff accountant position and not assigning more responsibilities to that position. This reorganization eliminates the staff accountant position and creates a coordinator of Business and elevates the title of the administrative assistant for Business Services to assistant superintendent for Business and Operations. The current Business Services clerk's job description should be revised and given the responsibilities and title of purchasing clerk. The assistant superintendent for Business and Operations should delegate more responsibility and lines of authority to the coordinator of Business. The reorganization should also include an evaluation and redistribution of professional assignments with other Business office staff to help ensure that all tasks are equitably distributed.

- **Recommendation: Conduct a staffing efficiency study, develop and apply staffing formulas to reduce staff, and revise the salary schedule to increase teacher salaries, making them more competitive.** ZCISD does not use local or industry standards to determine the staffing level for any of its employee categories. The district is overstaffed in the number of support staff, auxiliary staff, and assistant principals as compared to industry standards. It also has significantly more teachers and educational aides per student than its peers, the region, and the state. The high number of employees, particularly in the teacher and educational aide groups, has not resulted in improved student performance. ZCISD students continue to score lower than students in peer districts, the region, and the state in the majority of subjects and grades tested on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Efficiently staffed districts use local and industry standards to determine staffing allocations across schools and departments. Standards help district officials equitably distribute staff based on standards that are applied districtwide. Additionally, ZCISD does not currently offer competitive salaries for teachers, making it difficult to attract highly qualified teaching staff. A December 2003 compensation study conducted for the district by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) indicated that ZCISD's teacher salaries were low when compared to teacher salaries in surrounding districts. ZCISD should conduct a staffing efficiency study and develop staffing formulas based on enrollment data and other industry accepted standards. The director of Personnel should develop staffing allocation numbers

based on these standards. A workforce reduction plan should be developed and phased in if necessary to address overstaffing. This plan should include procedures dealing with displaced employees and should be widely communicated to employees. The district's attorney should review the plan to ensure all appropriate legal issues are addressed. The district should then revise the salary schedule to offer more competitive salaries for teachers. The district should implement the remaining teacher salary recommendations presented by the December 2003 compensation study to provide a pay raise for 2005–06 with additional salary equity adjustments for beginning teachers and those with one through four years of experience.

- **Recommendation: Establish a curriculum development and management system, which includes a review of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned.** ZCISD lacks a comprehensive curriculum development and management system to guide the district on how to use curriculum materials and how to measure student progress in mastering the TEKS. As a result, there is little coordination among subject areas and between grade levels, and the district lacks a curriculum plan to guide staff on how to use curriculum materials such as curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and TAKS subtests to measure student progress in learning the TEKS. This has led to ZCISD's student performance on some TAKS subtests being below the average of its peer districts, the region, and the state as a whole. While the district is making efforts to develop and maintain an aligned curriculum with appropriate assessments to determine student progress, gaps in concepts presented in the guides or in the assessment effort should be identified and rectified before they are allowed to compound current deficiencies in student performance. District staff should establish a curriculum development and management system, which includes a review of the TEKS, district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, with particular attention being given to mathematics in grades 5–11, reading grades 6–11, writing grades 4 and 7, science grade 5, and social studies grades 8 and 10, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned.

- **Recommendation: Develop an instructional plan to reduce student retention rates and increase the promotion rates of students.** ZCISD lacks a plan to monitor and reduce the retention rates in grades K-7. Currently, the district is not reviewing retention, suspension, and dropout data disaggregated by school, program, and subgroup to determine the cause for the high retention rates in grades K-7. Retention rates at the elementary level have increased due to the requirements of the Student Success Initiative, enacted in 1999 by the 76th Texas Legislature, which ties grade advancement to passing the grade 3 TAKS reading test and the grade 5 TAKS reading and math tests. The district also does not have a coordinated approach that uses all available resources to allow teachers in grades 5 and 6 to provide assistance to students who need to catch up with their peers. The middle school Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) lists several strategies for helping students to succeed, including benchmark tests given to identify areas of weakness, TEKS reading skills taught across the curriculum, and the administration of a practice TAKS test. However, grade 6 TAKS scores do not indicate that these strategies are improving student scores. The middle school CIP does not include specific strategies for grade 6 teachers to use to help grade 5 students transition from elementary to middle school, and elementary CIPs do not show evidence of strategies to prepare students in grade 5 to transition to the middle school. The instructional plan implemented should consider both the short- and long-term effects of academic failure that result in retention. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment should work with campus administrators as a team to review retention, suspension, and dropout data by school and program with data disaggregated by subgroup to determine how instructional plans should be revised to meet the needs of at-risk students. CIPs should include specific strategies for students at risk of retention.

- **Recommendation: Realign the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department, including consolidating positions and responsibilities, to improve the efficiency and accountability of departmental programs.** The current organizational structure has a variety of unrelated tasks assigned to each of the administrators in the department. This poorly designed organization is not conducive for staff to carry assignments out effectively. Departmental personnel report to the

administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and are responsible for a wide array of often-misaligned functions. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment reports directly to the superintendent and is responsible for providing leadership and oversight for all of the district's educational programs. These responsibilities have placed a significant workload on this position, making it difficult for the administrative assistant to address all of the district and school improvement efforts in the most expeditious and efficient manner. By realigning the department and consolidating positions and responsibilities, principals at each level can deal primarily with one director for all curriculum related areas, which will improve planning and communication while reducing duplication of effort. By reorganizing like responsibilities under the director of Special Services and the director of Compensatory Education, providing guidance to the principals in the areas of compliance and program implementation will be more efficient. Furthermore, assigning the duties and responsibilities currently under the administrative assistant of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to the directors allows the administrative assistant to carry out the leadership and supervisory role of this position.

- **Recommendation: Develop an instructional computer replacement schedule and purchase additional computers to meet the state's short-term goal of one Internet connected multimedia computer per four students over a period of two years.** ZCISD does not have a replacement schedule and lacks the necessary number of instructional computers to support student learning. The student-to-computer ratio of seven to one stated in the district's 2004–07 Long Range Plan for Technology is greater than the state recommended ratio of four to one, which is depriving students of a vital learning tool. Making technology a viable instructional tool requires schools to have sufficient numbers of up-to-date computers so that each student can have full and easy access to a computer. The Technology Department staff has not completed an accurate computer inventory database to correctly determine the precise number of computers needed to reach a student-to-computer 4:1 ratio. The Technology office staff should complete the inventory of the

district's computers to correctly determine the actual number of computers needed to reach a student-to-computer 4:1 ratio. An effort needs to be made to identify older computers that should be removed from the inventory. Once an exact inventory is achieved, the Technology staff, working with the District Technology Committee, should develop a replacement schedule for the aging computers in the district that includes a timeline and costs in 2005–06 and 2006–07.

- **Recommendation: Develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods to comply with state purchasing laws.** ZCISD lacks procedures to ensure full compliance with state regulations governing competitive procurement. The review team identified several contracts for the purchase of goods and services that were not developed through the use of one of the competitive procurement methods prescribed by the Texas Education Code. These contracts violate one or more state laws and place school administrators and the Board of Trustees at risk for legal action. The Business office should develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods that result in future contracts complying with state purchasing laws and board policy. The administrative assistant for Business Services should ensure all staff understand the guidelines to ensure compliance.

- **Recommendation: Develop a contract management policy and procedures to effectively manage and monitor ZCISD contracts.** ZCISD has no system to manage contracts creating a liability for the district in dealing with vendors. The district does not have contract procedures to provide staff guidance for reviewing contracts and does not require a legal review of contracts prior to execution. Contract management procedures provide guidance in executing contracts properly and establish a system for managing and monitoring the contracts that are approved by the district. The lack of contract procedures creates a risk of entering into a contract that is advantageous to a vendor, but not in the best interest of the district. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with legal counsel to develop a contract management policy and procedures, including a uniform set of contract standards and a generic district vendor contract. Procedures should include a process for

reviewing and maintaining contract files, and monitoring ongoing contracts.

- **Recommendation: Designate the Student Services and Operations coordinator responsible for the districtwide safety and security functions.** The district's safety and security program lacks central coordination, planning, oversight, and program evaluation. Staff interviews and a review of the current operations showed a safety and security program that was neither comprehensive nor centralized, and did not have procedures that provide guidance for performance of daily security and safety tasks. The organization chart includes a supervisor of Security, but interviews indicate that this position is not involved in the security guard assignments or supervision of the security guards. Security guards report to and are evaluated by the principal of their assigned campus. The Student Services and Operations coordinator and the principals actually share the oversight of the district's safety and security functions. The coordinator should assess the safety and security needs of the district, which should include the identification of the currently implemented security measures, the effectiveness of those measures, and input from the stakeholders, as well as any security needs that are not currently being addressed by the district. A districtwide safety and security plan should be developed based on the needs assessment and include goals with implementation strategies and performance measures. All security personnel, including the supervisor of Security, should report directly to the Student Services and Operations coordinator, who will be responsible for the development of job descriptions, evaluations, and duty assignments. All principals should work through the coordinator for security needs. Staff development needs should be identified and ongoing training scheduled to ensure personnel are trained to effectively carry out their daily responsibilities and perform appropriately in a crisis situation. The coordinator should participate in workshops, conferences, and seminars to keep abreast of developments in law enforcement and compliance issues, and keep the superintendent, board, and employees informed of those developments.

- **Recommendation: Adopt a formal bus fleet replacement policy.** ZCISD does not have a formal fleet replacement policy and is operating several buses that are excessively old. School buses can have a typical life span of approximately 18 years or around 250,000 miles of service. Manufacturers stock replacement parts for 18 years after the manufacture of the vehicle. The actual lifespan of buses will vary based on factors such as route conditions and the amount and quality of maintenance and repairs performed on a bus over its lifetime. Districts that implement good fleet management practices adopt a formal replacement policy limiting bus age to an appropriate length of time or mileage amount based on district requirements or circumstances. ZCISD should review route conditions in the area and consider maintenance expectations and determine an appropriate bus replacement schedule for its bus fleet. A conservative estimate would be maintaining a bus fleet that is not older than 15 years old or has more than 250,000 miles of service. Additional buses would be replaced as they reach 15 years of age or 250,000 miles of service.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ZCISD is located 50 miles south of Laredo on US Highway 83 along the United States and Mexico border.

- The district's enrollment at 3,143 students is a majority minority (97.6 percent Hispanic) district with a large population of economically disadvantaged students (79.0 percent).

- Out of the total of 567 full-time equivalent staff, 245.4 are teachers.

- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) rated the district Academically Acceptable in 2003–04 after the district's appeal of its initial Academically Unacceptable rating due to incorrect middle school dropout data reported by ZCISD.

- The district is building two new elementary schools to be ready in 2005–06 to replace Zapata Central and Zapata South Elementary Schools.

- ZCISD is a property wealthy district that is working with an outside consultant to assist in setting future tax rates after the district miscalculated its 2004 tax rate costing the average taxpayer about $58.

- In spring 2004 and as a requirement for promotion to fourth grade, 84 percent of the district's third graders met TEA's passing criteria for the reading portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in

English compared to 91 percent for the state and 87 percent for the Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1).

- Overall, ZCISD at 51 percent passing is 17 percentage points behind the state average of 68 percent passing and 8 percentage points behind the Region 1 average of 59 percent passing on all TAKS tests taken for 2003–04.

- The legislators in Zapata County ISD's district are Senator Zaffirini and Representative Guillen.

SCHOOLS
- Zapata North Early Childhood Center (PK-K)

- Benavides Elementary (PK-5) in San Ygnacio

- Zapata South Elementary (1-5)

- Zapata Central Elementary (1-5)

- Zapata Middle School (6-8)

- Zapata High School (9-12)

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM
- ZCISD operates a disciplinary alternative education program, the Students Educational Adjustment & Success (SEAS) program, which serves grades 6-12 and is a short-term placement center for students who have been assigned to less than 90 cumulative days of enrollment. The district refers more serious offenses to the sheriff's office where they are sent to a judge for a ruling and sentencing.

2003–04 STUDENT DATA
- 3,143 students enrolled

- 2.2 percent Anglo

- 97.6 percent Hispanic

- 0.1 percent African American

- 0.2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander

- 79.0 percent economically disadvantaged

2003–04 FINANCIAL DATA
- Total budgeted expenditures: $22.4 million

- Fund balance: 7.4 percent or $1.7 million of 2003–04 total budgeted expenditures

- 2003 Tax Rate: $1.625 ($1.50 Maintenance and Operations and $0.125 Interest and Sinking)

2003–04 PERCENT SPENT ON INSTRUCTION
- Out of total budgeted expenditures of $22.4 million, ZCISD spent 52.8 percent on instruction, which is above the state average of 50.4 percent. Looking at total operating expenditures, ZCISD spent 53.8 percent on instruction, which is below the state average of 56.6 percent.

The chapters that follow contain a summary of the district's accomplishments, findings, and numbered recommendations. Detailed explanations for accomplishments and findings/recommendations follow the summary and include fiscal impacts. Each recommendation also lists the page number that corresponds to its detailed explanation.

At the end of the chapters, a page number reference identifies where additional general information for that chapter's topic is available. Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter's recommendations and associated savings or costs for 2005–06 through 2009–10.

Following the chapters are the appendices that contain general information, comments from the Community Open House and Focus Groups, and the results from the district surveys conducted by the review team.

The table below summarizes the fiscal implications of all 98 recommendations contained in the report.

FISCAL IMPACT

	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
Gross Savings	$1,286,988	$2,091,394	$2,091,394	$2,091,394	$2,091,394	$9,652,564	$33,000
Gross Costs	($899,407)	($647,914)	($291,889)	($291,889)	($356,889)	($2,487,988)	($514,450)
Total	$387,581	$1,443,480	$1,799,505	$1,799,505	$1,734,505	$7,164,576	($481,450)

Chapter 1

Educational Service Delivery

Zapata County Independent School District

CHAPTER 1
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Providing instructional services in the most cost-effective and productive manner possible is a challenge for Texas school districts. Effective and efficient programs and a well-designed instructional program determine how well a district meets its goal of educating children. Student performance on standardized tests, mastery of subject matter, and fluctuating student enrollment influence the development of district programs and services. School districts also must provide a safe and secure environment for students and staff that promotes learning, productivity, and socially appropriate behaviors. Administrators, in particular, are responsible for keeping students and staff safe from violence, safeguarding facilities and physical assets, and creating environments conducive to learning. In addition, the integration of technology into the teaching and learning process is critical to the success of the educational program. The effectiveness of a district's technology effort depends on its management and oversight of instructional and administrative technology, which includes related hardware and software maintenance, implementation and oversight of local area networks and a wide area network, training and technical support for district staff, emergency preparedness for disasters affecting technology, and planning for future technology needs.

Zapata County ISD (ZCISD) is located fifty miles south of Laredo toward Rio Grande City along US 83 and Highway 16 on the International Falcon Reservoir, which is the border between the United States and Mexico. The county, named for local rancher Antonio Zapata, is bordered on the north by Webb County, on the east by Jim Hogg and Starr Counties, and on the west by Mexico. The town site was relocated to higher ground upon completion of Falcon Dam in 1953, when the waters of the reservoir inundated many acres of rich, irrigated farmland. Zapata is the center of extensive oil and gas wells; it attracts winter tourists and vacationers because of the mild climate and fine fishing in the reservoir.

ZCISD serves its students in six schools: one early childhood center, three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. In 2003–04, the student enrollment in the district was 3,143. The student population was predominately Hispanic at 97.6 percent, followed by Anglos at 2.2 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders at 0.2 percent, and African Americans at 0.1 percent. Its percentage of economically disadvantaged students, at 79 percent, is 26.2 percent higher than the state average.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides annual comprehensive information on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) results as well as other demographic, staffing, and financial data for school districts and the public through its Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and its Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). ZCISD and five of its campuses were rated *"Academically Acceptable"* for 2003–04; one campus was not rated.

ZCISD is served by Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1). The peer districts used for comparative purposes are Valley View ISD, Hidalgo ISD, Groesbeck ISD, and Point Isabel ISD. Region 1 provides numerous services to ZCISD, including board training, staff development in all curriculum areas, technical assistance to districts and campuses in school improvement, contract consulting services for federal and state financial applications, and software application services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ZCISD has actively pursued grant opportunities. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment coordinates the writing and submission of grant proposals with the district grant writer and the director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

FINDINGS

- ZCISD students are not adequately prepared to take college entrance examinations, as compared to students in the state, region, and peer districts.

- ZCISD lacks strategies to increase the number of Advanced Placement courses offered, course and exam participation, and examination scores.

- ZCISD does not have a local policy to provide direction for the management of curriculum.

- ZCISD does not have a districtwide comprehensive curriculum development and management system to guide the district on how to use curriculum materials and how to measure student progress in mastering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

- The ZCISD Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department is not organized in a functional and efficient manner.

- ZCISD's bilingual program has been ineffective in preparing Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to meet the standards required by both the district and the state.

- ZCISD libraries do not meet the *"Acceptable"* level guidelines for both staffing and collection size in accordance with the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas.*

- ZCISD lacks a plan to monitor and reduce the retention rates in grades K-7.

- ZCISD lacks strategies to monitor its dropout rate in grades 7 and 8.

- ZCISD's inadequate State Compensatory Education (SCE) program does not sufficiently address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school.

- ZCISD does not have a central point of coordination for its programs that address student violence, at-risk youth, discipline management, and drug prevention.

- ZCISD's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) is not appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the program or to implement DAEP guidelines.

- ZCISD does not develop annual comprehensive disciplinary incident reports to disseminate to the board, district staff, parents, and community.

- ZCISD's security program lacks central coordination, planning, oversight, and program evaluation.

- ZCISD has not developed staffing standards for security guards, which has resulted in an overstaffed security department.

- ZCISD does not have a written agreement with the Zapata County Sheriff's Office identifying services provided to the district.

- ZCISD does not have a comprehensive crisis management plan for the district.

- Some ZCISD campuses do not report fire drills as required by the State Fire Marshal's Office or routinely inspect campus buildings for fire hazards.

- The district does not have a replacement schedule and lacks the necessary number of instructional computers to support student learning.

- The computer maintenance-tracking program is not providing district staff with reasonable response time or feedback to solve hardware and software computer problems.

- The Technology office does not have a disaster recovery plan that would protect the district from losing crucial data in the event of an emergency.

- The district's Technology Planning Committee lacks adequate representation from the various stakeholder groups.

- The district is not effectively integrating technology into the teaching-learning process.

- ZCISD lacks the departmental management needed to address the needs of the Technology program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1 (p. 13): Offer students college entrance exam preparation opportunities, such as teacher-provided tutorials for the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and American College Test (ACT), which will provide a better foundation for students taking these examinations in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.** Although the district already encourages participation in the PSAT, it should also offer preparation for this exam. The district's Gifted and Talented coordinator should work with a representative from Region 1 to begin offering training opportunities for middle and high school teachers on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT. The district should also work with Region 1 to obtain materials for PSAT, SAT, and ACT exam preparation.

- **Recommendation 2 (p. 15): Increase the number and type of Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings, implement awareness activities of courses offered to encourage student participation, and initiate strategies to encourage students to take AP exams and assist them in achieving a score of three or above.** The district should establish strong communication among teachers, align the curriculum vertically, introduce advanced concepts and strategies in elementary and middle schools, and develop methods to determine the progress of students in their coursework. A survey of parents and students indicating the courses they would like to see offered would support any additional courses. The district should implement the College Board recommended Pre-AP program strategies to assist teachers and administrators in preparing students for AP exams. Students

taking AP classes should be encouraged to take the appropriate AP examinations.

- **Recommendation 3 (p. 18): Adopt a board policy that provides direction for management of curriculum.** The district should obtain samples of local curriculum management polices from other districts, determine which elements of the policies are relevant locally, and work to formulate and adopt a policy that meets ZCISD's local needs.

- **Recommendation 4 (p. 19): Establish a curriculum development and management system, which includes a review of the TEKS, district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned.** The district curriculum staff should review the TEKS, district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, with particular attention being given to mathematics in grades 5 through 11, reading grades 6 through 11, writing grades 4 and 7, science grade 5, and social studies grades 8 and 10, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned. While the district is making efforts to develop and maintain an aligned curriculum with appropriate assessments to determine student progress, gaps in concepts presented in the guides or in the assessment effort should be identified and rectified before they are allowed to compound deficiencies in student performance.

- **Recommendation 5 (p. 21): Realign the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department, including consolidating positions and responsibilities, to improve the efficiency and accountability of departmental programs.** By realigning the department and consolidating positions and responsibilities, principals at each level can deal primarily with one director for all curriculum related areas, which will improve planning and communication while reducing duplication of effort. By reorganizing like responsibilities under the director of Special Services and the director of Compensatory Education, providing guidance to the principals in the areas of compliance and program implementation will be more efficient. Furthermore, assigning the duties and responsibilities currently under the

administrative assistant of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to the directors allows the administrative assistant to carry out the leadership and supervisory role of this position.

- **Recommendation 6 (p. 22): Evaluate the Transitional Program Model for bilingual education to determine its effectiveness in meeting the instructional needs of all LEP students and ensuring that these students meet the standards required by both the district and the state.** The district can help ensure effectiveness of the program by providing resources (including time for staff development) and advocating for the programs through both policies and actions. Local policies should be developed that address the Transitional Program Model. Focused training on the content and use of the district's Instructional Model and Transition Plan as well as effective approaches to teaching LEP students should be considered a priority for staff development. Region 1 should be contacted to obtain information about available training opportunities for teachers responsible for the instruction of bilingual students.

- **Recommendation 7 (p. 27): Ensure that all campus libraries meet the *"Acceptable"* standard for library collections and staffing.** The district should work to increase the school library collections districtwide to meet the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas "Acceptable"* standards. In order to meet the *"Acceptable"* staffing standard according to state guidelines, ZCISD should increase the half-time librarian positions at both A.L. Benavides Elementary and Zapata North Early Childhood Center to full-time positions.

- **Recommendation 8 (p. 27): Develop an instructional plan to reduce student retention rates and increase the promotion rates of students.** The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment should work with campus administrators as a team to review retention, suspension, and dropout data by school and program with data disaggregated by subgroup to determine how instructional plans should be revised to meet the needs of at-risk students. Campus Improvement Plans should include specific strategies for students at risk of retention.

- **Recommendation 9 (p. 31): Develop district strategies to address the problem of the increasing dropout rates in grades 7 and 8.** Using information provided by the district's PEIMS coordinator, the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department should perform a district needs assessment to determine the root of the increasing dropout problem. The high school and middle school principals and site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees should collaboratively use the needs assessment results to design strategies to focus on the student populations that are most at-risk of dropping out and address these strategies in the CIPs and district improvement plan (DIP). At the beginning of the school year, the attendance clerks should review enrollment data to ensure all students enrolled the previous year have returned. Weekly team meetings should be held and the clerks should submit to the attendance officers and the truant officer the names of students who have not yet returned to school, who in turn should make telephone calls and home visits to determine if the students still reside in the district. For students still residing in the district but not attending school, conferences should be held with the student and the parents to explain options for the student's return to school.

- **Recommendation 10 (p. 32): Implement a comprehensive State Compensatory Education program to supplement the regular education program for students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.** The district should require administrators and campus improvement teams to attend extensive training in writing campus plans that will provide ways to organize and set forth a quality plan of action, examine data from the AEIS and PEIMS indicator systems, and assist in targeting overall campus needs. ZCISD should implement a site-based budgeting procedure to determine how Title I and State Compensatory Education funds are used, and establish performance measures and allocate funds within the law's requirement to attain the targets. A budget committee could be formed to review Title I and SCE funds and determine the funds to be allocated at each campus. The principal and staff at each school should develop a written plan and justification for allotment of funds and present it to the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and the director of Compensatory Education. The district and

campus site-based committees should review the district and campus improvement plans to ensure that strategies meeting the needs of at-risk students are included and have specified SCE funds or staff allocated to those activities and strategies. A representative from the district should be assigned to review the DIP and CIPs to ensure that the information and data in the campus improvement plans correlate with the district plans, goals, and objectives to meet the needs of at-risk students.

- **Recommendation 11 (p. 36): Designate the responsibility of coordinating the discipline management and safe schools programs to the director of Personnel and Compliance.** The director can coordinate the programs through the campus principals and serve as the central point for the programs for student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management. In addition, the director and the principals can conduct a needs assessment of all campuses to assess the effectiveness of any existing safe schools programs; identify new strategies to address the identified needs; and work with the PEIMS coordinator to develop procedures for program implementation and incident reporting and record keeping. The district improvement committee and campus improvement committees should add goals and strategies to the DIP and CIPs to address discipline management, drug prevention, and maintaining a safe school environment.

- **Recommendation 12 (p. 38): Create a DAEP coordinator position to oversee the DAEP program and ensure DAEP guidelines are being implemented.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment for the DAEP in order to determine if the guidelines in place effectively match the needs of the DAEP and its students. The DAEP coordinator should develop a campus improvement plan (CIP) in conjunction with staff at other district campuses to ensure that needs of the students at the DAEP are covered in all CIPs. The director of Personnel and Compliance should work to provide certified teachers for the DAEP, one of which must have special education certification.

- **Recommendation 13 (p. 40) Create annual comprehensive disciplinary incident reports.** These reports should be distributed and discussed with the board, district staff, parents, and the community at least once a

year. This process would enable district administrators to obtain input from all stakeholders when developing and implementing additional prevention and intervention programs.

- **Recommendation 14 (p. 41): Designate the Student Services and Operations coordinator responsible for the districtwide safety and security functions.** The coordinator should assess the safety and security needs of the district, which should include the identification of the currently implemented security measures, the effectiveness of those measures, and input from the stakeholders, as well as any security needs that are not currently being addressed by the district. A districtwide safety and security plan should be developed based on the needs assessment and include goals with implementation strategies and performance measures. All security personnel, including the supervisor of Security, should report directly to the Student Services and Operations coordinator, who will be responsible for the development of job descriptions, evaluations, and duty assignments. All principals should work through the coordinator for security needs. Staff development needs should be identified and ongoing training scheduled to ensure personnel are trained to effectively carry out their daily responsibilities and perform appropriately in a crisis situation. The coordinator should participate in workshops, conferences, and seminars to keep abreast of developments in law enforcement and compliance issues, and keep the superintendent, board, and employees informed of those developments.

- **Recommendation 15 (p. 43): Conduct a needs assessment for security, develop a staffing methodology for security guards, and reduce the number of district security guards.** The Student Services and Operations coordinator should work with principals to identify campus security needs. Job descriptions and security guard assignments should be based on the needs assessment. Security guards should be assigned responsibilities that deal with campus security as described in their job descriptions and not serve as part-time instructional assistants, custodial staff, or be assigned other non-security related duties. If a reassignment of duties not related to security occurs, the funding of the position should be changed to the appropriate budget code. Based on

staffing standards identified through the survey of peer district security departments and the Northside ISD staffing methodology developed through surveying larger districts, ZCISD can eliminate 15 security guard positions.

- **Recommendation 16 (p. 45): Formalize the relationship with the Zapata County Sheriff's Office by developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifying both the services provided by the sheriff's office as well as the district's responsibilities.** The Student Services and Operations coordinator should draft an MOU using samples provided by the National Association of School Resource Officers. The draft should be reviewed and finalized by the district's legal counsel, superintendent, and the Zapata County Sheriff's Office, with final approval from the school board.

- **Recommendation 17 (p. 46): Develop a comprehensive districtwide crisis management plan and provide routine training for staff and students.** The superintendent should assign the responsibility of developing the district's crisis management manual to the Student Services and Operations coordinator. The district should establish a committee to work with the coordinator on the development of the manual and to review and update the crisis management manual annually. The committee should identify the key components to include in the crisis management plan, the members of the crisis response team and their roles, procedures for handling specific incidents, training for preparedness, and procedures for handling communication. The draft manual should then go to the community and staff for comments and suggestions. Upon completion, the district should train all employees on the crisis management plan, with intermittent training and student drills throughout the year.

- **Recommendation 18 (p. 48): Develop procedures for campuses to report drills and conduct safety inspections on a routine basis.** The procedures should require principals to report the date, time, and duration of all fire drills on a quarterly basis to the Student Services and Operations coordinator. All campus administrators should be held accountable for compliance. Drill results can be used to evaluate the program and campus effectiveness. In

addition, the Student Services and Operations coordinator should assign staff to conduct routine building inspections to identify safety hazards. As a member of the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund, the district can request a sample inspection form that can then be used as a guide by the Student Services and Operations coordinator when drafting an inspection form for campuses.

- **Recommendation 19 (p. 49): Develop an instructional computer replacement schedule and purchase additional computers to meet the state's short-term goal of one Internet connected multimedia computer per four students over a period of two years.** The Technology office staff should complete the inventory of the district's computers to correctly determine the actual number of computers needed to reach a student-to-computer 4:1 ratio. An effort needs to be made to identify older computers that should be removed from the inventory. Once an exact inventory is achieved, the Technology staff, working with the District Technology Committee, should develop a replacement schedule for the aging computers in the district that includes a timeline and costs in 2005–06 and 2006–07.

- **Recommendation 20 (p. 51): Purchase software or utilize freeware to improve the district's computer maintenance program.** The director of Technology and the maintenance staff should evaluate low-cost and free software solutions that are available on the market. The director of Technology should work with the administrative assistant for Business Services to select the proper software package. Once the software is selected, the Technology staff should install the software package, monitor and track computer maintenance activities, and provide the necessary training and instruction to the users.

- **Recommendation 21 (p. 51): Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan and conduct tests on a regular schedule.** The superintendent, director of Technology, and the Technology Committee should meet to determine what elements are needed to develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan. The Technology Committee should research models to serve as a blueprint for building the district's disaster recovery plan. The plan should affix accountability to

specific individuals who will be responsible for performing actions and repairing equipment in the event of a disaster. The superintendent, director of Technology, and the Technology Committee should then develop a schedule to regularly test the disaster recovery plan once it is completed.

- **Recommendation 22 (p. 53): Broaden the membership of the Technology Committee to include more representation from professional staff, various departments, business leaders, and the community to obtain input and support for the District Long-Range Technology Plan.** The addition of important stakeholders to the planning committee would add valuable support, guidance, and expertise for district technology. Also, it would allow for these additional stakeholders to become partners and be more familiar with the technology efforts of the district. Meetings with the reorganized committee should be held periodically in order for members to become familiar with the district technology goals and objectives. Frequent meetings will help members feel that they have a stake in meeting technology needs for the teacher-student learning process. The board should receive regular progress reports from the Technology Committee on the implementation of the Technology Plan and other major technology projects.

- **Recommendation 23 (p. 54): Fill the vacated position of district instructional technology specialist.** The position is budgeted, but the person formerly holding the position has been temporarily assigned to a campus. It is critical that the position be filled, whether this person is returned to the position of district instructional technology specialist or a new person is selected for the position. The person should use all available tools, such as the ZCISD 2004–07 Long-Range Technology Plan, survey data, Region 1 workshops, and Technology office staff, to integrate technology into the curriculum and address the many strategies outlined in the district Technology Plan. The instructional technology specialist should prepare an action plan and present it to the director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for consideration in 2005–06.

- **Recommendation 24 (p. 55): Hire a qualified director of Technology to manage the Technology department.** The

superintendent should direct the director of Personnel and Compliance to develop a job description, including qualifications and all assigned responsibilities of the position of director of Technology. A job posting should be developed for the position and advertised in the district and through various state associations, the local newspaper, and surrounding areas. The superintendent should designate an interview committee to determine the most qualified candidate and provide a recommendation to the superintendent for board approval.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GRANT AWARDS

ZCISD has actively pursued grant opportunities. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment coordinates the writing and submission of grant proposals with the district grant writer and the director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. All school districts are eligible to apply for federal, state, and private sector grants. Chapter 41 districts generally do not actively seek grant funding because these districts have sufficient financial resources available to them without seeking additional funding. ZCISD has received eight grants for a total of $1,385,529 for the 2004–05 school years. **Exhibit 1–1** shows the Grant Fund Awards for 2004–05.

The director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment coordinates the writing and submission of the grant proposals with all curriculum departments. Program needs and student achievement are evaluated in both the foundation curriculum (English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and the enrichment curriculum (health, physical education,

fine arts, economics, career, and technology) before applying for a grant. **Exhibit 1–2** shows each grant's program goals and distribution of funds to meet the goals of the grants.

Several of the grants were also awarded in 2003–04, and the district is participating in year two of these grants: Texas Reading First; Even Start Family Literacy; Texas Classroom Supply Teacher Reimbursement Grant; Adult English: English Language and Civics Program; and Pre-kindergarten Expansion Grant. The additional funds are an asset in providing materials, staff development, and teacher support for many of the literacy programs already in place in ZCISD.

DETAILED FINDINGS

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS (REC. 1)

ZCISD students are not adequately prepared to take college entrance examinations, as compared to students in the state, region, and peer districts. The district has not encouraged students to take the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and American College Test (ACT) college entrance exams. Additionally, the district does not employ strategies to assist students in preparing for the exams; thus, they are unable to score competitively with their peers. **Exhibit 1-3** displays the SAT and ACT results for ZCISD, its peer districts, Region 1, and the state. In 2002–03, the percent of ZCISD students with scores at or above the TEA criterion is 8.9 percentage points below Region 1 and 25.9 percentage points below the state average.

The ACT measures critical reading, math problem solving, and writing skills. There are 215 questions on the ACT. The highest possible score is 36, the

EXHIBIT 1–1
ZCISD GRANT FUND AWARDS
2004–05

FUNDING CYCLE	PROGRAM	ALLOCATION	STATUS
2004–05	Texas Reading First Cycle 1, Year 2	$250,000	Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) on file
2004–05	Even Start Family Literacy Program	$200,000	Preliminarily Selected
2004–05	Texas Classroom Supply Teacher Reimbursement Grant	$20,000	Letter on file (in lieu of NOGA)
2004–05 and 2005–06	Texas Head Start Ready to Read Grant	$254,042 An equal amount will be re-allocated for Year 2 if the program is successful	NOGA on file
2004–05	Adult Education: English Language and Civics Program	$100,299	NOGA on file
2004–05, 2005–06, and 2006–07	Comprehensive School Reform (ITL/CSR): Improving Teaching and Learning	$149,927 Equal amounts will be re-allocated for Years 2 and 3 if the program is successful	NOGA on file
2004–05	Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grant	$331,311	NOGA on file
2004–05	Texas High School Completion and Success Grant, Cycle 2	$79,950	NOGA on file
Total Funds Awarded		$1,385,529	

SOURCE: ZCISD's Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, December 2004.

EXHIBIT 1–2
ZCISD GRANT AWARDS, PROGRAM GOALS AND FUND DISTRIBUTION
2004–2007

PROGRAM	PROGRAM GOAL	PAYROLL	CONSULTANTS	GENERAL SUPPLY	TRAVEL, CONFERENCE/ WORKSHOP REGISTRATION	TOTAL
Reading First, Cycle 1, Year 2	To ensure each student is reading on or above grade level by grade 3.	$120,853	$5,000	$123,227	$920	$250,000
Even Start Family Literacy Program	To provide educational services to parents and early learners.	$156,000	$17,700	$16,775	$9,525	$200,000
Classroom Supply Teacher Reimbursement	To provide resources for classroom teachers to purchase supplies and materials.	$0	$0	$20,000	$0	$20,000
Head Start Ready to Read Grant	To implement a specialized professional development plan that will improve the competencies of all teachers assigned to the early education centers.	$223,451	$9,384	$17,612	$3,595	$254,042
English Lang. Civics Education	To provide literacy and U.S. citizenship instructional services for adults.	$54,863	$3,587	$41,181	$668	$100,299
Comprehensive School Reform: Improving Teaching and Learning	To implement comprehensive reform strategies in the instructional program. The Connected Math Program will be implemented at the middle school.	$16,800	$18,625	$113,237	$1,265	$149,927
Pre-K Expansion Grant	To provide full-day instructional services for all eligible preschool children.					$331,311
High School Completion and Success Grant, Cycle 2	To provide after-school tutorial and mentoring services at the high school for 110 LEP students identified as being most in need.	$48,750	$0	$30,200	$1,000	$79,950
Summary of Funds						**$1,385,529**

SOURCE: ZCISD's Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, December 2004.

EXHIBIT 1-3
COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION SCORES
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION 1, AND STATE
CLASS OF 2003

DISTRICT	PERCENT OF STUDENTS TAKING EXAMINATIONS	PERCENT OF STUDENTS MEETING THE CRITERION	AVERAGE SAT SCORE	AVERAGE ACT SCORE
Hidalgo	71.1%	5.8%	793	16.3
Groesbeck ISD	54.5%	16.4%	1004	19.0
Point Isabel ISD	50.5%	8.3%	881	20.4
Zapata County ISD	**41.4%**	**1.3%**	**882**	**16.5**
Valley View ISD	*	3.4%	**	15.4
Region 1	**55.4%**	**10.2%**	**903**	**17.4**
State	**62.4%**	**27.2%**	**989**	**19.9**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2003–04.
* Indicates that the data for this item were statistically improbable, or were reported outside a reasonable range.
** Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

average score nationwide is 21, and the average score for students in Texas is 24. The test covers English, math, and reasoning. The SAT includes both verbal and math components. The two parts are scored independently and the score range for each component is 200 to 800. For each part, the average score is 500, for an average total score of 1,000. The 2003 national average combined score for the verbal and math sections was 1,026. The mean SAT verbal and math combined score for Texas public and non-public high school graduates in the class of 2003 was 993. Average SAT subject scores for all examinees were higher nationally than in Texas.

ZCISD board policy EIF (Local), Academic Achievement states, "Beginning with the 2003–04 school year, students in the tenth grade shall be required to take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The district shall provide financial assistance to ensure that all students take the examination prior to graduation." Students in grade 11 can take the PSAT/NMSQT at their own expense. Students are provided with the PSAT study guide before taking the test, but formal preparation or review classes are not offered; students are responsible for preparing for the test on their own. In 2003–04, 200 ZCISD sophomores took the PSAT; no data was available on students in other grade levels that may have taken the PSAT during this school year.

Many districts train teachers to present PSAT and SAT classes to students in tutorials both during and after school hours at no cost to the students. These districts provide an avenue for all students to practice skills necessary to earn competitive scores on college entrance examinations. Glen Rose ISD uses materials from Regional Education Service Center XI (Region 11) to increase awareness and preparation for the ACT and SAT college entrance examinations.

Belton High School in Belton ISD builds skills and prepares all types of college-bound students to take the SAT through their SAT Academy. The academy allows for twenty-four hours of instruction and is offered three times per year: in the fall, spring, and summer. Classroom activities conducted by experienced professional educators address the three main areas in which students need proficiency to improve performance on the SAT: math, vocabulary, and verbal strategies. Teachers are paid a stipend per session to provide the instruction. Most sessions require two teachers who teach either the verbal or the math portion. Teachers are responsible for advertising the academy, registering the students, and developing the lessons.

The College Board reports that students who attend these types of courses approach the test with a confident and positive attitude. This result comes from the familiarization with the test and basic test-taking techniques. While students can prepare for the SAT test on their own, many need a more structured approach.

The College Board and the American College Testing Program both offer various strategies for assisting students with test preparation. The College Board encourages students to take the PSAT to prepare for the SAT. For schools and districts requesting this information, a free analysis of test score results is provided, and methods for improvement in areas of student performance weaknesses are suggested.

Many districts use software from the College Board and the American College Testing Program on a districtwide basis, individualizing programs to address areas that need strengthening. Districts also often provide specific staff development on college entrance exams and curricular content to teachers, counselors, students, and parents. Some districts have arranged for community business partners and volunteers to serve as mentors for students, promoting effective study skills and preparation in advanced coursework and college preparatory classes.

The district should offer students college entrance exam preparation opportunities, such as teacher-provided tutorials for the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and American College Test (ACT), which will provide a better foundation for students taking these examinations in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Although the district already encourages participation in the PSAT, it should also offer preparation for this exam. The district's Gifted and Talented coordinator should work with a representative from Region 1 to begin offering training opportunities for middle and high school teachers on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT. The district should also work with Region 1 to obtain materials for PSAT, SAT, and ACT exam preparation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (REC. 2)

The district lacks strategies to increase the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered, course and exam participation, and examination scores. The Advanced Placement course and exam participation rates and examination scores of ZCISD students are lower than students in their peer districts, Region 1, and the state. AP is a nationally recognized program that introduces students to university-level work while they are still in high school. The courses are developed locally, based on course descriptions provided by the College Board, sponsor of the AP program. AP examinations, developed by committees of university faculty and high school teachers, are widely accepted as valid indicators of how well students are likely to perform in the same courses taken in college. Over 90 percent of the nation's colleges and universities have policies granting either incoming credit or advanced placement, or both, for satisfactory grades on AP exams. There are 29 College Board courses approved for the Texas public schools; seven of the courses are

offered by ZCISD, representing basic courses in English, math, history, foreign language, and science. The courses available through the College Board and those offered by ZCISD are indicated in **Exhibit 1–4.**

EXHIBIT 1–4
ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES
COLLEGE BOARD AND ZCISD
2003–04

COURSES AVAILABLE THROUGH COLLEGE BOARD	OFFERED BY ZAPATA HIGH SCHOOL
Biology	
Calculus AB	X
Calculus BC	
Chemistry	X
Computer Science A	
Computer Science B	
Macroeconomics	
Microeconomics	
English Language	X
English Literature	X
Environmental Science	
European History	
French Language	
French Literature	
German Language	
Spanish Language	X
Comparative Government and Politics	X
Human Geography	
Latin Literature	
Music Theory	
Physics B	
Physics C	
Psychology	
Spanish Language	
Spanish literature	
Statistics	
Studio Art	
U.S. History	X
World History	

SOURCE: ZCISD Gifted and Talented Coordinator, December 2004.

By earning college course credit through AP programs, students can complete college hours while still in high school, thus finishing their college degrees sooner. AP students and teachers have access to the APEX Learning Assessment Tools online program, which evaluates a student's knowledge and efficiently measures student performance throughout the AP course. A complete set of online tests and reports are provided through the APEX system for classroom use. Assessment Tools examine how individual students performed on each topic, allowing teachers to efficiently identify and address student needs. Students should be encouraged to use the APEX system to determine their readiness to take the AP test.

Even though Pre-AP classes in reading/language arts, math, pre-algebra, science, and social studies are offered at the middle school, students may not be adequately prepared to take the AP classes at the high school. Pre-AP participation should provide students the opportunity to study academic subjects in greater depth and to develop analytical and other study skills that can contribute to college level success. Evaluation of Pre-AP courses will ensure that students are being challenged and that the instruction in the Pre-AP subjects is in greater depth and complexity than the regular courses so that students are prepared to take AP classes at the high school level. There is no indication that the district encourages students who have completed Pre-AP courses at the middle school to enroll in similar subject area AP courses at the high school level.

Exhibit 1–5 shows the number of AP courses offered at the high school, student enrollment, number of students completing courses, number tested, and number passing with a score of three or above for 2003–04. With the exception of AP Spanish Language, the number of students passing with a three or better is significantly less that than the number of students tested.

In 2002–03, the percent of ZCISD students taking AP examinations was lowest among peer districts, Region 1, and state averages. In 2001-02, the percent of ZCISD students taking AP exams was the second lowest among peer districts and lower than the Region 1 and state averages. **Exhibit 1–6** shows the percent of students taking AP tests in ZCISD, peer districts, Region 1, and the state during 2001–02 and 2002–03. Data are not available for the 2003-04 school year.

The district does not prepare students for or require students to take the examination upon completion of an AP course. However, earning college credit is dependent on taking the exam and receiving a score acceptable to the receiving college or university. A student does not have to be enrolled in an AP course to take the course examination, and students are not prohibited from taking more than one examination during the test administration period if multiple subject area examinations can be scheduled.

To award credit or advanced standing for an AP course, colleges and universities generally require an AP examination score of three, four, or five, with three defined as "qualified," four as "well-qualified," and five as "extremely well-qualified." In 2002–03, the percent of scores for ZCISD students that were at or above the criterion score

EXHIBIT 1–5
ZCISD ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSE OFFERINGS
2003-04

COURSE NAME	NUMBER OF CLASSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETING COURSE	NUMBER TESTED	NUMBER PASSED WITH A SCORE OF 3 OR BETTER
AP Language	2	23	23	21	*
AP Literature	1	15	15	15	*
AP Calculus	1	13	13	*	0
AP Chemistry	1	12	12	*	0
AP U.S. History	2	39	39	*	0
AP Government	2	34	34	24	0
AP Spanish Language	1	20	20	12	11

SOURCE: ZCISD Gifted and Talented Coordinator, December 2004.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–6
PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED
ADVANCED PLACEMENT
EXAMINATION
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE
2001–02 AND 2002–03

DISTRICT	PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED 2001–02	PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED 2002–03
Valley View ISD	31.5%	21.3%
Zapata County ISD	11.1%	6.4%
Groesbeck ISD	13.7%	11.2%
Point Isabel ISD	8.8%	34.8%
Hidalgo ISD	45.0%	40.3%
Region 1	17.2%	17.5%
State	15.0%	16.1%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04.

EXHIBIT 1–7
PERCENT OF AP EXAMINEES WITH ONE AP SCORE OF THREE, FOUR, OR FIVE
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE
2001–02 AND 2002–03

DISTRICT	PERCENT OF SCORES OF 3,4, OR 5 2001–02	PERCENT OF SCORES OF 3,4, OR 5 2002–03
Zapata County ISD	42.1%	52.2%
Groesbeck ISD	51.9%	41.7%
Point Isabel ISD	52.4%	29.0%
Hidalgo ISD	57.9%	47.9%
Valley View ISD	71.4%	40.8%
Region 1	49.1%	50.0%
State	56.8%	56.0%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District Performance, 2003-04.

of three on one or more AP examinations was the highest among peer districts and higher than the percentages in the region but below the state percentage. In 2001–02, the percent of ZCISD students scoring a three, four, or five on one or more AP examinations was the lowest among the peer districts, Region 1, and the state. **Exhibit 1–7** compares the ZCISD AP scores to peer districts, Region 1, and the state**.**

The College Board report, *Reaching the Top*, calls for the implementation of affirmative development strategies to address the needs of minority students who are potential high achievers. Strategies should include providing an academically rich curriculum and instruction in grades K–12, providing teachers training in ways to improve student performance, and working with local universities to explore new ways to improve achievement of minority students.

The College Board has also instituted a Pre-AP program that includes assistance for teachers and administrators to ensure that students in grades pre-K–12 receive challenging, coherent instruction. It is recommended that districts establish strong communication among teachers, align the curriculum vertically, introduce advanced concepts and strategies in elementary and middle schools, and develop methods to determine the progress of students.

Students in Dripping Springs ISD's (DSISD) Pre-AP and AP classes score significantly higher on AP examinations than other students in Region 13 and the state as a whole. All Pre-AP and AP classes are designated Gifted and Talented (GT) courses and serve as the GT program at the high school. The Pre-AP and AP classes also have open enrollment for any non-GT student who wishes to register for them. All Pre-AP and AP teachers are certified as gifted and talented teachers. In addition, GT students are encouraged to enroll in GT electives such as debate, humanities, and/or the GT independent study course. GT students also have the opportunity to enroll in dual credit courses at Austin Community College (ACC), correspondence courses, or the GT summer academy. The summer academy is designed to provide experiences that will qualify for college credit.

The district should increase the number and type of Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings, implement awareness activities of courses offered to encourage student participation, and initiate strategies to encourage students to take AP exams and assist them in achieving a score of three or above. The district should establish strong communication among teachers, align the curriculum vertically, introduce advanced concepts and strategies in elementary and middle schools, and develop methods to determine the progress of students in their coursework. A survey of parents and students indicating the courses they would like see offered would support any additional courses. The district should implement the College Board recommended Pre-AP program strategies to assist teachers and administrators in preparing students for AP exams. Students taking AP classes should be encouraged to take the appropriate AP examinations.

LOCAL CURRICULUM POLICY (REC. 3)

ZCISD does not have a local policy to provide direction for the management of curriculum. The district has five policies related to curriculum; however, none of these policies provide direction on how the district should manage its curriculum. The five legal policies in place pertaining to curriculum are:

- EGA (Legal) Curriculum Development: Innovative and Magnet Programs;

- EHA (Legal) Curriculum Design: Basic Instructional Program;

- EHB (Legal) Curriculum Design: Special Programs;

- EHAA (Legal) Basic Instruction Program: Required Instruction (All Levels); and

- EHAC (Legal) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary).

The district contracts with Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for its policy document development. TASB codes all policies according to major areas of school district operations. Any policy designated in the policy manual as (Legal) is one developed by TASB to comply with the legal sources of authority defining local district governance.

Local policies developed by or for the district are to reflect the decisions of the local board of trustees and are so designated. TASB issues updates to ensure that the district's policies remain current. ZCISD does not have any local policies related to curriculum management.

The district provided information indicating that the teams that develop the Campus and District Improvement Plans work to address individual campus and district needs and goals to improve student learning. ZCISD implemented a Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment program in 2002–03 to ensure its curriculum is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and formative benchmark tests. This program ensures that the curriculum objectives selected are rigorous and meet or exceed state standards. The district formed vertical teams to align the curriculum in all subject areas and at all grade levels. The Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment program also consists of curriculum benchmark timelines that are correlated to TEKS and TAKS and serve as a formative benchmark-testing program for each campus. These efforts are commendable but do not provide the direction for curriculum development attained through board-adopted policy.

Strong curriculum management policies include statements that:

- define the curriculum;

- outline the curriculum development process;

- require written documents in all subject areas and courses;

- establish expectations regarding coordination of curriculum, instructional materials, and assessment programs;

- provide staff training; and

- establish a direct link between the budget development process and current priorities.

Existing ZCISD legal policies define the curriculum but all other elements listed above are not evident.

Many districts such as East Central ISD include well-written board policies on curriculum management in their policy manuals. Generally, an EG (Local) Curriculum Development policy is one that establishes common standards for what is being taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated. These standards ensure that curricula are consistent across the district and provide a basis for decision-making in all instructional settings.

ZCISD should adopt a board policy that provides direction for management of curriculum. The district should obtain samples of local curriculum management polices from other districts, determine which elements of the policies are

relevant locally, and work to formulate and adopt a policy that meets ZCISD's local needs.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE – INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM DELIVERY (REC. 4)

ZCISD does not have a districtwide comprehensive curriculum development and management system to guide the district on how to use curriculum materials and how to measure student progress in mastering the TEKS. The performance of ZCISD students on certain Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) subtests is below the average of students in its peer districts, the region, and the state as a whole. The district lacks a curriculum plan to guide the district on how to use curriculum materials and measure student progress in learning the TEKS. Because of ZCISD's absence of a districtwide comprehensive curriculum development and management system, there is little curricular coordination among subject areas and between grade levels. Prior to 2001–02, the district had no standardized districtwide curriculum documents and no districtwide testing system to monitor the curriculum. ZCISD has since implemented a process for aligning the written, taught, and tested curriculum.

Curriculum planning took place during the summers of 2002 through 2004. TEKS for Leaders Training Models were the resources that were utilized for the summer planning sessions. Stipends were provided to the staff that worked during the summers to align the curriculum to the instruction and assessment of the TEKS.

Benchmark testing was established in ZCISD to assess student progress in mastering the curriculum at three times during the school year. Benchmarks used for the 2001–02 school year were a combination of those developed by local district staff and those created by the United Independent School District. Benchmarks were created and administered in English and Spanish for the elementary bilingual students. During the summer of 2002, lead teacher partners worked on creating curriculum topic maps and curriculum bundles as provided by the TEKS for Leaders I model. Plans were based on the most effective instructional process for the 36-week instructional timeline and the five local benchmark assessments. The 2003 summer curriculum project continued with the revision of the instruction and assessment calendars. The instructional leaders were trained with the TEKS for Leaders II Model. Leaders were trained to complete instructional planning guides and to analyze the instructional guide's depth and complexity as prescribed by TEKS and

TAKS. During the summer of 2004, the lead teacher partners revisited the benchmarks used during 2002–03. The TAKS release tests for the spring of 2003 and 2004 were reviewed and added to the resource guides created in 2003. The number of benchmarks was reduced and revised for alignment with a new assessment calendar and instructional timeline. While the district is making efforts to develop and maintain an aligned curriculum with appropriate assessments to determine student progress, the low performance of students on certain TAKS subtests indicates that gaps in concepts presented in the guides or in the assessment effort remain.

Exhibit 1–8 shows the percent of students in grades 3 through 5 passing TAKS in ZCISD as compared with students in peer districts, Region 1, and the state. ZCISD students scored lower than the state average in all subjects and at all grade levels, lower than the region except in grade 3 math, and either the lowest or lower than three out of the four peer districts in all subjects.

Exhibit 1–9 shows the percent of students in grades 6 through 8 passing TAKS in ZCISD as compared with students in peer districts, Region 1, and the state. ZCISD students scored lower than the peer districts, the region, and the state average in all subjects at all three grade levels.

Exhibit 1–10 shows the percent of students in grades 9 through 11 passing TAKS in ZCISD as compared with students in peer districts, Region 1, and the state. Scores of ZCISD students are lower than those of the peer districts, the region, and the state average in all subjects and all grade levels, except grade 9 in reading and math and grade 11 in science, which were above the Region 1 average but below the state average.

Effective instructional program delivery requires a sound instructional management system. Administrators are held accountable for ensuring that the resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvements in student performance. Planning and evaluation systems are developed so that instructional program success can be monitored.

The district should establish a curriculum development and management system, which includes a review of the TEKS, district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned. The district curriculum staff should review the TEKS, district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, with particular

EXHIBIT 1–8
PERCENT OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS
GRADES 3 THROUGH 5 ALL SUBJECTS
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE

	READING	MATHEMATICS	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS TAKEN
GRADE 3						
Hidalgo ISD	91%	97%				90%
Valley View ISD	91%	98%				90%
Point Isabel ISD	90%	92%				85%
Groesbeck ISD	89%	85%				82%
Zapata County ISD	**84%**	**89%**				**80%**
Region 1	**87%**	**87%**				**80%**
State	**91%**	**90%**				**86%**
GRADE 4						
Point Isabel ISD	86%	89%	97%			77%
Valley View ISD	84%	92%	93%			77%
Groesbeck ISD	79%	76%	91%			69%
Hidalgo ISD	77%	86%	89%			68%
Zapata County ISD	**78%**	**77%**	**86%**			**65%**
Region 1	**80%**	**83%**	**91%**			**70%**
State	**86%**	**87%**	**91%**			**76%**
GRADE 5						
Valley View ISD	76%	91%		76%		67%
Hidalgo	69%	84%		81%		60%
Groesbeck ISD	80%	83%		67%		59%
Point Isabel	63%	73%		58%		47%
Zapata County ISD	**58%**	**73%**		**50%**		**45%**
Region 1	**70%**	**78%**		**62%**		**53%**
State	**80%**	**82%**		**70%**		**63%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04.

EXHIBIT 1–9
PERCENT OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 8 ALL SUBJECTS
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE

	READING	MATHEMATICS	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS TAKEN
GRADE 6						
Groesbeck ISD	86%	70%				68%
Point Isabel ISD	81%	75%				67%
Valley View ISD	80%	74%				65%
Hidalgo ISD	78%	77%				69%
Zapata County ISD	**69%**	**42%**				**39%**
Region 1	**79%**	**71%**				**65%**
State	**87%**	**78%**				**74%**
GRADE 7						
Groesbeck ISD	90%	76%	98%			73%
Hidalgo ISD	83%	66%	94%			62%
Point Isabel ISD	82%	66%	97%			62%
Valley View ISD	80%	69%	90%			63%
Zapata County ISD	**67%**	**52%**	**87%**			**49%**
Region 1	**77%**	**63%**	**90%**			**58%**
State	**83%**	**71%**	**91%**			**66%**
GRADE 8						
Groesbeck ISD	94%	80%			89%	76%
Point Isabel ISD	87%	63%			79%	60%
Hidalgo ISD	85%	62%			88%	60%
Valley View ISD	82%	58%			77%	50%
Zapata County ISD	**75%**	**54%**			**75%**	**50%**
Region 1	**84%**	**58%**			**83%**	**54%**
State	**90%**	**67%**			**88%**	**64%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04.

EXHIBIT 1–10
PERCENT OF STUDENTS PASSING TAKS
GRADES 9 THROUGH 11 ALL SUBJECTS
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE

	READING	MATHEMATICS	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS TAKEN
GRADE 9						
Groesbeck ISD	89%	65%				63%
Valley View ISD	86%	56%				56%
Hidalgo ISD	84%	59%				58%
Point Isabel ISD	82%	56%				54%
Zapata County ISD	77%	52%				48%
Region 1	76%	47%				45%
State	85%	61%				59%
GRADE 10						
Groesbeck ISD	78%	60%		62%	90%	45%
Point Isabel ISD	77%	72%		67%	86%	51%
Hidalgo ISD	73%	69%		75%	88%	51%
Valley View ISD	59%	75%		57%	91%	40%
Zapata County ISD	56%	42%		38%	69%	31%
Region 1	67%	54%		50%	81%	36%
State	76%	64%		65%	88%	50%
GRADE 11						
Point Isabel ISD	96%	87%		89%	99%	79%
Hidalgo ISD	89%	91%		86%	96%	80%
Groesbeck ISD	88%	79%		73%	98%	65%
Valley View ISD	74%	89%		82%	96%	63%
Zapata County ISD	73%	76%		82%	96%	59%
Region 1	85%	83%		78%	96%	66%
State	87%	85%		85%	97%	73%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04.

attention being given to mathematics in grades 5 through 11, reading grades 6 through 11, writing grades 4 and 7, science grade 5, and social studies grades 8 and 10, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned. While the district is making efforts to develop and maintain an aligned curriculum with appropriate assessments to determine student progress, gaps in concepts presented in the guides or in the assessment effort should be identified and rectified before they are allowed to compound deficiencies in student performance.
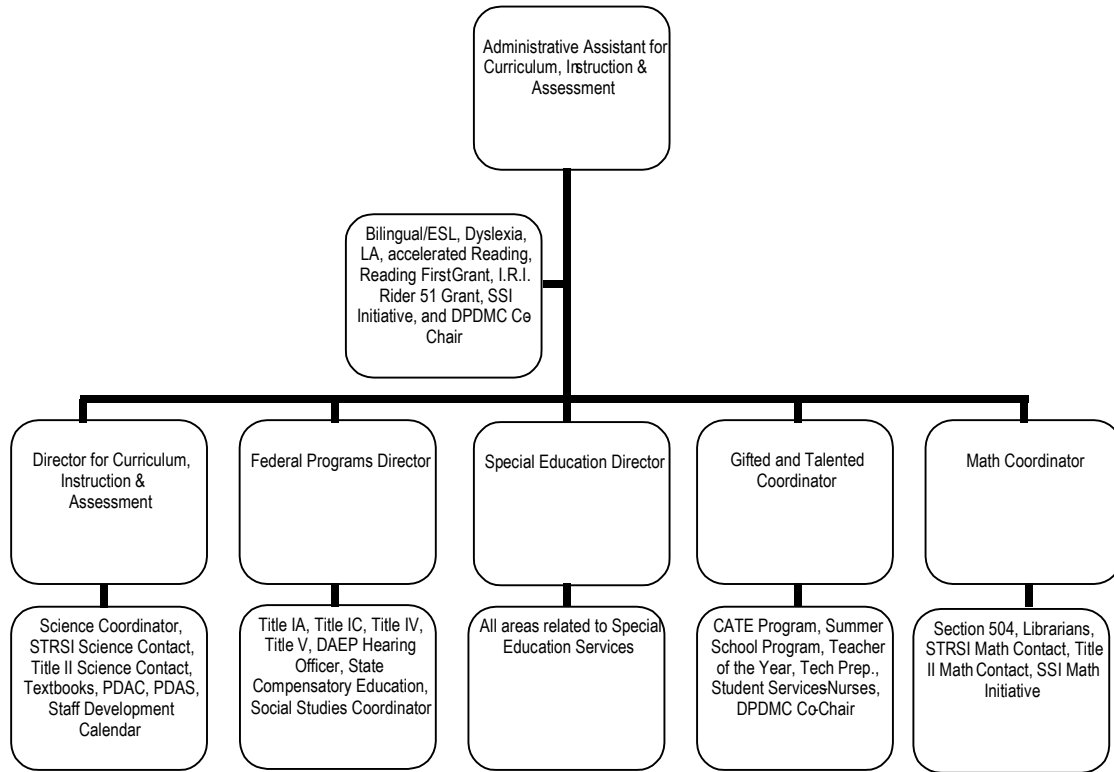
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (REC. 5)

The ZCISD Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department is not organized in a functional and efficient manner. Departmental personnel report to the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and are responsible for a wide array of often-misaligned functions. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment reports directly to the superintendent and is responsible for providing leadership and oversight for all of the district's educational programs. In addition, this position is directly responsible for Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) and the reading and language arts programs. These

responsibilities have placed a significant workload on this position, making it difficult for the administrative assistant to address all of the district and school improvement efforts in the most expeditious and efficient manner.

Exhibit 1–11 shows the positions and responsibilities currently assigned to the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

Under the present structure, the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment has three directors and two coordinators who report directly to this position. The district organizational chart also indicates that principals report to this position, although district interviews indicated that the principals report to the superintendent. Each of the directors/coordinators reporting to this position has a wide variety of responsibilities that appear unrelated. For example, the math coordinator is in charge Section 504, campus librarians, and district math programs. The gifted and talented coordinator is in charge of the career and technology education program, summer school program, teacher of the year recognition, and campus nurses, as well as co-chairing the District

EXHIBIT 1–11
ZCISD CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT ORGANIZATION

SOURCE: ZCISD Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Organization Chart and Staff Interviews, December 2004.

Planning and Decision Making Committee (DPDMC).

The current organizational structure has a variety of unrelated tasks assigned to each of the administrators in the department. The poorly designed organization of the department is not conducive for staff to be able to carry assignments out effectively. Responding to a variety of unrelated tasks makes it more difficult for administrators to keep abreast of compliance requirements and curriculum changes.

Effective school districts align responsibilities of administrative staff to promote efficiency and better coordination of instructional programs. These school districts assign their administrators duties and responsibilities that relate to each other, which facilitates enhanced job performance and results in improved overall educational outcomes.

ZCISD should realign the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department, including consolidating positions and responsibilities, to improve the efficiency and accountability of departmental programs. By realigning the department and consolidating positions and responsibilities, principals at each level can deal

primarily with one director for all curriculum related areas, which will improve planning and communication while reducing duplication of effort. By reorganizing like responsibilities under the director of Special Services and the director of Compensatory Education, providing guidance to the principals in the areas of compliance and program implementation will be more efficient. Furthermore, assigning the duties and responsibilities currently under the administrative assistant of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to the directors allows the administrative assistant to carry out the leadership and supervisory role of this position.

Exhibit 1–12 illustrates a proposed organization that will provide for a more effective, ongoing interaction between and among divisional components and reduce the number of staff directly reporting to the assistant superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

BILINGUAL/LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICENT (REC. 6)

ZCISD's bilingual program has been ineffective in preparing Limited English Proficient students to meet the standards required by both the district

EXHIBIT 1–12
RECOMMENDED ZCISD ORGANIZATION AND PROPOSED RESPONSIBILITIES
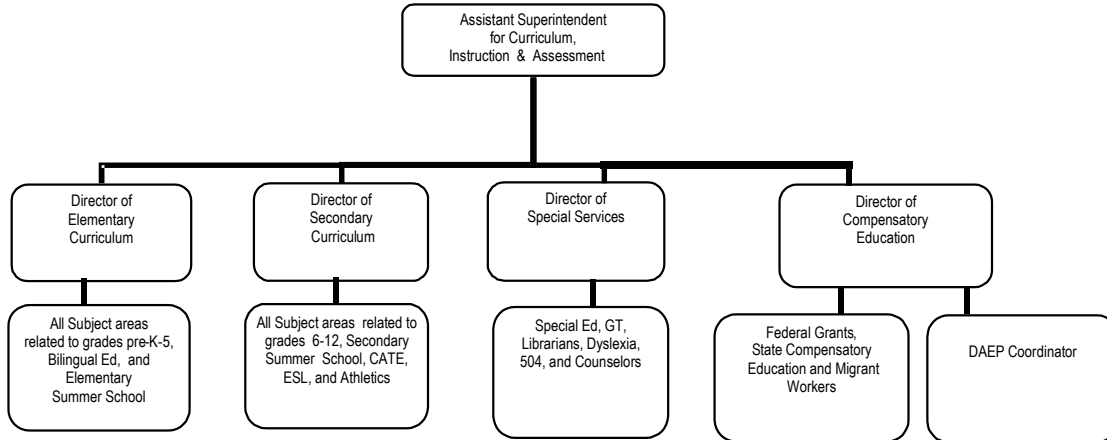
SOURCE: Texas Public School Consulting, Inc., February 2005.

and the state. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment coordinates the ZCISD Bilingual/LEP program. In 2003–04, ZCISD served 1,199 LEP students, which represented 38.1 percent of the district's population. The district serves all enrolled LEP students, with parent permission, in either the required bilingual education program or the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, as required by 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 89.1205(a) and (d), and 89.1210(g). Since the district has 20 or more LEP students in one language classification in the same grade level, all LEP students in pre-kindergarten through elementary grades are enrolled in a bilingual education program as required by law.

Exhibit 1–13 shows the number of LEP students enrolled in the district in 2003–04. This significant number of LEP students presents challenges at every campus for recruitment, teacher training, and resource allocations.

EXHIBIT 1–13
ZCISD LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2003–04

GRADE LEVELS	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	LEP ENROLLMENT	PERCENT OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT
Elementary	1,625	790	48.6
Middle School	703	194	27.6
High School	815	215	26.4
Total	3,143	1199	38.1

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Campus Profile, 2003-04.

The district has received additional funds to address the instructional needs of LEP students under the Even Start Early Literacy and Title III programs. The district has assigned the department of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to oversee the implementation of the bilingual education program. Their responsibilities include:

- monitoring appropriate bilingual education certification of teachers;

- monitoring equitable distribution to resources of students served in bilingual programs;

- supervising auxiliary staff members who assist in the bilingual education program;

- establishing a district task force to write a grant for additional resources to implement the bilingual program;

- developing and implementing a districtwide plan for bilingual education; and

- conducting comprehensive staff development for all teachers.

The TAC requirement for program content and design states, "The district shall modify the instruction, pacing and materials to ensure that LEP students have a full opportunity to master the essential knowledge and skills of the required curriculum." ZCISD implemented a District Instructional Model and Transition Plan during 2003–04, which is a move away from the Developmental Bilingual Program that had been used by the district in previous years. The developmental program groups students by their native language and instruction in English is increased as the students gain proficiency.

The ZCISD Transitional Bilingual Program moves students with a quick progression to all or most instruction through English. Students may begin to make the transition into English reading at the beginning of first grade after having had bilingual literacy instruction since pre-kindergarten or

kindergarten. The transitioning period will vary depending on the needs of the student. Reading instruction in Spanish continues during the transition. The end of first grade marks a complete transition to English reading.

The teacher survey and focus group comments indicate that some teachers are not supportive of the Transitional Program Model, while the majority of the teachers are doing their best to embrace the model that the district has implemented. The district did not provide evidence that there has been an evaluation of the Transitional Program Model to determine its effectiveness in preparing students to meet both district and state standards, or the model is addressed in local policies. The survey narrative comments included:

- "We have students in Spanish bilingual all the way through fourth grade. It is sad to see them not get all the opportunities of other students."

- "We are trying very hard to get them into English classes as early as possible. I think we are depriving the students."

- "Exiting second grade is ideally our goal. We can't let the fourth and fifth grades fall through the cracks."

- "We are the only district that has kids in all Spanish classes through fourth grade according to a recent conference."

- "Socially, they are left out. They go with their own group. It is going to take more than a year to get out."

Exhibit 1–14 shows the 2003–04 TAKS results in reading, writing, and mathematics, which indicate that LEP students have not mastered the TEKS in order to close the achievement gap between them and all students. The District Goal 1: Closing the Gap (for bilingual students) states: "The Zapata County ISD's Bilingual/ESL Education Program will be implemented for the purpose of closing the achievement gap between LEP students and other populations." This goal has not been fully met, but significant progress has been made to narrow the gap. District Goal 3: Placement and Curriculum states "Limited English Proficient students will be placed in an appropriate curriculum sequence to ensure that they are challenged to perform at a level commensurate with their ability." There is no evidence of a curriculum sequence or a curriculum outline used with LEP students.

While elementary LEP students are making gains in passing the TAKS reading test, the percentage is significantly lower than that of all students. **Exhibit 1–14** shows that LEP students in grades 3 through 5 generally performed lower in reading than students in two comparable peer districts, as well as in Region 1 and the state.

The percentage of Zapata Middle School LEP students passing TAKS reading is significantly lower as compared to all students. LEP students in grades 6 through 8 performed lower in reading than students in four comparable peer districts, as well as in Region 1 and the state, as shown in **Exhibit 1-15**.

The percentage of high school LEP students passing TAKS reading is significantly lower, with special note that the grade 10 scores are exceedingly low as compared to all students. **Exhibit 1–16** shows LEP students in grades 9 through 11 performed lower in reading than students in the peer districts, as well as in Region 1 and the state.

The percentage of elementary LEP students passing TAKS mathematics is significantly lower in grades 4 and 5 as compared to all students. LEP students in grades 3 through 5 generally performed lower in mathematics than students in the peer districts, Region 1, and the state. The comparison of the data for 2003–04 in **Exhibit 1–17** shows the district has made progress with the LEP population in mathematics as evidenced by the increase of 34 percentage points in grade 3, an increase of 14 percentage points in grade 4 and an increase of 21 percentage points in grade 5.

Exhibit 1–18 shows the percentage of middle school LEP students passing TAKS mathematics is significantly lower as compared to all students. LEP students in grades 6 through 8 performed lower in mathematics than students in the peer districts, as well as the region and the state. Grade 6 showed an increase of five percentage points but is still 27 percentage points below the district percentage of 42 percent. Grades 7 and 8 have decreased four and five percentage points, respectively.

The percentage of high school LEP students passing TAKS mathematics is significantly lower as compared to all students, as shown in **Exhibit 1–19**. LEP students in grades 9 through 11 performed lower in mathematics than students in the peer districts, as well as Region 1 and the state.

The percentage of LEP students passing TAKS writing is significantly lower as compared to all students. LEP students in grades 4 and 7 performed lower in writing than students in three of the peer districts, as well as the region and state.

EXHIBIT 1–14
ELEMENTARY SUMMARY PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISON
LEP TAKS READING RESULTS GRADES 3 THROUGH 5
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 3		GRADE LEVEL 4		GRADE LEVEL 5	
	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	45%	80%	16%	50%	12%	30%
Groesbeck ISD LEP Students	82%	*	*	*	*	*
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	75%	79%	41%	70%	*	*
Valley View ISD LEP Students	91%	90%	59%	67%	78%	35%
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	92%	93%	65%	63%	54%	52%
ZCISD All Students	58%	84%	49%	78%	49%	58%
Region 1 All Students	77%	87%	75%	80%	69%	70%
State All Students	86%	91%	82%	86%	74%	80%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–15
MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMARY PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISON
LEP TAKS READING RESULTS GRADES 6 THROUGH 8
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 6		GRADE LEVEL 7		GRADE LEVEL 8	
	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	17%	34%	12%	12%	43%	38%
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	40%	49%	57%	53%	45%	50%
Valley View ISD LEP Students	48%	46%	36%	25%	50%	31%
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	50%	46%	22%	57%	20%	38%
Groesbeck ISD LEP Students	*	*	*	*	*	*
ZCISD All Students	48%	69%	67%	67%	81%	75%
Region 1 All Students	70%	79%	74%	77%	79%	84%
State All Students	80%	87%	82%	83%	84%	90%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–16
HIGH SCHOOL SUMMARY PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISON
LEP TAKS ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS RESULTS GRADES 9 THROUGH 11
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 9		GRADE LEVEL 10		GRADE LEVEL 11	
	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	13%	47%	1%	3%	*	22%
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	31%	51%	32%	31%	63%	52%
Valley View ISD LEP Students	32%	69%	19%	18%	17%	44%
Groesbeck I SD LEP Students	*	*	*	*	*	*
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	40%	27%	13%	7%	*	44%
ZCISD All Students	57%	77%	50%	56%	42%	73%
Region 1 All Students	65%	76%	64%	67%	67%	85%
State All Students	76%	85%	70%	76%	70%	87%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–17
ELEMENTARY SUMMARY PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISON
LEP TAKS MATHEMATICS RESULTS GRADES 3 THROUGH 5
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 3		GRADE LEVEL 4		GRADE LEVEL 5	
	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	52%	86%	34%	48%	32%	53%
Groesbeck ISD LEP Students	45%	*	*	*	*	*
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	82%	94%	72%	82%	40%	*
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	94%	95%	76%	83%	64%	74%
Valley View ISD LEP Students	94%	98%	65%	75%	91%	79%
ZCISD All Students	60%	89%	58%	77%	60%	73%
Region 1 All Students	81%	87%	75%	83%	75%	78%
State All Students	84%	90%	81%	87%	78%	82%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–18
MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMARY PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISON
LEP TAKS MATHEMATICS RESULTS GRADES 6 THROUGH 8
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 6		GRADE LEVEL 7		GRADE LEVEL 8	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	10%	15%	16%	12%	19%	14%
Valley View ISD LEP Students	48%	45%	33%	31%	65%	31%
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	54%	75%	22%	50%	<1%	25%
Groesbeck ISDLEP Students	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	44%	54%	43%	53%	26%	39%
ZCISD All Students	43%	42%	54%	52%	50%	54%
Region 1 All Students	61%	71%	52%	63%	52%	58%
State All Students	71%	78%	63%	71%	62%	67%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–19
HIGH SCHOOL SUMMARY PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISON
LEP TAKS MATHEMATICS RESULTS GRADES 9 THROUGH 11
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 9		GRADE LEVEL 10		GRADE LEVEL 11	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	11%	9%	8%	3%	21%	38%
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	16%	25%	36%	52%	35%	68%
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	38%	15%	33%	43%	*	80%
Groesbeck ISD LEP Students	*	*	*	*	*	*
Valley View ISD LEP Students	33%	48%	59%	57%	20%	81%
ZCISD All Students	43%	52%	43%	42%	59%	76%
Region 1 All Students	42%	47%	52%	54%	62%	83%
State All Students	55%	61%	61%	64%	68%	85%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–20
DISTRICTWIDE SUMMARY PEER DISTICTS, REGION, AND STATE COMPARISION
LEP TAKS WRITING RESULTS GRADES 4 AND 7
MAY 2003 AND MAY 2004

	GRADE LEVEL 4		GRADE LEVEL 7	
	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04
Zapata County ISD LEP Students	35%	58%	22%	44%
Valley View ISD LEP Students	88%	74%	41%	43%
Hidalgo ISD LEP Students	83%	80%	55%	87%
Groesbeck ISD LEP Students	*	*	*	*
Point Isabel ISD LEP Students	83%	99%	30%	79%
ZCISD All Students	59%	86%	68%	87%
Region 1 All Students	81%	91%	78%	90%
State All Students	84%	91%	82%	91%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2003-04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

As shown in the comparison data for 2003 and 2004 in **Exhibit 1–20**, the district has made progress with the LEP population in writing, as evidenced by the increase of 23 percentage points in grade 4 and an increase of 22 percentage points in grade 7. This data indicates improvement in English reading and that bilingual teachers are giving comparable emphasis to both reading and writing in grade 4.

Successful program models for promoting the academic achievement of LEP students are those that enable the students to develop academic skills while learning English and provide non-English speaking students with the appropriate instruction. It is important that teachers and administrators do not view early transitioning to English reading as synonymous with exiting LEP students from bilingual programs. There should be an ongoing effort among teachers working with LEP students to coordinate the development of each student's academic profile. A long-term predictor of academic success is the use of current approaches

to teaching the academic curriculum through two languages.

The district should evaluate the Transitional Program Model for bilingual education to determine its effectiveness in meeting the instructional needs of all LEP students and ensuring that these students meet the standards required by both the district and the state. The district can help ensure effectiveness of the program by providing resources (including time for staff development) and advocating for the programs through both policies and actions. Local policies should be developed that address the Transitional Program Model. Focused training on the content and use of the district's Instructional Model and Transition Plan as well as effective approaches to teaching LEP students should be considered a priority for staff development. Region 1 should be contacted to obtain information about available training opportunities for teachers responsible for the instruction of bilingual students.

LIBRARY STANDARDS (REC. 7)

ZCISD libraries do not meet the "Acceptable" level guidelines for both staffing and collection size in accordance with the School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas. The School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas defines an "Acceptable" school library collection as a balanced and current collection of 9,000 books, software, and electronic resources such as Internet access for schools, or at least 20 items per student at the elementary level; at least 16 items per student at the middle school level; at least 12 items per student at the high school level, whichever is greater.

Exhibit 1–21 shows the library collection size at each school, the number of students, the number of items per student, and whether the collection meets, does not meet, or exceeds the *"Acceptable"* standard. Four of the six library collections are below the *"Acceptable"* standard.

The state guidelines for *"Acceptable"* or higher-rated libraries require at least one certified librarian in schools with 0–350 students, and one certified librarian and one half-time library aide in schools with 351 to 700 students. In schools with 700 to 1,050 students, *"Acceptable"* libraries should have one certified librarian and one aide, and in schools with 1,051 to 1,400 students, *"Acceptable"* staffing guidelines are met with one certified librarian and two aides. **Exhibit 1–22** shows library staffing for each ZCISD school, 2003–04 school enrollment, and whether or not each school library met library staffing standards. All of the libraries have certified

librarians. Two of the six ZCISD libraries are below standard and four libraries are at the *"Acceptable"* level.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Subpart 4 - Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, emphasizes the importance of libraries. NCLB considers libraries as resources for improving the literacy skills and academic achievement of students by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials, a well equipped, technologically advanced school library media center, and well trained, professionally certified school library media specialists.

The district should ensure that all campus libraries meet the *"Acceptable"* standard for library collections and staffing. The district should work to increase the school library collections districtwide to meet the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas "Acceptable"* standards. In order to meet the *"Acceptable"* staffing standard according to state guidelines, ZCISD should increase the half-time librarian positions at both A.L. Benavides Elementary and Zapata North Early Childhood Center to full-time positions. The annual fiscal impact of adding 1 full-time librarian position is calculated by multiplying an average mid-range librarian salary of $36,616 by 12 percent for benefits to determine the annual cost of $41,010 ($36,616 X 1.12 = $41,010), beginning in 2005–06. The 2004 average price of children and young adult selections is $19.31 and 21,749 items are required for all campuses to meet acceptable standard for a one-time cost of $419,973 ($19.31 X 21,749).

RETENTION (REC. 8)

ZCISD lacks a plan to monitor and reduce the retention rates in grades K-7. Retention refers to the practice of holding back a student at the end of an academic year and requiring the student to repeat a grade level. Grade retention has traditionally been defined as "the practice of requiring a child to repeat a particular grade or requiring a child of appropriate chronological age to delay entry to kindergarten or first grade." This definition of retention—delayed entry or repetition of a grade— applies primarily to grades K–6. The same grade level in successive years in high school does not necessarily represent the repetition of a full year's curriculum, as it does in elementary school. Practices in grades 7 and 8 may either be like those followed in elementary school or like those followed in high school, depending on local school district policies. Intervention or remediation often places children that are retained back in the same type of environment in which they previously did not succeed.

EXHIBIT 1–21
ZCISD LIBRARY COLLECTION BY SCHOOL
2003–04

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	DISTRICT COLLECTION SIZE	ACCEPTABLE STANDARD COLLECTION SIZE	DISTRICT COLLECTION PER STUDENT	ACCEPTABLE STANDARD COLLECTION PER STUDENT	MEETS STANDARD
Zapata North Early Childhood Center	445	9,550	8,900	21.4	20	Acceptable
A. L Benavides Elementary	85	2,500	1,700	29.4	20	Acceptable
Zapata South Elementary	592	5,000	11,840	8.4	20	Below Standard
Zapata Central Elementary	503	4,026	10,060	8.0	20	Below Standard
Zapata Middle School	703	3,948	11,248	5.6	16	Below Standard
Zapata High School	815	8,205	9,780	10.1	12	Below Standard

SOURCE: ZCISD Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Staff, December 2004, and *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas*, 2004.

EXHIBIT 1–22
STATE LIBRARY STAFFING STANDARDS AND ZCISD LIBRARY STAFFING
2003–04

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	DISTRICT NUMBER OF STAFF	ACCEPTABLE STANDARD	MEETS STANDARD
Zapata North Early Childhood Center	445	.5 certified librarian + 1 aide	1 certified librarian+.5 aide	Below Standard
A. L Benavides Elementary	85	.5 certified librarian + 0 aide	1 certified librarian	Below Standard
Zapata South Elementary	592	1 certified librarian + 1 aide	1 certified librarian+.5 aide	Acceptable
Zapata Central Elementary	503	1 certified librarian + 1 aide	1 certified librarian+.5 aide	Acceptable
Zapata Middle School	703	1 certified librarian + 1aide	1 certified librarian+1 aide	Acceptable
Zapata High School	815	1 certified librarian + 1 aide	1 certified librarian+1 aide	Acceptable

SOURCE: ZCISD Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Staff, December 2004, and *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas*, 2004.

ZCISD local board policy states: "In grades 1–8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on the overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subjects areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies."

Exhibit 1–23 shows ZCISD's overall retention rates for 2003–04 compared with its peer districts and the state. Grades K–7 have retention rates higher than the state average. The kindergarten retention rate is 4.1 percentage points higher than the state; first grade is 16.8 percentage points higher; second grade is 16.9 percentage points higher than the state average; third grade is 15.2 percentage points higher than the state average; fourth grade is 4.3 percentage points high than the state average; fifth grade is 1.8 percentage points

high than the state average; sixth grade is 3.8 percentage points higher than the state average, and seventh grade is 1.9 percentage points higher than the state average. Additionally, ZCISD has the highest overall retention rates in all grades among its peer districts. Studies show that children who fall behind by one or more grades are at a higher risk of dropping out of school.

Under guidelines from the NCLB implemented in 2003–04, children who do not pass the third grade reading portion of the TAKS will be retained in third grade. The elementary schools attribute the increase in the retention rate to the implementation of both the state and district's local promotion standards during the 2003–04 school year. ZCISD uses a variety of academic measures to decide if a student will be promoted to the next grade. The measures include:

- course grades;

EXHIBIT 1–23
ZCISD RETENTION RATES COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS AND THE STATE
2003–04

	GRADE K 2003-04	GRADE 1 2003-04	GRADE 2 2003-04	GRADE 3 2003-04	GRADE 4 2003-04	GRADE 5 2003-04	GRADE 6 2003-04	GRADE 7 2003-04
Hidalgo ISD	0.9%	2.8%	0.9%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%	1.0%	0.0%
Valley View ISD	1.0%	5.4%	5.2%	1.1%	2.6%	0.6%	3.0%	2.5%
Groesbeck ISD	4.3%	6.9%	5.8%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Point Isabel ISD	6.1%	5.4%	3.5%	1.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%
Zapata County ISD	**7.0%**	**22.7%**	**20.4%**	**18.1%**	**5.9%**	**2.7%**	**5.2%**	**3.2%**
State	**2.9%**	**5.9%**	**3.5%**	**2.9%**	**1.6%**	**0.9%**	**1.4%**	**1.3%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District Profile, 2003-04.

- local or state tests such as High Frequency word test;

- Texas Primary Reading Inventory/Tejas LEE (TPRI) for grade K-2; and

- Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

The ZCISD middle school principal attributes the high retention rate for grade 6 to a number of factors. Many students entering middle school have difficulty meeting higher academic standards. During the shift from elementary to middle school, teaching methods become faster paced, and students take cumulative and comprehensive tests or semester tests that require retention of a larger volume of material than in grade 5. In addition, as students become involved in competitive extracurricular activities, they must manage their time more effectively.

The middle school principal has implemented an extended-day tutorial program four afternoons a week for all core subjects. The district provides transportation for all students who need to attend. A double block class schedule for English and math was instituted for 2004–05 at the request of the teachers. The middle school campus improvement plan (CIP) lists several strategies for helping students to succeed, including benchmark tests given to identify areas of weakness, TEKS reading skills taught across the curriculum, and the administration of a practice TAKS test. However, TAKS scores for sixth graders do not indicate that these strategies are improving student scores. In addition, the middle school CIP does not include specific strategies for grade 6 teachers to use to help grade 5 students transition from elementary to middle school. Elementary plans do not show evidence of strategies to prepare students in grade 5 to transition to the middle school. The district does not have a coordinated approach that uses all available resources to allow teachers in grades 5 and 6 to assist students who need to catch up with their peers.

Studies show that intensive tutoring by a qualified teacher is an effective strategy for student success. Intensive tutoring works. Children who find learning difficult benefit more from high quality instruction. An article from *"LDA Newsbriefs" (Vol. 33, No. 2, March/April 1998)* states, "Providing a daily period of intensive tutoring by qualified personnel could cost half as much as retention–-and intensive tutoring reliably enhances achievement."

The research on retention at all age levels and across studies is based on group data. While there may be individual students who benefit from retention, no study has been able to predict

accurately which children will gain from being retained.

Numerous research studies on the long-term effects of retention have concluded that retaining children does not help them progress academically. In fact, for the vast majority of students, retention has a negative effect on their academic achievement. Researchers have found that children who are overage for their grade are more likely to drop out of school. Roderick (1995) suggests three possible reasons why retention places students at risk of dropping out:

- grade retention as a remedial strategy does not appear to fix school performance;

- retention is the strongest message a teacher or school can give a student that they are not as capable as their age mates; and

- overage students become more frustrated when they struggle with schoolwork.

Grissom and Shepard (1989:34) concluded that "retained students experience a greater risk for dropping out that cannot be explained by their poor achievement." They found that for African American males in Austin, Texas, retention increased their risk of dropping out of high school by 27 percent. Anglo females from a high socioeconomic district who were retained increased their chances of not completing high school by 21 percent. Based on their study and review of retention research, Grissom and Shepard (1989:60) stated:

> For a school district contemplating tougher promotion policies, it is possible to estimate what the effect might be on the district's dropout rate. If annual retention rates are increased, say, from 5 percent to 7 percent, the cumulative retention rate will go up about 20 percent. That is, an additional 20 percent of students will experience retention sometime in their school career. Following from the extra retentions, the district's dropout rate will go up by 3 to 6 percentage points. A district that had a 20 percent dropout rate could anticipate a new rate of 25 percent as groups of previously retained students reached high school age.

However, in a grade retention report by the Massachusetts Department of Education (1990), the authors concluded that in individual cases students can benefit from retention. Schools are

unable to predict who these students will be. A study by Sandoval and Hughes (1981) was designed to discover what types of children benefit from retention. The following observations were made of children who demonstrated greater success after repeating first grade:

- displayed mastery of some academic skills (usually reading);

- had good self-concepts and adequate social skills;

- had parents who were involved in the schools and who had favorable attitudes toward retention;

- demonstrated difficulty with school primarily due to lack of exposure to the material (school transfer or high absenteeism); and

- received substantially different curricula and methods of instruction during their retained year.

As a district explores and reviews their retention practices, alternate practices used by other school districts may be helpful. These ideas can help stimulate thinking about appropriate and effective educational strategies to implement. Some educational strategies used by school districts include:

- promote all low achievers and provide additional instructional support. One-to-one tutoring programs have had good results in helping students meet standards (See Allington & Walmsley, *No Quick Fix: Rethinking Literacy Programs in America's Elementary Schools*);

- provide students in a transition program with an enriched curriculum designed to lead to double promotion so students can catch up with their age cohorts;

- keep teachers with the same students for two or three years with an emphasis on continuous progress;

- implement multi-age classrooms where children have more time to learn and advance to the next level after mastering the concepts at their current level;

- develop a summer enrichment or "bridge" program;

- use supplemental funds from federal categorical programs like Title I to pay teachers to tutor students individually in reading and writing after school;

- expand parent involvement to include family literacy programs that teach parents how to support emergent literacy;

- review and/or redesign curriculum for developmental appropriateness;

- increase instructional effectiveness by using information from professional associations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards;

- provide intensive staff development for all K-3 teachers in emergent literacy and a common program for teaching reading/language arts;

- provide time for staff to examine current teaching practices and use staff development funds to organize study groups to identify alternatives; and

- find time to examine collective beliefs regarding teaching and learning and determine ways in which all students can be successful.

ZCISD should develop an instructional plan to reduce student retention rates and increase the promotion rates of students. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment should work with campus administrators as a team to review retention, suspension, and dropout data by school and program with data disaggregated by subgroup to determine how instructional plans should be revised to meet the needs of at-risk students. CIPs should include specific strategies for students at risk of retention.

The plan should consider both the short- and long-term effects of academic failure that results in retention and provide periodic assessment and the implementation of elementary to middle school strategies beginning in kindergarten. Campus improvement plans (CIPs) should include specific strategies for at-risk students. Strategies should include, but not be limited to:

- providing staff development designed to implement, assess, and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided to students at risk of dropping out of school;

- implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement, school performance, and attendance;

- implementing research-based accelerated education programs to address the needs of

all special populations' students, including but not limited to LEP, migrant, students with disabilities, and disadvantaged students; and

- implementing strategies at the elementary/middle school levels to assist these students with the transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school.

DROPOUT (REC. 9)

ZCISD lacks strategies to monitor its dropout rate in grades 7 and 8. Texas has set dropout prevention as one of its primary goals. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) considers the dropout rate as one of the main criteria in assigning an annual accountability rating to districts and campuses. TEA requires districts to report information on students who leave school, which is then used to determine the district's dropout rate.

ZCISD does not have a primary dropout prevention program. The responsibility for tracking students is not designated to a particular group or person within the district or on the campuses. Campus counselors and the campus secretary make phone calls to parents of chronically truant students. Home visits to chronically truant students are not made on a consistent basis. ZCISD has not performed a needs assessment using the information developed by the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to address the problem of the increasing dropout rates for secondary school students. Campus improvement plans do not address attendance or dropout issues.

Exhibit 1-24 shows that the annual dropout rate for grades 7 and 8 has increased from .06 percent in 2001–02 to 2.2 percent in 2002–03. An appeal was submitted to the TEA in October 2004 requesting that nine students be removed from the official dropout count for the district and the middle school. TEA noted that the documentation provided with the appeal was submitted well after the PEIMS resubmission deadline of January 22, 2004. The statement in the 2004 *Accountability Manual,* "data quality will be a consideration in evaluating completion rate appeals" was intended to mean poor data quality was a valid basis for denying a completion rate appeal. However, the appeal was granted and resulted in reducing the dropout rate count below the minimum size requirement, resulting in the district and middle school campus attaining the rating of *Academically Acceptable.* TEA stated in their response that any future appeals from ZCISD would not be considered. The outcome of the appeal resulted in

EXHIBIT 1–24
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE
GRADES 7 AND 8

	2001–02	2002–03
Zapata Middle School	0.6%	2.2% (2.0% after appeal)
District	0.6%	2.2%
State	0.2%	0.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04 District Performance.

EXHIBIT 1–25
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE BY ETHNICITY
GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT

	2001-02 HISPANIC	2002-03 HISPANIC	2001-02 ANGLO	2002-03 ANGLO
Zapata Middle School	0.7%	1.8%	0.0%	14.3%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003-04 District Performance.

the Zapata Middle School dropout rate being officially recorded as 2.0 percent for 2003-2004, which is 1.8 above the state average of 0.2 percent.

Exhibit 1–25 indicates the increase in the dropout rate by ethnicity.

In October 2004, the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment developed a plan of action to reduce the annual dropout rate. The following strategies have been implemented at Zapata Middle School:

- records requests will be handled by counselors only;

- PEIMS secretary will get a copy of records requests from the appropriate counselor and file together with the withdrawal form;

- PEIMS secretary will have a log of student withdrawals and calls the school where the student was supposed to enroll if no records requests are made from the receiving school;

- if attempts by the PEIMS secretary fail to locate the student, the truant officer will contact the family members in town, and the family members will provide information as to the whereabouts of the student; and

- the principal will confer with the PEIMS secretary on a weekly basis on student withdrawals to make sure all students are accounted for.

Eagle Pass ISD has implemented a best practice that develops strategies based on a needs assessment to reduce the dropout rate. Eagle Pass realized many dropouts were still residing in the district and created a secondary school leaver team. The PEIMS coordinator heads the team whose

members include high school principals, designated assistant principals, attendance officers, attendance clerks, and the student service advocate recruiters. The team meets weekly to review records of students who did not return to school at the beginning of the year and to plan strategies for locating students. Each week during the school year the PEIMS coordinator analyzes all attendance reports and provides the needs assessment data to school principals to identify potential dropouts. Team members make home visits to potential dropouts and provide information on small group and individual counseling. After implementing these strategies, Eagle Pass ISD lowered the dropout rate from 4.2 percent in 1997-98 to 1.1 percent in 1998-99.

ZCISD should develop district strategies to address the problem of the increasing dropout rates in grades 7 and 8. Using information provided by the district's PEIMS coordinator, the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department should perform a district needs assessment to determine the root of the increasing dropout problem. The high school and middle school principals and site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees should collaboratively use the needs assessment results to design strategies to focus on the student populations that are most at-risk of dropping out and address these strategies in the CIPs and district improvement plan (DIP).

At the beginning of the school year, the attendance clerks should review enrollment data to ensure all students enrolled the previous year have returned. Weekly team meetings should be held and the clerks should submit to the attendance officers and the truant officer the names of students who have not yet returned to school, who in turn should make telephone calls and home visits to determine if the students still reside in the district. For students still residing in the district but not attending school, conferences should be held with the student and the parents to explain options for the student's return to school.

To begin this new process, the following steps should be taken:

- the superintendent creates a secondary school leaver team to address dropout problems and assign staff to the team;

- the truant officers work with the PEIMS coordinator to compile attendance and dropout data for each campus;

- the truant officers develop several dropout prevention strategies and work with the secondary leaver team;

- the team meets weekly to address individual student needs;

- the truant officers meet with principals to encourage their SBDM committees to design strategies to help all student populations; and

- the truant officers coordinate dropout prevention and reduction efforts, monitor student data collection, analyze student data, monitor program effectiveness, and work with individual schools and the PEIMS coordinator on attendance/dropout issues.

Following the strategies similar to those implemented by Eagle Pass ISD, Zapata County ISD should be able to lower the dropout rate once a leaver team is in place, a PEIMS data assessment is completed, and strategies are implemented to actively track students.

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION (REC. 10)

ZCISD's inadequate State Compensatory Education (SCE) program does not sufficiently address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school. ZCISD legal policy EHBC (H) requires an evaluation that includes an analysis of the effectiveness of the SCE program as described in the campus and district improvement plans for reducing disparities. The district does not disaggregate and compare at-risk student data to that of other district students, and the district and campus improvement plans (DIP and CIPs) do not adequately identify the programs used to address the needs of at-risk students, or provide any strategies for evaluating their effectiveness. Without consistent monitoring of students and data, the district may not be closing the gap on the disparity of at-risk students as compared to all other students.

All six ZCISD campuses are allocated SCE and Title I federal funds to support supplemental programs designed by the campus to increase the achievement of students at-risk of dropping out of school. ZCISD teachers and counselors are responsible for identifying at-risk students. Campus secretaries are responsible for entering the information into the PEIMS data system.

ZCISD's 2003–04 district plan specifies the total amount of state compensatory education funds allocated for resources but does not specify the full-time equivalents (FTEs) for staff. Three of the six CIPs specify the total amount of SCE funds allocated for resources, whereas none of the campuses specify FTEs as required by the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG).

The district does not offer an intensive program of instruction to a student who does not perform satisfactorily on a state assessment instrument according to the TEC 29.081. Programs that meet the needs of at-risk students are not identifiable in the district or campus improvement plans. **Exhibit 1–26** shows the criteria addressed in the 2003–04 campus plans. CIPs do not show the presence of formative evaluation criteria for programs addressing the needs of at-risk students. It is therefore not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the accelerated instruction programs in reducing any disparity in performance on TAKS or disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at-risk of dropping out of school and all other district students.

Without a formative evaluation process for programs that address the needs of at-risk students, it is also not possible to determine the effectiveness of the annual performance objectives cited in the plans. **Exhibit 1–27** shows the teacher responses to the survey question regarding at-risk students. The teacher survey indicates 28 percent of the teachers disagree with the statement: "The district has effective special programs for students at-risk of dropping out of school."

TEC Section 29.081 defines the state criteria used to identify students at-risk of dropping out of school. It states a student at-risk of dropping out of school includes each student who is under 21 years of age and who:

- is in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, or grade 1, 2, or 3, and did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or assessment instrument administered during the current school year;

- is in grade 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12, and did not maintain an average equivalent to 70 on a scale of 100 in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum during a semester in the preceding or current school year or is not maintaining such an average in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum in the current semester;

- was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years;

- did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered to the student under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, and who has not in the previous or current school year subsequently performed on that instrument or another appropriate instrument at a level equal to at least 110 percent of the

EXHIBIT 1–26
ZCISD CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLANS
STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION CRITERIA MET
2003–04

CRITERIA	ZAPATA HIGH SCHOOL	ZAPATA MIDDLE SCHOOL	ZAPATA NORTH ECC	ZAPATA SOUTH ELEM.	ZAPATA CENTRAL ELEM.	A.L. BENAVIDES ELEM.
Total amount of funds allocated	X	*	X	X	X	*
Comprehensive needs assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Identified strategies	X	X	X	X	X	X
Measurable performance objectives	X	X	X	X	X	X
Timelines for monitoring strategies	X	X	X	X	X	X
Formative evaluation criteria	*	*	*	*	*	*
Summative evaluation criteria	X	X	X	X	X	X

SOURCE: ZCISD Campus Improvement Plans 2003-04.
NOTE: X indicates criteria included in the CIP; * indicates criteria not included in the plan.

EXHIBIT 1–27
TEACHER SURVEY RESPONSE
EFFECTIVENESS OF AT-RISK PROGRAMS

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
The district has effective special programs for: (i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school.	11%	22%	39%	28%	0%	0%

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, December 2004.

level of satisfactory performance on that instrument;

- is pregnant or is a parent;

- has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with Section 37.006 during the preceding or current school year;

- has been expelled in accordance with Section 37.007 during the preceding or current school year;

- is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution, or other conditional release;

- was previously reported through PEIMS to have dropped out of school;

- is a student of limited English proficiency, as defined by Section 29.052;

- is in the custody or care of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or has, during the current school year, been referred to the department by a school official, officer of the juvenile court, or law enforcement official;

- is homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001, Section 725; or

- resided in the preceding school year or resides in the current school year in a residential placement facility in the district, including a detention facility, substance abuse treatment facility, emergency shelter, psychiatric hospital, halfway house, or foster group home.

NCLB authorizes a school to be designated as a schoolwide Title I, Part A campus if it "serves an eligible school attendance area in which not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families." In Title I, Part A schoolwide programs, funds can be used throughout the school to upgrade the entire educational program as long as the school meets the needs of students at-risk of dropping out of school. All ZCISD schools are Title I, Part A schoolwide campuses because more than 40 percent of the students at each school are economically disadvantaged, as shown in **Exhibit 1–28.**

Exhibit 1–29 shows the district and campus Title I federal components that are represented in the district improvement plan and each ZCISD campus improvement plan and those components that are missing. Two campus plans do not have a comprehensive needs assessment; five campus plans and the district plan do not address

instruction by highly qualified teachers; four campus plans do not include high quality ongoing professional development; one campus plan lacks strategies to attract highly qualified teachers; four campus plans do not provide for transition strategies for children from early childhood programs to elementary; three campus plans do not address including teachers in the decision-making process; and two campus plans do not show the coordination of funds.

Campus improvement is measured in terms of students, student skills, knowledge, and/or behaviors that one can measure through student attendance, student retention rate, and percent of student passing TAKS. A district is unable to determine if it is meeting the needs of the intended beneficiaries of the state and federal education program funds when the required components of the plan for campuses are not included.

Many districts utilize their Regional Education Service Centers (ESC) to assist in the development of their campus and/or district improvement plans. Consultants at the ESC provide technical assistance to school districts and provide a wealth of information on best practices and model district and campus improvement plans and programs geared specifically to at-risk students.

Mount Pleasant ISD (MPISD) implemented two highly innovative educational programs directly targeting at-risk students: the Maximum Achievement Learning Lab (MALL) and Accelerated Schools teaching strategies. The MALL program is implemented in the following manner: The district "at-risk" list is generated at the beginning of the school year so students in need of special services can be monitored by MALL personnel. Each MALL has at least one certified special education teacher and one certified Gifted and Talented teacher. MALL personnel also serve as "at-risk" coordinators for each campus. Classroom teachers send three- and six-week progress reports to the MALL so that monitoring remains ongoing.

Teachers in several Mount Pleasant ISD schools have also received training in the Accelerated Schools teaching strategies. This program was created by the National Center for the Accelerated Schools at Stanford University. The program has the goal of bringing all students into the educational mainstream by the end of elementary school so they can perform at levels appropriate to their age group. The term "accelerated" emphasizes that at-risk students must learn at a faster rate than other students, not at a slower rate that puts them farther behind.

EXHIBIT 1–28
ZCISD ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS
2003–04

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS
Zapata Middle School	570	81.1%
Zapata High School	670	82.2%
Zapata South Elementary	453	76.5%
Zapata North Elementary	320	71.9%
AL Benavides Elementary	68	80.0%
Zapata Central Elementary	402	79.9%
District	**2483**	**79.0%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Campus Profiles, 2003–04.

EXHIBIT 1–29
ZCISD DISTRICT AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN TITLE I FEDERAL COMPONENTS
2003–04

COMPONENTS	ZCISD DIP	ZAPATA HIGH SCHOOL CIP	ZAPATA MIDDLE SCHOOL CIP	ZAPATA CENTRAL ELEMENTARY CIP	BENAVIDES ELEMENTARY CIP	ZAPATA NORTH ELEMENTARY CIP	ZAPATA SOUTH ELEMENTARY CIP
Comprehensive needs assessment disaggregated by all sub-groups	X	X	X	X	*	*	X
Schoolwide reform strategies based on scientifically- based research	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Instruction by highly-qualified teachers	*	X	*	*	*	*	*
High quality ongoing professional development	X	*	*	*	X	*	X
Strategies to attract highly-qualified teachers	X	X	*	X	X	X	X
Strategies to increase parental involvement	*	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plans to assist preschool children to transition from early childhood programs to elementary program	*	NA	NA	*	*	*	*
Measures to include teachers in decision-making	X	*	*	*	X	X	X
Students who experience difficulty are provided with effective, timely additional assistance	X	X	X	*	X	X	X
Coordination and integration occurs between federal, state, and local service	X	X	*	X	*	X	X

SOURCE: ZISD District and Campus Improvement Plans 2003-04.
Note: X Indicates components included in the plan, * indicates components not included in the plan.

Since the MALL was created and the Accelerated Schools approach was initiated, student academic test scores have increased in Mount Pleasant ISD, especially among economically disadvantaged and African American students. The director for Compensatory Education has explored innovative programs implemented by other school districts such as Accelerated Schools teaching strategies that address the needs of at-risk students. Once innovative programs are identified, the director for Compensatory Education identifies a list of at-risk

students to participate in specific programs. The director for Compensatory Education arranges to have at-risk students tested at the beginning of the program and monitors progress and improvement throughout the program.

Ysleta ISD has implemented a site-based budgeting procedure, which gives the principal and staff at each school full authority to determine how Title I and SCE funds are used. Schools designate funds to be used for general school

improvement purposes if certain requirements are met. Each school has a written plan integrated into the campus improvement plan that includes regular education, instruction, special program planning, instructional support, and school improvement, with a required amount of community involvement. Since 1994, Ysleta ISD students included in the state compensatory education system have significantly increased performance on the TAAS.

ZCISD should implement a comprehensive State Compensatory Education program to supplement the regular education program for students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school. The district should require administrators and campus improvement teams to attend extensive training in writing campus improvement plans that will provide ways to organize and set forth a quality plan of action, examine data from the AEIS and PEIMS indicator systems, and assist in targeting overall campus needs. ZCISD should implement a site-based budgeting procedure to determine how Title I and SCE funds are used and establish performance measures and allocate funds within the law's requirement to attain the targets. A budget committee could be formed to review Title I and SCE funds and determine the funds to be allocated at each campus. The principal and staff at each school should develop a written plan and justification for allotment of funds and present it to the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and the director of Compensatory Education. The district and campus site-based committees should review the district and campus improvement plans to ensure that strategies meeting the needs of at-risk students are included and have specified SCE funds or staff allocated to those activities and strategies. A representative from the district should be assigned to review the DIP and CIPs to ensure that the information and data in the campus improvement plans correlate with the district plans, goals, and objectives to meet the needs of at-risk students.

The district should contact Region 1 and TEA to assist with training designed to address the requirements of state compensatory education in order to increase the academic achievement and reduce the dropout rate of at-risk students. An estimate of the one-time cost to the district for five training days at $100 per hour X 8 hours per day = $800 X 5 days = $4,000 plus estimated $1,250 for travel expenses for a total of $5,250. ($4,000 Training + $1,250 travel = $5,250 total cost).

STUDENT DISCIPLINE (REC. 11)

ZCISD does not have a central point of coordination for its programs that address student violence, at-risk youth, discipline management, and drug prevention. Without coordination of these programs, the district cannot evaluate their effectiveness.

ZCISD publishes and distributes a detailed and comprehensive Student Code of Conduct to principals, parents, and students at the beginning of each school year to ensure everyone is familiar with the district's disciplinary process and the consequences for rules violations. Students and parents are responsible for reading and understanding the code, as well as for providing written confirmation of their commitment to the code. The district's discipline management program is coordinated through the individual campus principals. Each principal is responsible for conducting student hearings for violations of the district's Student Code of Conduct that occur on his/her campus and must monitor and track student disciplinary actions, including referrals to the alternative education placement center. However, district and campus improvement plans do not contain goals or strategies that address all components of a safe schools program, including strategies to address student discipline.

Exhibit 1–30 shows the number of ZCISD student code of conduct violations for school years 2001–02 through 2003–04. Although in 2002–03 there was a decrease in code of conduct violations from the previous year, violations of the code of conduct have shown an overall increase from 2001–02 through 2003–04.

Surveys showed that the majority of the ZCISD principals, teachers, students, and parents believe that students are safe and secure at school. **Exhibit 1–31** provides responses to survey questions regarding safety and security in the schools. While the majority of respondents agreed that school disturbances were infrequent and gangs were not a problem in the district, a significant number of responses from teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and students indicate a perception that there is a drug problem in the district.

Survey responses in **Exhibit 1–31** showed that a total of 55 percent of the teachers, 22 percent of the principals, and 68 percent of the administrative and support staff perceived that drugs were a problem in the district. In addition, 63 percent of the parents surveyed also believed the district had problems with drugs. The supervisor for Security told the review team that there was a drug problem

EXHIBIT 1–30
ZCISD SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ANNUAL EVALUATION
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS
2001–02 THROUGH 2003–04

TYPE OF INCIDENT	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Violation of student code of conduct not included in codes 33 and 34	719	596	1174

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2001-02 through 2003-04.

EXHIBIT 1–31
SAFETY AND SECURITY PERCEPTIONS AMONG
PRINCIPALS, SUPPORT STAFF, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS

SURVEY QUESTION: SCHOOL DISTURBANCES ARE INFREQUENT.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
Teachers	11%	72%	11%	0%	0%	6%
Principals	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Students	23%	34%	32%	2%	9%	0%
Parents	11%	43%	14%	26%	6%	0%
SURVEY QUESTION: GANGS ARE NOT A PROBLEM IN THIS DISTRICT.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
Teachers	17%	61%	17%	0%	6%	0%
Principals	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Administrative and support staff	18%	41%	9%	27%	0%	5%
Students	6%	45%	26%	15%	2%	6%
Parents	20%	46%	20%	11%	3%	0%
SURVEY QUESTION: DRUGS ARE NOT A PROBLEM IN THIS DISTRICT.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
Teachers	11%	11%	22%	33%	22%	0%
Principals	11%	44%	22%	22%	0%	0%
Administrative and support staff	0%	23%	9%	50%	18%	0%
Students	30%	11%	13%	36%	9%	2%
Parents	6%	11%	20%	26%	37%	0%

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, December 2004.

because drugs were easily accessible across the border in Mexico.

The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Annual Evaluation Report for ZCISD shows a decrease from 2001–02 of 41 incidents of possession of a controlled substance to 18 incidents in 2003-2004 **(Exhibit 1-32)**. The principals have used motivational speakers, participated in Drug Abuse Resistance Education

Programs (DARE), and prominently display school pride and "Just Say No to Drugs" banners throughout the district. The supervisor for Security stated that the Zapata County Sheriff brings K9 drug dogs to search the high school and middle school twice a year. He stated the dogs have found some drugs at the campuses.

Exhibit 1–33 shows the incident report for ZCISD campuses. Drug related incidents have decreased from 2001–02 to 2003–04, indicating ZCISD has made progress in addressing the drug problem in their district through their campus programs.

There is no centralized coordination of programs addressing discipline management and safe schools in the district. The implementation of these programs is left to the discretion of the campus principals and Campus Improvement Committees (CICs) at individual schools. Although ZCISD's commitment to site-based decision-making allows individual schools to develop autonomous programs addressing student violence and discipline management, the absence of a central point of coordination prevents the district from adequately evaluating the districtwide effectiveness of the many diverse programs. Without a central coordination of historical data and data listed by subcategories, campus and district administrators cannot evaluate and monitor the type and frequency of incidents and assess the effectiveness of their programs.

Effective school districts centralize their discipline management program so that implementation of discipline policies, as well as prevention and intervention programs, are administered consistently across the district. These school districts gather and analyze incident data to

EXHIBIT 1–32
ZCISD VS. PEER DISTRICTS
POSSESSION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE
2001–04

DISTRICTS	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Valley View ISD	*	5	*
Groesbeck ISD	*	*	*
Hidalgo ISD	10	6	8
Point Isabel ISD	20	7	8
Zapata County ISD	**41**	**21**	**18**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2001-02 through 2003-04. * Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

EXHIBIT 1–33
ZCISD INCIDENT REPORT FOR CAMPUSES
POSSESSED, SOLD OR USED CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES
2001–04

Type of Incident	2001–02				2002–03				2003–04			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total
Possessed, sold, or used marijuana or other controlled substance.	*	23	18	41	*	4	17	21	*	*	15	18

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2001-02 through 2003-04.

determine trends and create or modify prevention and intervention programs as needed.

The district should designate the responsibility of coordinating the discipline management and safe schools programs to the director of Personnel and Compliance. The director can coordinate the programs through the campus principals and serve as the central point for the programs for student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management. In addition, the director and the principals can conduct a needs assessment of all campuses to assess the effectiveness of any existing safe schools programs; identify new strategies to address the identified needs; and work with the PEIMS coordinator to develop procedures for program implementation and incident reporting and record keeping. The district improvement committee and campus improvement committees should add goals and strategies to the DIP and CIPs to address discipline management, drug prevention, and maintaining a safe school environment.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (REC. 12)
ZCISD's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) is not appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the program or to implement DAEP guidelines. The district operates one DAEP, the Students Educational Adjustment & Success (SEAS) program, which serves grades 6-12 and is a short-term placement center for students who have been assigned to less than 90 cumulative days of enrollment. No evidence was presented by the district to indicate that the guidelines for the

DAEP have been evaluated for effectiveness, or that the DAEP has its own Campus Improvement Plan in place with strategies specific to the students served on this campus. **Exhibit 1–34** shows the student disciplinary incidents that required a DAEP placement from 2001–02 through 2003–04 as reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program Annual Evaluation Reports.

The ZCISD DAEP meets the following requirements, which are set forth in TEC § 37.008:

- is provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom;
- is located off the regular school campus;
- separates students in the DAEP from students in the regular program;
- separates elementary student assigned to DAEP from secondary school students assigned to the DAEP;
- focuses on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline;
- provides for students' educational and behavioral needs; and
- provides supervision and counseling.

ZCISD assigns students to the DAEP with a removal order that states a specific violation of policy and the number of days that must be

EXHIBIT 1–34
ZCISD TOTAL STUDENT DISCPLINARY INCIDENTS RESULTING IN DAEP PLACEMENT
2001–04

TYPE OF INCIDENT	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Conduct punishable as felony	*	*	*
Retaliation against school employee	*	*	*
Used/possessed firearm	*	*	*
Used/possessed prohibited weapon	*	*	*
Possessed, sold, or used marijuana or other controlled substance	41	21	18
Possessed, sold, used, or was under the influence of an alcoholic beverage	5	*	*
Conduct occurring off campus while student was not in attendance at school related activity for felony offenses in Title 5	*	*	5
Possessed, purchased, used or accepted a cigarette or tobacco product	*	*	*
False alarm/false report	*	*	*
Public lewdness/indecent exposure	*	*	*
Total	51	26	31

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2001–02 through 2003–04.
* Indicates results are masked due to the small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

served. The length of all DAEP assignments is at the discretion of the administration and within the guidelines of the Student Code of Conduct. Students younger than ten are placed in a disciplinary alternative education program for elementary students. Students younger than six are not placed in a disciplinary alternative education program for any reason other than bringing a firearm to school. The primary objective of the DAEP is to provide continued education for students who violate the district's Student Code of Conduct. The existence of a DAEP serves to increase attendance rates, decrease expulsion rate, reduce the dropout rate among all district students, and provide students an opportunity to achieve educational goals.

The ZCISD DAEP has three uncertified teachers assigned to the campus and does not have a designated administrator to oversee the program. The director of Federal Programs serves as the DAEP Hearing Officer but is not responsible for overseeing the DAEP. The ZCISD superintendent meets with the DAEP students daily from 6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. and participates in a community service program with the students in which they all jog (with the superintendent) around the perimeter of the district to collect trash. Once students return to their DAEP classroom, the superintendent counsels individual students. In addition, two high school guidance counselors have a group counseling session with the DAEP students, along with a special education counselor for special education students assigned to the DAEP, every Monday morning from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

According to the DAEP guidelines, students should receive class assignments from their regular classroom teacher. Assignments are to be completed within a specified period and then returned to the home campus by the DAEP

teacher. Teachers are available to assist students with their assignments. Reference books, dictionaries, and other supplemental textbooks are available in the DAEP classroom.

Staff interviews indicated that there is little or no coordination between the regular classroom teachers and the DAEP staff. DAEP students often come to the program without regular classroom assignments. DAEP teachers are then required to work with students without a designated academic plan for each student.

The DAEP guidelines refer to a coordinator/administrator and/or designee of the DAEP, but the district has not assigned an employee to that position. During the review team visit, an employee interviewed stated that there were 20 students assigned to the DAEP; including both regular and special education students. The staff interviewed stated that the DAEP location does not have a security guard, although five of the six campuses do have security guards assigned to them. The security guard assignment sheet listed a security guard assigned to the DAEP, but the Personnel Department could not confirm the assignment with the review team. The DAEP staff has not been provided with any training within the past 12 months on the Placement Guidelines for DAEP.

The district is not sufficiently meeting the instructional needs of students assigned to the DAEP. Uncertified teachers are expected to provide instruction in all subjects for students assigned to the DAEP. Although TEC § 37.008 requires off-campus DAEPs to utilize certified special education instructors for special education students, there are no special education teachers assigned to the DAEP. Without an assigned administrator to coordinate the DAEP program, there is no one to oversee the instructional

program to ensure that the educational needs of the students are addressed. It is difficult to individualize instruction for students who are at a variety of educational levels, particularly in math and reading, without planned instruction that is overseen by an administrator. As a result of the lack of coordination between the regular education program and the DAEP program, student expectations for success are not being communicated to either the students or the DAEP staff.

Llano ISD (LISD) has implemented a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) that encourages students to remain current in their regular education coursework and be successful when they return to their regular classroom. The LISD DAEP is housed in a separate facility, near the central office, and serves students in grades 7 through 12. One administrator and two certified teachers staff the program; two of the three staff members are certified in special education. The district is committed to keeping alternative education students current with assignments, tests, and projects in their regular education classes. A student's regular classroom teachers share lesson plans and assignments with the alternative education instructors to ensure that students in the DAEP are working on identical assignments as if they had remained in the regular education setting. DAEP teachers meet with the regular teachers of their students each week to gather coursework and to determine expectations for that week. The students' work is monitored to ensure they are staying at the same pace as their regular classes. In addition to their core classes in English, math, science, and social studies, the DAEP affords students elective credit during their DAEP assignment. LISD parents and administrative staff agree that the DAEP is successful in serving students with behavioral problems.

The district should create a DAEP coordinator position to oversee the DAEP program and ensure DAEP guidelines are being implemented. The director of Personnel and Compliance should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment for the DAEP in order to determine if the guidelines in place effectively match the needs of the DAEP and its students. The DAEP coordinator should develop a CIP in conjunction with staff at other district campuses to ensure that needs of the students at the DAEP are covered in all CIPs. The director of Personnel and Compliance should work to provide certified teachers for the DAEP, one of which must have special education certification. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is estimated at an annual cost of

$57,012 to hire a coordinator for 206 days. This amount is calculated using a base salary of $50,904 plus a 12 percent benefit factor ($50,904 + $6,108 = $57,012).

INCIDENT REPORTS (REC. 13)

ZCISD does not develop annual comprehensive disciplinary incident reports to disseminate to the board, district staff, parents, and community. According to staff, the district is not compiling and publishing an annual behavior and violence incident report. In 1999, the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Education Code § 39.053 to require the board of trustees of each school district to publish statistics on incidents that occurred in the district in their annual district performance report. The report must include:

- the number, rate, and type of violent crime or criminal incidents that occurred on each campus;

- information concerning school violence prevention, violence intervention policies, and procedures that the district is using to protect students; and

- the findings that result from evaluations conducted under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act of 1994.

Without a comprehensive report that provides historical data, as well as data listed by categories, school and district administrators cannot evaluate and monitor the type and frequency of incidents occurring in the district. They cannot analyze the data to determine trends, evaluate the effectiveness of current programs, and create additional prevention and intervention programs to address student behavior problems, including student violence, drugs, and gang involvement.

Laredo ISD (LISD) maintains thorough records of misconduct and violence for monitoring trends and responding to discipline problems. The district compiles comprehensive behavior and violence reports that track all types of code violations by school and grade and the type of response required for each offense. These incident reports enable school officials to evaluate the effectiveness of several programs, such as drug prevention curriculum, Communities In Schools, their parent education program, and instructional methods that have contributed to the decrease in alternative placements, including those that were drug-related. Killeen ISD also compiles incident reports and shares these reports with board members, teachers, parents, and school administrators to obtain their input when developing prevention and

intervention programs tailored to the needs of the campuses.

The district should create annual comprehensive disciplinary incident reports. These reports should be distributed and discussed with the board, district staff, parents, and the community at least once a year. This process would enable district administrators to obtain input from all stakeholders when developing and implementing additional prevention and intervention programs.

SECURITY ORGANIZATION (REC. 14)

ZCISD's security program lacks central coordination, planning, oversight, and program evaluation. ZCISD has a generic local policy for a safety program that was adopted in December 1991. The policy states, "The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing, implementing, and promoting a comprehensive safety program." The policy directs the district to establish a program, but staff interviews and a review of the current operations showed a program that was neither comprehensive nor centralized, which did not have procedures providing guidance for performance of daily security and safety tasks. In addition, the policy does not address security guards. The organization chart includes a supervisor of Security, but interviews indicate that the Student Services and Operations coordinator and the principals share the oversight of the district's safety and security functions.

Although the principals are not included in the organization chart, campuses operate independently in the areas of safety and security. The district has 20 security guards and two part-time deputies from the Zapata County Sheriff's Office. The supervisor of Security is assigned to the high school guard gate and is not involved in the security guard assignments or supervision of the security guards. Security guards report to and are evaluated by the principal of their assigned campus. The district does not have a formalized agreement with the Sheriff's Office for the deputies, who report directly to the high school principal and turn in time sheets for hours worked. The Student Services and Operations coordinator is responsible for the supervision and evaluation of all other security guards. **Exhibit 1–35** illustrates the reporting structure based on staff interviews.

There is a lack of central coordination in addressing security procedures, job descriptions, and accountability. None of the security positions has job descriptions, nor were any administrative job descriptions that included the responsibility of security provided to the review team. The district
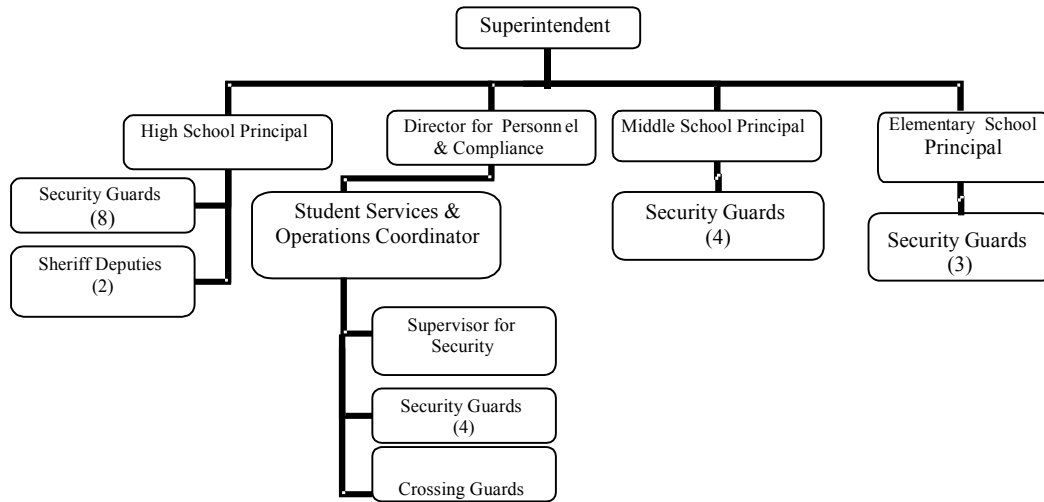
did provide a generic Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) evaluation form used to evaluate security personnel, but the district did not provide any documentation as to whether evaluations were completed for these employees. Security guards and staff receive limited training in security and safety procedures. The Student Services and Operations coordinator has not been authorized to attend any conferences, seminars, or workshops for staff development in the area of security and safety. Although the supervisor of Security stated the security guards had received some training on restraining children and confiscating weapons, the only documented training for Support Services staff over a three-year period is provided in **Exhibit 1–36**.

The shared responsibility for the safety and security program in the district has resulted in a lack of leadership and authority needed to develop an effective safety and security program in ZCISD. An effective program would have established goals based on a needs assessment and the evaluation of implemented safety measures. Without set policies and procedures, the district has neither established guiding principles for daily decision-making, nor defined roles for the security personnel, building principals, assistant principals, teachers, and other district staff. Without job descriptions, there is no documentation that employees have been informed of their responsibilities. Without performance measures identified and communicated to the employee, evaluations cannot be based on job performance, and the district cannot provide staff development to ensure employees have adequate training to carry out those responsibilities if they have not been identified. Consequently, employees cannot be held accountable for carrying out those responsibilities. Although there has been some safety training recently, the security department has no ongoing training that would prepare their staff to handle a critical incident.

The Texas Attorney General's *School Violence Prevention Task Force Report* published in May 2002 states, "A school safety assessment should be conducted regularly in order to correct weak areas and stay abreast of innovations." It goes on to say that districts should continually examine safety measures they have implemented in order to take advantage of new strategies. Some of the components identified in the report that should be addressed include:

- safety and security of buildings and grounds;

- development and enforcement of policies;

EXHIBIT 1–35
ZCISD SECURITY ORGANIZATION AS REPORTED
2004-05

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                              ┌──────────────────┐
                              │  Superintendent  │
                              └──────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┬───────────────┬────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌────────────────┐
│ High School   │ │ Director for     │ │ Middle School│ │ Elementary     │
│ Principal     │ │ Personnel &      │ │ Principal    │ │ School         │
└───────────────┘ │ Compliance       │ └──────────────┘ │ Principal      │
                  └──────────────────┘                  └────────────────┘
┌───────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌────────────────┐
│ Security      │ │ Student Services │ │ Security     │ │ Security       │
│ Guards (8)    │ │ & Operations     │ │ Guards (4)   │ │ Guards (3)     │
└───────────────┘ │ Coordinator      │ └──────────────┘ └────────────────┘
┌───────────────┐ └──────────────────┘
│ Sheriff       │   ┌────────────────┐
│ Deputies (2)  │   │ Supervisor for │
└───────────────┘   │ Security       │
                    └────────────────┘
                    ┌────────────────┐
                    │ Security       │
                    │ Guards (4)     │
                    └────────────────┘
                    ┌────────────────┐
                    │ Crossing Guards│
                    └────────────────┘
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SOURCE: ZCISD Staff Interviews, December 2004.

EXHIBIT 1–36
ZCISD STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SUPPORT SERVICES
2002–05

DATE & TIME	TOPIC	SECURITY	CUSTODIAN	TRANSPORTATION	MAINTENANCE
11/22/04					
9:30 am	Sexual Harassment	X	X		X
10:30 am	Sexual Harassment			X	
1:00 pm	Emergency Management	X	X		X
1:00 pm	Bus Evacuation			X	
11/23/04					
9:00 am	Hazcom Training		X		
9:00 am	Fire Extinguisher Training			X	

SOURCE: Student Services and Operations Coordinator, December 2004.

- procedures and data collection;

- development of intervention plans;

- level of staff development;

- opportunities for student involvement;

- level of parent and community involvement;

- role of law enforcement;

- development of crisis management plans; and

- standards for safety and security personnel.

Many school districts designate one person as coordinator of districtwide security and safety planning, communication, and allocation of resources. This person is responsible for ensuring that all planning and goals are incorporated into any districtwide long-range strategic plan and are then implemented according to identified budget allowances. Policies and procedures are both necessary for effective and legally compliant safety

and security programs, thereby reducing a district's exposure to liability and risks. Reporting relationships and position expectation provide the framework for a successful safety and security program.

The district should designate the Student Services and Operations coordinator responsible for the districtwide safety and security functions. The coordinator should assess the safety and security needs of the district, which should include the identification of the currently implemented security measures, the effectiveness of those

measures, and input from the stakeholders, as well as any security needs that are not currently being addressed by the district. A districtwide safety and security plan should be developed based on the needs assessment and include goals with implementation strategies and performance measures. All security personnel, including the supervisor of Security, should report directly to the Student Services and Operations coordinator, who will be responsible for the development of job descriptions, evaluations, and duty assignments. All principals should work through the coordinator for security needs. Staff development needs should be identified and ongoing training scheduled to ensure personnel are trained to effectively carry out their daily responsibilities and perform appropriately in a crisis situation. The coordinator should participate in workshops, conferences, and seminars to keep abreast of developments in law enforcement and compliance issues and keep the superintendent, board, and employees informed of those developments.

SECURITY STAFFING (REC. 15)

ZCISD has not developed staffing standards for security guards, which has resulted in an overstaffed security department. The district has a security department that includes 20 security officers. The security officers are not commissioned peace officers through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE), are not authorized to carry weapons, and do not have any type of training requirements. The security guards are assigned to the campuses and guard gates. Two deputies from the Zapata County Sheriff's Office are also contracted by the district and assigned daily four-hour shifts at the high school. Staff interviews revealed there is no centralized coordination of security personnel assignments, nor were there any documented needs assessments identified in the district that would provide a basis for security assignments. New security positions are added at the request of campus principals. The supervisor of Security is not included in the process of either hiring or assigning personnel, nor is he informed of assignment requests from the principals. The principals are directly responsible for the campus duty assignments and evaluations of the security personnel on their campuses. All other security personnel report to and are evaluated by the Student Services and Operations coordinator.

The supervisor of Security works as the gate guard at the high school. The high school front gate has security guards assigned 24 hours a day. There is an additional guard gate at the back of the school and a security guard is assigned to that gate during the day. Although there are guard gates at the two entrances of the campus, the campus does not have a permanent fence around its perimeter. In addition to the two Zapata County sheriff's deputies and gate guards, the high school has four security guards. The deputies respond to calls from the other campuses in the district as needed. The Zapata Middle School, Zapata Central Elementary School, and the administrative offices are located in a central compound with a gated entrance. The guard gate has assigned security guards 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During the review team interviews, district staff questioned the need for a 24-hour guard at the central office compound and did not feel it was needed. Staff stated, "No one comes in at 3:00 a.m." In addition, the middle school has four security guards assigned during the day. The elementary schools have four positions funded out of the security fund, although they have been renamed as instructional assistants and custodian. Benavides Elementary School does not have a security guard.

Exhibit 1–37 provides a list of security guard assignments in the district provided to the review team. Many of the security guards work 240-day contracts, although the students attend school only 175 of these days.

Exhibit 1–38 provides information on security overtime, part-time, deputies, and payroll costs to the district during the past two years.

The review team conducted a survey to determine if peer districts had police or security departments. Of the four peer districts, Groesbeck ISD and Hidalgo ISD responded that they did not have police or security departments. Valley View ISD has a security department with a staff of three security officers. In addition, they contract with the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office for two deputies under the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. Point Isabel ISD has a police department with four commissioned police officers. ZCISD security staffing is considerably higher than the two peer districts that have security or police departments. **Exhibit 1–39** provides information on peer district security departments and staffing.

As seen in **Exhibit 1-39**, the district is spending a significant amount of money on security guards in the schools. Two guard gates have 24-hour security guards. The security guards are not commissioned officers and cannot respond to burglaries or other criminal acts. New security positions are added at the request of the principals. The district continues to pay security officers for

EXHIBIT 1–37
2004-05 ZCISD SECURITY PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE	SHIFT	HOURS	WORKDAYS
Zapata North Early Childhood	*Instructional Assistant (Security Guard)	7:00 - 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.	8	240
Zapata North Early Childhood	*Custodial Security		8	
South Elementary	*Instructional Assistant (Security Guard)	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	240
Central B Elementary	*Instructional Assistant (Security Guard)	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	240
Zapata Middle School	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	245
	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	240
AEP Classroom	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	8	240
High School	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	8	240
	Campus Police	8:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.	4	
	Campus Police	12:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	4	
High School Guard House - Front	Security Guard	6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.	8	
High School Guard House - Back	Security Guard		8	
Guard House Central Office	Security Guard	6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	8	240
	Security Guard	10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.	8	
Permanent Substitutes	Crossing Guard			
	Crossing Guard			

SOURCE: ZCISD Office of Student Services and Operations, November 2004.
* Position is paid out of security fund but listed as instructional assistant or custodian.

EXHIBIT 1–38
ZCISD SECURITY DEPARTMENT COSTS
2002–04

PAYROLL COSTS	2002-03		2003-04	
	HOURS	COST	HOURS	COST
Annual security overtime	1,208	$18,077	1,628	$25,223
Part-time security	1,219	$8,247	2,199	$16,705
Annual security substitute	5,179	$27,035	6,195	$34,247
Sheriff deputies	1,349	$14,038	2,169	$18,984
Subtotal	8,955	$67,397	12,191	$95,159
Annual payroll cost	–	$281,005	–	$234,083
Total Cost	**–**	**$348,402**	**–**	**$329,242**

SOURCE: ZCISD Office of Student Services and Operations, November 2004.

EXHIBIT 1–39
SECURITY DEPARTMENT
ZCISD COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS

	GROESBECK	HIDALGO	VALLEY VIEW	POINT ISABEL	ZAPATA COUNTY
District Police or Security Department	None	None	Yes	Yes	**Yes**
Number of security employees	0	0	3	4	**20**
Number of County/City Police Officers	0	0	2	0	**2**

SOURCE: Peer District Survey, January 2005.

their services even when school is not in session. The resources the district is using to fund the extra positions are funds that could be redirected to instructional programs.

Many school districts establish police departments in response to incidents of school violence. Most districts currently provide law enforcement through their own school district police department, local city or county police officers assigned to campuses as school resource officers, or by working out an agreement with local law enforcement on an "as needed basis." Although an industry standard could not be identified,

Northside ISD (NISD) conducted a survey in October 2004 on school district police/security departments and received responses from nine districts. Spring Branch ISD was the only district that uses a set staffing formula of one officer per 1,000 students. The other districts ranged from assigning one officer per 800 students to one officer per 1,600 students. NISD uses enrollment figures to staff security personnel at one officer per 1,100 students. At the high school alone, which has an enrollment of approximately 815 students, ZCISD has assigned eight security officers in addition to the two part-time Sheriff's Office deputies.

Point Isabel ISD (PIISD) has established a police department with one police chief and three police officers. All officers are commissioned and licensed by TCLEOSE. In addition, the officers are required to complete the annual training requirements of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE). The district has four campuses and the police department is located at the high school. Officers are assigned to each campus but report to the high school each morning to review any events of the day that may require extra security. The district also has an agreement with the local city law enforcement for additional police services that may be needed for extra-curricular activities. The school board approves this agreement annually. PIISD police department provides the necessary services to maintain a safe learning environment with an efficient staff and a coordinated effort with the local law enforcement office.

ZCISD should conduct a needs assessment for security, develop a staffing methodology for security guards, and reduce the number of district security guards. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should work with principals to identify campus security needs. Job descriptions and security guard assignments should be based on the needs assessment. Security guards should be assigned responsibilities that deal with campus security as described in their job descriptions and not serve as part-time instructional assistants, custodial staff, or be assigned other non-security related duties. If a reassignment of duties not related to security occurs, the funding of the position should be changed to the appropriate budget code.

Based on staffing standards identified through a survey of peer district security departments and the Northside ISD staffing methodology developed through surveying larger districts, ZCISD can eliminate 15 security guard positions. The fiscal impact of this finding is based on the

average salary for the security guards and does not include additional savings that should be realized in reduced supplemental pay, substitute pay, and overtime. The fiscal impact of eliminating 15 security positions is calculated by multiplying the average salary of $17,949 by the 15 positions being eliminated ($17,949 X 15 = $269,235), then multiplying the results by 12 percent for benefits to determine the annual savings of $301,543 ($269,235 X 1.12 = $301,543). Five years savings should reach $1,507,715 (5 X $301,543).

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (REC. 16)

ZCISD does not have a written agreement with the Zapata County Sheriff's Office identifying services provided to the district. The superintendent stated during interviews that there was no agreement for services provided by the Zapata County Sheriff's Office to ZCISD. Two sheriff's deputies work four-hour shifts daily at the high school; they sign in with the principal's office and timesheets are submitted for payment, but they are not paid through the employee payroll system. The director of Personnel and Compliance informed the review team that no written agreement has been formally executed for services provided by the deputies. In both the high school and middle school crisis management plans, the sheriff's office is an integral part of the emergency response plan. In a recent incident regarding on-site underground drilling at the district for a four-week period, an emergency evacuation plan was developed with the assistance of the sheriff's office. The plan included having a deputy sheriff present at the drilling site at all times. The sheriff's office has also provided some training to the security guards over the years. The supervisor of Security stated the training included restraining students and confiscating weapons, how to inspect students, and sexual harassment awareness. In addition, training on emergency management and violence was recently provided for the staff and students.

Although the sheriff's deputies are serving in the capacity of school resource officers, there is no formalized agreement to identify specific responsibilities of the sheriff's office, the deputies or the school district. There is no documentation as to who is ultimately responsible for the supervision of the officers, the reporting relationship to the principals, and the responsibilities of the school district. Without a written agreement for the services of the sheriff's deputies, there is no clarification that the deputies will remain employees of the sheriff's office and

that their office is responsible for the benefits and liability of the officers.

During a crisis incident, there could be confusion over which agency has authority in a given area. For example, without an agreement, every involved agency could have its own spokesperson providing conflicting information to the public. The May 2002 report published by the Texas Attorney General's *School Violence Prevention Task Force* states, "All of the agencies involved in the critical incident plan should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly delineates issues of liability, responsibility, and jurisdiction." An MOU provides each agency with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Some examples of responsibilities listed in the report include operating the command post, processing a crime scene, conducting witness interviews, and providing services to victims.

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) provides samples of contracts between police departments and school districts that can be accessed on their website at http://www.nasro.org/governing_rules.asp. Included in the samples is a MOU used by the Allen Independent School District. The MOU includes the following components:

- purpose of agreement;

- mission and goals of the School Resource Program;

- organization structure that defines composition and supervision;

- procedures;

- selection process of officers;

- duties and responsibilities of the police department and officers;

- law enforcement duties;

- school district responsibilities; and

- compensation for services.

In addition to sample contract agreements, the NASRO provides sample job descriptions for school resource officers (SROs). These job descriptions include high school resource officers, middle school resource officers, and elementary SAFE/school resource officers. All sample contracts and job descriptions can be downloaded from the NASRO website.

Point Isabel Independent School District (PIISD) formalizes their relationship with the local city police department through an MOU. The city police department provides additional services as needed, including security services for extracurricular activities. The MOU is reviewed and submitted to the school board annually for approval.

The district should formalize the relationship with the Zapata County Sheriff's Office by developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifying both the services provided by the sheriff's office as well as the district's responsibilities. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should draft an MOU using samples provided by the National Association of School Resource Officers. The draft should be reviewed and finalized by the district's legal counsel, superintendent, and the Zapata County Sheriff's Office, with final approval from the school board.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN (REC. 17)

ZCISD does not have a comprehensive crisis management plan for the district. The district provided the review team with two crisis management plans, the Zapata Middle School Crisis Management Plan and the Zapata High School Crisis Management Plan. During the principal focus group, the elementary principals confirmed that there are no crisis management plans for the elementary schools and that the district does not have a districtwide crisis management plan. This was also confirmed by the Student Services and Operations coordinator, who is responsible for the district's security program. The current crisis management plans at the middle school and high school include the following incident procedures:

- lockdowns;

- a person with a weapon or similar threat;

- a staff member or student hears gun shots or sees someone with a gun;

- fire;

- bomb threat;

- suspicious box located on campus;

- hostage situation; and

- out-of-control student or parent.

In addition, the crisis management plans include local emergency telephone numbers, the campus floor plans, and a bomb threat report form, and identify who can declare a campus emergency. The plans do not include procedures for several critical incidents, such as weather, contagious disease,

assault, gang violence, environmental hazard, or death of a student at school. Although central administration does not hold the principals accountable for either conducting or reporting campus drills, the secondary administrators stated that they do have practice drills on lockdown procedures, and the elementary principals stated that they conduct fire drills once a month. The district did prepare an emergency evacuation plan in response to the on-site underground gas drilling operation during the month of December 2004 for the surrounding campuses. The evacuation plan was sent to the parents on November 29, 2004. The elementary campuses that were impacted by the underground drilling practiced the drill with the assistance of the Zapata County Sheriff's Office.

The middle school and high school are addressing certain critical incidents but there is no plan available for the elementary schools and the early childhood center, and there is no districtwide coordination for managing a crisis. Crisis is defined as "a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death." Crisis management is critical to school safety, as well as the health, welfare, and safety of the students and staff. When a school is prepared before a crisis occurs, the staff and students can deal with the crisis more effectively because they have a set of procedures to follow and they have practiced those procedures. It is important that the district and individual campuses engage in careful planning and attention to prevention, intervention, and post crisis procedures. There is a growing trend to hold the school and administrators legally responsible for developing crisis management plans, particularly when a school fails to take reasonable steps to prevent and/or manage a crisis.

In 2002, the Virginia Department of Education published the *Resource Guide for Crisis Management in Virginia Schools.* The resource manual provides a detailed framework for developing a crisis management plan with a coordinated response at all levels of the district, from central office staff to school personnel and students. The guide recommends that the district establish a school response team that operates at three levels: the individual school building, central office, and community. The leadership at the central office level is important to the overall success of managing school emergencies. The guide further states that preparing for those emergencies should become a district priority and suggests incorporating crisis planning into job descriptions,

personnel evaluations, and school audits. Highlights of the manual include:

- guidelines for establishing a crisis response team on three levels with assigned roles;
- roles for students in the crisis management plan;
- a sample general crisis response checklist;
- staff emergency skills inventory;
- sample communication inventory;
- sample roster of students/staff who need special assistance in an emergency;
- sample staff assignment roster;
- planning for off-campus activities including bus emergency kit;
- crisis response team post-incident debriefing;
- sample checklist for annual review of crisis plan;
- partnerships with community public safety agencies;
- components of the Crisis Response Box, such as aerial photos of campus, map, campus layout, blueprint of building, employee roster, keys, fire alarm procedures, utility shut-off valves, student photos, student rosters, emergency cards, and so forth;
- procedures for helping children cope with crisis;
- elements of training;
- communications with parents and the community at large and media; and
- informational resources.

The Resource Guide provides direction to school districts in developing an approach to school safety that anticipates potential problems and coordinates responses that can minimize disruptions in the school community. This comprehensive manual can be downloaded at *http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/crisis-guide.pdf.*

There are many examples of district crisis management plans in Texas school districts. Arp Independent School District implemented a crisis management plan in 1999. Principals provide training at the beginning of each school year to all school staff, including instructional, custodial, and food service employees. The training is based on the school's emergency and safety plans and is

tailored to the individual campus needs. The procedures are reviewed annually and approved by the campus site-based decision-making committees. District training includes an annual review of the district plan and an annual training session to include principals and district office staff. The district training occurs during the summer or on in-service days before the beginning of each school year.

Several districts establish a district committee to develop, review, and update a district's crisis management plan. Venus ISD recognized the need to develop a community-wide advisory committee that included members from the law enforcement department, fire department, community, and district to provide input and exchange ideas on how to improve the emergency procedures after a critical incident occurred the previous year. The committee consisted of the following:

- city police chief;

- county sheriff;

- fire department chief;

- school administration;

- director of Operations, Maintenance and Transportation;

- school resource officer;

- counselors;

- district nurse;

- parents;

- community representatives; and

- business and city representatives.

Good safety practices in today's environment call for each school district and its campuses to develop crisis management plans with the help of a team of specialists who represent a broad spectrum of the school community.

ZCISD should develop a comprehensive districtwide crisis management plan and provide routine training for staff and students. The superintendent should assign the responsibility of developing the district's crisis management manual to the Student Services and Operations coordinator. The district should establish a committee to work with the coordinator on the development of the manual and to review and update the crisis management manual annually. The committee should identify the key components to include in the crisis management plan, the members of the crisis response team and

their roles, procedures for handling specific incidents, training for preparedness, and procedures for handling communication. This plan should then go to the community and staff for comments and suggestions. Upon completion, the district should train all employees on the crisis management plan, with intermittent training and student drills throughout the year.

FIRE DRILL REPORTING (REC. 18)

Some ZCISD campuses do not report fire drills as required by the State Fire Marshal's Office or routinely inspect campus buildings for fire hazards. ZCISD does not have a mechanism in place for monitoring compliance with fire drill reporting and routine drills. There are no written procedures for fire drills or campus reporting to central administration. The district allows school principals to determine schedules for drills; however, schools do not routinely report the results of the drills to the Student Services and Operations coordinator. Only two schools, Zapata South Elementary School and Zapata Middle School, provided the review team with their annual report on fire drills and fire prevention for 2003–04. Reports from all other schools were requested but not provided. There was no record of drill reports from previous school years. Staff interviews stated that elementary schools did conduct monthly fire drills, which could not be verified since the district did not maintain any documentation of the drills. The high school staff stated lockdown drills were routinely conducted, but these drills were also not documented and reported to central administration.

Not all campuses have safety inspections by the fire department to identify fire hazards in the school buildings. However, the Zapata Middle School did have one fire inspection by the Zapata County Fire Department, which identified several safety violations, including:

- alarm system is out of order and needs to be fixed or replaced;

- all school fire extinguishers need to be reinserted;

- sweeping mops need to be placed in metal containers;

- ceiling tiles in some classrooms are missing and need to be replaced;

- some school fire extinguishers need to be recharged;

- rooms need fire extinguishers; and

- some exit light bulbs need to be replaced.

The inspection report did not have a date, nor was there any documentation that the district addressed the safety violations. The district does not have any procedures for personnel to conduct hazard inspections on a routine basis, nor are inspection forms provided for the campuses to use as a guide.

Without procedures requiring campuses to conduct and report routine drills, the district does not ensure that everyone on the campus, especially younger children, understands emergency evacuation procedures. There are no assurances that employees and students know which exits are to be used in emergencies, alternative routes to use when exits are blocked, or evacuation procedures for playgrounds. In addition, failure to request an annual inspection for fire safety hazards in the campus buildings prevents the district from ensuring buildings are in safe condition and that fire hazards have been eliminated. Routine drills and inspections also provide campuses with documentation that the fire alarm equipment is operating properly.

The State Fire Marshal's Office requires each school to complete a form for fire exit drills and fire prevention each year. A minimum of nine drills is required, one per month for each month having ten school days or more. These fire drill reports are to be maintained in district files for three years. Campuses can request routine fire drill inspections from the fire department.

The School Review's report, *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School*, January 2000, states that although fire drills and emergency evacuation procedures are often practiced in school, open discussion among teachers and administrators are not as common. When teachers are not familiar with written procedures for handling these situations, they will often handle the situation as they see fit during an emergency because they do not have time to search for the procedure. By not following proper procedures, the district can place students and employees at risk of injury as well as placing the district at risk of a lawsuit. When staff and students practice a set of procedures, the incidents will be handled more effectively if they occur.

Effective school districts develop procedures for routine drills and safety inspections. Procedures include a mechanism in place for monitoring campus compliance by the central administration. Should a critical incident occur, the district would have documentation that it made every effort to maintain a safe environment and to prepare students and staff for a safe evacuation. Routine drills prepare staff and students to handle real-life

emergencies. Districts can use drill results to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented safety and security procedures.

The district should develop procedures for campuses to report drills and conduct safety inspections on a routine basis. The procedures should require principals to report the date, time, and duration of all fire drills on a quarterly basis to the Student Services and Operations coordinator. All campus administrators should be held accountable for compliance. Drill results can be used to evaluate the program and campus effectiveness. In addition, the Student Services and Operations coordinator should assign staff to conduct routine building inspections to identify safety hazards. As a member of the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund, the district can request a sample inspection form that can then be used as a guide by the Student Services and Operations coordinator when drafting an inspection form for campuses.

COMPUTER RATIO (REC. 19)

The district does not have a replacement schedule and lacks the necessary number of instructional computers to support student learning. The district student-to-computer ratio of seven to one is greater than the state recommended ratio of four to one, which may be depriving students of a vital learning tool.

The district does not have the number of instructional computers to support student learning and has not implemented a plan for obtaining additional computers. The district has 703 computer workstations in the district with 626 of the workstations on campuses. These numbers are based on a November 2004 inventory completed by Records Consultants, Incorporated (RCI). The RCI inventory does not specify whether the computer is for a student, teacher, or administrator. Therefore, it cannot be used to determine the exact ratio of students-to-computers. In addition, many of the computers listed on the RCI inventory are 10-year-old Apple Macintoshes and other older PC clones that are not being used.

Exhibit 1–40 displays the student-to-computer ratios for ZCISD and its peer districts.

The 452 instructional computers for students listed in **Exhibit 1–40** were determined by using data (3,163 students divided by 7) stated in the ZCISD 2004–07 Long-Range Plan for Technology. At the time of the review team visit, the Technology office staff was in the process of building a database listing computers by campus and

EXHIBIT 1–40
STUDENT-TO-COMPUTER RATIO
ZCISD COMPARED TO PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL COMPUTERS	STUDENT TO COMPUTER RATIO
Valley View ISD	3,055	1,222	2.5:1
Hidalgo ISD	3,000	971	3:1
Point Isabel ISD	2,540	846	3:1*
Groesbeck ISD	1,655	411	4:1
Zapata County ISD	**3,163**	**452**	**7:1**

SOURCES: Peer district survey, January 2005 and ZCISD 2004–2007 Technology Plan, June 2004.
* Point Isabel reported a student-to-computer ratio of 3.5:1 with 846 instructional computers but did not provide the number of enrolled students used for the ratio. The 2,540 enrollment used in the exhibit is based on their 2003-04 PEIMS data and gives them a 3:1 student-to-computer ratio.

identifying the specific user, but it was not complete at the time. Staff was not including in the database the older computers such as the 10-year-old Apple Macintoshes and other older PC clones that are not being used.

Making technology a viable instructional tool requires schools to have sufficient numbers of up-to-date computers so that each student can have full and easy access to a computer. TEA created a Long-Range Plan for Technology for 1996–2010, which set goals for the number of computers for each student in Texas classrooms. In the plan, TEA sets short-term goals for 2003–04 (4:1), mid-term goals for 2005-07 (1:1), and long-term goals for 2008–10 (1:1). The plan states that school districts benefit the most by implementing and maintaining the suggested ratios of workstations to students and educators and determining how best to deploy the workstations to ensure universal accessibility.

The lack of enough up-to-date student computers may be depriving students of a vital technology-learning tool. The teachers at the teacher focus group meeting stated they feel students are not being given access to technology, especially in view of the district's wealth. Business owners at the business community leaders' forum also voiced the opinion that there are not enough student computers and the district can do better in technology.

The actual number of computers that the district lacks to reach a student-to-computer ratio of 4:1 cannot be accurately determined until an inventory of campus computers is completed with information on the capability and age of the computer and assigned users. Lyford Consolidated ISD has an effective clean-sweep program to annually inventory computers and verify their use. The inventory tracks selected information for each piece of computer equipment, including campus number, room number, equipment type,

manufacturer, model, serial number, barcode number, and replacement costs. This clean-sweep program is effective in verifying asset records as well as ensuring appropriate use of technology.

By using long term planning and the efficient use of funds, Hamilton ISD (HISD) exceeded the number of computers per student recommended for the short-term by the TEA. The HISD Technology Plan specified timeframes for the accomplishment of the recommended student to computer ratios: short term, mid-term, and long-term. By adhering to TEA's Long-Range Plan for Technology, the district has developed a plan to meet the goal of one computer workstation for each student by the year 2010. The technology coordinator and the technology committee update the plan on a regular basis.

ZCISD should develop an instructional computer replacement schedule and purchase additional computers to meet the state's short-term goal of one Internet connected multimedia computer per four students over a period of two years. The Technology office staff should complete the inventory of the district's computers to correctly determine the actual number of computers needed to reach a student-to-computer 4:1 ratio. An effort needs to be made to identify older computers that should be removed from the inventory. Once an exact inventory is achieved, the Technology staff, working with the District Technology Committee, should develop a replacement schedule for the aging computers in the district that includes a timeline and costs in 2005–06 and 2006–07.

A good quality, commercially-available personal computer designed to meet educational computing needs costs approximately $950. To bring the student-to-computer ratio up to the state recommendation of 4:1 computer workstations based on the district's stated 7:1 ratio, the district will need to purchase approximately 339 computers. This number was determined by

dividing 3,163 enrolled students by 4, which is 791 computers, and then subtracting the 452 existing computers counted in the district's reported 7:1 ratio. Lowering the student-to-computer ratio to four to one in two years will cost the district $161,025 annually X 2 years = a total cost of $322,050 ($950 X 339 computers = $322,050).

COMPUTER MAINTENANCE (REC. 20)

The computer maintenance-tracking program is not providing district staff with reasonable response time or feedback to solve hardware and software computer problems. Technology maintenance requests are now sent by emails from the users to the Technology office. These maintenance requests are not recorded into any database or manual spreadsheet. According to the technician printing the maintenance email requests, computer repair technicians select repair work from the emails on the desk, making it difficult to determine and track outstanding work orders or the most important problems and prioritize them accordingly. Additionally, this system does not provide district computer maintenance history, which would give data on such factors as common problems, turnaround times, and Technology office staffing requirements.

According to the Technology office computer repair technician who manages the computer maintenance requests, the average turnaround time is approximately 10 to 15 days. However, teachers at the focus group meeting said that turnaround time was over one to two months, and in some cases, they didn't receive any support or feedback for their computer maintenance problem. This lack of computer maintenance tracking not only frustrates the end users but also negatively impacts the student and teacher learning process. The lack of a properly working computer adds to a teacher's daily work schedule by reducing the capability to enter data such as student grades and attendance or access the district network from the classroom.

Many districts use an inexpensive software package to help track outstanding service requests, build a history of completed work orders, and track support history of equipment. The software allows the Technology department or help desk staff to specify end-user options and often has the capability for interfacing with inventory systems. Districts then analyze support trends and develop strategies to reduce certain types of requests such as recurring software questions. The Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD is presently using this kind of private vendor software with these features to manage and track their computer maintenance

program. Another maintenance tracking option for the district would be the use of free software from online vendors. The Medina Valley ISD has been successfully using freeware for two years.

The district should purchase software or utilize freeware to improve the district's computer maintenance program. The director of Technology and the maintenance staff should evaluate low-cost and free software solutions that are available on the market. The director of Technology should work with the administrative assistant for Business Services to select the proper software package. Once the software is selected, the Technology staff should install the software package, monitor and track computer maintenance activities, and provide the necessary training and instruction to the users.

The fiscal impact is based on purchasing vendor software for an initial cost of $4,715 for the software and technical support. In addition, the district could purchase software upgrades and technical support for $1,025 each subsequent year. There would be no cost if the district located computer maintenance-tracking freeware for this purpose.

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN (REC. 21)

The Technology office does not have a disaster recovery plan that would protect the district from losing crucial data in the event of an emergency. If a catastrophic event occurs such as a flood, fire, software virus attack, or vandalism, the district's data could be lost. In addition to the loss of data, the district would not be able to perform important operational and reporting functions such as payroll, accounts payable, or timely Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting until the original systems were restored. The Business office currently uses the Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) Internet-based Texas Computer Cooperative Software (iTCCS). Region 20 does back-up data at the end of each day for all districts using their software.

Districts use disaster recovery programs to operate in the event of a weather-related catastrophe or man-made-disasters, such as fire or an outside attack to the district's network infrastructure and data. Essential elements of a disaster recovery plan include:

- a disaster recovery team;

- a list of persons to contact after a disaster;

- a listing of critical school functions;

▪ the essential office equipment needed for continued operation; and

▪ required staffing levels and responsibilities needed immediately after a disaster.

Guidelines for contingency planning for information resources services resumption, along with a sample outline, can be found on the State of Texas Department of Information Resources website at: http://www.dir.state.tx.us/TIC/dir_Info/cntngcy.htm. Also, key elements for safeguarding technology information are available on the National Center for Education website at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/safetech/index.asp.

The Glen Rose Independent School District (GRISD) has developed a comprehensive disaster recovery plan for handling the loss of its information system. GRISD's disaster recovery plan includes emergency contacts for the Technology Department staff, the district, and software and hardware vendors. The plan is complete with protocols for both partial and complete recoveries to ensure that the technology staff is knowledgeable in every aspect of recovery and restoration. The plan outlines designated alternate sites dependent upon the type of outage that occurs. The plan also includes system redundancy and fault protection protocols, as well

as a tape backup plan. **Exhibit 1–41** displays the GRISD's Disaster Recovery Plan.

A disaster recovery plan will provide a road map of predetermined actions which will reduce decision-making during recovery operations, resume critical services quickly, and enable resumption of normal service at the earliest possible time in the most cost-effective manner. A plan will establish, organize, and document risk assessments, responsibilities, policies and procedures, and agreements and understandings for internal and external entities.

ZCISD should develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan and conduct tests on a regular schedule. The superintendent, director of Technology, and the Technology Committee should meet to determine what elements are needed to develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan. The Technology Committee should research models to serve as a blueprint for building the district's disaster recovery plan. The plan should affix accountability to specific individuals who will be responsible for performing actions and repairing equipment in the event of a disaster. The superintendent, director of Technology, and the Technology Committee should then develop a schedule to regularly test the disaster recovery plan once it is completed.

EXHIBIT 1–41
GLEN ROSE ISD DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

SYSTEM	RESTORATION
Servers: Operating System	Attempt restoration using PowerQuest image. Restore operating system using tape backup. Re-install operating system from CD.
Servers: Data Recovery	Verify loss of data. If RAID drive is lost, attempt recovery with a hot spare. Restore data using tape backup of alternate server backup.
Servers: Hardware Recovery	Replace failed part — if not in stock, determine availability. Evaluate repair time of failed server. Move application and data to secondary server.
Network: Primary LAN Router Cisco 5500	Cisco 5500 Route Switch Module may be replaced with Cisco 3810 to provide routing between Internet sublets.
Network: Primary WAN Router Cisco 3810	Cisco 3810 Switch may be replaced with a Cisco 2500 router from the Distance Learning lab.
Network: Backbone Switches	Since the chassis is equipped with redundant power supplies, if one fails, the other may be plugged in. To restore Fiber Module connectivity, a MM or SM to UTP converter may be used. However, this is a temporary fix and will only operate at 10 Mbps. Replace individual switch modules with either a spare or a stand-alone switch. Combine steps 2 and 3 in the event of total chassis failure. This will only achieve a minimum level of service.
Network: IDF Switch	Individual Cisco 1924 or 2924 switches may be swapped with spare units.
Alternate Site	Staff is prepared to move all necessary servers and equipment to the administration building server room in cases where the primary site loses power, HVAC or sustains damage that prevents service restoration in that area. Alternatively, fiber patch cables may be configured to route network traffic to the new location.

SOURCE: Glen Rose Independent School District Technology Department Disaster Recovery Plan.

LONG-RANGE TECHNOLOGY PLAN (REC. 22)

The district's Technology Planning Committee lacks adequate representation from the various stakeholder groups. Due to the lack of representation from the various stakeholder groups, the district is missing an opportunity to gain widespread support for accomplishing the goals and objectives of the plan.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) approved the ZCISD 2004–07 Long-Range Technology Plan on June 24, 2004 for a period of three years. Goals and objectives in the plan are based upon the recommendations defined by the Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology in the areas of teaching and learning, educator preparation and development, administration and support services, and infrastructure for technology. The plan states it is based on information drawn from many sources including:

- a review of the literature to identify best practices;

- a survey of teachers;

- a survey of administrators;

- interviews with site and district administrators and representatives from the community;

- other district technology plans; and

- experience from other school districts.

Technology specialists in the Technology office and campus principals determined membership on the district Technology Committee. The planning committee consisted of the following members:

- two Technology office technology specialists;

- one instructional technology specialist from the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department (per organization chart);

- two district librarians;

- two high school teachers and one middle school teacher;

- one high school student; and

- one parent.

Chapter 11, Section 11.251 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires that district committees include representation from professional school staff, parents of students enrolled in the district, business representatives, and community members. The ZCISD committee does not include enough representation from important stakeholder groups such as area business leaders, school district administrators, and community members.

To realize the benefits of technology, districts must develop a plan for integrating technology into the curriculum. An effective technology plan is based on the shared vision of educators, parents, community members, and business leaders who have technological expertise. The district is missing an opportunity to gain needed support and expertise for meeting the goals and objectives of the technology plan. Participants at the business and community leaders' focus group commented on the need for more information on the district technology program. These remarks included:

- "There are not enough computers."

- "We can do better in technology."

- "It is a mystery."

- "No one explains how the whole process works."

- "We do have the connectivity, but the capital that goes inside the classroom is still missing."

The Smithville ISD (SISD) developed a comprehensive technology plan, updating it continuously and using it to pursue needed resources to improve the quality of overall technology. The SISD director of Technology assembled a technology committee consisting of various stakeholders including business people, parents, and community members. Ysleta ISD (YISD) developed a comprehensive five-year technology plan. YISD made technology improvements a priority. The district has business partners for its individual schools that focus their efforts on the individual schools.

The district should broaden the membership of the Technology Committee to include more representation from professional staff, various departments, business leaders, and the community to obtain input and support for the District Long-Range Technology Plan. The addition of important stakeholders to the planning committee would add valuable support, guidance, and expertise for district technology. Also, it would allow for these additional stakeholders to become partners and be more familiar with the technology efforts of the district. Meetings with the reorganized committee should be held periodically in order for members to become familiar with the district technology goals and objectives. Frequent meetings will help members feel that they have a stake in meeting technology needs for the teacher-student learning process. The board should receive regular progress reports from the Technology

Committee on the implementation of the Technology Plan and other major technology projects.

INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY (REC. 23)

The district is not effectively integrating technology into the teaching-learning process. The district level instructional technology specialist position has been vacant since June 2004, and no staff member has been available to oversee the proper integration of technology into the teaching-learning process. In June 2004, the person previously assigned to the position was moved to Zapata North Early Childhood Center as an instructional technology teacher/specialist, although the position's job description states the position reports to the Director of Special Populations in the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department. The job description lists the primary duties as: (1) assist in writing grant proposals; (2) fill out surveys and reports to state and federal agencies; (3) facilitate the effective use and integration of technology in all campuses; and (4) provide technical support in the integration of technology into the curriculum. As the district instructional technology specialist from 2001 through 2004, this person stated her primary role was data analysis rather than integration of technology into the curriculum. The director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the ZCISD does not know if the move of the instructional technology teacher/specialist to a campus is temporary or permanent.

There was no evidence or survey data provided to indicate that educational technology and curriculum staff members work together to meet the curriculum and instructional needs of students. It is up to each campus administrator to plan for teacher technology training. In this regard, district staff has been going to the Regional Educational Service Center I (Region 1) for technology training workshops. **Exhibit 1–42** shows staff attendance from the campuses from January 2004 through August 2004 at these technology training workshops.

EXHIBIT 1–42
ZCISD TECHNOLOGY TRAINING
AT REGION 1
JAN. 2004 THROUGH AUG. 2004

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF STAFF ATTENDING	2003–04 PEIMS ENROLLMENT AT SCHOOL
Benavides Elementary	3	85
Central Elementary	14	503
North Elementary	14	445
South Elementary	12	592
Zapata MS	0	703
Zapata HS	8	815

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2003-04 and Staff Interviews.

Some campuses had minimal attendance at the technology training at Region 1 during this period. Zapata Middle School did not send any staff member to Region 1 for technology training while the high school sent only eight staff members, even though these two schools are serving 1,518 students, approximately 48% of the student population.

The Texas School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart is an online resource tool for self-assessment of a school district's efforts to effectively integrate technology across the curriculum. After being completed by the campuses, the STaR Charts are summarized to produce district profile indicators for four levels of progress in key areas: Early Technology, Developing Technology, Advanced Technology, or Target Technology. The district profile indicators for the ZCISD place them at the developing technology level in three of the four key areas.

A paragraph in the ZCISD 2004–07 Long-Range Technology Plan states, "The plan stresses the importance of ongoing and sustained staff development in the integration of technology into the curriculum for teachers, principals, administrators, and school library media personnel to further the effective use of technology in the classroom or library media center. It is also consistent with the recommendations for local education agencies as defined by the Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology in the area of teaching and learning." Objectives in the ZCISD 2004–07 Long-Range Technology Plan list many strategies for integrating technology into the curriculum. Some examples of these strategies include:

- All students will be given the opportunity to observe and acquire a variety of ways to obtain electronic data from different sources such as text, audio, video, graphic, and online searches by using the latest technology available to them in their classrooms.

- Increase academic performance of all district students using technology-based resources.

- All students will use technology to develop learning and process skills.

- All students will develop keyboarding skills and the use of appropriate technology vocabulary.

- All students will participate on a thematic unit in conjunction with the District Career and Technology Job Fair to implement technology skills such as Internet research, word

processing, power point presentations, spreadsheet analysis, and comparison of salaries.

- Provide video interactive sessions between classrooms and schools within the district.

- Offer staff development courses in basic areas such as Internet use, office suite implementation, security software, and backup procedures for all teachers and librarians that focus on preparing teachers to integrate technology into their subject area.

- Offer just-in-time training to all teachers and librarians utilizing the technology staff for training periodically throughout the year.

The effect of technology on student achievement depends on how well a district integrates technology to support student instructional objectives. This effort requires substantial staff developing both technology applications and their integration into the curriculum and classroom instruction. Teachers and administrators must have a clear vision of effective technology, best practices, and the support to achieve it. A district can be effective in instructional technology if it uses and supports existing and new technologies, learning activities, and research.

The integration of technology into the teaching and learning process at ZCISD is not being effectively accomplished because the authorized district level instructional technology specialist position is vacant. Students, teachers, and administrators are missing opportunities to integrate technology into all aspects of teaching and learning. Integrating technology in learning and teaching across the curriculum can make a difference in preparing students, teachers, and administrators to become technology literate. Further, the strategies in the district's Long-Range Technology Plan pertaining to integration of technology are not being properly addressed without the fulltime leadership of a district instructional specialist.

Effective districts implement a comprehensive staff development program that addresses technology integration. Some districts accomplish this task through sending teachers to programs like the Intel Teach to the Future initiative (www.intel.com/education). This free training program provides a robust 40-hour curriculum where teachers are required to develop a minimum of three technology integration lessons incorporating Microsoft Office suite. This training helps teachers use the computers in their classrooms as well as computers in their computer

labs. The teachers then provide staff development to their peers on how to incorporate their videoconferencing systems into curriculum.

Elgin ISD designed the Teacher Technologist Program to integrate technology into the curriculum and to provide a direct link between each school and the Technology department. Principals at each school recommend a teacher to serve as the teacher technologist for one semester. The selected teachers receive extensive training regarding technology issues and how to use technology effectively. On an ongoing basis, the teacher technologists work with other teachers at their school to integrate technology into the classroom.

The district should fill the vacated position of district instructional technology specialist. The position is budgeted, but the person formerly holding the position has been temporarily assigned to a campus. It is critical that the position be filled, whether this person is returned to the position of district instructional technology specialist or a new person is selected for the position. The person should use all available tools, such as the ZCISD 2004–07 Long-Range Technology Plan, survey data, Region 1 workshops, and Technology office staff, to integrate technology into the curriculum and address the many strategies outlined in the district Technology Plan. The instructional technology specialist should prepare an action plan and present it to the director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for consideration in 2005–06.

TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR VACANCY (REC. 24)

ZCISD lacks the departmental management needed to address the needs of the Technology program. The position of director of Technology has been vacant since December 2002. Consequently, the department does not have the consistent leadership needed to ensure the district's technology programs are being implemented and managed effectively.

Different department technology specialists have been acting as director since that time. The current interim technology director has not been provided with a copy of the Technology office budget. Consequently, he has limited knowledge of funds available for purchasing computers. In addition to serving as the interim director, he also serves as a computer repair person and is responsible for the telephone systems maintenance.

The lack of leadership from a permanent director of Technology has not only negatively affected the

district's teacher-student learning process but also has had an impact on the implementation of some other important responsibilities assigned to the department. For example, only twelve computers have been ordered this year, even though funds may be available to purchase additional computers. The district's student-to-computer ratio is 7:1, much higher than peer districts and the state-recommended ratio of 4:1. In addition, the district does not have a written replacement plan for computers. Without permanent leadership, the district's computer maintenance system has been neglected, and computer maintenance turnaround time is slow. Finally, the district does not have a disaster recovery plan for handling the loss of its information systems if a catastrophic event occurs.

The present district organizational structure provides for a district Technology director to manage all the functions assigned to the department. It is difficult for the department to successfully support the district's technology programs without full-time leadership. An interim director, who is also responsible for duties in another authorized position, cannot be expected to adequately provide effective management of the department.

The district should hire a qualified director of Technology to manage the Technology department. The superintendent should direct the director of Personnel and Compliance to develop a job description including qualifications and all assigned responsibilities of the position of director of Technology. A job posting should be developed for the position and advertised in the district and through various state associations, the local newspaper, and surrounding areas.

The superintendent should designate an interview committee to determine the most qualified candidate and provide a recommendation to the superintendent for board approval. The fiscal impact is estimated at an annual cost of $63,786 to hire a director for 226 days. The amount for this position is calculated using a base salary of $56,952 plus a 12 percent benefit factor ($56,952 + $6,834 = $63,786).

For more background information on Chapter 1, Educational Delivery Services, see page 183 in the General Information section of the Appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 1: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY							
1. Offer students college entrance exam preparation opportunities, such as teacher-provided tutorials for the PSAT, SAT, and ACT, which will provide a better foundation for students taking these college entrance examinations in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
2. Increase the number and type of Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings, implement awareness activities of courses offered to encourage student participation, and initiate strategies to encourage students to take AP exams and assist them in achieving a score of three or above.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3. Adopt a board policy that provides direction for management of curriculum.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

	RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 1: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY								
4.	Establish a curriculum development and management system, which includes a review of the TEKS, district curriculum guides, benchmark tests, and student scores on TAKS subtests, to ensure that the written, taught, and tested curriculum are properly aligned.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
5.	Realign the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department, including consolidating positions and responsibilities, to improve the efficiency and accountability of departmental programs.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
6.	Evaluate the Transitional Model for bilingual education to determine its effectiveness in meeting the instructional needs of all Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and ensuring that these students meet the standards required by the district and the state.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
7.	Ensure that all campus libraries meet the *"Acceptable"* standard for library collections and staffing.	($41,010)	($41,010)	($41,010)	($41,010)	($41,010)	($205,050)	($419,973)
8.	Develop an instructional plan to reduce student retention rates and increase the promotion rates of students.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
9.	Develop district strategies to address the problem of the increasing dropout rates in grades 7 and 8.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

	RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 1: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY								
10.	Implement a comprehensive State Compensatory Education program to supplement the regular education program for students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($5,250)
11.	Designate the responsibility of coordinating the discipline management and safe schools programs to the director of Personnel and Compliance.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
12.	Create a DAEP coordinator position to oversee the DAEP program and ensure DAEP guidelines are being implemented.	($57,012)	($57,012)	($57,012)	($57,012)	($57,012)	($285,060)	$0
13.	Create annual comprehensive disciplinary incident reports.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
14.	Designate the Student Services and Operations coordinator responsible for the districtwide safety and security functions.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
15.	Conduct a needs assessment for security, develop a staffing methodology for security guards, and reduce the number of district security guards.	$301,543	$301,543	$301,543	$301,543	$301,543	$1,507,715	$0
16.	Formalize the relationship with the Zapata County Sheriff's Office by developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifying both the services provided by the sheriff's office as well as the district's responsibilities.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
17.	Develop a comprehensive districtwide crisis management plan and provide routine training for staff and students.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 1: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY							
18. Develop procedures for campuses to report drills and conduct safety inspections on a routine basis.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
19. Develop an instructional computer replacement schedule and purchase additional computers to meet the state's short-term goal of one Internet connected multimedia computer per four students over a period of two years.	($161,025)	($161,025)	$0	$0	$0	($322,050)	$0
20. Purchase software or utilize freeware to improve the district's computer maintenance program.	$0	($1,025)	($1,025)	($1,025)	($1,025)	($4,100)	($4,715)
21. Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan and conduct tests on a regular schedule.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
22. Broaden the membership of the Technology Committee to include more representation from professional staff, various departments, business leaders, and the community to obtain input and support for the District Long-Range Technology Plan.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
23. Fill the vacated position of district instructional technology specialist.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
24. Hire a qualified director of Technology to manage the Technology department.	($63,786)	($63,786)	($63,786)	($63,786)	($63,786)	($318,930)	$0
Totals–Chapter 1	($21,290)	($22,315)	$138,710	$138,710	$138,710	$372,525	($429,938)

Chapter 2

District Management

Zapata County Independent School District

CHAPTER 2
DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

Effective management of a school district requires cooperation between the school board, the superintendent, and the district staff. They are responsible for facilitating excellent teaching, accelerated learning, and effective school district operations; securing and maintaining a quality workforce; promoting good community involvement; and establishing excellent communication.

The superintendent is the district's educational leader and chief executive officer, and the school board is responsible for approving budgets, setting policy, and acting as the liaison between the community and the school district. The superintendent is responsible for the district's daily operations. Mr. Romeo Rodriguez has served as superintendent of the Zapata County Independent School District (ZCISD) since 2001. Prior to being hired as the superintendent, Mr. Rodriguez served as a principal in Laredo ISD from 1989–2001.

An elected seven-member Board of Trustees governs ZCISD. Three members are elected at large, and four are elected from single-member districts. Each member serves a four-year term, with elections held biennially. **Exhibit 2–1** lists the board members, office held on the board, year elected, term of office, profession, and place of business.

Ms. Veronica P. Gonzalez became president of the board in December 2004 when the former president resigned from the board. Ms. Gonzales was named president per board policy BDAA (Local), which states that the vice-president will automatically become president if a vacancy in that position occurs. At the December 13, 2004 board meeting, Mr. Armando Paredes was elected vice-president by majority vote. Mr. Anselmo Trevino was appointed

by the board to fill the vacated position. ZCISD trustees meet regularly on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Special meetings are called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings is posted at least 72 hours before each scheduled meeting. All regular board meetings allow the public to address the board, but board members noted that public comment at meetings is rare.

Personnel management is a critical function of a school district because personnel costs are a school district's largest expense, accounting for the majority of operating expenditures. The ZCISD Personnel department recruits teachers, posts positions, and accepts applications for the district's administrative, professional, paraprofessional, and auxiliary staff. The Payroll office administers employee leave and benefits, and the Business office primarily handles compensation administration.

ZCISD's payroll costs in 2003–04 were 82.3 percent of the district's annual expenditures. **Exhibit 2–2** shows the number and percent of staff in ZCISD for each major employee group.

Responsibility for community involvement is distributed throughout ZCISD. Each campus administrator is responsible for the publicity and activities for their campus. Each campus has active parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) with good parent participation. District staff also works with numerous citizens and advisory and community committees for the benefit of students, staff, and parents. The district publishes district and administrative event calendars for distribution to the campuses and offices. The only local newspaper, Zapata County News, is published weekly and provides the media coverage for the district.

EXHIBIT 2–1
ZCISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND HISTORY 2004–05

NAME	OFFICE HELD ON THE BOARD	YEAR ELECTED	TERM OF OFFICE	BOARD MEMBERS' PROFESSIONS	PLACE OF BUSINESS
Veronica P. Gonzalez	President	May 1999	2003–07	Sales & Service Associate	US Post Office Zapata, Texas
Dora S. Martinez	Secretary	Appointed August 1999; Elected 2000	2005–09	Center Director	Head Start Program San Ygnacio, Texas
Zachary O. Garza	Member	Appointed December 1995; Elected May1996	2003–07	Health Safety Environmental Tech	Kinder Morgan Zapata, Texas
Armando B. Paredes	Vice-President	May 2001	2003–07	Health Safety Environmental Tech	Shell Oil McCook, Texas
Jose M. Ramirez, III	Member	Appointed June 2003	2003–07	Bank President	Zapata National Bank Zapata, Texas
Ricardo X. Ramirez	Member	Appointed May 2004; Elected May 2005	2005–09	Bank Vice-President	International Bank of Commerce Zapata, Texas
Anselmo Trevino	Member	Appointed December 2004; Elected May 2005	2005–09	Retired Educator	N/A

SOURCE: ZCISD Superintendent's Office.

EXHIBIT 2–2
ZAPATA COUNTY ISD STAFF COUNT
BY EMPLOYEE GROUP
2003–04

STAFF	COUNT	PERCENT
Professional Staff*	304.4	53.7%
Teachers	245.4	43.3%
Professional Support	43.0	7.6%
Campus Administrators	11.0	1.9%
Central Administrators	5.0	0.9%
Educational Aides	73.0	12.9%
Auxiliary	189.7	33.5%
Total Staff	567.0	100%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2003-04.
*This number includes teachers, professional support, campus administration, and central administration NOTE: Count and percent are rounded off.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The ZCISD superintendent conducts a weekly Instructional Joint Team Meeting to keep key staff informed, involved, and focused on achieving instructional goals. These meetings ensure the entire team is involved in relevant decision-making and improve the team's communication and support of one another.

FINDINGS

- ZCISD lacks a process to monitor board training, and board members have not completed state-required training.

- ZCISD board members have not received adequate training on the budget process and have not taken an active role in budget development and monitoring.

- ZCISD staff is not adequately organized to meet the district's educational, financial, and operational needs.

- ZCISD does not have written administrative guidelines or procedural manuals for conducting district operations.

- ZCISD lacks a framework for long-range strategic planning to prioritize needs and establish a clear direction for the district.

- ZCISD's process for developing the district improvement plan is not adequately serving the district's needs because it is not developed in a timely manner, lacks measurable objectives, and is not tied to the budget.

- ZCISD does not employ local or industry standards for staffing and is overstaffed in several employee groups, which has caused financial constraints and difficulty in offering competitive teacher salaries.

- ZCISD lacks a process for filing and securing the superintendent's evaluations.

- The Personnel department is not adequately staffed and is unable to perform necessary personnel functions.

- The Personnel department does not have written administrative procedures to guide staff in performing key human resources tasks.

- ZCISD does not have standardized procedures for employee records management, and records are not properly safeguarded.

- ZCISD's Personnel department does not use the personnel management and reporting tools available in the personnel module of the district's business software system that would help in managing the department.

- ZCISD does not have a position control process or system to maintain information regarding the number and type of district positions that have been approved.

- ZCISD does not have current job descriptions or a system for updating them, which could result in staff not being fully knowledgeable of all the duties expected of their positions.

- The Personnel department has an inefficient system for tracking annual evaluations for employees.

- ZCISD's substitute teacher program does not have a sufficiently rigorous educational standard for substitutes, provide orientation or training, or have an efficient substitute-calling program.

- ZCISD has not determined the cause of high absenteeism among its employees.

- ZCISD does not have a coordinated or centralized staff development program, making it difficult for employees to take full advantage of professional development opportunities.

- ZCISD has a poorly developed website and is missing an opportunity to inform the public about activities in the district.

- ZCISD central administration has not adequately communicated with the community about district activities, undermining the district's efforts to gain the trust and confidence of the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 25 (p. 66): Develop a process to monitor board training and to ensure all board members meet continuing education requirements.** The superintendent should identify a staff member to maintain a record of the board training. The superintendent

should provide the board with information on continuing education opportunities, especially in the areas in which board members are lacking the required training hours.

- **Recommendation 26 (p. 67): Require board member training on the budget process and implement a process for board participation in budget development.** The board should participate in workshops with a facilitator to increase its awareness of the board's role in budgeting and improve its skills in aligning resources to improve student performance. The board, superintendent, and business officials should attend training on the budget process and adopt a budget calendar that incorporates the required reporting and planning activities as well as staff input for the board to make informed budgetary decisions.

- **Recommendation 27 (p. 68): Restructure central administration along functional lines and eliminate the position of administrative assistant for Construction.** The proposed structure moves the present Student Services and Operations coordinator under the administrative assistant for Business Services. Both administrative assistant positions should be renamed as assistant superintendents, which better reflects the functions performed. Testing responsibilities should be moved under the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The director of Technology position should be filled, and the department should report directly to the superintendent. The director of Personnel and Compliance position should be renamed the director of Personnel and Student Services, with the job description being revised to reflect at least 75 percent of this director's time being spent on personnel-related matters. The director of Athletics should be moved under the curriculum area. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should report to the administrative assistant for Business Services, and the position should be renamed the director of Operations. The district should reassign the administrative assistant for Construction's responsibilities and construction oversight to the director of Operations. Attendance officers and nurses should report to the director of Personnel and Student Services.

- **Recommendation 28 (p. 70): Develop a comprehensive set of operations manuals for conducting district operations.** The superintendent should delegate responsibility to central office administrators to form teams to

review existing policies and procedures in their areas of responsibility and develop manuals. Once manuals are written and reviewed, each department head should develop and implement training for all staff members. Department heads should also be responsible for disseminating and updating manuals annually. If possible, the district should post the procedures manuals online to increase accessibility.

- **Recommendation 29 (p. 72): Develop an integrated long-range strategic plan.** The plan should encompass all of the district's planning documents, including the district improvement plan and the technology and facility plans. The plan would also serve to ensure that all plans are aligned and focused on meeting the district's overall goals. The superintendent should select and present a strategic planning model to the board for approval. The board, superintendent, and key administrators should select members for a district planning committee, including business representatives and community members, who would be responsible for developing a long-range strategic plan.

- **Recommendation 30 (p. 73): Develop a district improvement plan (DIP) that is timely, includes measurable objectives, and is tied to the budget.** The superintendent and the chairperson of the District Planning and Decision Making Committee (DPDMC) should modify the existing process for developing the district improvement plan to ensure it meets all state and federal requirements regarding planning and implementation of the DIP. The document should be developed so that the schools can also use it to develop their campus improvement plans.

- **Recommendation 31 (p. 74): Conduct a staffing efficiency study, develop and apply staffing formulas to reduce staff, and revise the salary schedule to increase teacher salaries, making them more competitive**. ZCISD should conduct a staffing efficiency study and develop staffing formulas based on enrollment data and other industry accepted standards. The director of Personnel should develop staffing allocation numbers based on these standards. A workforce reduction plan should be developed and phased in if necessary to address overstaffing. This plan should include procedures dealing with displaced employees and should be widely communicated to employees. The district's attorney should review the plan to ensure all appropriate legal issues are

addressed. The district should then revise the salary schedule to offer more competitive salaries for teachers. The district should implement the remaining teacher salary recommendations presented by the December 2003 compensation study to provide a pay raise for 2005–06 with additional salary equity adjustments for beginning teachers and those with one through four years of experience.

- **Recommendation 32 (p. 80): Develop a procedure for filing and safeguarding the superintendent's evaluations.** The superintendent and his secretary should select a secure, lockable file cabinet in which to file the superintendent's evaluations, and the secretary should file evaluations annually, immediately after the board approves the evaluation. The secretary should also send a copy of the evaluation to the superintendent's personnel file.

- **Recommendation 33 (p. 81): Centralize personnel functions under the Personnel department and provide appropriate staffing to accomplish these tasks.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should be given the primary responsibility of managing the Personnel department. Compliance responsibilities should be placed under the appropriate administrative assistant or director. The Student Services and Operations coordinator, the energy manager, and the Athletic director should be assigned to appropriate divisions. The position should be renamed director of Personnel and Student Services with at least 75 percent of the director's time spent on personnel-related matters. The director and superintendent should develop a plan to ensure a smooth transition of functions, including the reassignment of leave and benefit administration and compensation to the Personnel department. A Personnel technician should be hired after a job description is developed. This additional position will provide support in administering this department's expanded responsibilities.

- **Recommendation 34 (p. 83): Develop written administrative procedures for the Personnel department.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should review all personnel policies and develop guidelines to meet policy requirements. The director should identify all key personnel tasks and develop internal procedures to ensure the department completes all tasks timely and legally. The director should meet with district administrators to receive input regarding areas of concern in

personnel functions and should address these areas in developing written, districtwide procedures involving the personnel function.

- **Recommendation 35 (p. 84): Centralize all personnel records and ensure controlled access.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should develop a filing system that organizes files, with separate sections for applications and related documents such as transcripts, service records, contracts and letters of assurance, and performance evaluations. Existing files should be audited and reorganized based on the new system. The district should establish a records management system that complies with state and federal requirements and designate a records management officer. ZCISD should consider alternatives such as microfilming for its inactive files.

- **Recommendation 36 (p. 84): Implement the personnel module of the district's business software system.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should contact the Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) to get information about the system and develop an action plan to begin implementation of the system. Training on the software should be provided to the director and the Personnel staff. The district's existing agreement with Region 1 includes access to the personnel module and training at no extra cost.

- **Recommendation 37 (p. 85): Expand use of the position management system to maintain accountability of authorized district positions and integrate this information with payroll and budget applications.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should review the benefits of the position management system software currently used by the Business office and design a districtwide plan that supports use of the system. This product, along with training, is available at no cost to districts using the business software.

- **Recommendation 38 (p. 86): Develop new job descriptions for each position in the district and update them regularly.** The director of Personnel and Compliance should work with employees, supervisors, and other resources to create specific job descriptions based on job analyses. Job descriptions should be submitted to the superintendent and the board for approval. A schedule for updating job descriptions should be developed and followed. Job descriptions should also be reviewed any time there is a reorganization of staff.

- **Recommendation 39 (p. 87): Develop a system for tracking evaluations and ensure all are completed and submitted in a timely fashion.** ZCISD conducts teacher evaluations annually using the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) appraisal instrument and has an extensive number of additional evaluation instruments for use with other employee groups. The director of Personnel and Compliance should develop a procedure to ensure evaluations are completed by all administrators.

- **Recommendation 40 (p. 87): Improve the substitute teacher system by increasing educational requirements for substitutes, providing training for substitutes, and implementing an automated substitute employee management program.** The director of Personnel and Compliance, with the help of campus administrators and teachers, should review current requirements and adopt higher educational requirements. The Personnel department should develop an action plan to recruit and hire more substitutes who meet these requirements. The Personnel department should work with the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department to develop and schedule required training sessions for the district's substitutes throughout the year. The director of Personnel and Compliance should review several automated systems, visit districts using the systems, and select a system that best meets the needs of ZCISD. Training on the system should be provided to all campus administrators, teachers, and substitute teachers.

- **Recommendation 41 (p. 88): Develop mechanisms to analyze, monitor, and better manage employee absenteeism.** The district should analyze employee absentee data and review existing leave policies to determine if they are contributing to the absentee problem. The Personnel department should review current procedures used to track absentee data to improve the existing process and facilitate regular data review and analysis. The Personnel department should also revise forms and procedures to support the district's efforts to better manage leave. The director of Personnel and Compliance should form a committee to identify incentives and training needed to reduce employee absenteeism.

- **Recommendation 42 (p. 89): Assign responsibility for overseeing staff development to the director of Personnel**

and Compliance and create a staff development plan. Staff development can remain decentralized, but one employee should be responsible for identifying and matching staff training needs and opportunities with district priorities and goals. The director, with the assistance of other department heads, should create a districtwide staff development plan for all employees. The plan should serve as a resource for departments in identifying the types of training available. The director should evaluate the training programs for effectiveness and support of the district's mission and goals.

- **Recommendation 43 (p. 90): Establish a Web Advisory Committee for implementing district and campus websites.** The superintendent should appoint the interim Technology director as the committee chairperson. The committee should have representation from various stakeholder groups and should work with the private vendor to implement district and campus websites. The work of the committee should be publicized to users, parents, and the community. Input regarding website development should be solicited from a variety of staff and community members who could bring knowledge about the community and district activities to the design table.

- **Recommendation 44 (p. 91): Create a communications plan for sharing district information with stakeholders.** The plan should emphasize the use of various communication strategies and media formats to make information available to both internal and external stakeholders. The plan should also centralize all communication through the superintendent's office and be reviewed regularly to ensure efforts are relevant to the tasks and resources are adequate and appropriate. The development of a district website should be a high priority, and the *ZCISD Connections* newsletter should be published quarterly on the website.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

INSTRUCTIONAL JOINT TEAM MEETINGS

The superintendent conducts a weekly Instructional Joint Team Meeting to keep key staff informed, involved, and focused on achieving instructional goals. The team, including the superintendent, six principals, three administrative assistants, the director of Personnel and Compliance, the Student Services and Operations coordinator, the Curriculum

department coordinators and directors, and the Technology coordinator, began meeting in fall 2004.

These meetings provided the team with essential information concerning the Superintendent's Educational System of Support (SESOS). The plan is an accountability system that outlines the major roles, responsibilities, and expectations of instructional and administrative personnel in meeting the district's educational goals. Sample items on this plan are listed below:

- Each campus will develop a campus improvement plan (CIP) that projects yearly gains needed to achieve a campus accountability rating of Recognized or above within three years. Each school will submit an annual summative evaluation of progress on this goal based on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores.

- Subject area coordinators, program coordinators, and directors will each document efforts to support each school in achieving the TAKS targeted improvements (to be reviewed at regular intervals).

The plan also specifies expectations for teachers and students, holding them accountable for high performance on required measures of evaluation. The joint meetings allow the district to review accountability plan activities and discuss improvements.

Meeting agendas cover areas such as accountability data, benchmark processes, staff development, and program changes and requirements. For example, the superintendent has used this meeting to update the instructional administrative team on new federal and state mandates, such as the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act.

In focus groups and individual interviews, principals said they felt involved in decision-making. They stated the superintendent listens to their concerns and uses their input to make critical decisions involving their campuses and the district. Eighty-two percent of the central office administrators and support staff responding to a school review survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader."

The regular meetings held by the instructional joint team provide an opportunity to keep key staff informed, involved, and focused on instructional goals. These meetings ensure the entire team is involved in relevant decision-making and improve the team's communication and support of one another.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD TRAINING (REC. 25)

ZCISD lacks a process to monitor board training, and board members have not completed state-required training. Board members are required by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) to complete specified training on an annual basis. Orientation sessions, team building sessions (which include all board members and the superintendent), and specified hours of continuing education are all part of the training requirements. New members are required to receive a local orientation within 60 days of joining the board and an orientation to the Texas Education Code (TEC) within one year of election or appointment to the board. The orientation to the TEC is delivered by the Education Service Centers (ESCs) and should be three hours in length. After every legislative session, each school board member is required to obtain an update on the TEC incorporating main changes in the code. The entire board is required to participate annually with the superintendent in a team building session to enhance the effectiveness of the board–superintendent team.

A board member is required to receive at least ten hours of continuing education in the first year and a minimum of five hours of continuing education in subsequent years of service. Training can be obtained through the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), ESCs, the district, or other approved service providers. **Exhibit 2–3** provides an overview of continuing education requirements for school board members.

ZCISD does not maintain its own records regarding continuing education requirements for the board. The district relies on TASB to maintain these records through its Board Member Continuing Education Report. However, this report specifies that the report is provided as a TASB member service and that official record keeping regarding board members' continuing education credit is the responsibility of the district.

A review of the TASB report for the reporting period of January 1, 1998 through December 6, 2004 indicates that new board members in ZCISD did not receive the required Tier 1 local district orientation within 60 days of election or appointment. All board members serving on the board in 2000 did receive a local orientation on September 9, 2000.

EXHIBIT 2–3
TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE
CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

TIER ONE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS		
CATEGORY 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	Three hours	Not required
Update to the Texas Education Code	Incorporated into Orientation to the Texas Education Code	After legislative session and of "sufficient length" to address major changes
TIER TWO TRAINING REQUIREMENTS		
CATEGORY OF CONTINUING EDUCATION	**FIRST YEAR BOARD MEMBER**	**EXPERIENCED BOARD MEMBER**
Team building Session/Assessment of Continuing Education Needs of the Board–Superintendent Team	At least three hours	At least three hours
TIER THREE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS		
CATEGORY OF CONTINUING EDUCATION	**FIRST YEAR BOARD MEMBER**	**EXPERIENCED BOARD MEMBER**
Additional Continuing Education, based on assessed need and Framework for School Board Development	At least ten hours	At least five hours
Total Minimum Number of Hours Annually	Sixteen hours, plus local district orientation	Eight hours, plus update to the Texas Education Code

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

None of the board members have received the orientation on the TEC required for new members or the TEC update required after legislative sessions. Tier 2 training on team building was provided on March 5, 2001 and November 19, 2001; however, according to the report, none of the board members have participated in the required team building session since 2001. All but two of the board members have met or exceeded their Tier 3 continuing education requirements. **Exhibit 2–4** lists each board member's compliance with training requirements.

Ensuring board members receive the required continuing education is essential to having a board that is informed of educational laws, requirements, and best practices in governance. Team building is critical in ensuring the board and the superintendent work together effectively in addressing district issues.

Many school boards like the Clear Creek ISD (CCISD) board place an emphasis on training opportunities to improve their effectiveness as board

members. CCISD board members all exceed the minimum number of state-required training hours.

The ZCISD superintendent should develop a process to monitor board training and to ensure all board members meet continuing education requirements. The superintendent should identify a staff member to maintain a record of the board training. The superintendent should provide the board with information on continuing education opportunities, especially in the areas in which board members are lacking the required training hours.

BOARD BUDGET TRAINING (REC. 26)
ZCISD board members have not received adequate training on the budget process and have not taken an active role in budget development and monitoring. Even though most board members have met or exceeded the required Tier 3 training hours, they have not received adequate training on the basics of school funding or on the board's role in budget development and monitoring of district finances. Board members have relied upon the expertise of the

EXHIBIT 2–4
ZCISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND REQUIRED TRAINING

NAME	DISTRICT ORIENTATION (WITHIN FIRST 60 DAYS)	TEXAS EDUCATION CODE ORIENTATION	TEAM BUILDING (ANNUAL)	CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS 2003–04
Veronica P. Gonzalez	X	X	X	16.75
Dora S. Martinez	X	X	X	16.75
Zachary O. Garza	X	X	X	4
Armando B. Paredes	X	X	X	11.25
Jose M. Ramirez, III	X	X	X	12.25
Ricardo X. Ramirez	X	X	X	0
Anselmo Trevino*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

SOURCE: *Texas Association of School Boards Board Member Continuing Education Report, December 6, 2004.*
NOTE: *"X" indicates did not meet training requirement. *Appointed December 2004.*

Business Services director and the recommendations of the superintendent in budget development, implementation, and monitoring.

District administrators present an overview of budget information to the board that contains limited details. Board members said they need more budget workshops to gain a better understanding of the budget process. The board did not express a clear understanding that district level planning should precede budget resource allocation.

The board members' limited understanding of their role in the budget process has contributed to the budget development process being centered in the Business office. The Business Services director has been solely responsible for developing the budget, and the budget has not been based on district priorities as set in the available plans. District administrators are often not informed about their budgets and have limited knowledge of the financial resources available to them.

Effective boards receive training regarding their role in the budget process and are involved in budget development and review. These boards adopt budget calendars that outline activities needed to ensure that necessary information is presented in a timely manner so that appropriate budget decisions can be made.

The National School Boards Association's Key Work of School Boards presents a framework designed to help school boards raise student achievement by setting clear standards, aligning resources, raising expectations, and engaging community support. It identifies the process of aligning resources as a major board responsibility and presents steps boards should take in achieving this goal. The first step is board self-assessment, which requires that board members rank themselves on elements such as the following:

- We make staffing and resource allocation decisions based on our student achievement priorities.

- We view the budget as a vehicle for accomplishing our priorities rather than simply as our spending plan.

- We leverage resources within our budget to achieve our priorities.

- We add or delete programs and initiatives based on analysis of data and district priorities.

- We have no "sacred cows" within our budget.

The guidebook also lists questions that the board, superintendent, and staff should ask themselves regarding key work areas. Examples of questions the board should ask in the area of resource allocation are listed below:

- Are financial resources aligned with student achievement plans and priorities?

- Do operational plans and budgets provide the necessary programs and resources to promote student achievement?

- Are programs evaluated for effectiveness and are ineffective programs discontinued?

- Are funding decisions data-driven and research based?

- Do we have a good understanding of budget reports, procedures, regulations, and opportunities for flexibility?

Effective boards participate fully in budget development and implementation. They understand that aligning resources appropriately can result in improved student performance. They allocate resources to support the work of principals, teachers, and students.

Dripping Springs ISD (DSISD) has a comprehensive budget process. The board meets regularly on the budget starting in October. DSISD adopts district goals in December, approves the district and school improvement plans in April, and adopts the budget in June. The board holds several budget workshops during the year and ensures that district plans are tied to the budget.

ZCISD should require board member training on the budget process and implement a process for board participation in budget development. The board should participate in workshops with a facilitator to increase its awareness of the board's role in budgeting and improve its skills in aligning resources to improve student performance. The board, superintendent, and business officials should attend training on the budget process and adopt a budget calendar that incorporates the required reporting and planning activities as well as staff input for the board to make informed budgetary decisions.

Board training is available through TASB. A TASB facilitator would cost $750 for a half-day of services. A series of three half-day sessions of training would cost a total of $2,250. Training should focus on increasing the board's understanding of their role in budgeting and aligning budget resources with district priorities.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (REC. 27)

ZCISD staff is not adequately organized to meet the district's educational, financial, and operational needs. The organizational structure has many related

functions distributed across the organization, resulting in inefficiency in accomplishing tasks. **Exhibit 2–5** shows ZCISD's organizational structure.

The superintendent, as chief executive officer, reports to the board. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, the administrative assistant for Construction (part-time position), and the director for Personnel and Compliance all report directly to the superintendent. As of January 3, 2005, the district hired an administrative assistant for Business Services who also reports to the superintendent. According to the school principals, they report directly to the superintendent although the organizational chart shows them reporting to the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The superintendent said the principals report to him regarding administrative business and to the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for curriculum-related matters.

The administrative assistant for Construction was

formerly the administrative assistant for Instruction, including Special Programs, Personnel, and Elections. In 2003, a month after his retirement, the administrative assistant was rehired to fill the newly formed position of administrative assistant for Construction. The position is part-time and provides oversight of construction projects, board agendas and packets, and policy development and updating; however, the position does not have a formal job description. The position also oversees the collection of PEIMS data.

The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment also lacks a formal job description. The current administrative assistant, who has held this job since January 2004, said the position's main responsibility is to assist the superintendent in implementing the accountability plan for school improvement. This administrative assistant also stated that it has been difficult to fully address this responsibility due to the large number of responsibilities assigned to this position (for example, responsibility for the bilingual and reading

EXHIBIT 2–5
ZCISD CURRENT ORGANIZATION
2004–05
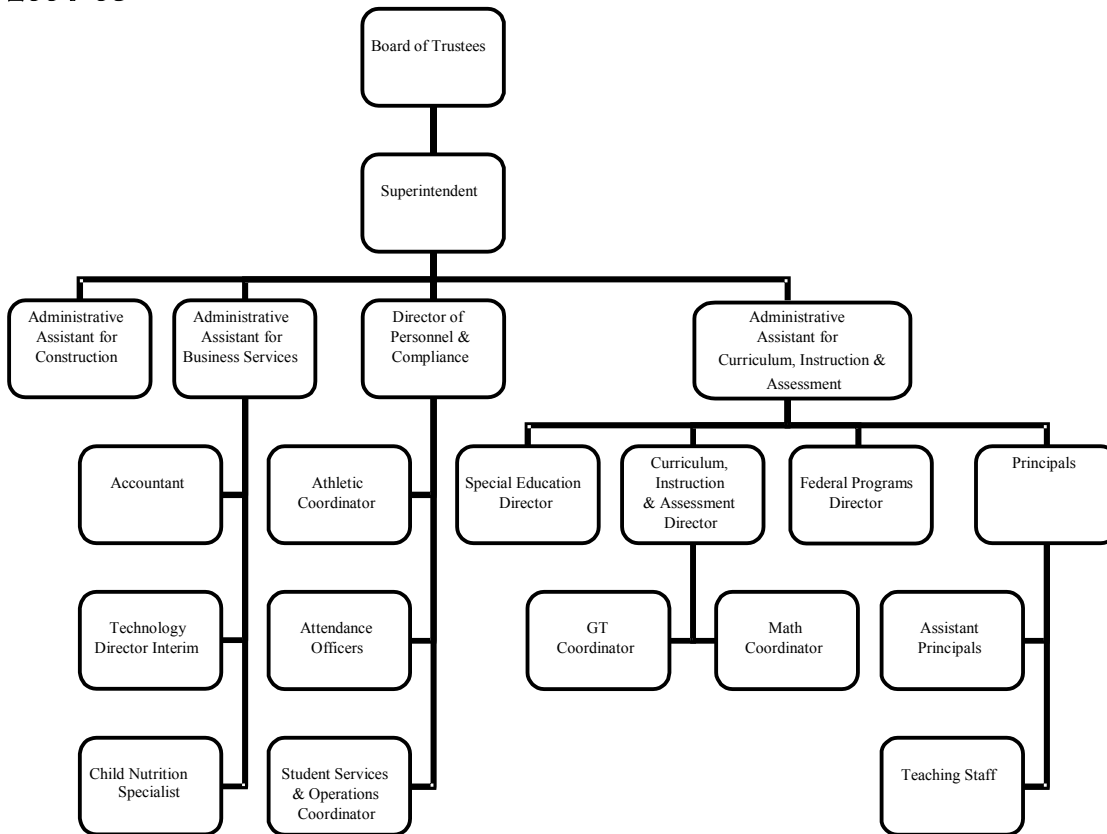
SOURCE: *ZCISD Superintendent's Office and Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Department, December 2004.*
NOTE: *Administrative assistant for Business Services replaced the Business Services director in January 2005.*

programs). The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment maintained these responsibilities when promoted from a previous position.

The director of Personnel and Compliance also has duties beyond the general scope of personnel functions. This position conducts research and develops action plans in response to compliance issues or superintendent requests; serves as the chair of the District Improvement Planning Committee; and supervises the Athletic and Student Services and Operations coordinators, attendance officers, and the energy manager. The Payroll office performs related personnel functions such as compensation, leave administration, and benefit administration.

The Student Services and Operations coordinator, who reports to the director of Personnel and Compliance, oversees transportation, custodial services, security, and state assessment. This coordinator reported that during the two months when assessment responsibilities are exceptionally heavy, it is difficult to effectively perform the responsibilities as Student Services and Operations coordinator.

The Business Services director left the district in January 2005, and the new administrative assistant for Business Services assumed the position's duties. This administrative assistant is responsible for technology, child nutrition, accounting, and payroll. The Business office is also responsible for budget development, purchasing, compensation, and benefit administration. During interviews in December 2004, the Business Services director stated that it was difficult to adequately perform all duties due to the scope and large amount of responsibilities. The position of director of Technology under the Business Services director has been vacant for two years, negatively affecting the work production there.

The current organizational structure hinders accountability and efficiency. Some positions are overloaded and cannot perform all of the assigned responsibilities within their respective areas. For example, the director of Personnel and Compliance has been unable to adequately address all responsibilities in records management and oversight of the employee evaluation process. Also, the director has not been able to fulfill responsibilities as chair of the District Improvement Committee due to other assignments. Additionally, assigning personnel functions such as compensation and benefits to the Business office results in lack of accountability and efficiency in providing services to employees. Employees suffer when left without adequate information to make informed decisions regarding areas such as insurance and cafeteria plan selections.

School districts with effective organizational structures are characterized by functional grouping of tasks. They organize based on appropriate functional lines instead of on an employee's specific skills or on the number of tasks assigned per position. Peer districts generally do not have more than two assistant superintendents reporting to the superintendent. ZCISD has 2.5 administrative assistants that function as assistant superintendents.

The district should restructure central administration along functional lines and eliminate the position of administrative assistant for Construction. The proposed structure moves the present Student Services and Operations coordinator under the administrative assistant for Business Services. Both administrative assistant positions should be renamed as assistant superintendents, which better reflects the functions performed. Testing responsibilities should be moved under the administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The director of Technology position should be filled, and the department should report directly to the superintendent. The director of Personnel and Compliance position should be renamed the director of Personnel and Student Services, with the job description being revised to reflect at least 75 percent of this director's time being spent on personnel-related matters. The director of Athletics should be moved under the curriculum area. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should report to the administrative assistant for Business Services, and the position should be renamed the director of Operations. The district should reassign the administrative assistant for Construction's responsibilities and construction oversight to the director of Operations. Attendance officers and nurses should report to the director of Personnel and Student Services.

Exhibit 2–6 shows the proposed organizational structure for ZCISD. Chapter 1, Educational Service Delivery, and Chapter 3, Financial Management provide additional information on the recommended organizational changes and their financial impact within each of those respective areas.

Eliminating the part-time position of administrative assistant for Construction at a salary of $49,280 ($44,000 + $5,280 in benefits) will reduce costs for the district.

WRITTEN OPERATING PROCEDURES (REC. 28)

ZCISD does not have written administrative guidelines or procedural manuals for conducting district operations. The Business office; Maintenance, Transportation, and Food Service departments; and district administration all lack

EXHIBIT 2–6
PROPOSED ZCISD ORGANIZATION

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                              Board of
                              Trustees
                                 |
                            Superintendent
                                 |
   ┌─────────────┬─────────────┬─────────────┬─────────────┐
 Assistant      Director of   Director of   Assistant     Principals
 Superintendent Personnel     Technology    Superintendent
 for Curriculum, &                           for
 Instruction &  Student                      Business &
 Assessment     Services                     Operations
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Director of Secondary Curriculum	Attendance Officers	Technology Specialist	Coordinator of Business	Assistant Principals
Director of Elementary Curriculum	Nurses	PEIMS	Director of Operations	Teaching Staff
Director of Special Services				
Director of Compensatory Education				
DAEP Coordinator				

SOURCE: Texas Public School Consulting, Inc., January 2005.
NOTE: Title changes for some positions are discussed in other chapters of the report.

formalized procedures. Departments rely on previously established practices and memory to perform district operations instead of on information normally found in manuals.

Procedural manuals detail day-to-day processes and ensure consistency in operations. They define employee authority and responsibility and may indicate who can authorize action or give approval.

Administrative regulations and/or operational manuals stipulate how board policy is to be implemented and serve as reference guides for all employees. Use of procedural manuals reduces time spent on determining "the next steps" and can guide departmental staff in resolving problems. Additionally, effective procedure manuals provide the basis for training new employees and preserve valuable information that can be lost when staff members leave the departments.

Lack of written administrative procedures can result in inconsistent interpretation and application of policies and mandates. Tasks that are critical to the operation of a school district may be missed due to lack of a documented procedure or a detailed workflow process. Lack of procedures and the resulting inconsistencies or mistakes expose the district to possible grievances and/or litigation, particularly in areas such as personnel, student discipline, special education, and purchasing.

ZCISD does not have written procedures for other central administrative functions, including records management. The records management for district, employee, and student records is inadequate in that the documents are not properly safeguarded. For example, important student records such as transcripts are stored in cardboard boxes in a storage area that is not fireproof, and there are no provisions for microfilming inactive personnel records. Also, an error in PEIMS reporting due to a lack of procedures resulted in a district rating of Unacceptable. A lack of written administrative procedures for implementing board policies allows for individual discretion and subjective interpretation in the performance of job functions.

Effective school districts recognize the importance of developing a comprehensive written set of procedures for conducting district operations. These districts disseminate procedures, provide training as needed, and ensure that procedures are updated annually. Lyford ISD has a comprehensive operating procedures manual covering 70 areas of district operations, including budget development, fixed asset inventory, and maintenance requests. The manual serves as a training tool for new employees and is updated regularly.

ZCISD should develop a comprehensive set of operations manuals for conducting district operations. The superintendent should delegate responsibility to central office administrators to form teams to review existing policies and procedures in their areas of responsibility and develop manuals. Once manuals are written and reviewed, each department head should develop and implement training for all staff members. Department heads

should also be responsible for disseminating and updating manuals annually. If possible, the district should post the procedures manuals online to increase accessibility.

STRATEGIC PLANNING (REC. 29)

ZCISD lacks a framework for long-range strategic planning to prioritize needs and establish a clear direction for the district. The district's planning efforts are limited to the annual development of campus improvement plans (CIPs) and the district improvement plan (DIP) as mandated by state law. The CIPs and DIP are primarily instructional in focus. Long-range strategic plans are comprehensive and designed to address all areas of school operations.

The current planning model used in ZCISD is the one mandated by the Texas Education Code (TEC) §11.251–253 and set forth in district policies BQ (Legal), BQ (Local), BQA (Legal), and BQA (Local). Campus committees are involved in developing campus improvement plans (CIPs), and the District Planning and Decision Making Committee (DPDMC) is involved in developing the district improvement plan (DIP). The district has written bylaws and operating agreements for DPDMC meetings, as required by BQ (Legal). These plans are primarily focused on instruction and only minimally address other district priorities such as district technology and facilities.

Many districts use a comprehensive long-range planning process because it allows them to prioritize their needs for resource allocation and provide a clear direction for the district. Given budget deficits, long-range planning helps districts figure out how to do more with less through better integration of activities, finances, human resources, and information technology. Strategic planning generally helps with improved decision-making and enhanced organizational effectiveness.

Districts that have experienced success with strategic planning include Elgin, Bastrop, and Fort Bend ISDs. Fort Bend ISD uses a strategic planning process that includes extensive community participation in goal setting, in-depth analysis of community input, critical action planning, and allocation of budget resources. Through a six-step strategic planning process, the district develops a strategic plan containing a mission, a vision, belief statements, goals and objectives supported by detailed action plans, timelines, and assignment of responsibilities to specific individuals. The district budget is based on priorities established in the multi-year district strategic plan. A manageable number of objectives and specific implementation strategies are critical to the success of the plan. The superintendent

and his cabinet present quarterly progress reports on the plan's implementation to the board and other district stakeholders. **Exhibit 2–7** shows the six-step strategic planning process used by Fort Bend ISD.

ZCISD should develop an integrated long-range strategic plan. The plan should encompass all of the district's planning documents, including the district improvement plan and the technology and facility plans. The plan would also serve to ensure that all plans are aligned and focused on meeting the district's overall goals. The superintendent should select and present a strategic planning model to the board for approval. The board, superintendent, and key administrators should select members for a district planning committee, including business representatives and community members, who would be responsible for developing a long-range strategic plan.

**EXHIBIT 2–7
FORT BEND ISD SIX-STEP
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**
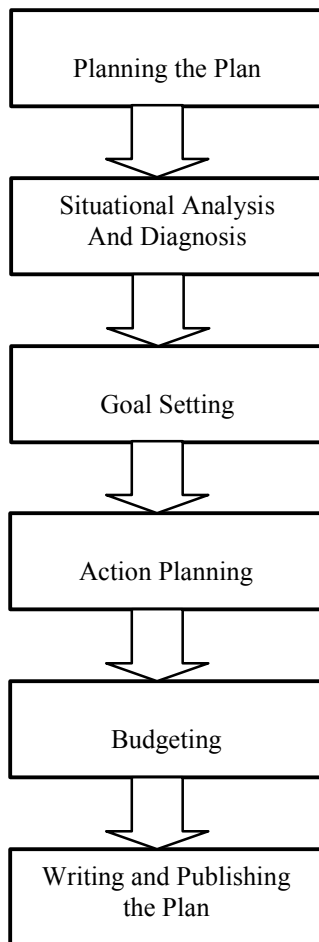
SOURCE: Fort Bend ISD Strategic Plan, 2000–05.

Districts often use a facilitator to assist in development of a long-range strategic plan. Elgin ISD used a TASB facilitator when they began their formal strategic planning process. TASB charges $750 per half-day session. The district would need approximately 6 sessions, resulting in a total cost of $4,500 ($750 x 6 = $4,500).

**DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN
(REC. 30)**
ZCISD's process for developing the district improvement plan (DIP) is not adequately serving the district's needs because it is not developed in a timely manner, lacks measurable objectives, and is not tied to the budget.

The board approved the District Improvement Plan for 2003–04 on December 8, 2003 and the 2004–05 plan on January 24, 2005. The director of Personnel and Compliance was appointed as chairperson of the DPDMC on September 24, 2003. The DPDMC held five meetings between September 24, 2003 and November 20, 2003 to develop the 2003–04 plan that was presented to the board for approval in December 2003. During the meetings, the committee reviewed the plan and revised goals and objectives.

The DPDMC continued to meet in 2004 to review ongoing progress on the plan and to review student performance based on standardized test data. The committee presented a revised plan for 2004–05 for board approval at the October 2004 board meeting. The board tabled approval on the plan for further study and did not approve the plan until January 24, 2005.

Because the district improvement plan has not been adopted in a timely manner, it has been difficult to integrate the CIPs with the DIP. District administrators state that campuses have used the 2004–05 DIP as a basis for developing the CIPs and that district level staff are working on implementing the 2004–05 DIP. However, a review of the activities planned for meeting DIP objectives indicates that some of the activities have not been implemented in a timely fashion. For example, objectives and activities for Goal 2: "All schools will operate with a fiscally sound budget," have not been implemented in a timely manner.

The 2004–05 DIP includes the following goals:

▪ Student Performance – All students will demonstrate exemplary performance supported with a research-based curriculum and instructional program enhanced by technology integration.

▪ Finance – All schools will operate with a fiscally sound budget.

- Human Resources and Learning Environment –

  o Qualified and highly effective professional personnel will be recruited, trained, and retained to ensure high student achievement and professional development, as well as efficient management and operation.

  o Highly qualified instructional assistants with two years of college and/or having passed a state-mandated test will be recruited and employed as the need arises.

  o Support staff, including bus drivers, with the appropriate license and/or certification will be recruited, employed, and trained to meet the needs of the students.

- School Partnerships – Parent, business, and community representatives will be full partners with the schools in the education of their children.

Many of the DIP goals and objectives are subjective and not measurable. For example, the plan fails to define terms like "sound," adequate," and "highly qualified." In order to evaluate progress, goals and objectives must be specific and measurable. Also, the activities designed to meet the plan's objectives do not reflect meaningful analysis and are often statements of ongoing or required tasks such as:

- State compensatory funds will be designed to improve the academic achievement of at-risk students; and

- Bilingual/ESL funds will be designated to improve the academic achievement of bilingual and ESL students.

The DIP also fails to identify resources needed to accomplish objectives. Furthermore, much of the plan is not tied to a formal evaluation mechanism or to data. A written evaluation of DIP accomplishments and progress toward meeting the goals and objectives is not presented to the board. Several board members said that they viewed their role in district planning as simply approval of the plans when presented. The board has not been actively involved in setting the direction and focus of the planning process and has not used planning goals and objectives to determine budget allocations.

An additional problem is that since administrators in ZCISD have not been involved in the budgeting process and have only limited information regarding their own budgets, it has been difficult for them to identify resources in the CIPs and the DIP.

In addition, the membership list of the DPDMC submitted to the review team in December 2004

showed that the committee did not have the required membership from the community or parents. Policy BQA (Local) states that the committee shall be comprised of campus-based professional staff, district-level professional staff, parents, and business and community representatives. The policy further states that the committee shall include at least two parents of students currently enrolled within the district, two community members, and two business representatives. The membership listing submitted by the district did not list any parents or community members.

The district should develop a district improvement plan (DIP) that is timely, includes measurable objectives, and is tied to the budget. The superintendent and the chairperson of the District Planning and Decision Making Committee should modify the existing process for developing the district improvement plan to ensure it meets all state and federal requirements regarding planning and implementation of the DIP. The document should be developed so that the schools can also use it to develop their campus improvement plans.

STAFFING STANDARDS AND TEACHER SALARIES (REC. 31)

ZCISD does not employ local or industry standards for staffing and is overstaffed in several employee groups, which has caused financial constraints and difficulty in offering competitive teacher salaries.

ZCISD has more staff per student in several employee groups when compared to peer districts, the region, and the state. **Exhibit 2–8** compares ZCISD to its peers, the region, and the state in numbers of students per full-time-equivalent staff (FTEs) in total personnel, teachers, support staff, administrators, total professionals, educational aides, and auxiliary staff. Compared to its peers, the region, and the state, ZCISD has more staff per student in the following areas: total personnel, support staff, educational aides, and auxiliary staff. At 12.9 students per teacher, it has the next to the lowest student-to-teacher ratio compared to its peers and is below the region and state averages at 15.7 and 15.0, respectively. These figures were computed by dividing the total enrollment for each district, region, and state by the number of employees in each category. (The lower the figure for a category, the higher the number of FTEs in that category.)

ZCISD has one educational aide for every 43.3 students. **Exhibit 2–8** shows that each peer district has fewer education aides per student than ZCISD. The average of the three peer districts (Hidalgo ISD, Valley View ISD, and Point Isabel ISD) most like

EXHIBIT 2–8
STUDENTS PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STAFF (FTES)
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, REGION, AND STATE
2003–04

STAFF	ZAPATA COUNTY	GROESBECK	HIDALGO	VALLEY VIEW	POINT ISABEL	REGION	STATE
Total Personnel	**5.6**	6.3	6.6	6.7	8.1	6.8	7.5
Teachers	**12.9**	12.8	14.1	15.6	15.6	15.7	15.0
Support Staff	**73.6**	119.5	81.3	112.0	97.1	85.7	91.1
Administrators	**197.7**	157.3	229.9	163.1	149.4	237.7	217.6
Total Professionals	**10.4**	10.8	11.4	12.7	12.4	12.6	12.1
Educational Aides	**43.3**	137.9	51.6	50.9	91.8	55.4	73.7
Auxiliary Staff	**16.7**	17.1	22.6	19.5	32.0	20.5	27.1

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04.

ZCISD in student composition is one educational aide per 64.76 students. Based on this comparison, ZCISD is overstaffed by 21.46 educational aides.

The district also has more teachers per student than most of the peer districts, region, and state averages. According to PEIMS 2003–04 data, ZCISD had an enrollment of 3,143 students and 245.4 teachers, resulting in a ratio of 12.9 students per teacher. This ratio is lower than the region, state, and all peer districts with the exception of Groesbeck ISD, as shown in **Exhibit 2–8.**

The superintendent said the district is overstaffed and referred to district staffing as "bottom heavy." Several board members also said that overstaffing in the district needed to be addressed.

The superintendent and his administrative staff have begun to address the problem of overstaffing by reviewing every position as it becomes vacant to determine if the position is necessary. Additionally, 50 percent of the postings reviewed were posted internally, allowing people already employed in the district to move into other positions.

Exhibit 2–9 compares class size information in ZCISD, peer districts, and the state. The exhibit shows that in many of the grades or subjects compared, ZCISD has the lowest or second lowest class size numbers when compared to peer districts and the state. The lack of staffing standards has contributed to small class sizes.

A report compiled by the Personnel department shows the number of employees who resigned or retired and the number of employees hired from May 2, 2002 through December 2, 2004. **Exhibit 2–10** shows that during this period, the district increased the total number of employees by 37 staff, primarily teachers. Every major employee group except teachers, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers decreased in numbers based on attrition. The number of teachers increased by 44 positions.

Exhibit 2–11 shows that during this time, the district enrollment grew by almost 300 students. Applying the district's student-to-teacher ratio of 12.9:1 would have resulted in hiring 23 additional teachers instead of the 44 new teachers hired, an overstaffing of 21 teachers.

EXHIBIT 2–9
CLASS SIZE AVERAGE BY GRADE OR SUBJECT
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, AND STATE
2003–04

GRADES	ZAPATA COUNTY	VALLEY VIEW	HIDALGO	POINT ISABEL	GROESBECK	STATE
Kinder	13.3	22.0	–	21.4	18.5	19.1
1	19.4	17.6	22.0	19.6	19.6	18.6
2	18.8	17.9	18.0	18.7	19.1	18.8
3	16.4	18.4	20.0	21.2	5.0	18.8
4	19.0	17.9	18.6	21.3	9.0	19.4
5	19.3	30.6	20.8	21.5	8.5	22.2
6	18.8	22.6	16.9	20.0	17.8	22.4
Mixed Grades	30.0	–	–	–	–	25.1
Eng/Lang. Arts	17.0	18.1	19.6	19.3	17.2	20.4
Foreign Lang.	18.5	23.1	31.5	19.6	19.3	21.5
Mathematics	17.5	17.6	18.4	18.2	15.0	20.5
Science	17.9	21.3	21.3	20.4	15.2	21.6
Social Studies	19.5	23.1	21.4	19.3	19.4	22.6

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04.

EXHIBIT 2–10
ZCISD STAFF RETIRED/RESIGNED COMPARED TO STAFF HIRED
MAY 2002 THROUGH DECEMBER 2004

EMPLOYEE TYPE	NUMBER RESIGNED/RETIRED	NUMBER HIRED	DIFFERENCE
Teacher	76	120	44
Other (Professionals)	7	6	(1)
Secretary	4	0	(4)
Educational Aides	13	10	(3)
Maintenance	1	0	(1)
Security	4	1	(3)
Bus Driver	6	11	5
Bus Aide	3	0	(3)
Cafeteria	5	10	5
Other (Classified)	4	2	(2)
Totals	**123**	**160**	**37**

SOURCE: ZCISD Personnel Department, 2004.

EXHIBIT 2–11
STUDENT ENROLLMENT FOR ZCISD
2002–03, 2003–04, AND CURRENT

CAMPUS	2002–03	2003–04	ACTUAL (NOVEMBER 2004)	DIFFERENCE
Benavides Elementary	79	85	117	38
Zapata North Early Childhood Center	398	445	608	210
Zapata Central Elementary	518	503	489	(29)
Zapata South Elementary	600	592	632	32
Zapata Middle School	678	703	745	67
Zapata High School	836	815	811	(25)
Totals	**3,109**	**3,143**	**3,402**	**293**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 2002–03, 2003–04; ZCISD Administrative Office.
NOTE: Difference column reflects difference between 2002-03 PEIMS data and actual enrollment.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has developed staffing standards for principals, assistant principals, librarians, and support staff based on school enrollment numbers. SACS accredits more than 12,000 public and private educational institutions from pre-kindergarten through university levels in the southeastern United States and Latin America.

Exhibit 2–12 presents SACS accreditation standards for principal, assistant principal, and support staff positions in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Compared to SACS standards, the district is overstaffed by 1.5 assistant principal positions **(Exhibit 2–13)**.

Exhibit 2–14 compares ZCISD's staffing of support staff to SACS standards. When compared to SACS standards, the district is overstaffed by three secretary/clerks.

The high number of employees, particularly in the teacher and educational aide groups, has not resulted in improved student performance. ZCISD students continue to score lower than students in peer districts, the region, and the state in the majority of subjects and grades tested on the TAKS, as described in chapter one of this report. Overstaffing along with

other factors has caused financial constraints in a district that should have funds to offer more competitive salaries, advanced technology, and a more abundant supply of instructional materials. In surveys and focus groups, teachers, administrators, and community leaders all expressed serious concerns over low teacher salaries and limited technology in the schools. The district is addressing the overstaffing issue by closely monitoring the hiring of new employees and attrition; however, the low district turnover rate in most employee groups does not make it feasible to use a workforce reduction plan based solely on attrition.

Efficiently staffed districts use local and industry standards to determine staffing allocations across schools and departments. Standards help districts make staffing decisions based on student enrollment and other consistent factors, such as facility square footage. Standards also help district officials equitably distribute staff and reduce the time spent in reviewing rationales presented by principals and department heads for additional staff. As student enrollment changes and/or new facilities are added, districts can allocate staff based on a standards that are applied districtwide. To develop local staffing standards, some school districts conduct staffing

EXHIBIT 2–12
SACS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR CAMPUS PRINCIPALS,
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS, AND SUPPORT STAFF

ENROLLMENT	PRINCIPAL	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	SUPPORT STAFF FOR ADMINISTRATION, LIBRARY MEDIA, OR TECHNOLOGY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAFFING STANDARDS			
1–249	1	0.0	0.5
250–499	1	0.0	1.0
500–749	1	0.5	1.5
750–999	1	1.0	2.5
1000–1249	1	1.5	3.0
1250–1499	1	2.0	3.0
1500–up	1	2.0*	3.0
MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFFING STANDARDS			
1–249	1	0.0	1.0
250–499	1	0.5	2.5
500–749	1	1.0	4.0
750–999	1	1.5	4.5
1,000–1,249	1	2.0	5.0
1,250–1,499	1	2.5	5.5
1,500–up	1	2.5*	6.0
HIGH SCHOOL STAFFING STANDARDS			
1–249	1	0.0	1.0
250–499	1	0.5	2.5
500–749	1	1.0	4.0
750–999	1	1.5	4.5
1,000–1,249	1	2.0	5.0
1,250–1,499	1	2.5	5.5
1,500–up	1	2.5*	6.0

SOURCE: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; Elementary, Middle and High School Accreditation Standards, 2005.
* One additional position may be added where needed for each additional 250 students over 1,500.

EXHIBIT 2–13
CAMPUS ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
ZCISD VERSUS SACS STANDARDS
2003–04

CAMPUS	ENROLLMENT	ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS		
		ZCISD	SACS	OVER (UNDER)
Benavidez Elementary	85	0	0	0
Zapata Central Elementary	503	1	0.5	0.5
Zapata North Early Childhood Center	445	0	0	0
Zapata South Elementary	592	1	0.5	0.5
Zapata Middle School	703	1	1	0
Zapata High School	815	2*	1.5	0.5
Totals	**3,143**	**5**	**3.5**	**1.5**

SOURCE: ZCISD Staffing Counts, Business Office, SACS.
* Count includes Dean of Discipline.

EXHIBIT 2–14
CAMPUS SUPPORT STAFF
ZCISD VERSUS SACS STANDARDS
2003–04

CAMPUS	ENROLLMENT	SECRETARY/CLERKS		
		ZCISD	SACS	OVER (UNDER)
Benavidez Elementary	85	1	.5	0.5
Zapata Central Elementary	503	3	1.5	1.5
Zapata North Early Childhood Center	445	2	1	1
Zapata South Elementary	592	2	1.5	0.5
Zapata Middle School	703	2	4.0	(2.0)
Zapata High School	815	6	4.5	1.5
Totals	**3,143**	**16**	**13.0**	**3.0**

SOURCE: ZCISD Staffing Counts, Business Office, SACS.

efficiency studies to analyze staffing across campuses and departments and to compare current staffing to state and/or national standards. TASB conducts such staffing efficiency review services for districts.

Eagle Pass ISD has developed and effectively uses staffing formulas based on enrollment and other industry standards. The executive director of Human Resources reviews projected enrollments at the beginning of the budget cycle to develop staffing recommendations for each school using the approved standards. The superintendent and senior staff review the student-to-staff ratios and resulting staff allocations and submit them to the board for approval. The board approves the allocations as a basis for budget development.

Additionally, ZCISD does not currently offer competitive salaries for teachers, making it difficult to attract highly qualified teaching staff. The significant cost savings achieved through the development and implementation of staffing standards and the resulting staff reductions would allow the district to raise teacher salaries.

According to the PEIMS report for 2003–04, the district's teaching salaries are lower than peer districts and the state for teachers with one to five years of

experience, 11 to 20 years of experience, and more than 20 years of experience. Although information contained in the PEIMS reports shows ZCISD beginning teachers in 2003–04 had a salary of $30,145, the district's minimum salary schedule for that year was $28,740 for teachers with a bachelor's degree and $29,740 for teachers with a master's degree. **Exhibit 2–15** compares teacher salaries for 2003–04 with those of peer districts and the state.

A compensation study conducted for the district by TASB in December 2003 indicated that salaries for teachers in ZCISD were low when compared to teacher salaries in surrounding districts. **Exhibit 2–16** presents salary comparisons for ZCISD teachers and those of surrounding districts at several levels of experience. It also shows average salaries for all districts across all levels of experience and computes the median salary at each level of experience for all districts. When average salaries are compared, ZCISD salaries rank ninth out of ten districts compared. When median salaries are compared, ZCISD salaries are below the group median for all levels of experience except the year ten salary. The greatest difference is in salaries for beginning teachers, which is $3,260 lower than the median salaries for surrounding districts.

EXHIBIT 2–15
AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY BY EXPERIENCE
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, AND STATE
2003–04

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	ZAPATA COUNTY	GROESBECK	HIDALGO	POINT ISABEL	VALLEY VIEW	STATE
Beginning	$30,145	$30,408	$27,432	$34,392	$28,927	$32,744
1–5 years	$30,961	$31,592	$33,872	$31,855	$33,181	$34,774
6–10 years	$37,331	$37,605	$39,464	$37,229	$38,062	$37,432
11–20 years	$42,812	$44,433	$45,517	$43,211	$45,909	$42,989
20 + years	$44,352	$48,631	$50,669	$50,173	$51,960	$50,553

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2003–04.

EXHIBIT 2–16
TEACHER SALARY COMPARISONS
ZCISD AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS
2003–04

DISTRICT	0–YEAR SALARY	5–YEAR SALARY	10–YEAR SALARY	15–YEAR SALARY	20–YEAR SALARY	AVERAGE SALARY
Laredo ISD	$34,000	$35,500	$38,200	$42,090	$46,450	$41,825
United ISD	$34,000	$35,500	$37,950	$41,500	$45,710	$38,793
La Joya ISD	$33,500	$36,238	$40,716	$45,844	$50,115	$40,716
Webb CISD	$32,452	$36,806	$42,567	$46,909	$50,184	$50,989
Rio Grande City CISD	$32,000	$34,239	$38,222	$43,432	$47,042	$39,268
Roma ISD	$31,500	$33,620	$38,420	$43,550	$46,530	$37,495
La Feria ISD	$30,652	$33,644	$38,085	$43,125	$46,985	$41,971
Zapata County ISD	**$28,740**	**$32,880**	**$38,230**	**$42,260**	**$45,300**	**$37,781**
Jim Hogg CISD	$28,140	$32,280	$37,630	$41,660	$45,500	$38,604
Carrizo Springs ISD	$26,896	$31,139	$36,623	$40,754	$44,895	$37,797
Median Salary	$32,000	$34,239	$38,200	$43,125	$46,450	$39,268
Comparison to Median	**($3,260)**	**($1,359)**	**$30**	**($865)**	**($1,150)**	**($1,487)**

SOURCE: Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Salary Study, Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools, 2003–04.

Many school districts have responded to the need to attract teachers in critical need areas such as bilingual, special education, and secondary math and science by offering stipends to teachers holding certificates in those areas. According to the ZCISD superintendent, the ZCISD board has not approved stipends for critical need areas. **Exhibit 2–17** presents stipend comparisons for ZCISD and surrounding districts. This data indicates that four out of the nine districts listed do offer stipends in critical need areas. In addition, five districts offer signing bonuses for all newly hired teachers or those in hard-to-fill positions. These stipends broaden the gap between salaries approved by these districts and ZCISD.

The TASB study made several recommendations regarding teacher pay, including the following:

- providing a $1,400 pay increase for all 10-month salary teachers;

- increasing the starting salary to $30,000 for 2004–05;

- continuing the $1,000 Master's degree incentive; and

- providing equity increases in years one through four when below schedule.

Additionally, TASB presented a two-year Model of Salary Schedule Development, which included a starting teacher salary of $30,000 and an additional $1,444 increase for all teachers in 2005–06.

The district implemented the recommendation for a $1,400 increase for all teachers but not the recommendation for an equity increase for years one

through four. Even with the increase, teachers' salaries in ZCISD continue to be significantly less than the average salaries of teachers in surrounding areas, especially for beginning teachers and those with one to five years of experience.

Lack of competitive salaries has made it difficult to hire highly qualified staff. According to the Personnel secretary, this year the Personnel department only received about 40–50 applications; this number is reportedly a decrease from previous years. Although most positions can be filled if vacated by early summer, the pool of applicants is limited.

Quality teachers are the most important factor in achieving excellence in schools. Effective school districts make hiring quality teachers their highest priority. An important factor in succeeding with this priority is the ability to offer competitive salaries. Salary is an issue that may attract or discourage candidates from pursuing employment in specific districts, and districts not offering competitive starting salaries will have a harder time filling positions.

Although the turnover rate in ZCISD is low and the number of annual vacancies has not been large, it is critical that the district is able to offer salaries that will attract and retain quality teachers. Effective school districts often conduct compensation studies to determine the actual salaries required to become competitive in the market. Difficult decisions regarding budget cuts in other areas are often necessary in achieving results.

ZCISD has begun the process of reducing staff by leaving some positions open when teachers resign or

EXHIBIT 2–17
TEACHER STIPEND AND INCENTIVES MARKET COMPARISONS
ZCISD AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS
2003–04

DISTRICT	MASTER'S DEGREE	SPECIAL EDUCATION	FOREIGN LANGUAGE	BILINGUAL	ESL	MATH	SCIENCE	SIGNING BONUS
Carrizo Springs CISD		$1,000		$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	
Jim Hogg CISD								
La Feria ISD	$1,000			$1,000				
La Joya ISD	$1,000							$800–$1,500
Laredo ISD	$1,000	$4,000			$800	$1,800	$2,300	$750–$3,000
Rio Grande City CISD	$500	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000		$1,500
Roma ISD	$2,000							$1,500
United ISD	$1,000	$3,600		$1,000	$400	$1,500	$1,500	$1,000
Webb CISD	$1,073							
Zapata County ISD	$1,000							

SOURCE: TASB Salary Study, Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools, 2003–04.

retire, reassigning teachers to fill vacancies, and eliminating other positions.

The district should conduct a staffing efficiency study, develop and apply staffing formulas to reduce staff, and revise the salary schedule to increase teacher salaries, making them more competitive. ZCISD should conduct a staffing efficiency study and develop staffing formulas based on enrollment data and other industry accepted standards. The director of Personnel should develop staffing allocation numbers based on these standards. A workforce reduction plan should be developed and phased in if necessary to address overstaffing. This plan should include procedures dealing with displaced employees and should be widely communicated to employees. The district's attorney should review the plan to ensure all appropriate legal issues are addressed.

ZCISD is overstaffed in several employee categories including teachers, educational aides, assistant principals, and clerks/secretaries. A staffing efficiency study will cost the district approximately $10,000 plus travel expenses for five days at $350 per day, equaling $1,750 (5 x $350 = $1,750), for a total of $11,750. The district could save $1,413,999 annually based on reducing 1.5 assistant principals, 3 secretary/clerks, 21 educational aides, and 21 teachers. **Exhibit 2–18** shows the cost savings for the reduction of each group as well as the total annual cost savings.

The district should then revise the salary schedule to offer more competitive salaries for teachers. The district should implement the remaining teacher salary recommendations presented by the December 2003 compensation study to provide a pay raise for 2005–06 with additional salary equity adjustments for beginning teachers and those with one through four years of experience. In addition, the Personnel department should conduct an analysis of positions in the district that have been hard to fill and submit a recommendation regarding stipends if indicated.

The cost for implementing this recommendation is based on the Two Year Model of Salary Development presented by TASB. The annual cost required for increasing teachers' salaries by $1,400 plus adding adjustments for years one through four

is estimated at $404,000. This cost is based on a $1,400 increase for 272 teachers for a total of $380,800 and an additional $23,200 for the adjustments at year one through year four experience levels.

The district will have an annual net savings beginning in 2006–07 of $1,009,999 ($1,413,999 - $404,000 = $1,009,999) based on a staff reduction and teacher salary increase. All staffing reductions would not occur until 2006–07, after a staffing efficiency study is completed and a staffing formula fully developed.

For 2005–06, the district should be able to eliminate approximately one-half, or 10, of the recommended 21 teaching positions ($41,010 x 10 = $410,100), three secretary/clerks ($21,375 x 3 = $64,125), and one-half, or 10, of the educational aide positions ($19,242 x 10 = $192,420), for a total savings of $666,645 ($410,100+ $64,125 + $192,420 = $666,645). Net savings in 2005–06 will be $262,645 ($666,645 - $404,000 = $262,645). The district should review teaching and educational aide positions closely to determine which positions can be eliminated for 2005–06, with the remaining staff positions to be eliminated occurring in 2006–07.

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATIONS (REC. 32)

ZCISD lacks a process for filing and securing the superintendent's evaluations. The district was unable to furnish the superintendent's evaluations for 2002–03. The board evaluation of the superintendent is the board's primary means of holding the superintendent accountable for performance. Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) establishes statutory provisions that must be followed in the evaluation process. Completion of a written evaluation instrument is critical to the process. BJCD (Legal) and BJCD (Local) both address the requirement that the board prepare a written evaluation of the superintendent annually.

The district completed a written evaluation of the superintendent on March 18, 2002, but complete evaluations for 2002–03 and 2003–04 were not available during the review team's on-site work. The district did have a copy of the Commissioner-Recommended Student Performance Domain/Superintendent Appraisal and

EXHIBIT 2–18
STAFF REDUCTIONS AND SAVINGS

POSITION	RECOMMENDED REDUCTION	SALARY	TOTAL SAVINGS FOR POSITION
Assistant Principal	1.5	$56,388 ($50,346 + 6,042 benefits)	$84,582
Secretary/Clerk	3	$21,375 ($19,085 + 2,290 benefits)	$64,125
Educational Aides	21	$19,242 ($17,180 + 2,062 benefits)	$404,082
Teachers	21	$41,010 ($36,616 + 4,394 benefits)	$861,210
Totals	**46.5**		**$1,413,999**

SOURCE: Texas Public School Consulting, Inc., January 2005.

superintendent goals for 2003–04.

During the on-site visit, the superintendent stated he had been unable to locate the missing evaluations, but assured the review team they had been completed. Board minutes for the last two years showed the superintendent evaluations had been completed on March 24, 2003 and January 12, 2004.

The ZCISD superintendent provided his most recent evaluation to the team on January 14, 2005. This evaluation was completed on January 10, 2005 and consisted of three parts: an assessment of priority performance goals, a review of general job performance responsibilities, and a student performance domain. TASB provides this three-part evaluation instrument in a publication entitled Evaluating the Superintendent: A Guide to Appraising Your District's Chief Administrator. The superintendent submitted the completed evaluation for 2003–04 on March 16, 2005.

Since board members indicated they completed the evaluations, and the minutes confirm an evaluation was completed each year, the problem appears to be that these evaluations have not been filed and safeguarded appropriately. Written documents are critical if the board wishes to compare the superintendent's present performance with past performance. Previous evaluations serve as a baseline to determine if the superintendent is moving forward with his goals and provide a base for holding the superintendent accountable. The evaluations also support board actions regarding the superintendent's contract.

Effective school districts have a well-established procedure for securing the superintendent's evaluations. Copies of the evaluations are generally maintained in a locked cabinet in the administrative offices for board members and in the superintendent's personnel file.

ZCISD should develop a procedure for filing and safeguarding the superintendent's evaluations. The superintendent and his secretary should select a secure, lockable file cabinet in which to file the superintendent's evaluations, and the secretary should file evaluations annually, immediately after the board approves the evaluation. The secretary should also send a copy of the evaluation to the superintendent's personnel file.

PERSONNEL STAFFING (REC. 33)

The Personnel department is not adequately staffed and is unable to perform necessary personnel functions. The Personnel department currently consists of a director of Personnel and Compliance, a Personnel secretary, and a part-time receptionist. The director of Personnel and Compliance indicated that

he spends less than 25 percent of his time conducting matters dealing with personnel. The receptionist is located in another building and is able to provide limited assistance to the department. The Personnel secretary is the only full-time member of the department, and the majority of the daily personnel responsibilities are assigned to her. The Personnel secretary's duties include oversight of the employee application process, the processing of new employees, and completion of service records. Additionally, she performs the duties of certification officer and records clerk. The large number of duties required for effective personnel management makes it difficult for the limited number of staff to perform all tasks in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Campus administrators are responsible for reviewing applications, checking references, and interviewing candidates when positions become vacant. Applications are received and maintained in the Personnel department and are sent out to administrators when requested. Applicant information is not maintained on a spreadsheet or on an automated tracking system, and all applications must be pulled and reviewed each time a particular need is identified.

The Business office primarily handles compensation administration. Once the Personnel secretary processes a new employee, she forwards a "Payroll Order Form" to the payroll clerk with basic demographic information, years of experience, education, base salary, and supplemental salary information if available. Actual salary computations based on days of employment are the responsibility of the Business office. Changes in compensation are also routinely handled in the Business office and do not go to the Personnel department for review or approval.

The payroll clerk tracks all employee leave time, administers the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and oversees employee benefits, including health insurance and workers' compensation. The payroll clerk meets with each new employee to do benefit review and enrollment. The director of Personnel and Compliance is involved in the orientation of new staff at the beginning of the year, primarily to welcome new employees, but a formal orientation for new employees is not in place and employees hired after the school year begins are not provided with an orientation. Thirty-three percent of the teachers and 44 percent of the administrators surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "The District has a good and timely orientation program for employees."

While the Personnel department has the responsibility for oversight of the evaluation process,

the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department is responsible for developing and communicating the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) calendar. Campus administrators provide the required PDAS orientation to teachers. Additionally, the administrative assistant for Construction handles the development of the employee handbook.

While the division of responsibilities with other departments and campuses occurs in many districts, this fragmentation of duties requires extensive coordination and oversight. Under the present system in ZCISD, important personnel duties listed below are not receiving adequate attention:

- No one adequately monitors staff-to-student ratios to ensure most efficient use of staff resources.

- No one monitors and reports district trends regarding staff absenteeism or turnover.

- No one actively tracks FMLA to ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

- No one monitors the employee evaluation process to ensure evaluations are properly completed.

- No one ensures that employees receive appropriate notifications, such as letters of reasonable assurance.

A human resources department is generally responsible for the following:

- recruiting;

- assessing and documenting teacher credentials;

- employee retention;

- processing of promotions, transfers, and resignations;

- maintaining personnel records;

- developing and maintaining job descriptions;

- preparing and distributing contracts;

- determining compensation schedules;

- administering the compensation program;

- forecasting personnel needs;

- managing the employee evaluation process;

- developing personnel policies;

- handling employee complaints and grievances;

- administering the district's leave and benefit programs;

- supervising the substitute teacher program; and

- ensuring that employment laws and regulations are followed.

Effective districts have personnel departments with strong leadership and the proper number of staff required to accomplish human resources functions in an organized, well-coordinated, and effective manner. Having adequate personnel staffing allows districts to centralize the personnel duties, thus improving oversight, accountability, and overall efficiency. The human resources industry monitors the ratio of personnel staff to employees served for different organizations. According to the Bureau of National Affairs, the human resources benchmark ratio of human resources staff-to-employees is 1:100 employees. ZCISD's ratio of 1:324 is high. (This ratio was derived by adding 25 percent of director's time, 50 percent of receptionist time, and 100 percent of the secretary's time, for a total of 1.75 staff. The total staff in ZCISD is 567 according to the 2003–04 AEIS report, so the total staff number divided by the 1.75 staff results in a ratio of 1:324.)

The district should centralize personnel functions under the Personnel department and provide appropriate staffing to accomplish these tasks. The director of Personnel and Compliance should be given the primary responsibility of managing the Personnel department. Compliance responsibilities should be placed under the appropriate administrative assistant or director. The Student Services and Operations coordinator, the energy manager, and the Athletic director should be assigned to appropriate divisions. The position should be renamed director of Personnel and Student Services with at least 75 percent of the director's time spent on personnel-related matters. The director and superintendent should develop a plan to ensure a smooth transition of functions, including the reassignment of leave and benefit administration and compensation to the Personnel department. A Personnel technician should be hired after a job description is developed. This additional position will provide support in administering the department's expanded responsibilities.

The cost of adding a Personnel technician will be approximately $25,834 ($23,066 + $2,768 in benefits = $25,834). Additional costs will be incurred to provide training for the director and his staff. Although the present director has attended an overview for new Personnel administrators, the director should attend training in areas such as designing and managing pay systems and managing leave and absences. These workshops cost about $175 per topic through organizations such as the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).

Attendance at four workshops would cost the district $700 ($175 x 4 = $700), and travel and expenses are estimated to be approximately $1,400 ($350 x 4 = $1,400). In addition to these workshops, the district should consider obtaining consultation services to help "set up" the department and assist with the development of department procedures. These services are available at approximately $1,200 per day plus expenses and can be provided on-site through TASB or similar personnel organizations. Three days of consultation services would cost the district $3,600 ($1,200 X 3 = $3,600), and travel and expenses would cost approximately $1,050 ($350 x 3 = $1,050). The total annual cost for the district would be $25,834 for the Personnel technician salary plus a one-time cost of $6,750 for training expenses.

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REC. 34)

The Personnel department does not have written administrative procedures to guide the staff in performing key human resources tasks. According to the director of Personnel and Compliance and the Personnel secretary, procedures are based on established practices and use existing forms and memorandums. The secretary for Personnel has been in the department and has institutional knowledge regarding activities such as contract renewal that must be conducted at a certain time on an annual basis. The department does not maintain a calendar to ensure timely performance of personnel activities. Procedures for district staff to follow in such areas as evaluations, progressive discipline, and terminations are not available.

The director of Personnel and Compliance is not involved in the policy development process and is not fully aware of all requirements stipulated in those policies. The director was not aware of the requirement in DC (Legal) to report to State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in writing any certified applicant who has a reported criminal activity. He was also not aware of the new hiring reporting requirements listed in the same policy. The district submits neither of these reports. The Personnel department lacks written guidelines and action plans stipulated in some legal or local personnel policies. DC (Local) indicates that "The superintendent or designee shall establish guidelines for advertising employment opportunities and posting notices of vacancies." The Personnel department has not developed guidelines, and posting of positions is determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, the positions for administrative assistant for Construction and administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment were not posted. Guidelines regarding areas of acute shortage and employment of retirees [DC (Legal)]

and required action plans to encourage hiring of educational aides who show a willingness to become certified teachers have not been addressed.

The district has an employee handbook that was developed in 2004 which states that the handbook is a "guide to and a brief explanation to district policies." The handbook provides employees information relating to employment, compensation and benefits, leave and absences, employee relations, complaints and grievances, terminations, and student issues. Employees must sign and return a form acknowledging receipt of the handbook.

Lack of written administrative procedures in the Personnel department makes it difficult to operate the department in the most efficient manner. The lack of systematic districtwide hiring procedures monitored by the department could result in noncompliance with federal laws such as the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Providing specific guidelines for hiring helps staff to select employees while complying with applicable laws. The lack of written procedures in areas such as processing of new hires, contract renewal, and compensation may result in inconsistent and inequitable treatment of employees. The lack of a manual detailing required tasks and timelines could lead to missed deadlines and/or missed requirements. Failure to submit required reports results in district noncompliance with federal and state regulations.

Efficient personnel offices have written procedures to guide them in performing required and essential human resources tasks. They also provide written guidelines to assist district staff involved in human resources-related tasks such as recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and terminating employees. The Human Resources department in Galena Park ISD develops a monthly calendar for each upcoming school year to ensure timely performance of personnel activities. The calendar is used to assign staff to each task and monitor progress. It enables staff to easily identify incomplete tasks, set priorities, and organize resources to ensure tasks are completed successfully. South San Antonio ISD has developed and regularly updates a detailed and comprehensive reference manual that includes procedural information, personnel forms, departmental policies, salary schedules, and other important personnel information. This manual is distributed to all principals and administrators to assist them in complying with personnel laws and district procedures.

The district should develop written administrative procedures for the Personnel department. The director of Personnel and Compliance should review

all personnel policies and develop guidelines to meet policy requirements. The director should identify all key personnel tasks and develop internal procedures to ensure the department completes all tasks timely and legally. The director should meet with district administrators to receive input regarding areas of concern in personnel functions and should address these areas in developing written, districtwide procedures involving the personnel function.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT (REC. 35)

ZCISD does not have standardized procedures for employee records management, and records are not properly safeguarded. The Personnel department is located in a small building approximately one-half mile from the administrative offices. Most of the employee records are maintained in the fireproof records vault in the administration building. These records are maintained loosely in folders in alphabetical order in file cabinets that remain unlocked during the day. Personnel files for new employees are maintained in the Personnel office so that required documents can be easily added. These files are not locked during the day and are not in fireproof storage. Additionally, the review team noted that many of the files had been pulled for research and were in the Personnel office and had not been returned to the fireproof storage facility. Files in both areas, however, were not sufficiently safeguarded and could be easily accessed by non-authorized personnel.

Review of several personnel files showed that they did not contain some required documents, such as employee contracts or service records; these files were maintained in the Personnel department. Performance appraisal records and personnel action memorandum/forms typically maintained in personnel files were also missing from the personnel files. Personnel files for inactive employees were maintained in a different section in the file cabinets in the fireproof storage. These files had not been purged and provisions had not been made to store these records on microfilm or some other electronic media.

Personnel files are considered confidential and should be available to only authorized personnel, board members, representatives of government agencies, the employee, and his/her representative. Proper records maintenance is critical to protecting the rights of employees and protecting the district in the event of an employee dispute. Storage areas for all records, including active, inactive, or archived records should be fireproof, waterproof, and lockable. Districts must comply with the Texas Local Government Records Act that requires each district to establish a local records management program.

Districts must ensure the efficient management of all district records, designate a records management officer, and develop a local records control schedule that meets minimum retention periods established by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. This schedule should provide for the review, removal, and destruction of records whose retention periods have expired.

ZCISD lacks standards and procedures to ensure proper employee documentation and records management and does not have a person on staff serving as the district's records management officer. The lack of a system has resulted in noncompliance with the Texas Local Government Records Act. Furthermore, inefficient maintenance of records has hindered the efficient operation of the Personnel department, often resulting in valuable time being lost in locating and retrieving requested or required information.

Effective personnel departments keep employee records in organized files containing required documents to ensure records are complete and comply with federal, state, and local requirements. South San Antonio ISD uses comprehensive and detailed color-coded checklists to improve the accuracy and consistency of personnel records and ensure that all necessary information is included. Additionally, districts with effective records management have records located in a fireproof location with controlled access and have a schedule for purging their records and dealing with inactive files.

ZCISD should centralize all personnel records and ensure controlled access. The director of Personnel and Compliance should develop a filing system that organizes files, with separate sections for applications and related documents such as transcripts, service records, contracts and letters of assurance, and performance evaluations. Existing files should be audited and reorganized based on the new system. The district should establish a records management system that complies with state and federal requirements and designate a records management officer. ZCISD should consider alternatives such as microfilming for its inactive files.

A one-time cost of obtaining a part-time clerical person with previous experience in records management to help with the new filing process is estimated at $280 ($7.00 per hour x 40 hours).

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE SYSTEM (REC. 36)

ZCISD's Personnel department does not use the personnel management and reporting tools available in the personnel module of the district's business

software system that would help in managing the department. Currently, the Personnel department does not use any computer software applications that support the personnel function. The director of Personnel and Compliance indicated that the Personnel department "uses Microsoft Word" and that the department has "a database setup of all classroom teachers identifying campus assignment and their certification."

The Business office uses the Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) Internet-based Texas Computer Cooperative Software (iTCCS), a system designed specifically for school districts across Texas to facilitate and support business functions. The same software is available for use in the Personnel department; however, the Personnel department is not using this software. The Personnel secretary indicated that she had requested training in the software but had not received any training at the time of the on-site visit. The iTCCS tracks employee data and salary information and also captures and reports Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) personnel information to TEA. Currently, the Personnel department does not enter any data into the system, relying on payroll to enter demographic and salary data into the payroll system. The Personnel department maintains minimal data on its employees and must review individual personnel files to obtain information for required reports. Reports on stipends, turnover rates, reason for termination, salaries, supplemental pay, leave, and many other personnel-related factors are not available because that information has not been entered into the system.

Lack of a personnel software system negatively affects the way the ZCISD Personnel department functions. They do not maintain a database on employees, do not have readily available access to employee data, and cannot readily respond to questions regarding information such as years of employment, contract status, or number of days in contract without looking at a variety of data sources including employee files and previous reports. Staff cannot update critical employee information and maintain current records for employment verification purposes. They are unable to provide reports for the superintendent or other administrators that might reveal trends in employee turnover or other important factors and cannot conduct analyses that might be helpful to the district.

Many districts ensure that their personnel departments have effective management tools at their disposal. These districts have identified appropriate computer software applications that can help them maintain and track vital employee information. One such system is the Texas

Computer Cooperative Software, which is designed to facilitate business and personnel functions. Many districts across Texas are currently using this system with good results. A benefit of using this system in the Personnel department in ZCISD is that the Business office is already using the system.

ZCISD should implement the personnel module of the district's business software system. The director of Personnel and Compliance should contact Region 1 to get information about the system and develop an action plan to begin implementation of the system. Training on the software should be provided to the director and the Personnel staff. The district's existing agreement with Region 1 includes access to the personnel module and training at no extra cost.

POSITION CONTROL (REC. 37)

ZCISD does not have a position control process or system to maintain information regarding the number and type of district positions that have been approved. There is no record of positions authorized versus the number of positions filled. Positions are filled on a case-by-case basis with superintendent approval. The Personnel department does not initiate and track many of the transactions involving a change in compensation. For example, information regarding stipends or extra days added to a position is maintained in the Business office. The principals also make changes in positions at the campus level without consulting and/or notifying the Personnel department.

These practices may result in a system where one part of the organization may not know what employee position changes have been made and at what cost. Lack of a formal system of position control often results in overstaffing and overspending. It may also result in inequities in salaries and supplements if not consistently monitored by one department. Movement of positions by campus administrators often results in problems with certification requirements and funding sources.

Some districts are using position control systems as a tool for maintaining accountability of district positions as well as integrating this information with payroll and budget functions. The human resource component of the iTCCS has a highly effective position management module currently in place in twelve districts across the state. Two sites in Region 1, Mission ISD and Edinburg ISD, are currently experiencing success with this system. This system maintains a specific record for each regular staff position by establishing a unique record for each position, whether occupied or unoccupied. Each unique record has related financial and funding source data, information regarding stipends,

incentive pay, and supplementary pay, if applicable. Many reports, such as Salaries Based on Position, Position Listings by Campus, and Position Roster by Campus, are provided to assist the district with monitoring the process. The system requires all transactions involving personnel changes to be initiated in the Personnel department. It calculates pay information resulting from employment status changes and allows payroll to review these calculations to improve accuracy of transactions. The module supports the budget process by presenting various staffing scenarios and associated costs to allow districts to plan more effectively.

ZCISD should expand use of the position management system to maintain accountability of authorized district positions and integrate this information with payroll and budget applications. The director of Personnel and Compliance should review the benefits of the position management system software currently used by the Business office and design a districtwide plan that supports use of the system. This product, along with training, is available at no cost to districts using the business software.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 38)

The district does not have current job descriptions or a system for updating them, which could result in staff not being fully knowledgeable of all the duties expected of their positions. Many of ZCISD's positions do not have job descriptions, and some job descriptions do not accurately reflect the duties for the position. Most of the job descriptions provided reflected the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) generic job descriptions. These generic job descriptions, intended as guides for the district, do not provide accurate and complete descriptions of the actual responsibilities of existing positions. For example, the job description provided for the director of Personnel and Compliance was the same as the one provided by TASB for director of Personnel and does not reflect the majority of the responsibilities of this position.

Job descriptions for the majority of central office administrators were incomplete, inaccurate, or missing. The person to whom the employee reports is often incorrect, and many of the primary purpose descriptions reflect outdated responsibilities. For example, the primary purpose of the Business Services director is as follows:

> Directs and manages the operation of all financial and business affairs of the district including accounting, purchasing, data processing, tax collection, food, maintenance, transportation and printing services. Provide managerial direction and coordination under

board policy guidelines to several key district functions. Serve as the chief financial adviser to the superintendent and board of trustees.

This director, however, was not responsible for maintenance and transportation services. Some responsibilities that should be listed, such as those for risk management functions, were missing. Although a job description was provided for a director of Special Populations, the district does not have this position. Job descriptions for positions such as staff accountant and dean of discipline were not available. Descriptions for the positions of administrative assistant for Construction and administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment have not been developed.

Job descriptions in ZCISD are generally not used to identify and delegate job responsibilities. Employees are provided information concerning their jobs primarily through briefings from their supervisors. This process can result in staff not being fully knowledgeable of all the duties expected of their positions and may result in some duties not being addressed. The great majority of job descriptions available are generic job descriptions provided by TASB, and the staff has not been involved in their development. These job descriptions do not accurately reflect the work being performed, and updating them has not been made a priority.

Well-written job descriptions distinguish between essential and non-essential responsibilities and provide an overview of the work performed in a position. They also provide information that should be used in validating selection criteria for jobs as well as in determining compensation and appropriate classification.

Employees whose positions have job descriptions that clearly delineate their job responsibilities are able to perform more effectively and efficiently. Clarity in job descriptions should reduce duplication of effort and confusion concerning operational expectations. A well-developed job description should serve as a basis for effective evaluation. It can assist the supervisor in developing growth plans and counseling reports, which address needed improvement areas specific to job responsibilities. Accurate job descriptions reduce risk of employment lawsuits by specifying duties and responsibilities of positions as well as equal pay, workplace safety, equal employment, and overtime eligibility conditions related to each job.

While most job descriptions cannot list all possible tasks, they do provide the employee with an understanding of job requirements and expectations for performance. Effective personnel departments

use job descriptions and routinely update them to ensure they are consistent with the organizational structure and accurately reflect job duties and qualifications. Many districts use job description templates such as those provided by private vendors or other organizations to ensure that all descriptions are consistent, personalized, and contain required elements. Spring ISD maintains updated and accurate job descriptions to provide employees with a guide for understanding their role and responsibilities. The Personnel and Support Services department creates and updates job descriptions after conducting focus groups with employees in each position. A job analysis is completed through this cooperative effort.

ZCISD should develop new job descriptions for each position in the district and update them regularly. The director of Personnel and Compliance should work with employees, supervisors, and other resources to create specific job descriptions based on job analyses. Job descriptions should be submitted to the superintendent and the board for approval. A schedule for updating job descriptions should be developed and followed. Job descriptions should also be reviewed any time there is a reorganization of staff.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATION SYSTEM (REC. 39)

The Personnel department has an inefficient system for tracking annual evaluations for employees. The district does not effectively review staff evaluations to make appropriate employee decisions. ZCISD conducts teacher evaluations annually using the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) appraisal instrument. The district also has an extensive number of additional evaluation instruments for use with other employee groups. Supervisors are expected to evaluate all staff members annually between March and May using appropriate evaluation instruments. The Personnel department does not verify that evaluations for all employees have been completed. At the time of the on-site visit, at least two schools had not submitted their teacher appraisals for 2003–04 to the Personnel department for review and filing. Policy DNB (Legal) requires that an annual evaluation be conducted for all administrators and other professionals. The district's system for PDAS evaluation of teachers also requires that evaluations be performed on an annual basis.

The staff evaluation process in ZCISD is not carefully reviewed or monitored. Consequences are not outlined if evaluations are not submitted in a timely fashion. It is not possible to determine if evaluations have been completed annually as required by state and local requirements. Lack of

monitoring of evaluation documents by the Personnel department may result in noncompliance with state and district requirements. The PDAS calendar has strict timelines, and various activities have to be completed within those timelines. Lack of adherence to those timelines may result in teacher grievances and possibly result in legal costs. Evaluations provide the basis for any negative employment actions, and missing evaluations could result in the district's inability to proceed with appropriate disciplinary action.

Effective personnel departments have a definite procedure for collecting evaluations within certain time periods and reviewing them for completeness. Administrators are made accountable for this process and lack of timeliness in the process is noted in their evaluations.

The Personnel department should develop a system for tracking evaluations and ensuring all are completed and submitted in a timely fashion. ZCISD conducts teacher evaluations annually using the Professional Development Appraisal System appraisal instrument and has an extensive number of additional evaluation instruments for use with other employee groups. The director of Personnel and Compliance should develop a procedure to ensure evaluations are completed by all administrators.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM (REC. 40)

ZCISD's substitute teacher program does not have a sufficiently rigorous educational standard for substitutes, provide orientation or training, or have an efficient substitute-calling program. The Personnel department compiles a list of qualified substitutes and their qualifications each summer and distributes this list to principals. Policy DPB (Local) states that the district shall attempt to hire certified teachers as substitutes whenever possible and that no person will be employed as a substitute without having at least a high school diploma or equivalent. A review of the current list of available substitutes shows that approximately 47 percent of the substitutes hold only a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and an additional 28 percent have less than two years of college. Seventy-five percent of all substitutes have less than 60 hours of college credits. The Personnel department does not provide any orientation or training to any of the substitutes. The campus secretaries call substitutes when teachers contact them to report their absences. The secretaries use the list of substitutes provided by the Personnel department to request substitutes. Reports from administrators indicated that finding qualified substitutes was sometimes difficult.

Nationwide statistics show that students will be taught by a substitute teacher for the equivalent of one entire academic year between kindergarten and twelfth grade. Many school districts have raised the standards or requirements for substitute teachers to at least 60 hours of college/university preparation. Strategies to recruit applicants with degrees and certification are the responsibility of the Personnel department. Such districts routinely advertise at local colleges, use the district website, and participate in job fairs. Encouraging teaching and paraprofessional applicants to substitute until permanent employment becomes available is also an effective strategy. The use of a graduated pay structure for substitutes based on educational levels can motivate applicants to apply. Northside Independent School District in San Antonio uses all of these strategies to recruit substitutes including graduated pay rates, as shown in **Exhibit 2–19.**

Districts with effective substitute programs also require that substitute candidates receive training sessions before placement in a classroom. Candidates receive training in classroom management, effective teaching techniques, and district policies and procedures, including discipline management. Cedar Hill ISD, Spring ISD (SISD), and Northside ISD (NISD) offer training for substitutes. In addition, NISD prepares a handbook for substitutes that covers areas such as substitute responsibilities, dress code, payroll and employment, district policies, complaints and grievances, and safety and health issues. NISD also provides extensive web-based support and information for substitutes.

Many districts that maintain a well organized and effective substitute program have implemented an automated substitute system that makes placement more efficient. When principals or teachers need a substitute, they call an automated phone line or enter information into a web-based system to request a substitute by date, time, and location. The system then locates the substitute and assigns the job. The number of school districts who are using automated systems is increasing and include Floresville ISD, Medina ISD, Valley View ISD, Bastrop ISD, and Kingsville ISD. An advantage of the automated

systems is that it reports employee absences. The system reduces the workload of secretaries not only in scheduling substitutes but also in maintaining absence-from-duty records, tracking employee leave totals, and submitting substitute forms to payroll. The accuracy of such records is also improved.

The Personnel department should improve the substitute teacher system by increasing educational requirements for substitutes, providing training for substitutes, and implementing an automated substitute employee management program. The director of Personnel and Compliance, with the help of campus administrators and teachers, should review current requirements and adopt higher educational requirements. The Personnel department should develop an action plan to recruit and hire more substitutes who meet these requirements. The Personnel department should work with the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment department to develop and schedule required training sessions for the district's substitutes throughout the year. The director of Personnel and Compliance should review several automated systems, visit districts using the systems, and select a system that best meets the needs of ZCISD. Training on the system should be provided to all campus administrators, teachers, and substitute teachers.

The cost of implementing the recommendation is for training and the cost of the automated system. If district staff is involved in training during regular work hours, the training recommendation can be carried out using existing resources. The cost for implementing an automated system varies. The most cost-effective system based on the current number of employees has an estimated one-time cost of $9,482 and a yearly maintenance fee thereafter of $7,482.

EMPLOYEE ABSENCES (REC. 41)

ZCISD has not determined the cause of high absenteeism among its employees. Data on teacher absenteeism in ZCISD is not maintained in a districtwide report. When data on absenteeism was requested, the team received a report entitled "State Sick Leave and State Personnel Leave Report" from each campus and department. This report lists employees at each campus and department and the leave information for each employee at that site. The following leave information was provided: leave balances for the prior year, leave earned, leave used, and balances for state leave. Also indicated in the report are leave earned, leave used, and balances for local leave (personal and sick). This information is maintained at each site and is submitted to the Personnel department at the end of the school year for the development of service records. Campuses also send leave information to payroll on a monthly

EXHIBIT 2–19
SUBSTITUTE RATES FOR PAY
NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CLASSIFICATION	FULL-DAY RATE	HALF-DAY RATE
Certified Teachers	$85.00	$57.00
90+ Semester Hours	$70.00	$47.00
60–89 Semester Hours	$65.00	$43.00

SOURCE: Northside ISD Human Resources Department, 2004–05.

basis on a Substitute Monthly Report. School secretaries maintain an ongoing record of absences and balances and inform payroll when leave amounts have been exhausted. Designated department secretaries also provide this information to payroll on a monthly basis.

An analysis of employee absenteeism has not been performed in ZCISD. A review of the State Sick Leave Reports indicates there is a high rate of absenteeism. The review team tallied the number of absences at two schools for 2002–03 and 2003–04. The total number of absences was divided by the number of staff at each school to determine the average absences per employee. At Zapata Central Elementary, the average number of absences per employee was nine days for 2002–03 and 8.91 days for 2003–04. At Zapata South Elementary, the average number of absences was 15 days for 2002–03 and 15.86 days for 2003–04. These absences do not include days absent for staff development.

ZCISD local leave policy DEC (Local) provides district employees five days of local sick leave per year. This local leave is noncumulative and, if not used by the end of the year, it is bought back by the district at a rate established by the board. The current rate is $20.00 per day for nonprofessional employees and $30.00 per day for professional employees. Employees are also granted two days of personal leave to be used "for errands of a personal nature that cannot be done except during working hours."

Policy DEC (Local) also provides for up to 30 days of extended sick leave, which can be requested by employees after they have exhausted all accumulated leave, in the course "of a catastrophic illness or disability, including pregnancy related disability of an employee or a member of the employee's immediate family." This leave is granted with substitute pay deducted for each day of absence whether or not a substitute is needed. Employee requests for extended leave are submitted to the director of Personnel and Compliance who submits them to the superintendent for approval. According to the director, all of the requests he has submitted have been approved.

In an effort to improve the relatively high rate of absenteeism in ZCISD, administration proposed and the board approved a pay incentive for perfect attendance. This proposal provided for classroom teachers to receive a pay supplement for achieving perfect attendance in the classroom for the fall and spring semesters. According to the director of Personnel and Compliance, about 45 teachers have received the incentive pay, which is $200.00 per semester. A review of attendance at two campuses did not show a reduction between 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Effective school districts monitor employee absenteeism very carefully. These districts frequently review and analyze available data on employee absences to identify patterns. They examine their leave policies to determine if they are contributing factors to the absenteeism problem and make revisions if necessary. Districts often provide training for administrative and supervisory staff in managing leaves and absences. Many districts have a variety of incentives both at the campus and district level to motivate staff to improve their attendance. Spring ISD has implemented an attendance incentive plan in which district contributions are made into an employee retirement plan based on attendance data.

ZCISD should develop mechanisms to analyze, monitor, and better manage employee absenteeism. The district should analyze employee absentee data and review existing leave policies to determine if they are contributing to the absentee problem. The Personnel department should review current procedures used to track absentee data to improve the existing process and facilitate regular data review and analysis. The Personnel department should also revise forms and procedures to support the district's efforts to better manage leave. The director of Personnel and Compliance should form a committee to identify incentives and training needed to reduce employee absenteeism.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT (REC. 42)

The district does not have a coordinated or centralized staff development program, making it difficult for employees to take full advantage of professional development opportunities. ZCISD makes training available to staff through a variety of different sources. The most extensive training for teachers is provided through the Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1). Workshops and academies are made available to Zapata teachers who attend most of these sessions at the recommendation of their campus principals. ZCISD is a member of the Region 1 Training Consortium, and principals purchase training "slots" with their campus funds to send their teachers to training. The district tries to use a "trainer of trainers" model whenever possible to limit the expense to its budget. Many of the workshops are provided in the Laredo area. Region 1 provides a cumulative listing at the end of the year that indicates the workshops attended by each teacher.

District staff also provides training during in-service days and early dismissal days. Attendance at these sessions is documented using sign-in sheets. Although central office staff provides some of these sessions, principals and other campus personnel are very involved in presenting teacher training. Records

of attendance at district trainings are not maintained in any centralized fashion and cannot be readily accessed unless sign-in sheets from all sessions are compiled and reviewed.

The district does not have an official new teacher mentoring program but does partner each new teacher with an established teacher. The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment indicated training is provided to these "partners" only on an informal basis. The district does conduct a new teacher orientation, which is primarily a welcoming session that provides an overview of the district.

The required orientation to the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) is provided to new teachers as stated in the ZCISD board policy DNA (Legal). Each principal is required to provide teachers on their respective campuses with this orientation during in-service days. Principals are also required to provide this PDAS orientation for teachers hired after the beginning of school. This method of delivery is on a case-by-case basis and is highly inefficient and time consuming for principals.

The Personnel department does not coordinate staff development for the district. The director of Personnel and Compliance stated his department had not provided staff development for non-certified teachers, and he was not aware of any other district level staff development provided to meet the needs of these teachers. The only training coordinated by the Personnel department was on sexual harassment. The director also approves training recommended by the Student Services and Operations coordinator for auxiliary personnel. The director indicated that such training was limited and should be expanded to include training to improve overall job performance.

Without a centralized record keeping system for staff development, the district has difficulty in verifying compliance with all mandated training, such as the gifted and talented training. Lack of coordination and communication may also result in not providing required training and support for non-certified or non-highly qualified teachers. Failure to provide centralized training for requirements such as PDAS orientation has resulted in an inefficient delivery system. The current system does not ensure that the staff development provided to all employees is consistent or meets district, departmental, or individual needs.

Many school districts have a centralized staff development program. While a decentralized training program is not necessarily ineffective, it is more difficult to ensure that all employees take full advantage of professional development opportunities and that accurate tracking of training is maintained. For the decentralized professional development program to work, there must be a clearly defined planning effort that defines each department's responsibility in conducting needs assessments and providing activities that meet the needs of employees.

The district should assign responsibility for overseeing staff development to the director of Personnel and Compliance and create a staff development plan. Staff development can remain decentralized, but one employee should be responsible for identifying and matching staff training needs and opportunities with district priorities and goals. The director, with the assistance of other department heads, should create a districtwide staff development plan for all employees. The plan should serve as a resource for departments in identifying the types of training available. The director should evaluate the training programs for effectiveness and support of the district's mission and goals.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT (REC. 43)

ZCISD has a poorly developed website and is missing an opportunity to inform the public about activities in the district. At the time of the on-site visit, the district website had not been updated for months. For example, the website lists a junior high school in the district that does not exist and the former district superintendent instead of the current one. Campus activity calendars are accessible but do not show any scheduled functions. According to the interim Technology director, the district website should have been deleted from the Internet. On August 27, 2004, the district superintendent signed an agreement with a private vendor, a provider of web-based communications solutions for grades K–12, to build websites for the district and each campus. This company will also provide other services such as individual email accounts, project planning, school calendars, campus web pages, and web-based training. The interim Technology director is working with the vendor to build websites for the district and each campus; however, as of December 2004, there was no documented evidence that planning for building the district and campus websites had been done.

The private vendor made a risk-free offer in a letter to the district that would continue service regardless of whether or not the district has received E-rate funding. In the event the district's E-rate funding application for the vendor is denied, the company requires that the district appeal that decision. If the appeal is unsuccessful, the district must then make a

good faith effort to obtain other sources of funding to cover the E-rate share of the cost. This risk-free assurance means that the private vendor will not seek reimbursement from the district for any portion of eligible E-rate funds.

A letter from the private vendor dated May 28, 2004 requested that a district official sign an agreement of services and send a purchase order for the amount not covered by E-rate funds. The ZCISD superintendent signed the agreement letter on August 27, 2004. However, a check for the purchase order amount was not sent to the vendor until January 11, 2005.

The district's website is limited, and the district is missing an opportunity to communicate with the public. For example, the website is not providing information on the school calendar, board meeting agendas and decisions, special events, teacher phone numbers, and email addresses. Furthermore, the community's perception of the district is shaped by the way a district presents itself to the public. A publication or website that is not up-to-date or poorly developed may cause the public to form a negative impression about the district.

Many districts have excellent websites that could serve as models for ZCISD. For example, Hamilton ISD maintains a well designed website that includes information on all the schools as well as the administration and school board meetings. State test scores, the scholastic calendar, and an activities calendar are also included on the website. Valley View ISD's website has a "parent's corner" that provides links to information such as parent grade book login, Chapter 37-Safe Schools, board meeting agendas, immunization requirements, a school calendar, and the lunch menu.

The district should establish a Web Advisory Committee for implementing district and campus websites. The superintendent should appoint the interim Technology director as the committee chairperson. The committee should have representation from various stakeholder groups and should work with the private vendor to implement district and campus websites. The work of the committee should be publicized to users, parents, and the community. Input regarding website development should be solicited from a variety of staff and community members who could bring knowledge about the community and district activities to the design table.

DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS (REC. 44)

ZCISD central administration has not adequately communicated with the community about district activities, undermining the district's efforts to gain the trust and confidence of the community. The central office administration has not established an effective communication program to keep the community informed about the district. For example, there were only two news releases on file in the Superintendent's office for the past 12 months. One of these releases pertained to the drilling of a gas well on school property next to an elementary school and was not released until December 2004, after the drilling rig was in place. Also, the district's quarterly newsletter, *ZCISD Connections*, has not been published since August 2003. People attending the business leader, teacher, and community focus groups felt that more information is needed from the administration on meetings, safety issues, and financial matters.

The present situation does not foster a positive relationship with the various district stakeholders. For instance, notifying the public after drilling the gas well negatively affected community morale. Honest and timely communications with parents and area residents is critical if a district is to maintain the trust, confidence, and support of the community.

By communicating with the community regularly and in a variety of ways, Bastrop ISD (BISD) has kept the public informed of district activities, goals, policies, calendars, school activities, performance reports, and other news. A district newsletter and weekly columns appear in the local newspapers. BISD's website contains district information such as school calendars, board meetings, test data, and campus news items. BISD publishes an annual report, which includes a school calendar, names of principals, and phone numbers, that is distributed by mail to all addresses in the district.

Dripping Springs ISD (DSISD) used a forum approach to advise the community about an issue regarding the homestead exemption. The district assembled a group of community leaders that included ministers, retired board members, business owners, and residents to explain the issue and receive feedback from them. The superintendent incorporated the community feedback into a district presentation and then conducted three open public forums on the issue. The district sent more than 7,000 invitations to district property owners about the public forums, and 285 people attended the forums.

The superintendent should create a communications plan for sharing district information with stakeholders. The plan should emphasize the use of various communication strategies and media formats to make information available to both internal and external stakeholders. The plan should also

centralize all communication through the superintendent's office and be reviewed regularly to ensure efforts are relevant to the tasks and resources are adequate and appropriate. The development of a district website should be made a high priority, and

the *ZCISD Connections* newsletter should be published quarterly on the website.

For more background information on Chapter 2, District Management, see page 197 in the General Information section of the Appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

	RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE- TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
				CHAPTER 2: DISTRICT MANAGEMENT				
25.	Develop a process to monitor board training and to ensure all board members meet continuing education requirements.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
26.	Require board member training on the budget process and implement a process for board participation in budget development.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($2,250)
27.	Restructure central administration along functional lines and eliminate the position of administrative assistant for Construction.	$49,280	$49,280	$49,280	$49,280	$49,280	$246,400	$0
28.	Develop a comprehensive set of operations manuals for conducting district operations.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
29.	Develop an integrated long-range strategic plan.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($4,500)
30.	Develop a district improvement plan (DIP) that is timely, includes measurable objectives, and is tied to the budget.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
31.	Conduct a staffing efficiency study, develop and apply staffing formulas to reduce staff, and revise the salary schedule to increase teacher salaries, making them more competitive.	$262,645	$1,009,999	$1,009,999	$1,009,999	$1,009,999	$4,302,641	($11,750)
32.	Develop a procedure for filing and safeguarding the superintendent's evaluations.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
33.	Centralize personnel functions under the Personnel department and provide appropriate staffing to accomplish these tasks.	($25,834)	($25,834)	($25,834)	($25,834)	($25,834)	($129,170)	($6,750)

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

	RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
	CHAPTER 2: DISTRICT MANAGEMENT							
34.	Develop written administrative procedures for the Personnel department.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
35.	Centralize all personnel records and ensure controlled access.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($280)
36.	Implement the personnel module of the district's business software system.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
37.	Expand use of the position management system to maintain accountability of authorized district positions and integrate this information with payroll and budget applications.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
38.	Develop new job descriptions for each position in the district and update them regularly.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
39.	Develop a system for tracking evaluations and ensure all are completed and submitted in a timely fashion.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
40.	Improve the substitute teacher system by increasing educational requirements for substitutes, providing training for substitutes, and implementing an automated substitute employee management program.	$0	($7,482)	($7,482)	($7,482)	($7,482)	($29,928)	($9,482)
41.	Develop mechanisms to analyze, monitor, and better manage employee absenteeism.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
42.	Assign responsibility for overseeing staff development to the director of Personnel and Compliance and create a staff development plan.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
43.	Establish a Web Advisory Committee for implementing district and campus websites.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
44.	Create a communications plan for sharing district information with stakeholders.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Totals - Chapter 2		$286,091	$1,025,963	$1,025,963	$1,025,963	$1,025,963	$4,389,943	($35,012)

Chapter 3

Financial Management

Zapata County Independent School District

CHAPTER 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

School districts must practice sound financial management to maximize limited resources and plan for future needs. Effective financial management ensures that internal controls are in place and operating as intended, technology is maximized to increase productivity, and reports are prepared timely and accurately. School districts must maximize the use of their assets and protect them against loss from unforeseen events. A district must establish an effective risk management program that provides reasonable assurance that a district's assets are safeguarded from loss, minimizes exposure to catastrophic loss, and protects financial interests should loss occur. The district's purchasing function is also a critical component of business management in schools and is a major management process that supports financial accountability.

School districts' financial operations must comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires that districts' financial operations follow the requirements of the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG). The FASRG combines requirements for financial management from a variety of sources into one guide for Texas school districts.

Texas school districts receive revenue from three primary sources: local sources, state funding, and federal programs. Property taxes provide the primary local source of funds for most school districts. Zapata County Independent School District (ZCISD) is considered a property rich school district. Consequently, the district is subject to recapture and must either send part of their local tax collection to the state or use it for one of the purposes outlined in state law. As one of the options provided by law, ZCISD has chosen to contract with Raymondville ISD to educate some of their children through paying the state for student attendance credit.

The district's budget for 2004–05 is $23.6 million, of which 57 percent is designated for instructional-related purposes. Payroll makes up the majority of the budget, accounting for 84 percent of all expenditures. The district's revenues come from local, state, and federal sources. Local tax makes up the majority of the district's revenue and accounts for over 75 percent of all revenues. The tax rate for 2004–05 is $1.6978 ($1.50 for maintenance and operation and $0.1978 for debt service).

ZCISD's asset management function is assigned to the Business office. The Business office is also

responsible for the purchase of insurance, employee benefits, workers' compensation, and unemployment compensation. The administration of the benefit programs is assigned to the payroll clerk. The risk management function is not formally assigned to any office.

The Business office in ZCISD is also responsible for purchasing operations. The operation provides site-based responsibility, allowing the schools and departments to initiate their own requisitions. The Business office processes these requisitions as purchase orders. ZCISD has a limited centralized contract management process covering major purchases. Schools and departments are responsible for identifying vendors available through one of the regional purchasing cooperatives and managing the ordering process for goods and services.

ZCISD stores all textbooks on school campuses. Textbooks are received and returned at the district's maintenance facility, which is managed by the Student Services and Operations coordinator. The maintenance facility is not a district warehouse, but it does serve as a central receiving point and storage facility for custodial supplies and chemicals.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ZCISD monitors tax collection and has a consistently high delinquent tax collection rate.

FINDINGS

- The ZCISD Business office is not organized in a functional and efficient manner.

- ZCISD does not have a plan for managing their fund balance, causing large fluctuations between fiscal years.

- ZCISD does not have a coordinated budget preparation and adoption process that complies with state requirements and involves the citizens, board, and employees in budget planning.

- The ZCISD Business Services director does not provide the board or other district administrators with monthly financial reports that would assist them in making sound budget and financial decisions.

- The district's failure to assign costs to the proper account code misstates program expenditures causing an inaccurate administrative cost ratio and failure to comply with the requirements of the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide

concerning accounting for federal and state programs.

- The district payroll process is not documented and does not provide adequate internal controls to prevent errors and safeguard district funds.

- ZCISD contracts with its employees to perform services in violation of state and federal guidelines.

- ZCISD does not have a policy for the periodic competitive procurement and rotation of external audit services.

- ZCISD does not monitor the securities pledged by their depository bank to ensure that district bank accounts are adequately protected against loss.

- ZCISD maintains too many bank accounts to operate efficiently.

- ZCISD does not reconcile bank accounts accurately and in a timely manner.

- ZCISD does not maximize interest revenues by providing for the timely deposit of tax receipts, which account for approximately 80 percent of General Operating Fund revenue.

- The ZCISD board is not provided with a detailed investment report that would allow the board to monitor the district's investments and provide oversight as required by the Public Funds Investment Act.

- ZCISD does not diversify investments to ensure maximum yield and the safety of district funds.

- ZCISD does not use a cash flow spreadsheet to project cash flows, which would help determine cash requirements and the amount of funds available for investment.

- ZCISD does not have a comprehensive safety program or a program to address its workers' compensation losses.

- The district does not effectively manage its workers' compensation program by analyzing losses or periodically requesting proposals for coverage to determine if they are obtaining the most comprehensive and cost-effective program.

- ZCISD does not conduct an annual evaluation of its property and casualty insurance program to determine if the district has obtained adequate coverage for existing loss exposures at the best possible cost.

- ZCISD does not carry equipment breakdown coverage on property excluded from the district's property coverage, resulting in an exposure to financial loss that the district has not addressed through insurance or through self-insurance should a loss occur.

- The district cannot verify that the ZCISD cafeteria plan complies with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service.

- ZCISD does not have written procedures that provide an efficient process for the district to offer competitive benefit programs and address related employee benefit liability issues.

- ZCISD is not complying with state regulations governing competitive procurement.

- ZCISD staff is circumventing the purchasing process at the campus and department levels.

- ZCISD does not have a purchasing procedure manual to effectively guide staff on the purchasing process.

- ZCISD does not provide adequate staff training on purchasing procedures.

- ZCISD does not have a centralized textbook inventory and management system that would enable staff to effectively manage textbook operations.

- ZCISD has no system to manage contracts creating a liability for the district in dealing with vendors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 45 (p. 101): Reorganize the Business office, eliminate the staff accountant position, and replace it with a coordinator of Business.** This reorganization eliminates the staff accountant position and creates a coordinator of Business and elevates the title of the administrative assistant for Business Services to assistant superintendent for Business and Operations. The current Business Services clerk's job description should be revised and given the responsibilities and title of purchasing clerk. The assistant superintendent for Business and Operations should delegate more responsibility and lines of authority to the coordinator of Business. The reorganization should also include an evaluation and redistribution of professional assignments with other Business office staff to help ensure that all tasks are equitably distributed.

▪ **Recommendation 46 (p. 103): Develop a plan to actively manage the fund balance.** The plan should consider the district's long-range needs and the possibility of tax shortfalls due to the fluctuation in appraised values. In addition, budget development should include a review of how budget decisions will impact fund balance. The administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a presentation for the board on the status of the fund balance. After receiving the report, the board, superintendent, and administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a fund balance management plan. The plan should include a procedure for informing the board of the impact of budget amendments on the fund balance. The procedure should include providing the board and superintendent with a report showing the beginning fund balance, the impact of the budget amendment, and the ending fund balance. In this manner, the staff would monitor the fund balance and make the board aware of the district's financial position on an ongoing basis.

▪ **Recommendation 47 (p. 106): Develop a budget process that includes stakeholder training and a comprehensive budget calendar.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should attend the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) Budget Academy or other comparable training. The superintendent and administrative assistant should develop a plan and budget for board and administrator training. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with the superintendent and board to develop and publish a budget calendar and budget guidelines. The administrative assistant should determine district revenues and work with the superintendent, the board, and district stakeholders to determine expenditures. The administrative assistant for Business Services should prepare presentations and handouts for the board, citizens, and district personnel.

▪ **Recommendation 48 (p. 109): Provide the board and district administrators with monthly detailed budget-to-actual expenditure reports.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should assign a staff member to run the Texas Computer Cooperative Software (iTCCS) detailed budget-to-actual expenditure reports on the last day of the month and distribute them to district administrators. A summary copy of the report along with an explanation of variances should be included in the board's monthly agenda package.

▪ **Recommendation 49 (p. 110): Review all account code assignments to ensure they meet state requirements.** Assigning proper codes will ensure the accuracy of the fiscal information provided by the district through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The superintendent should assign the administrative assistant for Business Services and the director of Personnel and Compliance the task of reviewing all personnel assignments to ensure they are charged to the proper account code. The administrative assistant for Business Services should review the general ledger to make sure it contains the necessary accounts. The Business office should provide account code training to all budget managers and their assistants.

▪ **Recommendation 50 (p. 112): Establish internal control procedures for payroll that segregate duties to safeguard district assets.** Although the district has not experienced any problems resulting from a lack of internal controls, proper procedures should be established to prevent problems from developing in the future. Segregation of duties not only protects the district, it also protects employees from being wrongfully accused of theft. The superintendent should meet with the director of Personnel and Compliance and administrative assistant for Business Services to determine which of the current payroll duties should be reassigned to the Personnel office. Each employee should provide the superintendent with internal control recommendations for their position. The superintendent should evaluate the internal control recommendations and share them with the board.

▪ **Recommendation 51 (p.113): Direct the administrative assistant for Business Services to process all extra duty payments through the payroll system.** The district should process all employee extra duty payments through the district's payroll system to comply with state and federal requirements and allow eligible employees to receive the proper overtime payment. The administrative assistant for Business Services should design a system that ensures all extra duty pay is processed through payroll in compliance with

IRS, Teacher Retirement System, and the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements.

- **Recommendation 52 (p. 114): Adopt a policy for the periodic, competitive procurement and rotation of external audit services.** The policy should address the amount of time between competitive bids and the number of consecutive years that one firm can perform the audit. The superintendent and the administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a request for proposal for external audit services using the format in the FASRG, including a provision for an annual report to management on district business practices needing improvement. The policy should include a provision for an evaluation committee made up of at least three qualified business professionals from the community. Management should present the results of the evaluation and recommendations to the board. The board should approve the recommended firm only after considering both the evaluation and recommendation.

- **Recommendation 53 (p. 116): Establish procedures to ensure that all funds in the district's depository bank are fully collateralized and monitored on a daily basis.** Both the Texas Education Code and FASRG require the depository bank to provide approved securities in a sufficient amount that adequately protects district funds. It is the responsibility of both the depository bank and the district to ensure that these requirements are carried out. This recommendation can be implemented by working with the depository bank to provide a daily online report of aggregate account balances and a monthly report of the market value of securities pledged to the district. The duty of monitoring these reports on a daily basis should be assigned to the Business office.

- **Recommendation 54 (p. 117): Close all unnecessary bank accounts and limit campuses to one bank account each.** The administrative assistant for Business Services can implement this recommendation by evaluating and closing unnecessary Business office accounts; closing dormant and individual department accounts; preparing a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on the action to take concerning the principals' campus accounts; recording scholarships in an agency fund and accounting for them in the

Business office; and notifying outside organizations to have their bank statements mailed to the person responsible for their account.

- **Recommendation 55 (p. 119): Reconcile all bank accounts on a monthly basis ensuring that adjustments are researched and posted to the district's books.** The Business office should be responsible for reconciling all accounts not located at a campus. The staff accountant or another Business office employee should be assigned the duty of monthly bank account reconciliation with the additional responsibility of ensuring that campus level accounts are reconciled. Copies of all reconciliations should be forwarded to the Business office for review. The administrative assistant for Business Services should establish a review procedure to ensure that these duties are being accomplished.

- **Recommendation 56 (p. 120): Require the Tax Assessor-Collector of Zapata County (TAC) to make distribution payments in accordance with the inter-local agreement and immediately invest tax receipts directly into an interest earning account.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should open an account with a local government investment pool and have the TAC electronically transfer tax receipts to the fund when collections exceed the $100,000 threshold. The Business office should monitor this account to ensure compliance.

- **Recommendation 57 (p. 121): Prepare the required investment reports and present them to the board on a quarterly and annual basis.** This practice will provide the board with sufficient warning about potential problems with the portfolio and allow them to make corrections in a timely manner. The administrative assistant for Business Services can implement this recommendation by preparing the required reports on a quarterly and annual basis.

- **Recommendation 58 (p. 122): Diversify the investment portfolio by scheduling maturities and making alternative investments when appropriate.** This practice will allow the district to take advantage of the higher yields paid on longer term investments and to diversify between types of investments offering the best yield. The administrative assistant for Business Services should establish an investment

relationship with a broker and a public investment pool. The enrollment forms for public investment pools can be downloaded from websites. This recommendation can be implemented by completing the enrollment forms and presenting them to the Board of Trustees for approval.

- **Recommendation 59 (p. 123): Develop a cash flow spreadsheet to assist the investment officer in determining what portion of available cash should be invested long-term.** The administrative assistant for Business Services can use the ZCISD CD Transactions Report to determine cash flows in the previous years. A simple cash flow spreadsheet should then be developed using this information.

- **Recommendation 60 (p. 124): Develop a comprehensive safety program to address workers' compensation losses.** The superintendent should assign the responsibility of the safety program to the administrative assistant for Business Services. The administrative assistant for Business Services can work with the Student Services and Operations coordinator to analyze trends and identify exposures to financial loss for the workers' compensation program. The district should establish a safety committee consisting of representatives from all employee groups to work with the administration to develop loss prevention strategies, an employee-training program, workplace safety inspections, and a system for monitoring the program.

- **Recommendation 61 (p. 128): Evaluate the current workers' compensation program and request proposals for workers' compensation coverage on a periodic basis.** Loss reports can be accessed through the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) online system and analyzed to identify loss trends and appropriate loss control strategies. The administrative assistant for Business Services should develop proposal specifications that include five years of loss information, payroll information, and a description of the district's safety program. The Business office should advertise a request for proposals for workers' compensation coverage. The administrative assistant for Business Services should evaluate the proposals based on program cost, coverage, and services that best meet the district needs.

- **Recommendation 62 (p. 130): Conduct a periodic review for the property and casualty insurance program to ensure the district is obtaining the most comprehensive and cost-effective coverage.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should conduct a risk analysis to determine exposures to loss, identify coverage gaps, and develop specifications for a request for proposals. If the district does not have the level of expertise needed, it can contact organizations like TASB for assistance or contract with a risk management consultant. The district should advertise a request for proposals a minimum of 90 days prior to the renewal date of the current policies. The administrative assistant for Business Services should evaluate the proposals to determine the most appropriate coverage at the lowest cost to the district.

- **Recommendation 63 (p. 131): Evaluate the loss exposures related to equipment breakdown that are excluded under the current property coverage and determine the feasibility of purchasing equipment breakdown coverage to address those exposures.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should identify the district's potential exposure to property damage concerning equipment breakdown and obtain quotes for coverage from its current property carrier. The quotes should be compared to the potential losses the district could incur in one year. A recommendation for addressing the current loss exposures should be developed based on the assessment and evaluation.

- **Recommendation 64 (p. 132): Develop a process to manage the district's cafeteria plan that ensures compliance with Internal Revenue Service rules for cafeteria plans.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with legal counsel to develop a cafeteria plan document in compliance with the IRS Code Section 125 for board approval and a summary plan document for employees with a corresponding election agreement. The district should make a request for proposals for third party administrator (TPA) services for the cafeteria plan and develop a TPA service agreement that identifies liability exposures and cafeteria plan administration responsibilities assigned to the TPA and the district, along with performance measures which the district can use to evaluate services delivered by the TPA. The administrative

assistant for Business Services should monitor the TPA services to ensure compliance with IRS Code Section 125.

- **Recommendation 65 (p. 135): Develop employee benefit procedures to provide guidelines for the selection and administration of benefit programs and to ensure efficient operation, consistency in employee communication, and compliance with benefit-related laws.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should evaluate the current benefit programs to determine benefit needs and identify duplicate benefit programs that have minimum participation. A request for proposals should be advertised for supplemental coverages based on the evaluation. An insurance committee should be established consisting of representatives from all employee groups to review proposals and develop recommendations. Each benefit program should submit a contract or agreement to the committee for review prior to board approval. A list of authorized agents for selected benefit plans should be compiled for the campuses along with vendor guidelines. The district should conduct annual training on employee benefit procedures with central office and designated campus staff.

- **Recommendation 66 (p. 137): Develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods to comply with state purchasing laws.** The Business office should develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods that result in future contracts complying with state purchasing laws and board policy. The administrative assistant for Business Services should require that all staff understand the guidelines to ensure compliance.

- **Recommendation 67 (p. 139): Centralize the purchasing operation to increase its effectiveness and efficiency.** The Business office should prepare a list of approved district vendors and post the list on the Internet for staff use. The district should also fully implement the automated business and financial accounting program offered by the Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) to reduce processing time and provide a more efficient service to staff and vendors.

- **Recommendation 68 (p. 143): Develop and implement a comprehensive purchasing procedure manual that covers the**

purchasing process. Using sample manuals from other Texas school districts and Region 1, the administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a purchasing manual that accurately describes the purchasing process in ZCISD. Placing the manual online on the district's website will allow easy updating and access. All district staff involved in the purchasing process should receive training on accessing the purchasing manual to ensure they understand the policies and procedures.

- **Recommendation 69 (p. 144): Provide a comprehensive training plan to ensure all employees involved in the purchasing process can perform their duties effectively.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should budget time and funds for those directly involved in purchasing functions to attend classes on purchasing laws and procedures. Part of each annual administrative in-service should cover business legal requirements and ethics. The administrative assistant for Business Services should also create an annual in-service for clerical staff involved in purchasing operations. The Business office should develop peer training between the Accounts Payable clerk and those involved in requisition input to improve the speed and effectiveness of purchasing operations.

- **Recommendation 70 (p. 145): Implement a textbook inventory and management system.** State law requires an annual inventory of all textbooks. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should contact TEA regarding training and apply for all Educational Materials and Textbooks (EMAT) services. The coordinator should also develop written procedures to provide campus administrators and support staff with guidelines for complying with textbook rules and regulations.

- **Recommendation 71 (p 146): Develop a contract management policy with procedures to effectively manage and monitor ZCISD's contracts.** The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with legal counsel to develop a contract management policy with procedures that include a uniform set of contract standards and a generic district vendor contract. Procedures should include a process for reviewing and maintaining contract files and monitoring ongoing contracts.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTION

ZCISD monitors tax collection and has a consistently high delinquent tax collection rate. The district contracts with the firm of Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson, LLP for the collection of delinquent taxes. The district meets with the firm annually to monitor tax collection, and the firm provides the board with an annual report on tax collection efforts. The action by both the district and law firm resulted in a delinquent tax collection rate of 15.42 percent in 2002–03 and 17.50 percent in 2003–04. When these delinquent tax collections are added to an already high current tax collection rate, the total percent of the levy collected in many years exceeds 100 percent.

Exhibit 3–1 displays ZCISD's adjusted levy and the total of current and delinquent tax collections for fiscal years 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03.

The exhibit shows that the district tax levy is increasing, which is a result of a continuing increase in the district's appraised values. As this happens during the year, the district will collect additional taxes, which will increase the collection percentage. In addition, the district uses an aggressive tax collection law firm to ensure that back taxes are collected in a timely manner.

Maintaining a total tax collection percentage of 96 percent is one of the indicators of the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST), a financial accountability rating system developed by TEA that rates the financial performance of school districts. Since tax collection is the main source of revenue for most school districts, it is considered a key indicator in assessing a district's financial situation.

DETAILED FINDINGS

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (REC. 45)

The ZCISD Business office is not organized in a functional and efficient manner. Business office personnel report to the Business Services director and are responsible for accounting, financial reporting, auditing, accounts payable and receivable, bank reconciliation, investments, purchase order processing, competitive bidding, and fixed assets. The Business Services director also supervises the Technology and Child Nutrition departments.

Exhibit 3–2 displays the organization chart for the Business office and indicates that the Business Services director does not assign supervisory authority to the staff accountant, who is the only other business professional in the department. In addition, the staff accountant does not perform many tasks normally assigned to business professionals, such as assisting in budget preparation, reviewing payroll output, approving stop payments and check reissues, preparing and analyzing bid specifications, and supervising Business office paraprofessionals. **Exhibit 3–3** displays tasks performed by the Business office professionals.

The staff accountant has worked for the district for one year and has the responsibility to reconcile nine bank accounts and more recently was given the additional duty of approving requisitions. The job description for accountants in many school districts requires an accounting degree with a minimum of 24 semester hours in accounting.

ZCISD is experiencing a number of problems related to the Business office organizational structure. Several problems result from not having a more qualified staff accountant position and delegating responsibilities to that position. Examples of related problems are as follows:

- reconciliation of only a few of ZCISD's 42 bank accounts;

- failure to examine and adjust ledgers as needed;

- delaying the close of the 2003–04 fiscal year until January 2005;

- assigning budget codes that do not comply with FASRG requirements; and

- accounting reports not being provided to the board and staff.

EXHIBIT 3–1
ZCISD CURRENT AND DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTED AS A PERCENT OF THE LEVY FOR FISCAL YEARS 2001, 2002, AND 2003

YEAR	ADJUSTED LEVY	TOTAL TAX COLLECTIONS			
		M&O	DEBT SERVICE	TOTAL	PERCENT
2001	$14,348,344	$12,680,466	$1,975,955	$14,656,421	102%
2002	$21,243,596	$19,619,992	$1,801,006	$21,420,998	101%
2003	$26,139,371	$24,311,789	$1,889,289	$26,201,078	100%

SOURCE: ZCISD Annual Financial Reports.

EXHIBIT 3–2
ZCISD BUSINESS OFFICE ORGANIZATION
2004–05

```
                      ┌─────────────────────┐
                      │  Business Services  │
                      │      Director       │
                      └──────────┬──────────┘
                                 │
   ┌──────────────────────┐      │      ┌──────────────────────┐
   │ Accounts Payable Clerk │─────┼─────│   Staff Accountant   │
   └──────────────────────┘      │      └──────────────────────┘
                                 │
   ┌──────────────────────┐      │      ┌──────────────────────────┐
   │     Payroll Clerk     │─────┼─────│ Secretary & Cash Receivables │
   └──────────────────────┘      │      └──────────────────────────┘
                                 │
   ┌──────────────────────┐      │
   │ Business Services Clerk │────┘
   └──────────────────────┘
```
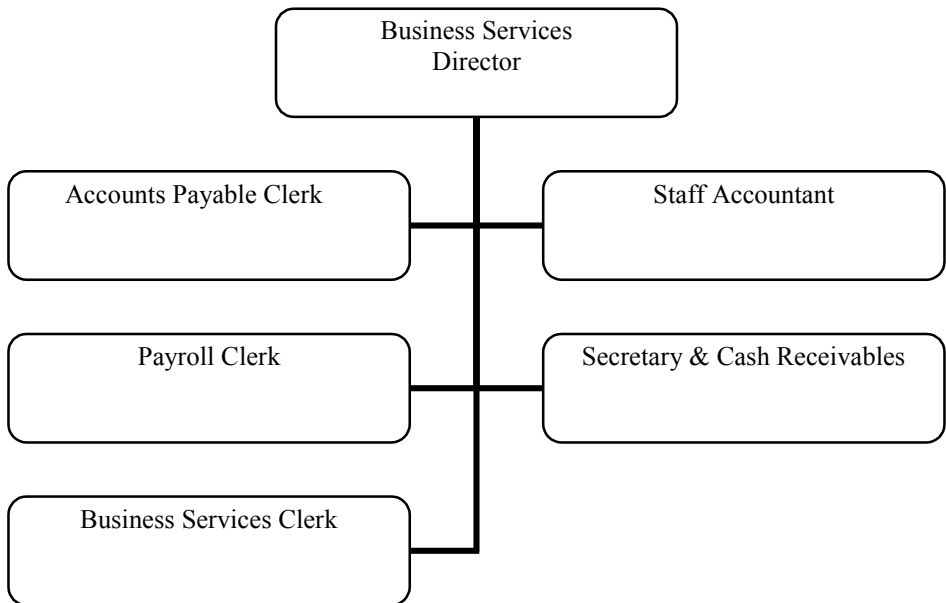
SOURCE: ZCISD Business office.

EXHIBIT 3–3
RESPONSIBILITIES OF BUSINESS OFFICE PROFESSIONALS

```
                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │ Business Office │
                          └────────┬────────┘
                ┌──────────────────┴──────────────────┐
      ┌──────────────────┐                 ┌──────────────────────┐
      │ Business Services│                 │   Staff Accountant   │
      │     Director     │                 │   Responsibilities   │
      └──────────────────┘                 └──────────┬───────────┘
                                        ┌─────────────┴─────────────┐
   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
   │Supervise Staff│  │  Accounting  │  │ Bank Account │  │Requisition Approval│
   │  Accountant   │  │              │  │Reconciliation│  │                  │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘

   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
   │Supervise     │  │    Audit     │
   │Business Office│  │ Preparation │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘

   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
   │   Budget     │  │  Sign Purchase│
   │ Preparation  │  │    Orders    │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘

   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
   │ Competitive  │  │Review and Certify│
   │   Bidding    │  │ Federal Reports │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘

   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
   │Prepare Tax   │  │Review Financial│
   │Revenue       │  │PEIMS Information│
   │Estimates     │  │              │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘

   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
   │  District    │  │Invest District│
   │ Risk Manager │  │    Funds     │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
```

SOURCE: Interviews and Business Services director's chart of duties performed, December 2004.

The Business Services director has contributed to the problem by not training the staff accountant or delegating duties to subordinates. By trying to do everything, the Business Services director has not completed the following:

- calculated the proper tax levy;

- established a budget process that included stakeholders;

- provided the board or staff with budget and accounting reports;

- assigned the correct budget codes to personnel; and

- developed a comprehensive investment program.

The Business Services director was replaced in January 2005, and the title of the position was changed to the administrative assistant for Business Services. The new administrative assistant has 23 years of accounting experience and is a certified public accountant. Previous assignments include 15 years banking experience, two years as a controller for a hospital, and three years as the assistant superintendent for Finance and Operations for a public school district.

Effective districts organize the business office to ensure that all tasks are equitably distributed and that professional positions are filled with individuals possessing both the academic qualifications and experience to do the job.

ZCISD should reorganize the Business office, eliminate the staff accountant position, and replace it with a coordinator of Business. This reorganization eliminates the staff accountant position and creates a coordinator of Business and elevates the title of the administrative assistant for Business Services to assistant superintendent for Business and Operations. The current Business Services clerk's job description should be revised and given the responsibilities and title of purchasing clerk. The assistant superintendent for Business and Operations should delegate more responsibility and lines of authority to the coordinator of Business. The reorganization should also include an evaluation and redistribution of professional assignments with other Business office staff to help ensure that all tasks are equitably distributed. **Exhibit 3–4** displays the proposed organization of the ZCISD Business office.

Exhibit 3–5 contains the proposed distribution of business-related professional responsibilities in the proposed organization.

The superintendent and assistant superintendent for Business and Operations should review the proposed structure and write a job description for the coordinator of Business. The proposal should be presented to the board for approval.

This recommendation will increase the annual cost by approximately $23,082, which is the difference between the average proposed salary for the coordinator of Business of $56,952 plus $6,834 in benefits at 12 percent equaling $63,786, and the staff accountant salary of $36,343 plus $4,361 in benefits at 12 percent equaling $40,704, resulting in a net cost of $23,082 ($63,786-$40,704 = $23,082). The proposed salary for the coordinator of Business is based on the average salaries for similar type positions at ZCISD.

FUND BALANCE MANAGEMENT (REC. 46)

ZCISD does not have a plan for managing their fund balance, causing large fluctuations between fiscal years. The fund balance for the General Fund has varied from a high of $8,624,729 in 1998–99 to a low of $148,747 in 2003–04.

Exhibit 3–6 displays the district's fund balance for a six-year period beginning in 1998–99.

The chart shows that the district's fund balance declined in 2000–01. The decline resulted from using $7,983,711 of the fund balance for the construction of a new high school. In 2003–04, the district's fund balance declined significantly to $148,747. This amount is $272,729 less than the district's reserved fund balance. The Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) requires that the total fund balance be greater than the reserved fund balance. ZCISD failed to meet this requirement, which will result in the district receiving a substandard FIRST rating.

Fund balance is the gross difference between a fund's assets and liabilities reflected on the balance sheet and is similar to the retained earnings in financial accounting. The fund balance is normally comprised of the following three elements:

- Reserved fund balance designates the portion of fund balance that is not available for appropriations or expenditures and includes items such as inventory. It also includes funds that are legally restricted for a specific use such as a reserve for encumbrances.

- Designated unreserved fund balance is an amount set aside or designated by management to reflect tentative plans or commitments of district resources. Designations require board action to earmark

EXHIBIT 3–4
PROPOSED ZCISD BUSINESS OFFICE ORGANIZATION

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              ┌─────────────────────────┐
              │  Assistant Superintendent │
              │  for Business & Operations │
              └─────────────────────────┘
                            │
   ┌──────────────────┐     │
   │ Secretary & Accounts │  │
   │    Receivable     │─────┤
   └──────────────────┘     │
                            │
              ┌─────────────────────────┐
              │     Coordinator of       │
              │        Business          │
              └─────────────────────────┘
                            │
       ┌────────────────────┼────────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Payroll Clerk │   │ Purchasing Clerk │   │ Accounts Payable │
│              │   │                  │   │     Clerk        │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
```
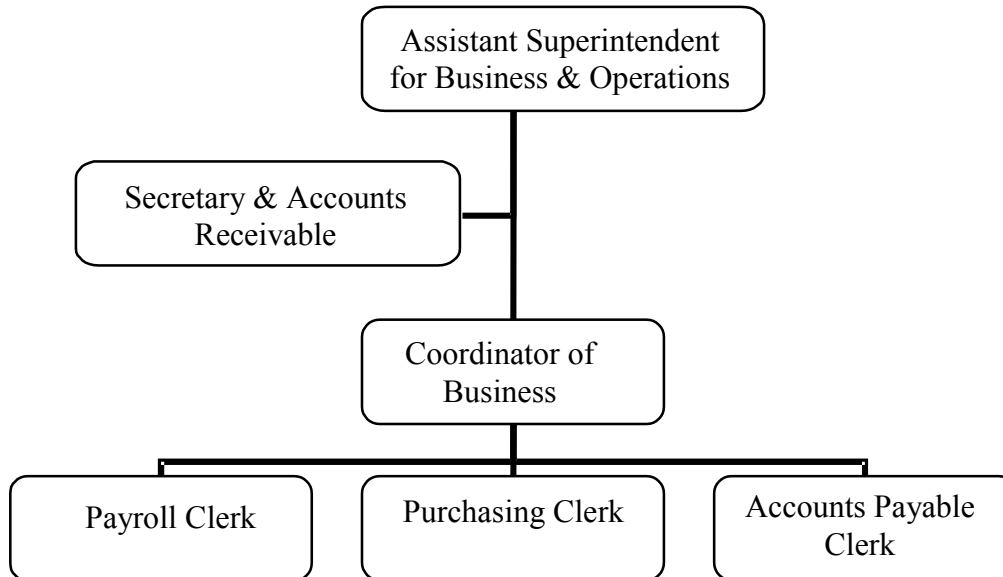
SOURCE: Texas Public School Consulting, Inc., January 2005.

EXHIBIT 3–5
PROPOSED ZCISD BUSINESS OFFICE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

```
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │ Business Office  │
                        │ Responsibilities │
                        └──────────────────┘
                                 │
          ┌──────────────────────┴──────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Assistant Superintendent for │          │   Coordinator of    │
│   Business & Operations      │          │      Business       │
└─────────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────┘
```

Assistant Superintendent for Business & Operations		Coordinator of Business	
Budget	Investments	Purchasing	Accounting
Tax Collection	State Revenues	Accounts Payable	Budget Code Assignments
Federal & State Grant Reporting	External Audit	Bank Account Reconciliation	Payroll and Related Reporting
PEIMS Financial Reports	Receivables	Accounting Reports Distribution	
Risk Management			

SOURCE: Texas Public School Consulting, Inc., January 2005.

EXHIBIT 3–6
ZCISD GENERAL FUND BALANCE
1998–99 THROUGH 2003–04
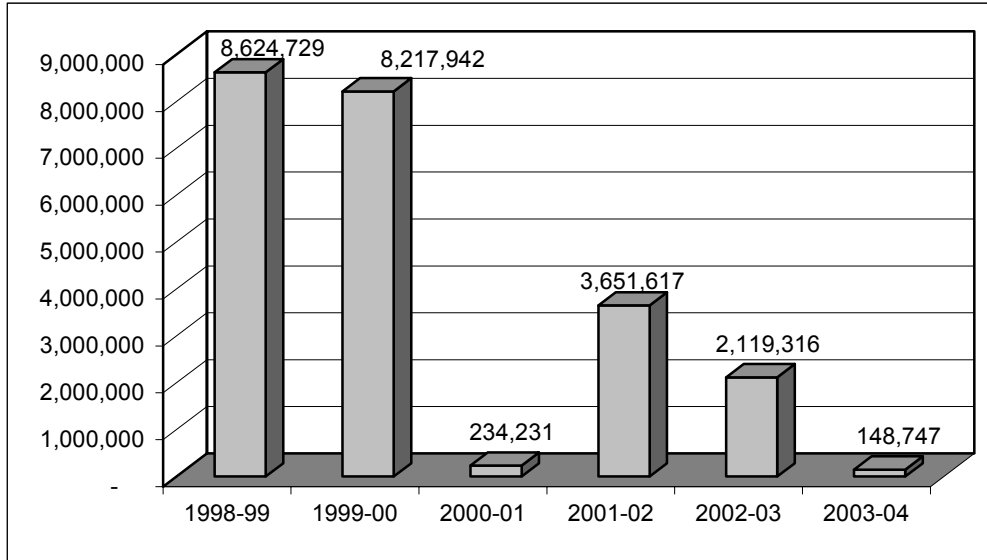
SOURCE: Zapata County ISD Annual Financial Reports.

fund balance for bona fide purposes that will be fulfilled within a reasonable period of time. An example would be designations for self-insurance or capital replacement.

- Undesignated unreserved fund balances are the difference between the unreserved fund balance and the designated unreserved fund balance. This portion of the fund balance is usually available to finance monthly operating expenditures.

Prudent financial management requires accumulating undesignated unreserved fund balance in the General Fund in an amount that is adequate to cover net cash outflows that occur in virtually all school districts during most of the fiscal year.

TEA has set a rule of thumb to compute the optimum fund balance in the General Fund. The rule of thumb calls for the computation of the optimum undesignated unreserved fund balance to equal the estimated amount to cover cash flow deficits in the General Fund for the fall period in the following fiscal year plus estimated average monthly cash disbursements of the General Fund for the nine months following the fiscal year.

Exhibit 3–7 contains the optimum fund balance calculations for ZCISD.

The chart shows that ZCISD has not made it a practice to manage their fund balance. The board has no knowledge of what the fund balance is, and there is no plan to determine an optimum fund balance for ZCISD or where any excess fund balance should be used. An optimum fund balance can include board designations for such items as the purchase of capital assets, a contingency for self-insurance, or a set aside for renovations.

EXHIBIT 3–7
ZCISD OPTIMUM GENERAL FUND BALANCE CALCULATIONS
2000–01 THROUGH 2003–04

EXPLANATION	FISCAL YEARS			
	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Beginning Fund Balance	$234,231	$3,651,617	$2,119,316	$148,747
Reserved Fund Balance	$385,203	$448,388	$453,078	$421,476
Designated Fund Balance	$0	$0	$0	$0
Amount Designated to cover fall cash flow deficits	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$3,000,000	$2,900,000
Estimate of one month cash disbursement	$1,666,000	$2,500,000	$3,000,000	$2,900,000
Optimum Fund Balance	$4,051,203	$4,948,388	$6,453,078	$6,221,476
Excess (Deficit) Unreserved Fund Balance	($3,816,972)	($1,296,771)	($4,333,762)	($6,072,729)

SOURCE: Zapata County ISD Annual Financial Reports.

The ZCISD superintendent should develop a plan to actively manage the fund balance. The plan should consider the district's long-range needs and the possibility of tax shortfalls due the fluctuation in appraised values. In addition, budget development should include a review of how budget decisions will impact fund balance. The administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a presentation for the board on the status of the fund balance. After receiving the report, the board, superintendent, and administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a fund balance management plan. The plan should include a procedure for informing the board of the impact of budget amendments on the fund balance. The procedure should include providing the board and superintendent with a report showing the beginning fund balance, the impact of the budget amendment, and the ending fund balance. In this manner, the staff would monitor the fund balance and make the board aware of the district's financial position on an ongoing basis.

BUDGET PROCESS (REC. 47)

ZCISD does not have a coordinated budget preparation and adoption process that complies with state requirements and involves the citizens, board, and employees in budget planning. ZCISD uses a top-down approach to budgeting. Payroll budgets are prepared in the Business office and are not shared with the board, superintendent, principals, or other budget managers. Campus principals receive their budget allocation based on a per pupil amount multiplied by their projected enrollment. The Business office controls allocation amounts, which have not increased in several years. In addition, the Business office decides how allocations are distributed to state mandated programs.

Exhibit 3–8 contains the amounts distributed by the Business office to the campuses. Because of Benavides Elementary School's small size, it is treated as an exception and receives a fixed amount from the Business office. North Elementary receives additional funds to support the pre-kindergarten through grade 3 program.

Principals work with their campus faculty to assign their allocations to grade level or subject matter budgets. This process is limited by the Business office requirement that campuses are restricted from moving funds between programs. Campus budgets are maintained on either a computer generated spreadsheet or manual ledger. Currently, campuses and departments cannot check on their budget by accessing the district's financial system.

Budget training is not provided to district personnel. The Business Services director provides the board with a budget workshop, which is used to explain enrollment projections, campus allocations, function and object level expenditure budgets, and estimated revenues. The board does not receive a comparison of the projected budget to the current budget, campus and department level briefings on budget requirements, projections of spending decisions on future budgets, or an explanation of how revenues are computed.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) requires school districts to adopt a budget prior to August 20 if the district's fiscal year ends on August 31. It also requires a public hearing to adopt the proposed budget and tax rate. The hearings may be conducted on the same night, but a notice of these hearings must be published in a local newspaper. ZCISD conducted proposed budget and tax rate hearings as required by the TEC. However, the district failed to adopt the revenue portion of the budget, which is one of the components of a

EXHIBIT 3–8
ZCISD GENERAL FUND
CAMPUS BUDGET ALLOCATIONS
2004–05 FISCAL YEAR

			PROGRAMS						
SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	ALLOCATION	REGULAR EDUCATION	SPECIAL EDUCATION	CAREER & TECHNOLOGY	GIFTED & TALENTED	STATE COMP. EDUCATION	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	TOTAL ALLOCATION
High School	867	$65	$39,449	$5,072	$3,381	$282	$6,763	$1,409	$56,355
Middle School	802	$65	$38,055	$5,213	$0	$521	$6,777	$1,564	$52,130
Central Elementary	519	$50	$18,944	$2,595	$0	$260	$3,374	$779	$25,950
Benavides Elementary	97	Small School	$7,424	$1,017	$0	$102	$1,322	$305	$10,170
South Elementary	610	$50	$22,265	$3,050	$0	$305	$3,965	$915	$30,500
North Elementary	420	$50	$20,878	$2,860	$0	$286	$3,718	$858	$28,600

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Office 2004–05 Planning Budget. NOTE: Program dollar amounts are rounded off which may result in Total Allocation dollar amounts not adding up to figure shown.

school district's budget. The revenue portion reflects the amount of monies the district is estimated to receive during the fiscal year. Without the revenue component, the board has no knowledge of whether the budget they are approving is balanced to revenues or if they are overspending. This is also required by ZCISD Policy CE (LEGAL), which states: "The superintendent shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a proposed budget covering all estimated revenue and proposed expenditures of the district for the following fiscal year."

The budgeting process is comprised of three major phases: planning, preparation, and evaluation. The budgetary process begins with sound planning. Planning defines the goals and objectives of campuses and the school district and develops programs to attain those goals and objectives. Once these programs and plans have been established, budgetary resource allocations are made to support them. Budgetary resource allocations are the preparation phase of budgeting. However, the allocations cannot be made until plans and programs have been established. Finally, the budget is evaluated for its effectiveness in attaining goals and objectives. Evaluation typically involves an examination of how funds were expended, what outcomes resulted from the expenditure of funds, and to what degree these outcomes achieved the objectives stated during the planning phase. This evaluation phase is important in determining the following year's budgetary allocations.

ZCISD's budget process fails to meet these requirements. First, the district fails to consider its goals or objectives in the budget process. Budgets are based on allocations that are not tied to district or campus goals. Personnel are not assigned or allocated based on educational objectives, and long-term maintenance and equipment needs are not considered. Second, the budget development process is centered in the Business office and does not involve the board or administration. District level and campus committees are not trained or briefed on the budget and have very little knowledge of the development process. This practice has resulted in a lack of trust from stakeholders and a general suspicion of the Business office. Finally, there is no knowledge of the resources available to the district. Many district employees are frustrated by the fact they are considered a wealthy district but have lower salaries and fewer supplies than neighboring districts. The board would like to consider pay increases, but without a basic knowledge of

available resources plus staffing and expenditure requirements, they cannot move forward.

Effective budgeting provides a district with a solid financial foundation. Costs must be accurately reported and effectively controlled. Everyone involved in the budget process must have sufficient and accurate information to ensure that when budget reductions or changes are required, they will not be to the detriment of the district's primary goal, providing quality education to its students. An effective district begins the budget planning process by training the board, superintendent, and Business office professionals on budget development. Only after receiving this instruction can a district go on to develop a comprehensive and inclusive budget process, which includes a planning calendar and stakeholder involvement.

Budget training is available from the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO). TASBO holds an annual two-day Budget Academy for chief financial officers and school district business officials. This training includes the development of a school district budget from concept to adoption and beyond. In addition, TASBO offers a certification course entitled Budget and Financial Planning. This course is designed for business officials, superintendents, and board members and covers the following subjects:

- budgetary approaches;
- the budget development process;
- communicating the budget;
- roles and responsibilities;
- legal requirements (funds to be budgeted);
- forecasting;
- multiyear projections;
- fund balance;
- grant/construction programs;
- truth in taxation; and
- fiscal year change.

A good budget calendar incorporates the elements of the budget development process. The following three steps can be used to prepare a budget calendar:

- Determine the level of detail needed. A district may have several budget calendars with varied levels of detail provided. A general calendar may be presented to the school

board while a detailed calendar may be used in the budget guidelines at the campus level. If several calendars are used, they should be summarized in a district master calendar to ensure that all the activities and dates are consistent and compatible.

▪ Identify all the activities that must be included in the calendar and arrange them in chronological order.

▪ Assign completion dates to each activity on the calendar. Completion dates for activities should be assigned working backward from the legally mandated date for presentation of the preliminary school district budget to the school board by August 20. Dates should also be assigned to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the completion of each activity on the calendar.

Budget calendars should contain a column that shows who is responsible for each activity listed.

The TEA Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) provides a sample budget calendar. The sample may be modified to suit district needs. **Exhibit 3–9** is an example of a budget calendar that has been modified to meet the requirements of a district the size of ZCISD.

Dripping Springs ISD has developed a planning process that begins in October and includes the board, citizens, administrators, and staff in the development process. Their process includes the following:

▪ board review of the mission and approval of school improvement plans;

▪ four board budget workshops;

▪ a budget review team composed of the superintendent, assistant superintendents, directors, campus administrators, and teachers;

EXHIBIT 3–9
BUDGET CALENDAR EXAMPLE

TARGET DATE	ACTIVITY/PROCESS	RESPONSIBILITY
11-01-0X	Budget process approved	Superintendent
11-15-0X	Projected enrollments	Business Services director
02-15-0X	Staffing requirements determined	Superintendent and Personnel Director
03-6-0X	Budget process outlined to principals and staff	Superintendent and Business Services director
03-8-0X	Beginning of campus budget preparation	Principals/staff
03-8-0X	Beginning of special program and support service budget preparation	Special program and support departments
04-1-0X	Completion of campus budgets	Principals
04-6-0X	Completion of special program and support service budgets	Special program and support service administrators
04-8-0X	Initiate review of campus budgets and non-allocated requests	Superintendent and Business Services director
05-18-0X	Review projected revenue estimates	Superintendent and Business Services director
05-19-0X	Initiate superintendent's review of preliminary district budget	Superintendent
05-21-0X	Review personnel staffing and proposed salary schedule	Superintendent, Personnel Director and Business Services director
05-22-0X	Review of building maintenance, renovation, and future construction schedules	Superintendent and Business Services director
06-1-0X	Complete superintendent's review of preliminary district budget, personnel requirements, facility requirements, and projected revenue	Superintendent, Directors and Business Services director
06-8-0X	Complete first draft of district budget	Business Services director
06-9-0X	Review first draft of district budget	Superintendent
06-16-0X	Budget workshop	School Board and administrative staff
06-24-0X	Administrative budget meeting	Input from citizens and district employees
07-16-0X	Budget workshop	School Board and administrative staff
07-30-0X	Complete final budget draft	Superintendent and Business Services director
08-6-0X	Preliminary public budget hearing	School Board, Superintendent, and Business Services director
08-13-0X	Official public budget hearing	School Board, Superintendent, and Business Services director
08-27-0X	Budget adopted	School Board

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Financial Accountability Resource Guide (FASRG) Modified Budget Calendar.

- a slide presentation, which includes comparative data from other districts;

- presentation of the budget to community leaders; and

- a public hearing and adoption.

ZCISD should develop a budget process that includes stakeholder training and a comprehensive budget calendar. The administrative assistant for Business Services should attend the TASBO Budget Academy or other comparable training. The superintendent and administrative assistant should develop a plan and budget for board and administrator training. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with the superintendent and board to develop and publish a budget calendar and budget guidelines. The administrative assistant should determine district revenues and work with the superintendent, the board, and district stakeholders to determine expenditures. The administrative assistant for Business Services should prepare presentations and handouts for the board, citizens, and district personnel.

Implementing this recommendation will cost approximately $625 annually. The two-day TASBO Budget Academy is conducted in Austin at a cost of $275 per person plus an additional $350 for trip costs. Sending the administrative assistant for Business Services or another Business office employee to this training will cost $625 per year ($275+$350=$625). TASBO can also be contracted to conduct additional budget training locally. Local training would allow the district to train the board, principals, directors, secretaries, Business office paraprofessionals, and other district personnel without travel expenses. The estimated one-time cost of this training is $2,500.

FINANCIAL REPORTS (REC. 48)

The ZCISD Business Services director does not provide the board or other district administrators with monthly financial reports that would assist them in making sound budget and financial decisions. Instead, the board receives a monthly listing of vendors and the amount they were paid and approves the expenditures as an agenda item. Campuses also lack the reports necessary to effectively manage their budget, and as a result, have to depend on their own manual or spreadsheet systems to keep track of their expenditures and remaining amounts in their budget. By failing to monitor expenditures during fiscal year 2002–03, the district overspent its budget in several functions.

Exhibit 3–10 compares the 2002–03 actual expenditures with the approved budget and provides information on variances. The instructional expenditure budget was overspent by $883,156. This type of budget variance should be caught during the fiscal year and presented to the board for a budget amendment before it occurs. Budget variance should not be a surprise occurrence at the end of the year when the board can take no action to prevent overspending.

TEA'S FASRG states "The level and frequency of management review of the budget will vary by district. In most districts, the superintendent (or designee) reviews budget-to-actual comparisons monthly. Reporting periodic budget/actual results to the school board is customary in most districts."

The district has implemented the Internet-based Texas Computer Cooperative Software (iTCCS). This system will provide detailed budget-to-actual expenditure reports to the district, which the district is not currently providing to the administrators and board. The iTCCS reports contain the following information for each individual budget code:

- detailed budget code containing all of the elements mandated by the FASRG;

- a written description of the budget code;

- appropriation (budget as amended);

- encumbrances (total purchase orders outstanding);

- expenditures (the total of all expenses to date); and,

- balance (the amount of appropriation remaining).

Crystal City ISD (CCISD) increases stakeholder understanding and participation by providing an informative budget analysis report on a monthly basis. The CCISD reports include information on the budget amount, the actual financial results, and variances from budget at a selected level of detail. The district supplements any large budget variance in monthly board reports with written or oral explanations.

The Business office should provide the board and district administrators with monthly detailed budget-to-actual expenditure reports. The administrative assistant for Business Services should assign a staff member to run the iTCCS detailed budget-to-actual expenditure reports on the last day of the month and distribute them to district administrators. A summary copy of the report along with an explanation of variances

EXHIBIT 3–10
ZCISD GENERAL FUND BUDGET COMPARISON TO ACTUAL EXPENDITURES
2002–03 FISCAL YEAR

FISCAL YEAR 2002–03	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	VARIANCE
REVENUE BY TYPE			
Local Tax	$19,661,571	$16,807,065	$(2,854,506)
Other Local and Intermediate	329,929	252,434	$(77,495)
State	900,000	3,061,912	$2,161,912
Federal	1,165,000	1,485,149	$320,149
Total	$22,056,500	$21,606,560	$(449,940)
BY FUNCTION (6110–6400)			
Instruction	$11,794,396	$12,677,552	$(883,156)
Instructional Resources & Media Services	350,682	281,255	$69,427
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development	7,000	144,855	(137,855)
Instructional Leadership	27,192	13,323	13,869
School Leadership	805,081	695,193	109,888
Guidance & Counseling	757,616	652,141	105,475
Social Work Services	44,520	63,950	(19,430)
Health Services	305,883	210,092	95,791
Student Transportation	903,945	1,165,767	(261,822)
Food	1,124,929	1,396,951	(272,022)
Co curricular/Extracurricular	738,885	768,560	(29,675)
General Administration	1,796,793	1,546,225	250,568
Plant Maintenance & Operations	2,658,499	2,528,659	129,840
Security & Monitoring	347,520	427,102	(79,582)
Community Services	1,000	-	1,000
Total	21,663,941	22,571,625	(907,684)
Equity Transfer	$-	$7,190,086	$(7,190,086)

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency website, TEA - Standard Reports.

should be included in the board's monthly agenda package.

ACCOUNT CODES (REC. 49)
The district's failure to assign costs to the proper account code misstates program expenditures causing an inaccurate administrative cost ratio and failure to comply with the requirements of the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) concerning accounting for federal and state programs. A major purpose of the accounting code structure is to establish the standard school district fiscal accounting system as required by law. FASRG contains a detailed explanation of the account code structure and provides examples of how certain costs should be coded. **Exhibit 3–11** displays the TEA mandated account code structure.

Although ZCISD uses the proper code structure, the district fails to assign expenditures to the proper elements within the structure. For example, the function column in **Exhibit 3–11** is a mandatory two-digit code applied to expenditures, which identifies the purpose of the transaction. Functions are grouped according to related activities in the following major areas/classes:

- 10 Instruction and Instructional-Related Services;
- 20 Instructional and School Leadership;
- 30 Support Services - Student (Pupil);
- 40 Administrative Support Services;
- 50 Support Services - Non-Student Based;
- 60 Ancillary Services;
- 70 Debt Service;
- 80 Capital Outlay; and
- 90 Intergovernmental Charges.

Each of these major areas is further defined by detailed function codes. For example, the instructional function 10 is broken down into three detailed functions. The detailed functions are instruction (11), instructional resources and media services (12), and curriculum development and instructional staff development (13).

In examining ZCISD financial and payroll records, the review team discovered several incidents where the district used the wrong function code.

EXHIBIT 3–11
TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY MANDATED ACCOUNT CODE STRUCTURE

FUND	FUNCTION	OBJECT	LOCAL OPTION	ORGANIZATION	FISCAL YEAR	PROGRAM INTENT CODE	LOCAL OPTION	LOCAL OPTION
XXX	XX	XXXX	XX	XXX	X	XX	X	XX

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency FASRG.

EXHIBIT 3–12
ZCISD ERRORS IN FUNCTION CODE ASSIGNMENTS
2004–05 SCHOOL YEAR

ACTUAL ASSIGNMENT	BUDGET CODE ASSIGNMENT
Student Services and Operations Coordinator salary should be split with a portion assigned to function 34 Transportation and function 51 Maintenance	Assigned to function 23 Campus Administration
Technology Specialist should be assigned to function 12 Instructional Resources and Media Services	Assigned to function 23 Campus Administration
Counselor/Facilitator should be assigned to function 31 Guidance, Counseling, and Evaluation Services	Assigned to function 23 Campus Administration
Assistant Principal should be assigned to function 23 Campus Administration	Assigned to function 11 Regular Education Teacher

SOURCE: ZCISD List of Employees by Campus and ZCISD Payroll Report.

Exhibit 3–12 contains some examples of coding errors in functions 11, 12, and 31. Each of these functions is used in computing the administrative cost ratio, which is an indicator in the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST). Coding errors such as these misstate the cost of instruction and do not allow the TEA or the district to accurately compare district operations to those of other school districts.

The object is a mandatory four-digit code identifying the nature and object of an account. It is used to identify the type of expense. For example, contracted services are recorded under 6200 level objects, while supplies and material are recorded as 6300 level objects. The last two digits of the object code provide the detail. Two examples of 6200 object detail are 6211 Legal Fee and 6212 Independent Audit Costs. These two objects, along with other information, are used by TEA to calculate the indirect cost a district receives as revenue on grants.

ZCISD did not use the proper code for legal fees and in 2002–03 reported only $1,842 in legal expenses, when in fact legal fees exceeded $49,000. In addition, audit expenditures were reported as $0. These errors were not caught by the external auditor and were incorrectly reported in the Annual Financial Report.

The program intent code (PIC) in **Exhibit 3–11** is a two-digit code used to designate the intent of a program provided to students. These codes are used to account for the cost of instruction and other services that are directed toward a particular need of a specific set of students. TEA uses this code to determine if a district is meeting the spending requirements of special program funding such as special education, bilingual education, and accelerated education. TEA uses PIC information to monitor program compliance.

The district has not taken the proper care in assigning PIC codes. Some examples of improper PIC assignments are the following:

- a custodian assigned to accelerated education;
- a coaching stipend assigned to bilingual education;
- a DAEP instructor assigned to regular education; and
- a campus administrator assigned to accelerated education.

Effective districts comply with the legal requirements of Section 44.007 of the Texas Education Code, which requires that a standard school district fiscal accounting system be adopted by each school district. The system must meet at least the minimum requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education. These requirements are outlined in the FASRG.

ZCISD should review all account code assignments to ensure they meet state requirements. Assigning proper codes will ensure the accuracy of the fiscal information provided by the district through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The superintendent should assign the administrative assistant for Business Services and the director of Personnel and Compliance the task of reviewing all personnel assignments to ensure they are charged to the proper account code. The administrative assistant for Business Services should review the general ledger to make sure it contains the

necessary accounts. The Business office should provide account code training to all budget managers and their assistants.

PAYROLL INTERNAL CONTROL (REC. 50)

The district payroll process is not documented and does not provide adequate internal controls to prevent errors and safeguard district funds. The Payroll clerk learned the payroll process from the previous Payroll clerk, who is now the Accounts Payable clerk. ZCISD pays all full-time employees twice per month (on the 15th and at the end of the month). This process is altered if paydays fall on a weekend or holiday; in those cases, payroll checks are issued on the preceding Friday. Employees are paid early during holiday periods when the district is closed.

Exhibit 3–13 compares ZCISD and peer district payroll costs as a percentage of total expenditures.

EXHIBIT 3–13
SUMMARY OF ACTUAL PAYROLL COSTS
ZCISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2002–03

DISTRICT	TOTAL PAYROLL COSTS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES
Groesbeck ISD	$10,143,919	75.9%
Hidalgo ISD	$20,688,391	66.9%
Point Isabel ISD	$14,171,139	67.0%
Valley View ISD	$15,296,213	67.8%
Zapata County ISD	$21,184,649	72.6%
Peer District Average	$15,074,916	69.4%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Actual Financial Report, 2002–03.

Payroll processed payments for approximately 567 employees during 2003–04, not including substitutes and temporary positions. Of this number, about 50 percent have selected the district's direct deposit option. Actual payroll cost for 2002–03 reached $21,184,649, which is 72.6 percent of total expenditures and more than 3 percent higher than the peer district average.

The Payroll clerk, who also has the additional duty of providing employees with benefit information, processes payroll. The job includes everything from setting up new employees to processing withholdings. The Personnel department hires new employees and forwards the Payroll Order Form to the Payroll clerk. The form contains basic demographic information, years of experience, education, and annual base and supplemental salary information. The Personnel department does not reduce the number of contract days for employees who are hired after the start of the school year, nor do they make any adjustments to

the annual salary. The Payroll clerk calculates the remaining contract days and adjusts the annual contract salary accordingly for new employees.

Exhibit 3–14 displays the processing of a new employee.

Campuses and departments maintain time and attendance information. The Payroll clerk receives this information and enters it into the payroll system. Once all payroll information has been entered, a payroll transmittal form is produced. Both the Payroll and Accounts Payable clerks check the transmittal for errors prior to running paychecks.

The Payroll clerk produces paychecks. Check stock is not secured and is stored on a shelf in the Business office. Check numbers and a Payroll Pre-print Report control the number of checks issued. A data key is used to produce check signatures and must be inserted into the computer, and a password is entered prior to running actual paychecks. The Payroll clerk retains the key and controls the voids and reissue of paychecks that have errors. In addition, this position controls the stop payment and reissue of lost checks. By allowing one person to control the total payroll process, including the data key and checks, there are no checks and balances in the system.

Internal control is defined as a process affected by an entity's board of directors, management, and other personnel that is designed to provide reasonable assurance of the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. A strong system of internal control enables the school district to ensure that resources are properly handled and used and that those resources are available for management and the school board's designation. Control of activities is considered an essential component of good internal controls and is defined as "the policies and procedures that help ensure that management directives are carried out." Elements of control of activities include the segregation of duties and physical controls.

The TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) states that, "top management should deliver a clear message to school district personnel that control responsibilities and must be taken seriously. School district personnel must understand their own role in the internal control system, as well as how individual activities relate to the work of others."

Effective districts control blank check stocks and the signature key and segregate payroll duties to

EXHIBIT 3–14
ZCISD NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESSING

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Personnel office prepares Payroll│
│ Order Form and forwards it to     │
│ Payroll clerk.                    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Payroll clerk computes days       │
│ remaining in contract, gross pay  │
│ and bimonthly pay rate and        │
│ forwards form to Business         │
│ Services director.                │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Business Services director checks │
│ payroll computations and assigns  │
│ budget code(s). Form is returned  │
│ to Payroll clerk.                 │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Payroll clerk enters              │
│ demographic, pay and budget       │
│ code informationinto the          │
│ Internet based computer software. │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

SOURCE: *ZCISD Business Office Staff Interview, December 2004.*

ensure that one person is not in total control of a procedure. McDade ISD (MISD) improved their internal controls by requiring all checks be signed by both the superintendent and board president. This step, along with streamlining procedures and establishing strong internal controls, allowed MISD to improve operations and achieve significant savings.

ZCISD should establish internal control procedures for payroll that segregate duties to safeguard district assets. Although the district has not experienced any problems resulting from a lack of internal controls, proper procedures should be established to prevent problems from developing in the future. Segregation of duties not only protects the district, it also protects employees from being wrongfully accused of theft. The superintendent should meet with the director of Personnel and Compliance and administrative assistant for Business Services to determine which of the current payroll duties should be reassigned to the Personnel office. Each employee should provide the superintendent with internal control recommendations for their position. The

superintendent should evaluate the internal control recommendations and share them with the board.

**CONTRACTING EMPLOYEES
(REC. 51)**

ZCISD contracts with its employees to perform services in violation of state and federal guidelines. The district pays employees performing certain extra duties through the district's accounts payable system. Payment is processed only after receiving an athletic voucher form listing the person to be paid and the amount of payment. The high school principal and the Business Services director authorize the form. Payment is made through a contracted services budget code, and the employee is paid as a contractor. There are no withholdings taken out for Federal income tax, Medicare, or the Teacher Retirement System (TRS).

The type of event worked determines the amount of pay. **Exhibit 3–15** contains a listing of extra jobs for a football game and the amount of stipend paid.

Several of the employees paid as contractors are classified as nonexempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and are performing their

EXHIBIT 3–15
ZCISD FOOTBALL EXTRA DUTY PAY
PER GAME
2004–05

DUTY	PAY
Announcer	$25
Gate Keeper	$35
Security Varsity	$55
Security Other	$50
Chain Crew	$10
Timer	$25

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Office, Extra Duty Pay, 2004–05.

normal duties on an extra duty basis. These duties are subject to the overtime requirements of the FLSA. **Exhibit 3–16** is an example of district employees who perform their normal duties for extra duty pay.

EXHIBIT 3–16
EXAMPLE OF ZCISD EXTRA DUTY
PAY FOR PERFORMING
NORMAL DUTIES
PERIOD FROM 1/3/2004–1/27/2004

EXTRA DUTY ASSIGNMENT	NORMAL DUTY ASSIGNMENT	EXTRA DUTY PAY
Security	Security	$280
Security	Security	$320
Custodian	Custodian	$80
Custodian	Custodian	$100

SOURCE: ZCISD Account Payable Checks, 1/08/2004.

The FLSA requires that "nonexempt" employees be paid overtime at one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek. The FLSA does allow government employees to be given compensatory time off at the one and one-half times rate instead of receiving overtime pay. Nonexempt employees generally include secretaries, food service workers, custodians, maintenance workers, bus drivers, and security personnel. Penalties for violating the FLSA can subject both the district and individual supervisor to large fines and criminal penalties.

An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) article published on April 5, 2004, entitled *IRS Warns Business, Individuals to Watch for Questionable Employment Tax Practices,* states "Generally if the payer has the right to control what work will be done and how it will be done, the worker is an employee." It further states, "Employers who misclassify employees as independent contractors will be liable for the employment taxes on wages paid to the misclassified worker and subject to penalties." In addition, the IRS Commissioner

said, "Failure to pay employment taxes is stealing from the employees of the business."

The FASRG states that payments for auxiliary services performed by an employee in addition to their normal, specified duties and performed outside of regular work hours should be made through the district Payroll office. A district should process all employee extra duty payments through the district's payroll system. This procedure complies with state and federal requirements and allows eligible employees to receive the proper overtime payment.

The superintendent should direct the administrative assistant for Business Services to process all extra duty payments through the payroll system. The district should process all employee extra duty payments through the district's payroll system to comply with state and federal requirements and allow eligible employees to receive the proper overtime payment. The administrative assistant for Business Services should design a system that ensures all extra duty pay is processed through payroll in compliance with IRS, the Teacher Retirement System, and FLSA requirements.

This recommendation can be implemented for approximately $104 per year. The stipends paid by the district reflect the average overtime rates; the only additional cost would be the district's share of Medicare, which is 1.45% of the gross payment. In January 2004, the district paid $790 for supplemental duties performed by employees paid through the accounts payable system. Rounding this figure up to $800 per month and using a nine-month school year provides an annual amount of $7,200 ($7,200 X .0145 = $104).

EXTERNAL AUDITOR (REC. 52)
ZCISD does not have a policy for the periodic competitive procurement and rotation of external audit services. Although the district issues a request for proposal (RFP) periodically and has solicited proposals for audit services, the district does not have a clearly stated policy. The current external auditor was selected based on a request for proposal and was appointed by the board for 2001–02. The selection was made based on cost and the location of the audit firm. The selected firm is based in Laredo, as opposed to the previous firm, which was located in Corpus Christi.

Since 2000–01, the district's auditor has issued an unqualified opinion on the district's financial statements. An unqualified opinion is issued if, in the auditor's opinion, the district's financial statements are presented fairly. This unqualified

opinion does not mean that the financial statements are guaranteed to be perfect, but it does mean that the auditors performed sufficient tests to gain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements.

During the on-site visit, the review team noted several areas of concern that were not identified by the external auditor and reported to the ZCISD board and management. Problems discovered and not reported to the board and management include the following:

- The budget was adopted without revenues.

- Some bank accounts were not reconciled.

- Some bank accounts were dormant.

- The district failed to use proper account codes.

- There were internal control problems.

- Purchases were made without purchase orders.

In addition, the review team found the following two items of concern from the 2002–03 Annual Financial Report:

- The Notes to the Financial Statements (Notes) disclosed that the district adhered to the management reports requirement of the Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA), when in fact the district had not prepared any of the required management reports during fiscal year 2002–03 and was in violation of both the PFIA and ZCISD policy CDA (LEGAL).

- The Notes also reported that ZCISD had a market value of $58,172,897 in securities pledged to the district by their depository bank, when in fact the market value of the securities was $7,305,608, leaving the district with unsecured bank balances, which is a violation of the Texas Education Code §45.208.

The annual financial audit is designed to provide reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements fairly present the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows. Financial audits determine if the district is in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). For example, financial-related audits ask these important questions:

- Has financial information been presented in accordance with established or stated criteria?

- Has the school district adhered to specific financial compliance requirements?

- Is the school district's internal control over financial reporting and safeguarding assets suitably designed and implemented to achieve the control objective?

The FASRG states that, during the audit, the auditor may become aware of certain matters relating to internal control that may be considered reportable conditions or material weaknesses. Such matters should be communicated to the board. Reportable conditions and material weaknesses are defined as:

- A reportable condition is a matter coming to the auditor's attention that, in his judgment, represents significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the internal control, which could adversely affect the organization's ability to record, process, summarize, and report financial data consistently.

- A material weakness is a reportable condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the components of internal control does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that errors and irregularities in amounts that would be material in relation to the general-purpose financial statements.

The FASRG also states that other matters may come to the auditor's attentions that are not considered reportable conditions or material weaknesses. The auditor should evaluate these matters and either include them in a separate letter to management or communicate them orally to management. Other matters may be classified as either internal control or general operations related.

Even though the external auditor did not consider their findings to be material, their observations were not brought to the attention of ZCISD management and the board with either a management letter or an oral report to the board. As a result, the board and superintendent were not made aware of possible finance-related problems.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that governmental entities use a competitive process for the selection of independent auditors on a periodic basis and that the process actively seek all qualified firms available to perform the annual audit. Competitive procurement on a periodic basis helps to reduce audit costs. Rotating auditors periodically also ensures the independence of the audit firm in auditing the district's records.

The ZCISD board should adopt a policy for the periodic, competitive procurement and rotation of external audit services. The policy should address the amount of time between competitive bids and the number of consecutive years that one firm can perform the audit. The superintendent and the administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a request for proposal for external audit services using the format in the FASRG, including a provision for an annual report to management on district business practices needing improvement. The policy should include a provision for an evaluation committee made up of at least three qualified business professionals from the community. Management should present the results of the evaluation and recommendations to the board. The board should approve the recommended firm only after considering both the evaluation and recommendation.

MONITORING SECURITIES (REC. 53)

ZCISD does not monitor the securities pledged by their depository bank to ensure that district bank accounts are adequately protected against loss. The Texas Education Code (TEC) provides that a bank serving as a school depository must provide either a surety bond and/or the market value of pledged securities in an amount sufficient to cover the balance of all district deposits. The depository bank may use Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) coverage to meet the pledge requirement.

On June 12, 2003, the ZCISD board approved the International Bank of Commerce (IBC) located in Zapata as the district's depository bank for 2003–04 and 2004–05. After approval, the district and the bank executed and submitted a notarized depository contract to TEA. In the contract, the bank agreed to provide the market value of $25,019,564 in pledged securities, but the actual market value of the securities pledged in September 2003 was $13,460,531. The district did not require the bank to provide the market value of pledged securities on a regular basis, nor was anyone in the district monitoring the market value

of the pledged securities. **Exhibit 3–17** lists the original face value, current face value, and market value of securities pledged by the bank during September 2003.

The district failed to catch this error and did not request the market value of any pledged securities from the bank until December 2004, when the external auditor needed the information for the annual financial report.

Another example occurred earlier in November 2002 when the external auditor reported in the Annual Financial Report that the market value of securities pledged was $58,172,897. At the time, the actual market value of securities pledged was $7,305,608. **Exhibit 3–18** lists the original face value, current face value, and market value of securities pledged by the bank during November 2002.

The exhibit shows that there is a difference of over $50,000,000 between what the district thought was pledged and the market value of the pledged securities.

During November 2002, ZCISD's cash, savings, and time deposits amounted to $23,555,257, while the total amount of pledged securities and FDIC insurance was $7,605,608, leaving $15,949,649 of ZCISD balances unsecured. As a result, the district failed to comply with the requirements of the Texas Education Code (TEC). This requirement protects the district in the event of bank failure by mandating that the depository bank pledge securities to the district. Securities pledged to the district can be redeemed to provide cash in the event the district's bank accounts cannot be accessed. **Exhibit 3–19** displays the total pledged by the IBC, ZCISD account balances, and the amount of accounts balances not secured by pledge.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts publication, *Banks to Bonds*, states, "It is important that cash in the bank is fully collateralized. This means that the funds a school district's depository

EXHIBIT 3–17
SECURITIES PLEDGED TO ZCISD BY
THE INTERNATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE
AS OF SEPTEMBER 2003

DESCRIPTION OF SECURITY	ORIGINAL FACE VALUE	CURRENT FACE VALUE	MARKET VALUE
FNMA Pool Due 11/01/2009	$15,000,000	$9,526,391	$9,385,522
FNMA Pool Due 02/01/2020	$5,019,564	$793,424	$836,036
FHLMC Gold Pool Due 04/01/2010	$5,000,000	$3,908,963	$3,238,973
Totals	$25,019,564	$14,228,778	$13,460,531

SOURCE: Letter from International Bank of Commerce dated December 6, 2004.

EXHIBIT 3–18
SECURITIES PLEDGED TO ZCISD BY THE
INTERNATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE
AS OF NOVEMBER 2002

DESCRIPTION OF SECURITY	ORIGINAL FACE VALUE	CURRENT FACE VALUE	MARKET VALUE
FMAR 846847 G Due 01/01/31	$3,000,000	$1,055,593	$1,085,921
07.500 FGPC N98867 Due 08/01/07	$5,000,000	$267,616	$278,322
07.000 FGPC C90204 Due 02/01/18	$4,223,333	$984,304	$1,033,519
08.000 FMPC 253915 Due 12/01/04	$20,000,000	$212,072	$218,429
09.500 FMPC 730240 Due 03/01/06	$6,000,000	$64,205	$67,416
08.250 FMPC 298005 Due 04/01/10	$5,000,000	$294,122	$310,299
FNMS 07.000 CT251891 Due 07/01/18	$4,980,000	$1,758,675	$1,846,609
FNMS 07.500 CT253111 Due 02/01/20	$5,019,564	$1,837,559	$1,938,625
FNMS 07.000 CX323O17 Due 01/01/05	$4,950,000	$511,133	$526,468
Total Securities Pledged to ZCISD	**$58,172,897**	**$6,985,279**	**$7,305,608**

SOURCE: International Bank of Commerce Evaluation of Market Values, November 2002.

EXHIBIT 3–19
ZCISD UNSECURED BANK BALANCES
AS OF NOVEMBER 2002

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNTS
Market value of pledged securities plus $300,000 in FDIC coverage	$7,605,608
Less: Highest combined balances of cash and certificates of deposits	($23,555,257)
Total amount of ZCISD unsecured bank balances	**($15,949,649)**

SOURCE: International Bank of Commerce, January 2005 and ZCISD Annual Financial Report.

bank has on deposit should be secured by securities of equal value plus two percent. This collateral should be monitored daily to ensure the safety of the school district's money."

Effective districts check the actual cash balances from the bank on a daily basis. Banks usually provide this information online. These balances are then compared to the market value of the securities pledged by the bank. In all cases, the total of FDIC insurance and pledged securities should exceed the district's actual balances.

ZCISD should establish procedures to ensure that all funds in the district's depository bank are fully collateralized and monitored on a daily basis. Both the Texas Education Code and Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) require the depository bank to provide approved securities in a sufficient amount that adequately protects district funds. It is the responsibility of both the depository bank and the district to ensure that these requirements are carried out.

This recommendation can be implemented by working with the depository bank to provide a daily online report of aggregate account balances and a monthly report of the market value of

securities pledged to the district. The duty of monitoring these reports on a daily basis should be assigned to the Business office.

EXCESS BANK ACCOUNTS (REC. 54)

The district maintains too many bank accounts to operate efficiently. ZCISD has 42 bank accounts, which have been established for various purposes and are located throughout the district. **Exhibit 3–20** contains ZCISD bank accounts as reported by the district's depository bank.

The exhibit lists five parent/teacher organizations and three other organizations that maintain bank accounts at the district's depository bank and have their statements mailed to the district. The high school campus maintains four separate bank accounts in addition to their student activity account. All other campuses have one account for student activities and one additional account. Five campuses maintain accounts that are used to purchase general supplies and other campus needs. The Texas Successful School account was established for South Elementary and has not been used for the last two years.

The Business office uses 16 accounts for normal school district operations. Three accounts are used for a single purpose. These accounts are as follows:

- Federal Tax Payment System Account - paying federal withholding tax;

- Teacher Retirement Account - paying the teacher retirement system; and

- Agency Fund Account - receiving and disbursing payments received from TEA.

EXHIBIT 3–20
ZCISD BANK ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES
AS OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2004

ACCOUNT NAME	STATEMENT LOCATION	BALANCE
125 Claims	ZCISD Business Office	$5,352
Administrative Fund	ZCISD Business Office	$124
Agency Fund Account	ZCISD Business Office	$614,417
Cafeteria Account	ZCISD Business Office	$194,551
Consolidated Application System	ZCISD Business Office	$8,259
Construction Account	ZCISD Business Office	$90,457
Designated Purpose Fund	ZCISD Business Office	$43,561
District Bond Account	Other	$44,887
District Fund	ZCISD Business Office	$35,714
Federal Tax Payment System	ZCISD Business Office	$459
Interest & Sinking Fund	ZCISD Business Office	$34,648
Operating Fund	ZCISD Business Office	$33,876
Payroll Account	ZCISD Business Office	$161,400
Summer Food Service Program	ZCISD Business Office	$56
Support Services and Operations	ZCISD Business Office	$40
Teacher Retirement Account	ZCISD Business Office	$22,053
Texas Successful School	ZCISD Business Office	$4,720
Textbook Account	Other	$1,207
ZISD Insurance Escrow	ZCISD Business Office	$822
Campus Improvement Fund	Zapata High School	$21,834
Mentor Campus Account	Zapata High School	$427
Student Activity Account	Zapata High School	$43,440
ZHS Faculty Club	Zapata High School	$58
ZHS Scholarships	Zapata High School	$15,478
Student Activity Account	Zapata Middle School	$19,440
Zapata Middle School Account	Zapata Middle School	$31,993
Office Account	Benavides Elementary	$198
Student Activity Account	Benavides Elementary	$50
Campus Improvement Account	Central Elementary	$17,700
Student Activity Account	Central Elementary	$3,504
Social Faculty Club	North Elementary	$2,512
Student Activity Account	North Elementary	$7,113
Campus Improvement	South Elementary	$33,113
Student Activity Account	South Elementary	$2,317
A R Booster Club	South Elementary	$1,653
Elementary PTO Account	Benavides Elementary	$52
Parent/Teacher Organization	Zapata Elementary	$474
Parent/Teacher Organization	Central Elementary	$560
Zapata Community Coalition	P. O. Box 1534	$880
Zapata High School PTO	ZCISD Business Office	$266
Zapata Middle School PTO	Zapata Middle School	$3,688
ZCISD Sp Ed Advisory	ZCISD Business Office	$864
Total Balances as of September 29, 2004		**$1,504,217**

SOURCE: International Bank of Commerce (IBC) Global Report, September 29, 2004.

In addition, there are two food service-related accounts and two accounts used for special programs.

Having an excessive number of bank accounts increases the amount of staff time used for the following:

- writing checks for transfers between bank accounts;

- reconciling bank accounts;

- preparing adjusting entries to ledger accounts;

- checking securities pledged against aggregate account balances; and

- preparing cash flow spreadsheets.

Spreading cash balances across several bank accounts reduces the amount of funds available for investing in higher yielding investments.

The campus improvement accounts, which are used to buy school supplies, are in fact a part of the district's general operations and as such must be recorded in the district's financial system. The *FARSG* allows districts to record these transactions into fund 461. This fund classification is used to account for transactions related to a principal's activity fund if the monies generated are not subject to recall into the General Fund by the school district's Board of Trustees.

Outside organizations should not be using the district's tax identification number, nor should their bank statements be mailed to the district. Accounting for these funds is not the responsibility of district personnel and subjects district personnel to an unnecessary liability.

The *FASRG* states in the site-based decision-making chapter that "Each school should have only one bank checking account." An effective school district limits the number of bank accounts it uses. Fredericksburg ISD uses five bank accounts for general operations, one trust and agency account for scholarships, and limits their campuses to one activity account each. The general operating account is used to track most fund types, including special revenues and food service operations.

ZCISD should close all unnecessary bank accounts and limit campuses to one bank account each.

The administrative assistant for Business Services can implement this recommendation by:

- evaluating and closing unnecessary Business office accounts;

- closing dormant and individual department accounts;

- preparing a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on the action to take concerning the principals' campus accounts;

- recording scholarships in an agency fund and accounting for them in the Business office; and

- notifying outside organizations to have their bank statements mailed to the person responsible for their account.

The fiscal impact of closing unnecessary bank accounts is based on freeing an additional $500,000 for investment. (Of the $1.5 million in account balances, approximately $1.3 million is located in Business office accounts. Closing several of these accounts would allow the district to monitor the balances and invest excess funds, with $500,000 as a very conservative estimate of the additional amount that could be invested.) The additional $500,000 could be invested into a certificate of deposit or government investment pool paying a conservative estimate of 2% rate of return, resulting in an additional $10,000 in investment revenue annually ($500,000 X .02 = $10,000).

BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION (REC. 55)

ZCISD does not reconcile bank accounts accurately and in a timely manner. At the end of September 2004, the district had 42 separate bank accounts. Many of these accounts are not reconciled on a regular basis.

The staff accountant is responsible for bank account reconciliation. At the time of the review, the staff accountant reported that he regularly reconciles nine Business office bank accounts, but he had not reconciled any accounts after August 2004 because the previous fiscal year was not closed. He further stated that he had not been told to reconcile the other 10 accounts sent to the Business office and that he just filed the statements. **Exhibit 3–21** shows the accounts that are normally reconciled in the Business office.

EXHIBIT 3–21
ZCISD BUSINESS OFFICE BANK ACCOUNTS RECONCILED THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2004

ACCOUNT NAME	BALANCE AS OF 9/29/2004
Agency Fund Account	$614,417
Cafeteria Account	$194,551
Payroll Account	$161,400
Construction Account	$90,457
Designated Purpose Fund	$43,561
Operating Fund	$33,876
Consolidated Application System	$8,259
Texas Successful School	$4,720
Summer Food Service Program	$56
Total	**$1,151,297**

SOURCE: *International Bank of Commerce Global Report 9/29/04 and ZCISD Monthly Reconciliations.*

A review of the nine accounts that are regularly reconciled disclosed a number of problems. Some of the problem accounts are listed below:

- The Consolidated Application System account reconciliation has carried the following adjustments since September 30, 2002:

  o $55,894.14 check cut from the wrong fund;

  o $155,364.71 not explained; and

  o $392.15 not explained.

- The Payroll account has a deposit in transit of $7.74 carried forward for a year and monthly-unexplained adjustments ranging from ($21,738.10) to $36,390.31.

- The Cafeteria account has unexplained amounts of $66.70, $3,584.25, and ($253.15) carried on monthly reconciliations for a year.

- The Designated Purpose Fund account has the following amounts carried forward for a year:

  o ($32,187.61) not explained;

  o $79,987.45 and ($738.16) deposits in transit; and

  o August 31, 2004 reconciliation lists outstanding checks as $15,154.72 when the attached listing of outstanding checks totals $9,140.78.

Exhibit 3–22 is a listing of the bank statements sent to the Business office that are not reconciled.

**EXHIBIT 3–22
ZCISD BANK ACCOUNTS NOT RECONCILED**

ACCOUNT NAME	BALANCE AS OF 9/29/2004
District Fund	$35,714
Interest & Sinking Fund	$34,648
Teacher Retirement Account	$22,053
125 Claims	$5,352
ZCISD Sp Ed Advisory Committee	$864
ZISD Insurance Escrow	$822
Federal Tax Payment System	$459
Zapata High School PTO	$266
Administrative Fund	$124
Support Services and Operations	$40
Total	$100,342

SOURCE: International Bank of Commerce Global Report 9/29/04 and Staff Accountant Interview, December 2004.

Campus account reconciliation is the responsibility of campus administration. Activity account reconciliation was taking place at the campuses visited by the review team. The staff accountant requested that copies of all campus activity account reconciliations be forwarded to the Business office as of August 31, 2004. The staff accountant was only aware of the activity accounts. He had not reviewed the listing of accounts at the bank to determine the number of accounts located at campuses. Therefore, the accountant did not ask for the accounts or provide the account reconciliations to the auditors. As a result, there is no requirement that other bank accounts located at the campuses be reconciled.

Reconciliation of bank accounts on a monthly basis ensures that funds are in balance and that errors are caught and corrected in a timely manner. Corrections not posted when they are detected tend to be overlooked and cause cash balances to be misstated. Accurate cash balance reports are essential to good cash management and allow the district to know what monies are available to

invest. Good internal control requires timely reconciliation by a person not having access to writing checks or making deposits by increasing the early detection of theft.

United ISD's director of Accounting ensures that all 14 bank accounts maintained by the district are reconciled in a timely manner by approving the reconciliation only after reviewing the appropriate evidence that the reconciliation was completed accurately.

ZCISD should reconcile all bank accounts on a monthly basis ensuring that adjustments are researched and posted to the district's books. The Business office should be responsible for reconciling all accounts not located at a campus. The staff accountant or another Business office employee should be assigned the duty of monthly bank account reconciliation with the additional responsibility of ensuring that campus level accounts are reconciled. Copies of all reconciliations should be forwarded to the Business office for review. The administrative assistant for Business Services should establish a review procedure to make sure that these duties are being accomplished.

TIMELY DEPOSITS OF TAX RECEIPTS (REC. 56)
ZCISD does not maximize interest revenues by providing for the timely deposit of tax receipts, which account for approximately 80 percent of General Operating Fund revenue. To ensure that taxes are collected in a timely manner, the district provides an incentive for early payment. The incentive amounts to a reduction of the total current tax bill of three percent in October, two percent in November, and one percent in December. As a result of the incentive, the majority of taxes are paid prior to January. ZCISD's total current tax collection is displayed in **Exhibit 3–23.**

ZCISD has an inter-local agreement with the Tax Assessor-Collector of Zapata County (TAC) for the collection of property tax. The fee for collection is $113,863 annually plus a $3,600 payment toward the salary of the Tax Assessor-Collector. The fee is based on the district's share of the TAC's budget, which is currently 50 percent. The current agreement was signed in December 1999.

In the agreement, TAC agrees to distribute tax monies received at the County Tax Office on a monthly basis or sooner in the event tax revenues equal or exceed $100,000. Currently, all payments are made by check. An examination of tax deposit

EXHIBIT 3–23
ZCISD CURRENT TAX COLLECTIONS
FISCAL YEARS ENDING AUGUST 31, 2001 THROUGH 2003

YEAR	ADJUSTED LEVY	CURRENT COLLECTIONS			
		M&O	DEBT SERVICE	TOTAL	PERCENT
2001	$14,348,344	$11,918,702	$1,927,439	$13,846,141	96%
2002	$21,243,596	$18,835,810	$1,723,628	$20,559,438	97%
2003	$25,526,395	$23,091,511	$1,816,991	$24,908,502	98%

SOURCE: Zapata County ISD Annual Financial Reports.

records shows that the county failed to make payments when tax revenues equaled or exceeded $100,000. The following is a listing of distributions between October and December of 2004:

- October 27, 2004 $3,000,000

- November 23, 2004 $11,000.000

- December 7, 2004 $1,305,347

Failure to require the TAC to make timely distributions of tax receipts results in decreasing interest income revenue for the district.

Many districts require their tax collectors to deposit directly into district accounts daily or when receipts equal an established amount. San Angelo ISD optimizes its interest earnings on large cash sums by investing excess cash every day primarily into two local government investment pools, TexPool and Lone Star Liquidity Plus Fund.

ZCISD should require the Tax Assessor-Collector of Zapata County (TAC) to make distribution payments in accordance with the inter-local agreement and immediately invest tax receipts directly into an interest earning account. The administrative assistant for Business Services should open an account with a local government investment pool and have the TAC electronically transfer tax receipts to the fund when collections exceed the $100,000 threshold. The Business office should monitor this account to ensure compliance.

The fiscal impact is computed by using October 15 as the start of tax collections, then figuring the number of days between deposits. For example, there are 12 days between October 15 and the October 27 tax deposit. Assuming that deposits were made in equal amounts daily, then one-half of

the total deposit equals the average accumulated amount ($3,000,000/2 = $1,500,000). Using a 2 percent annual interest rate would produce $82.19 on a daily basis ($1,500,000 X .02 = $30,000) ($30,000/365 = $82.19), and $82.19 multiplied by the days between deposits equals approximately $986 ($82.19 X 12 = $986.28). The total annual impact of this recommendation is calculated in **Exhibit 3–24**.

DETAILED INVESTMENT REPORTS (REC. 57)

The ZCISD board is not provided with a detailed investment report that would allow the board to monitor the district's investments and provide oversight as required by the Public Funds Investment Act. ZCISD staff has not complied with the reporting requirement of policy CDA (LEGAL), which requires the investment officer to prepare and submit to the board a written report of investment transactions for all funds covered by the Public Funds Investment Act. In addition to this quarterly report, the district has not complied with the annual requirement to provide a comprehensive report covering the investment program and investment activity. Instead, the quarterly reports for 2002–03 and 2003–04 were presented to the board in October 2004. The reports they received at that time did not comply with policy and only provided a list of the certificates of deposits and their rate of return. The reports were not signed and did not make comparisons to the 91-day U.S. Treasury Bill rate as required by policy. Treasury bills are used as a benchmark because they are backed by the United States Government and are considered an extremely safe investment. Safe investments have a very low rate of return, which makes them an

EXHIBIT 3–24
ZCISD ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL IMPACT OF DAILY TAX DEPOSITS

DATES	DAYS BETWEEN DEPOSITS	DEPOSIT AMOUNT	HALF OF THE DEPOSIT AMOUNT	DAILY INTEREST AT 2% ON HALF THE DEPOSIT	DAILY INTEREST TIMES DAYS BETWEEN DEPOSITS
10/27/04	12	$3,000,000	$1,500,000	$82.19	$986
11/23/04	27	$11,000,000	$5,500,000	$301.37	$8,137
12/07/04	14	$1,305,347	$652,674	$35.76	$501
Total Annual Return at 2% interest					$9,624

SOURCE: ZCISD Deposit Tickets for 10/27/04, 11/23/04, and12/07/04.

excellent benchmark for comparison to other investments that may have greater risk but provide a higher rate of return.

The main goal of an investment program is to ensure its safety and maximize financial returns within current market conditions. The Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA) is contained in Texas Government Code Chapter 2256. The PFIA requires government entities, including public school districts, to meet a number of requirements including:

- written policies approved by the board;

- an annual review of investment policies and strategy;

- an annual compliance audit of management controls on investments and adherence to board investment policies;

- board designation of one or more investment officers;

- mandatory investment officer training; and

- quarterly investment reports.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts publication, *Banks to Bonds: A Practical Path to Sound School District Investing,* states that "State and federal laws set the rules within which all school districts are expected to operate when investing public funds. It is important for every district to know, understand and comply with these laws."

ZCISD should prepare the required investment reports and present them to the board on a quarterly and annual basis. This practice will provide the board with sufficient warning about potential problems with the portfolio and allow them to make corrections in a timely manner. The administrative assistant for Business Services can implement this recommendation by preparing the required reports on a quarterly and annual basis.

DIVERSIFYING INVESTMENTS (REC. 58)

ZCISD does not diversify investments to ensure maximum yield and the safety of district funds. The agreement with the district's depository bank fixes the rate on single maturity certificates of deposits (CDs) of more than $100,000 at 25 basis points (0.25 percent) above the "asked" rates on the Treasury bills (T-Bill) closest to the maturity date of the CD being purchased. The United States Government issues Treasury Bills, which are extremely safe, low-yielding investments.

ZCISD invests exclusively in CDs from their depository bank. The CDs purchased do not have

a single maturity date, which allows the district to deposit and withdraw funds at will. The bank and the district have agreed to this arrangement even though the depository agreement does not quote a rate for these instruments.

For 2003–04, the bank paid the district a rate of 1.15 percent on these investments. This rate is 5 to 14 basis points below what the district could have earned by diversifying maturities and investing in single maturity CDs at their depository bank.

In addition, ZCISD has not established a relationship with an investment pool or broker that would allow the district to invest in alternative authorized investments. Having the availability to compare the yield on various investments can increase the district's investment income. Diversification also reduces the risk of loss resulting from over concentrating assets in a specific class of investments, financial institution, or maturity schedule.

Board policy CDA (LOCAL) allows the district to invest funds in the following investment types:

- obligations of, or guaranteed by, governmental entities;

- certificates of deposit and share certificates;

- fully collateralized repurchase agreements;

- a securities lending program;

- banker's acceptances;

- commercial paper;

- no-load money market mutual funds and no-load mutual funds;

- a guaranteed investment contract as an investment vehicle for bond proceeds; and

- public funds investment pools.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts' publication, *Banks to Bonds: A Practical Path to Sound School District Investing,* states that traditionally districts have used only time deposits (CDs) bought from their local banks as their investments. Since all CDs are collateralized, covered by pledged securities in Texas, there is little risk of loss on bank defaults. However, this translates into lower interest rates because investors are rewarded for taking risks. The publication goes on to say the district's cash should be used for maximum investment benefit. It is the responsibility of the district to thoroughly research its options and choose an appropriate strategy that not only safeguards funds but also earns a reasonable market yield. Since every investment has some risk,

the investor must research those risks and follow some set strategy to minimize unacceptable risks. **Exhibit 3–25** contains the 2003–04 rate of return on the district's CDs, as compared to TexPool and three month Treasury bills. TexPool is a government fund investment pool that allows the investor to deposit and withdraw funds on a daily basis.

As the exhibit shows, there are times when ZCISD could increase its rate of return by switching to alternative investments.

ZCISD should diversify the investment portfolio by scheduling maturities and making alternative investments when appropriate. This practice will allow the district to take advantage of the higher yields paid on longer term investments and to diversify between types of investments offering the best yield. The administrative assistant for Business Services should establish an investment relationship with a broker and a public investment pool. The enrollment forms for public investment pools can be downloaded from websites. This recommendation can be implemented by completing the enrollment forms and presenting them to the Board of Trustees for approval.

The district normally has $3,000,000 to invest in a three-month investment and an additional $3,000,000 that could be invested into a six-month investment. Increasing the yield on these two investments by just 0.25 percent or 25 basis points would result in an additional $5,625 in investment revenue. ($3,000,000 X 0.0025 = $7,500 per annum) ($7,500/12 = $625 per month) (9 months X $625 = $5,625).

CASH FLOW FORECASTING (REC. 59)

ZCISD does not use a cash flow spreadsheet to project cash flows, which would help determine cash requirements and the amount of funds available for investment. The district does not make long-term investments. Long-term investments normally produce a higher yield than certificates of deposit or money market funds and can be part of a district's investment portfolio.

The district makes investment decisions based on the receipt of tax revenue. As tax revenues are received, they are invested into a variable maturity certificate of deposit (CD). The certificate, which has been opened for at least two years, allows the district to add and withdraw funds as needed. One

EXHIBIT 3–25
ZCISD 2003–04 INVESTMENTS IN CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSITS COMPARED WITH THE RATE OF RETURN ON TEXPOOL AND THREE MONTH TREASURY BILLS
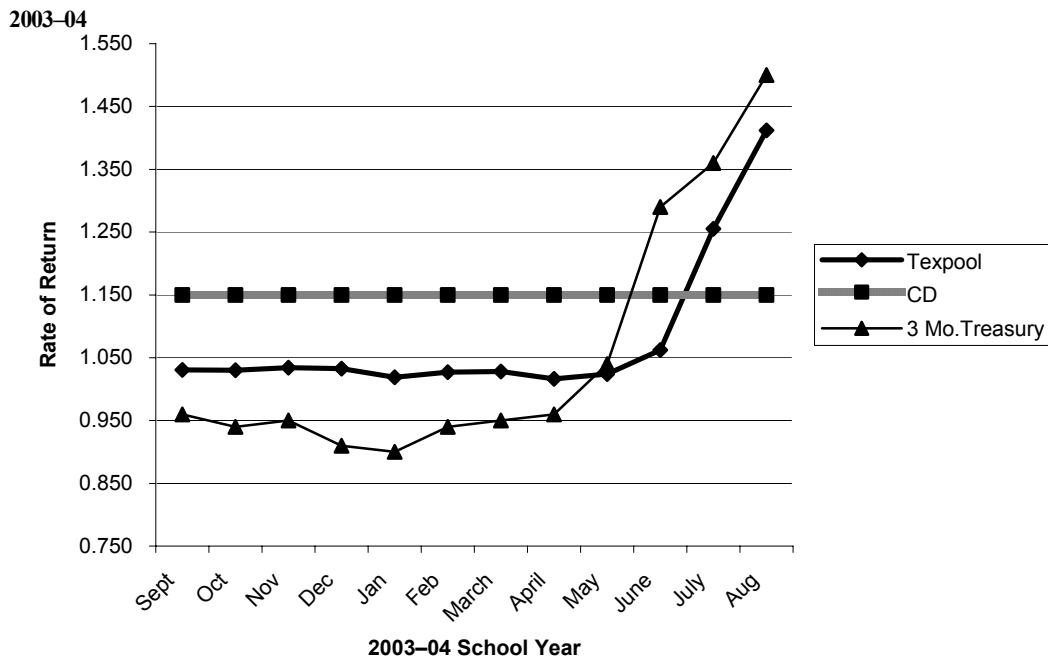
SOURCE: ZCISD 2003–04 Investment Report, TexPool Monthly Rate History, 2004 and the Federal Reserve System 3-Month Treasury Constant Maturity Rate History.

month of activity in the district's CD is shown in **Exhibit 3–26.**

As shown in **Exhibit 3–26**, the CD acts like a money market account and is not used for making longer-term investments, which would produce a higher yield.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts' publication,

EXHIBIT 3–26
ZCISD CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT ACTIVITY FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2003

DATE	ACTION	AMOUNT	BALANCE
1-Nov	Beginning Balance		$26,016
12-Nov	Deposit	$11,292,641	$11,318,657
13-Nov	Withdrawal	($650,000)	$10,668,657
16-Nov	Deposit	$1,472	$10,670,129
20-Nov	Withdrawal	($100,000)	$10,570,129
24-Nov	Withdrawal	($800,000)	$9,770,129
26-Nov	Withdrawal	($1,800,000)	$7,970,129

SOURCE: ZCISD 2003–04 CD Transactions.

Banks to Bonds: *A Practical Path to Sound School District Investing*, states that when a district develops its investment strategy, all assets should be considered and placed in interest-earning vehicles if possible. The publication recommends that a cash flow analysis be used to determine the amounts of cash that will be needed and the length of time that funds can be invested.

By developing a cash forecasting tool, Del Valle ISD (DVISD) was able to maximize interest earnings and effectively plan investment portfolio activities. The deputy superintendent for Business estimates DVISD's accounts payable and payroll expenses for the upcoming month, in part based on expenditure history, and enters the figures in the cash flow forecasting tool. The deputy superintendent then estimates incoming revenues based on historical receipts and state funding reports and enters this information into the cash forecasting tool. Based on this information, the deputy superintendent plans the district investments.

ZCISD should develop a cash flow spreadsheet to assist the investment officer in determining what portion of available cash should be invested long-term. The administrative assistant for Business Services can use the ZCISD CD Transactions Report to determine cash flows in the previous years. A simple cash flow spreadsheet should then be developed using this information.

COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PROGRAM (REC. 60)

ZCISD does not have a comprehensive safety program or a program to address its workers' compensation losses. There is no formal program to proactively address district losses and develop loss prevention strategies. The board policy CK (LOCAL), adopted in 1991, states "The district shall take every reasonable precaution regarding the safety of its students, employees, visitors, and all others (with) whom it conducts business. The superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing, implementing, and promoting a comprehensive safety program." The policy states that the general areas of responsibility include, but are not limited to, the following:

- guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies;

- program activities intended to reduce the frequency of accident and injury, including:

  o inspecting work areas and equipment;

  o training frontline and supervisory staff;

  o establishing safe work procedures and regulations;

  o reporting, investigating, and reviewing accidents; and

  o promoting responsibility for district property on the part of students, employees, and the community.

- program activities intended to reduce the ultimate cost of accidents and injuries through investigation and documentation;

- program activities that identify and develop prudent methods of financing loss costs on an annual basis, including the purchase of commercial insurance, self-insured retentions, and risk pooling;

- driver education programs, when available;

- vehicle safety programs; and

- traffic safety programs and studies related to employees, students, and the community.

The policy also states that the "Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the collection, storage, and analysis of relevant operational and historical data required to develop sound procedures for implementation and operation of the comprehensive safety program." The district could not provide any evidence of collection or analysis of historical data to determine loss exposures or loss trends necessary for the

development of loss prevention strategies. Interviews with staff confirmed that there was no formalized safety program in place to address workers' compensation loss control. It was stated that employee accidents are not investigated. When an accident occurs, the employee must complete a district form providing information on the accident, which must be signed by their supervisor. The liaison for the district's workers' compensation program is the Payroll clerk, who receives the information, notifies the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund adjuster by entering the accident information in the online reporting system and completing necessary workers' compensation follow-up forms. The TASB claims adjuster follows up on questionable accidents by telephone.

Safety programs and accident prevention begin with providing safe work environments for employees. The review team observed an unsafe storage area in the Transportation building where the district stores custodial supplies, chemicals, personnel files, and student records. This storage area is located on the second floor of the facility in a locked metal caged area. To access the area, employees must climb a flight of stairs, which can be difficult when carrying supplies and boxes. A forklift that was once used to lift pallets to the area was broken and unable to be repaired. Several hundred dollars in bus parts, such as brake shoes, were also stored in this area. Boxes are stacked along the walls and in the middle of the room, creating a potentially unsafe condition for employees when they access the area. In addition, student records and inactive personnel files are stored in this location in paper boxes along with cleaning chemicals. The area is not fireproof. The district could not provide any documented safety inspections of this area.

The district does not have any documented annual

safety training for workers' compensation, although there has been some training over the years for the operations staff. No safety training was identified for the professional or clerical staff, the group that has the largest percentage of claims. The Business Services director provided copies of TASB loss reports to the review team, but there was no evidence of any analysis of the losses or any identified strategies to reduce the losses. TASB provides the district access to online reports. These reports can be downloaded and printed upon request and provide losses current to the end of the previous month. TASB also provides extensive loss control services that include safety-training materials, loss control manuals, and accident prevention plans.

The professional and clerical staff account for the largest portion of the district's workers' compensation claims in each year reviewed, averaging a little more than 50 percent of the district's total claims. Building maintenance employees are the second highest number of claimants, averaging around 20 percent of the claims. **Exhibit 3–27** shows the number of claims by employee class for the 2000–01 through 2004–05 claim periods.

Exhibit 3–28 provides a comparison of employee groups and their average claim cost for a five-year period. The professional and clerical staff also account for the highest percent of total claim costs and averaged an incurred cost of $3,244 per claim. Incurred claims are the estimated value of the total claim, including future benefits and adjusting costs that may be paid on the claim. The maintenance employee group is the second highest percent for the total incurred claims costs, with an average incurred cost of $2,404 per claim. Transportation employees have the highest average per incurred claim cost at $4,043 but only account for 6 percent of the total incurred costs.

A review of the district's loss analysis by injury

EXHIBIT 3–27
ZCISD CLAIM FREQUENCY BY OCCUPATION
WORKERS' COMPENSATION
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

OCCUPATION	2000–01		2001–02		2002–03		2003–04		2004–05*	
	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS
Professional/ Clerical	43.75%	21	54.05%	20	56.41%	22	45.00%	18	52.91%	9
Maintenance	18.75%	9	21.62%	8	15.38%	6	25.00%	10	17.65%	3
Custodial	4.17%	2	5.41%	2	5.13%	2	12.50%	5	0.00%	0
Food Service	22.92%	11	13.51%	5	10.26%	4	2.50%	1	11.76%	2
Transportation	8.33%	4	2.70%	1	7.69%	3	10.00%	4	11.76%	2
All Other	2.08%	1	2.70%	1	5.13%	2	5.00%	2	5.88%	1
Total		48		37		39		40		17

SOURCE: Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund Loss History Analysis by Occupation as of December 31, 2004.
*Claims are through November 10, 2004.

EXHIBIT 3–28
ZCISD CLAIM COST BY EMPLOYEE CLASS
WORKERS' COMPENSATION
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

OCCUPATION		2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	5-YEAR AVERAGE COST	AVERAGE CLAIM COST
Professional/ Clerical	Claims Paid	$45,616	$36,950	$120,251	$40,267	$1,390	$48,895	$2,716
	Incurred Claims*	$45,616	$36,950	$143,491	$60,713	$5,149	$58,384	$3,244
	Percent Incurred	50%	61%	58%	49%	16%	47%	
Maintenance	Claims Paid	$14,935	$6,718	$14,764	$24,557	$1,470	$12,489	$1,735
	Incurred Claims*	$14,935	$6,718	$14,945	$37,940	$12,000	$17,308	$2,404
	Percent Incurred	16%	11%	6%	31%	37%	20%	
Custodial	Claims Paid	$246	$0	$963	$3,196	$0	$881	$1,735
	Incurred Claims*	$246	$0	$963	$3,201	$0	$882	$2,404
	Percent Incurred	0.27%	0%	0.39%	2.60%	0%	1%	
Food Service	Claims Paid	$30,511	$401	$36,711	$2,881	$1,920	$14,485	$3,149
	Incurred Claims*	$30,511	$401	$36,711	$8,982	$13,000	$17,921	$3,896
	Percent Incurred	33%	1%	15%	7%	40%	19%	
Transportation	Claims Paid	$648	$202	$33,312	$1,881	$178	$7,244	$2,587
	Incurred Claims*	$648	$202	$52,367	$1,881	$1,500	$11,320	$4,043
	Percent Incurred	0.71%	0.34%	21.05%	1.53%	4.67%	6%	
All Other	Claims Paid	$0	$15,871	$236	$9,792	$0	$5,180	$3,700
	Incurred Claims*	$0	$15,871	$239	$10,577	$500	$5,437	$3,884
	Percent Incurred	0%	26%	0%	9%	2%	7%	

SOURCE: TASB Risk Management Fund Report on Loss History Analysis by Occupation, as of December 31, 2004. Note: Claims for 2004-05 are through November 10, 2004.
*Case Base Incurred Losses are the estimated values as of the prior month end for claims occurring in the indicated fund year.

shows that the majority of the district's losses are due to falls and slips. **Exhibit 3–29** lists the most frequent accident types for the past five years. Not all accident types are included in the table.

Review of the TASB loss reports also provides district staff information as to where the accidents are occurring. **Exhibit 3–30** shows the number of accidents by location for 2000–01 through 2004–05. The Student Services and Operations office has the most frequent claims in recent years according to the report.

By failing to review loss reports, the district loses an opportunity to develop a proactive safety program to reduce workers' compensation costs. Loss reports can assist the district in identifying

the areas of greatest exposure to risk, including employee groups, locations, and accident types. Without identifying specific loss exposures, strategies cannot be developed and implemented to discourage future losses. These strategies include ongoing employee safety training specific to employee class and hazards they face in the workplace, along with routine hazard inspections to ensure a safe working environment. If the district does not have a comprehensive safety program in place to address loss prevention, the district cannot present itself as a good risk to the workers' compensation carrier to justify lower contributions or premiums.

The TASB Risk Management Program offers several loss control services to their participants to

EXHIBIT 3–29
ZCISD MOST FREQUENT ACCIDENT TYPES
WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

ACCIDENT TYPE	TOTAL ACCIDENTS	TOTAL INCURRED COST
Fall/Slips on elevation	8	$36,321
Fall/slips on stairs/ladder	2	$203
Fall/slips due to miscellaneous	27	$63,134
Falls/slips on same level	31	$68,066
Fall/slip from grease/liquid spill	3	$53,711
Lifting object	2	$12,000
Strain/injury due to lifting	14	$8,432
Strain - Push Pulling/holding or carrying object	5	$89,302
Strain/Injury miscellaneous	8	$24,138
Struck/Injured by falling object/ miscellaneous	11	$2,301
Cut/scrape by power tool/miscellaneous	16	$2,076
Caught in between object handled	5	$3,673
Animal insect	6	$13,919
Miscellaneous	24	$81,828

SOURCE: *TASB Risk Management Fund Report on Loss Analysis by Cause, December 31, 2004.*

EXHIBIT 3–30
ZCISD CLAIM ANALYSIS BY LOCATION
WORKERS' COMPENSATION
2000–01 THROUGH 2004–05

LOCATION	2000–01		2001–02		2002–03		2003–04		2004–05*	
	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS	FREQUENCY	NO. OF CLAIMS
Administration	8.33%	4	5.41%	2	17.95%	7	7.50%	2	17.65%	3
Zapata HS	22.92%	11	16.22%	6	15.38%	6	5.00%	2	5.88%	1
Zapata MS	10.42%	5	16.22%	6	7.69%	3	12.50%	5	5.88%	1
Zapata North Elementary	25.00%	12	5.41%	2	10.26%	4	27.50%	11	5.88%	1
Zapata Central Elementary	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Zapata South Elementary	20.83%	10	21.62%	8	12.82%	5	7.50%	3	11.76%	2
Benavides Elementary	4.17%	2	10.81%	4	5.13%	2	0.00%	0	0%	0
Student Services & Operations	6.25%	3	10.81%	4	17.95%	7	30.00%	12	41.18%	7
Off District Site	0%	0	0%	0	2.56%	1	0%	0	5.88%	1

SOURCE: *TASB Risk Management Fund Report on Loss Analysis by Location, December 31, 2004.*
Claims are through November 10, 2004.

assist in reducing workers' compensation losses. TASB consultants work with districts on an accident prevention plan that includes:

- accident trend analysis;
- workplace inspections;
- accident investigations;
- education and training;
- documentation and record keeping; and
- prevention plan monitoring.

TASB provides the fund participant with a loss control manual that contains information and resources needed to implement a loss control program. The loss control manual includes a collection of materials on specific safety topics that the district can use for safety training, including posters, handouts, and payroll stuffers. Bilingual materials are also included.

The establishment of safety committees in school districts has also proven to be successful. These committees are made up of representatives from all employee groups, providing valuable input for the safety program. Meetings are held on a regular basis to develop safety initiatives, review loss records, and monitor the ongoing program.

Lyford Consolidated ISD (LCISD) reduced its workers' compensation program expenses by instituting a strong safety and loss prevention program. The district took advantage of TASB loss control services, including on-site visits by the loss control consultant, training, review of loss reports with district staff to identify high-risk areas, the loss control manual, and safety handout kits with topics for monthly safety meetings. The supervisor

for Maintenance and Transportation incorporated the TASB loss control manual and safety kit into the district's safety program. The safety program has been well documented through training logs and inspection forms. Training is provided to employees, with specific training to address high-risk employees. New employees are trained to use personal protective equipment when issued. Training is documented on a training form stating the type of equipment issued, type of training, and the employee's signature. In addition, the district implemented a district safety committee that includes the following personnel:

- supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation;

- assistant custodian supervisor;

- transportation representative;

- yard crew representative;

- custodian;

- administrator; and

- district police chief.

The safety committee meets each month to review loss reports and safety issues. Based on these loss reports and safety issues, the committee determines the safety topics for the following months. The committee does routine safety inspections of district facilities and playgrounds, documents findings, and makes recommendations for the correction of unsafe practices or situations. By implementing a strong safety program, LCISD reduced its workers' compensation losses and its workers' compensation contribution to the TASB Risk Management Fund.

The district should develop a comprehensive safety program to address workers' compensation losses. The superintendent should assign the responsibility of the safety program to the administrative assistant for Business Services. The administrative assistant for Business Services can work with the Student Services and Operations coordinator to analyze trends and identify exposures to financial loss for the workers' compensation program. The district should establish a safety committee consisting of representatives from all employee groups to work with the administration to develop loss prevention strategies, an employee-training program, workplace safety inspections, and a system for monitoring the program.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION (REC. 61)

The district does not effectively manage its workers' compensation program by analyzing losses or periodically requesting proposals for coverage to determine if they are obtaining the most comprehensive and cost-effective program. School districts are required by law to extend workers' compensation benefits to employees. A district can provide these benefits through self-funding, purchasing an insurance policy, or entering into an inter-local agreement with other political subdivisions providing self-insurance. The ZCISD Business office is responsible for obtaining the district's workers' compensation coverage and managing the program. There are no established procedures for purchasing insurance coverage. The district participates in the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund's Workers' Compensation Program through an inter-local agreement. They joined the TASB Workers' Compensation Program in 1974 and have been a participant for thirty years. The Business Services director stated the district has not requested proposals for workers' compensation coverage for the past five years. The renewal agreement provided to the review team did not have signatures from TASB. Although the coverage agreement was sent July 16, 2004 and due no later than the effective date of September 1, 2004, the district did not sign the agreement until October 13, 2004. There was no evidence that the workers' compensation costs have been analyzed by the Business office or that the district's loss history had been reviewed to track trends in claims.

Exhibit 3–31 illustrates the dollar amount paid in claims, the dollar amount incurred, and the contributions paid to the TASB fund. Over the past six years, the district has incurred a total of $679,067 in claims and has paid $2,384,753 in contributions.

EXHIBIT 3–31
ZCISD WORKERS' COMPENSATION PAID AND INCURRED CLAIMS VS. CONTRIBUTIONS

YEARS	PAID TO DATE	INCURRED TO DATE	CONTRIBUTIONS TO TASB FUND
1999–00	$115,685	$117,670	$484,374
2000–01	$91,955	$91,955	$359,827
2001–02	$60,143	$60,143	$382,698
2002–03	$201,441	$248,470	$422,036
2003–04	$72,643	$118,385	$355,468
2004–05	$2,857	$42,444	$380,350
Total	$544,724	$679,067	$2,384,753

SOURCE: TASB Facsimile, 12/14/2004, TASB Member History Report as of 11/30/04.

Exhibit 3–32 illustrates ZCISD's claim history and experience modification factor. TASB states "the experience modification factor is applied to the manual contribution to reflect the TASB member's actual experience as compared to the expected experience of similarly sized districts. If this factor is over 1.00 the actual experience is worse than expected." The number of claims over the past seven years has been consistent. The incurred losses are considerably lower than contributions, as illustrated in **Exhibit 3–31**.

The district is not actively managing the workers' compensation coverage through monitoring associated costs, analyzing losses for trends, developing loss prevention strategies, and identifying available coverage options. The district does not request proposals in an effort to obtain the most comprehensive coverage at the most cost-effective rate. The staff has accepted the TASB renewal rates without any analysis or investigation of other options available to the district. The district received their renewal rates from TASB in July with an effective date of September 1. By failing to take action prior to July, the district eliminates the opportunity to pursue other options with other carriers. A proposal process and implementation of a new program would require a minimum of four to six months prior to the September 1 effective date for coverage.

Many districts have achieved reductions in insurance premiums by actively managing their coverage. Often districts will contract with an external risk management consultant to assist with analyzing loss information, developing bid specifications, and evaluating options submitted in proposals. In accordance with the Attorney General Opinion JC-0205, the consultant should not be a broker or insurance agent. A timeline is established providing at least four to six months for the process. Loss reports are analyzed for the previous five years and included in the

specifications to provide insurance carriers with an accurate picture of the district's loss experience. Tatum ISD contracted with an expert to prepare specifications and to evaluate bids for their insurance programs. The result of the competition through the bid process resulted in a reduction in total premium of about 10.4 percent from the prior year.

The district should evaluate the current workers' compensation program and request proposals for workers' compensation coverage on a periodic basis. Loss reports can be accessed through the TASB online system and analyzed to identify loss trends and appropriate loss control strategies. The administrative assistant for Business Services should develop proposal specifications that include five years of loss information, payroll information, and a description of the district's safety program. The Business office should advertise a request for proposals for workers' compensation coverage. The administrative assistant for Business Services should evaluate the proposals based on program cost, coverage, and services that best meet the district needs.

The district can implement this recommendation with existing resources, or it can contract with an outside risk management consultant to assist with the process. The estimated one-time cost for the consultant's work is 75 hours or $7,500 ($100 hourly fee X 75 = $7,500). The amount of work in subsequent years would be assessed on an as needed basis. While it is difficult to estimate exact savings without responses to a request for proposals, because of its low annual incurred losses the district could realize a 15 percent to 25 percent reduction in annual costs. At 15 percent, the annual savings would be $57,052 ($380,350 from contributions to TASB Fund in 2004–05 X 0.15 = $57,052). In order to give the district adequate time for the proposal process, savings would begin in 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 3–32
ZCISD WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIM HISTORY
1999–2005

YEAR	NUMBER OF CLAIMS	NUMBER OF OPEN CLAIMS	PAID TO DATE LOSSES	INCURRED LOSSES	EXPERIENCE MODIFICATION FACTOR
1998–99	34	1	$88,148	$92,665	.94
1999–00	43	1	$115,685	$117,670	.90
2000–01	48	0	$91,955	$91,955	.98
2001–02	37	0	$60,143	$60,143	.80
2002–03	39	7	$201,411	$248,470	.80
2003–04	40	8	$72,643	$118,385	.69
2004–05	17	11	$2,857	$42,444	.93

SOURCE: *TASB Member History Report as of 11/30/04.*

PROPERTY CASUALTY COVERAGE (REC. 62)

ZCISD does not conduct an annual evaluation of its property and casualty insurance program to determine if the district has obtained adequate coverage for existing loss exposures at the best possible cost. At the time of the review team visit, the Business Services director was responsible for the Purchasing function of the district and the district's property and casualty insurance, although his current job description did not include any risk management responsibilities or duties. The district currently participates in the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund and purchases their property and casualty coverages from the fund. The district did not have any record of evaluating their options for coverage or requesting proposals for property and casualty coverages on file for the past five years. The Business Services director stated they have participated in the TASB fund for the past five years. **Exhibit 3–33** provides the current coverage purchased by the district.

The district did request proposals for student insurance on July 12, 2004. The proposals were due on July 20, 2004, with an effective date of August 1, 2004. Due to the short turnaround time, the district received only one proposal, which was from the current carrier.

Without a periodic analysis of the district's loss exposures and property casualty coverage, the district cannot ensure that it is obtaining optimum coverage at minimum cost. The district also does not identify coverage gaps resulting from exclusions under current policies. For example, the district purchases the TASB crime policy to cover all employees up to $25,000 for losses due to employee dishonesty and failure to perform duties. However, there is no evidence the district has purchased any fidelity bonds to protect the district from larger losses that may result from key employees, such as the superintendent and the administrative assistant for Business Services, who are responsible for the overall budget and approving large expenditures. The district does not purchase an electronic data processing equipment (EDP) floater. This coverage extends the district's property coverage limits for the data processing equipment, including data and media owned by the district, and provides additional extra expense coverage. The current property policy limits the coverage of replacement of records such as magnetic recording or storage media for electronic data processing to $25,000. The EDP endorsement would extend that coverage to actual expenses for reproducing the property, repairing or replacing the property with material of the same kind and quality, and provide coverage for duplicate and backup "data" and any media on which the data is recorded at each storage location.

Preparation of specifications for a request for proposal for property and casualty coverage provides district staff with an opportunity to

EXHIBIT 3–33
ZCISD PROPERTY AND CASUALTY COVERAGES
2004–05

INSURANCE/ COVERAGE POLICY	POLICY PERIOD	COVERAGE LIMITS	DEDUCTIBLE	PREMIUM	COMPANY
Property	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	$50,834,287	$5,000	$84,386	TASB
Property – Wind, Hurricane, & Hail	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	$50,834,287	$50,000	Included	TASB
General Liability Employee Benefits	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	$1,000,000 $100,000	$1,000	$3,014	TASB
School Professional Legal Liability	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	$1,000,000 per occurrence, $1,000,000 Annual Aggregate	$20,000	$16,468	TASB
Fleet Liability	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	$100,000 per person $300,000 per occurrence $100,000 per property	$500	$14,115	TASB
Fleet Physical Damage	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	Actual Cash Value	$500	$5,624	TASB
Physical damage – all other vehicles Specified Perils, Collision	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	Actual Cash Value	$500	$1,166	TASB
Crime Policy	9/1/04 – 9/1/05	$25,000	$250	$413	TASB
Student Insurance Blanket Athletic and UIL	8/1/04 – 7/31/05	$25,000 $5,000,000	$25,000	$56,400	Texas Monarch

SOURCE: TASB Risk Management Fund Property/Casualty Renewal, July 16, 2004, ZCISD Business Office.

conduct a risk assessment of the district's needs and loss exposures. Obtaining proposals from various companies allows the district to identify various options within the market, identify trends in the industry, and compare coverages and costs that are most beneficial to the district. Agents should be provided a minimum of 45 days to respond to the request for proposals. Providing a two-week turnaround eliminates submissions, as evidenced in the district's request for proposals for student insurance in July 2004.

Effective organizations review their insurance programs periodically to ensure they balance the best coverage with an optimum price. Many districts contract with a risk management consultant to conduct the risk analysis, develop specifications, evaluate proposals, and develop a recommendation. A consultant is usually paid a flat fee or a fee ranging from $75 to $100 per hour. This is an acceptable method rather than hiring an agent or broker of record to purchase the insurance coverage. The Attorney General Opinion JC-0205 states "the district may not use a designated broker of record to purchase insurance contracts with premiums of an aggregate value of $10,000 or more for each twelve month period because a broker will have affiliations with a limited number of insurance companies." The rationale is that the broker's affiliations to the industry may limit access to all available insurance and coverage options for the district. Furthermore, the AG Opinion states the use of a designated broker of record is not authorized under the Texas Education Code (TEC) Sections 44.031 and 44.033.

The district should conduct a periodic review for the property and casualty insurance program to ensure the district is obtaining the most comprehensive and cost-effective coverage. The administrative assistant for Business Services should conduct a risk analysis to determine exposures to loss, identify coverage gaps, and develop specifications for a request for proposals. If the district does not have the level of expertise needed, it can contact organizations like TASB for assistance or contract with a risk management consultant. The district should advertise a request for proposals a minimum of 90 days prior to the renewal date of the current policies. The administrative assistant for Business Services should evaluate the proposals to determine the most appropriate coverage at the lowest cost to the district. Although it is difficult to estimate savings without actual proposals, using a conservative estimate of a 10 percent savings in premiums, the district will save $18,159 per year. This estimate is

based on the current property values ($181,586 X 0.1 = $18,159).

EQUIPMENT BREAKDOWN COVERAGE (REC. 63)

ZCISD does not carry equipment breakdown coverage on property excluded from the district's property coverage, resulting in an exposure to financial loss that the district has not addressed through insurance or through self-insurance should a loss occur. The district's current property coverage excludes certain losses related to mechanical breakdowns, heating and cooling equipment, plumbing, air conditioning, refrigeration units, steam pipes, boilers, and steam engines. Some exclusions include losses caused directly or indirectly by electrical currents artificially generated; losses caused by or resulting from power, heating, or cooling failure if it is caused by an excluded peril; failure, breakdown, or derangement of machines or machinery; and any continuous or repeated seepage, leakage, penetration, transpiration, or intrusion of water or steam from a heating, air conditioning, or automatic sprinkler system, appliance, or plumbing system.

Some examples of losses the district is not addressing include losses due to the breakdown of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; water heaters; service interruptions; hazardous substances; and perishable goods if caused by a covered equipment breakdown. If these losses should occur, the district will have to finance repairs, replacements, and additional operating expenses out of the district's general operating budget. The district currently carries property insurance through the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund. TASB offers participants equipment breakdown coverage that includes property damage resulting from the breakdown of equipment that generates, transmits, or utilizes energy per the definition of an "accident" in the policy. In addition, the policy also contains the following coverages:

- property damage up to property coverage limit;
- off-premises property damage $100,000 limit;
- business income included in coverage limit;
- extra expense included in coverage limit;
- service interruption included in coverage limit;
- contingent business income $100,000;
- perishable goods $100,000;

- data restoration $100,000;

- demolition $250,000;

- expediting expense $250,000;

- hazardous substance $250,000; and

- newly acquired locations included in coverage limit.

School districts that implement good risk management practices identify coverage gaps and determine how to address these areas in the most cost-effective manner, either through the purchase of additional insurance or self-insurance for loss exposures. The purchase of equipment breakdown coverage fills in some of the coverage gaps for excluded property at a low cost and can be budgeted annually.

The district should evaluate the loss exposures related to equipment breakdown that are excluded under the current property coverage and determine the feasibility of purchasing equipment breakdown coverage to address those exposures. The administrative assistant for Business Services should identify the district's potential exposure to property damage by equipment breakdown and obtain quotes for coverage from its current property carrier. The quotes should be compared to the potential losses the district could incur in one year. A recommendation for addressing the current loss exposures should be developed based on the assessment and evaluation.

The district currently places its property coverage with TASB, which offers equipment breakdown coverage for an additional cost. TASB bases the equipment breakdown coverage on the current appraised property value, losses, and reinsurance rating. Based on the district's current property values, the fiscal impact is the estimated annual premium for equipment breakdown, which is $3,314 for 2005, with the limit of coverage equal to the current property limit carried on the property coverage.

SECTION 125 CAFETERIA PLAN (REC. 64)

The district cannot verify that the ZCISD cafeteria plan complies with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The district offers employees a cafeteria plan benefit. Cafeteria plans are authorized under the IRS Code, Section 125 and allow employers to provide the option of purchasing some fringe benefits before taxes are calculated, saving both the employer and employees on taxes. The district could not provide the review team with the required cafeteria plan document adopted by the board, nor any

documentation that the board adopted the plan. The district offers employees the option of placing their benefit premiums on the cafeteria plan in addition to medical and dependent reimbursement accounts. District staff stated that American Family Life Assurance Company (AFLAC) administers the cafeteria plan, but staff did not have a contract on file with the vendor. The Business Services director requested a copy of the vendor's Flex One Flexible Spending Account Agreement from the vendor's agent. The agent only provided a facsimile of a "Full Plan Renewal Letter" dated July 2, 1999. The vendor requests the district to use the letter as a guide to assist the Flex One Administration in obtaining the required information for account setup. The letter listed the following requirements:

- You must re-enroll each employee at renewal. Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plan year elections do not automatically roll forward from plan year to plan year. Therefore, you need to allow yourself enough time to see everyone.

- Participating Salary Redirection Agreements (SRA) must be received by the vendor's Flex One Administration 10 working days prior to the plan renewal date to avoid a delay in processing. The vendor's Flex One will no longer require nonparticipating Salary Redirection Agreements (SRAs). The vendor will accept either the participating SRAs or a list from the plan sponsor with all the information on the Salary Redirection Agreement.

- The vendor's Flex One FSA will no longer require a Plan Document Request/Change Form to renew a full plan unless there is a change in the following information:

  o company name;

  o service fees; and

  o processing method (i.e., self-pay to daily).

- Fees will be charged to the account for the renewal plan year based on the number of eligible employees as indicated on the fee schedule. Fee information addressed in the Reimbursement Services Agreement does not roll forward from plan year to plan year.

Both the Business Services director and Payroll clerk responsible for processing the district's employee benefits stated that they rely on the vendor for the plan administration and compliance with the law. The staff stated that the plan did not have a brochure or summary plan description or

any other type of written information for the employee. The district did not provide any copies of the annual employee communication informing the employees of their rights, except for what was printed in the employee handbook. The employee handbook provides only a generic statement of the cafeteria plan, without any specific information on participation requirements or specific benefits offered in ZCISD that qualify for placement under the cafeteria plan. The handbook includes the following information:

> Employees may be eligible to participate in the cafeteria plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulation, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental and additional term life insurance). A third party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

> New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis and during the specified period.

The handbook description of the cafeteria plan does not mention the medical reimbursement or dependent care accounts that the staff said was offered and are listed on the 1999 vendor fee schedule. It does state that the disability plans can be placed under the cafeteria plan.

If an employee wants to make a change in the election agreement during the year, the staff contacts the vendor. According to staff, the agent of record is responsible for communicating the plan requirements and benefits to the employees, but there is no documentation available as to what is being communicated. The district does not have any documentation showing that the third party administrator is responsible for the communication and compliance with the IRS code. Staff was unaware of the affect other benefit laws had on the cafeteria election changes during the year. IRS regulations only allow cafeteria plan participants to make changes or revoke their participation during the annual enrollment period or under specific circumstances defined for Section 125 plans. Exceptions to these regulations are provided under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). If an employee, spouse, or dependent become eligible for continuation of coverage under

a health plan through COBRA, the cafeteria plan may permit the employee to elect to increase payments under the employer's cafeteria plan for any premium increase for that coverage. Additional exceptions for election changes are extended if the employee qualifies for special enrollment rights under HIPAA. The FMLA provides other exceptions, such as the option for an employee to revoke coverage while on unpaid FMLA leave. FMLA also allows an employee to continue coverage but discontinue his or her share of the premium payments while the employee is on unpaid leave.

The vendor's agent also offers other supplemental benefits to employees in the district. **Exhibit 3–34** provides a list of the current benefits marketed in ZCISD.

EXHIBIT 3–34
AFLAC AGENT'S SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS MARKETED IN ZCISD

COMPANY	SUPPLEMENTAL COVERAGE
AFLAC	Life Insurance
AFLAC	Cancer Coverage
AFLAC	Accident Insurance
AFLAC	Specific Event Insurance
AFLAC	Short Term Disability

SOURCE: *ZCISD Payroll Staff Interview, December 2004.*

The vendor's agent of record has a competitive advantage over other vendors for marketing the above products since he is responsible for meeting with each employee to communicate the cafeteria plan requirements during the open enrollment period.

The Internal Revenue Code Sections 79, 105, 106, 125, 129, 213, and 401 created the cafeteria plan benefit that allows significant tax savings for the district and employees. Contributions made by an employee salary reduction agreement are not subject to federal and local income taxation. To offer this benefit, a district must comply with the IRS requirements for administration and documentation of all cafeteria plans. The IRS requirements include the following:

- a description of each benefit available under the plan and the period of coverage;

- a description of the eligibility rules for participants;

- procedures for holding elections under the plan, including when elections may be made and revoked and elections referring to a period when the employees make decisions about enrollment;

- the manner in which employer contributions may be made, such as by salary reduction

agreement between the employer and employee, by non-elective employer contributions, or by both;

- a statement regarding the maximum amount of employer contributions available to any participant; and

- the plan year.

The district sponsors the cafeteria plan and is ultimately responsible for complying with the IRS requirements. The district does not have a written agreement with the third party administrator (TPA) outlining all of the responsibilities assumed by the TPA in the plan administration along with the TPA's assumption of liability incurred due to failure to meet those responsibilities. The renewal letter documents that the district is responsible for enrolling the employees, not the TPA. The district did not have documentation from the employees who elected not to participate in the plan. Consequently, the district cannot verify that they have been offered the option to participate in the plan. The district is not monitoring the TPA for compliance. In addition, there is no documentation available to ensure the cafeteria plan has been updated with changes in other benefit laws, such as HIPAA, FMLA, and COBRA. In addition, if an employee places their disability plan premiums under the cafeteria plan, any benefits they receive under the disability plan are taxable and should be listed on their W-2 form.

Failure to comply with the IRS Code Section 125 requirements can result in penalties to the district. When the district has not met compliance requirements, employees can also be adversely affected.

The Texas Department of Insurance provides school districts guidance in insurance and employee benefit issues in the publication *Insurance Decisions for Texas School Districts*. The IRS requires cafeteria plan administration and documentation to include a written plan document, summary plan descriptions, salary reduction agreements, and 5500 series reports. The publication states that if a district outsources its cafeteria plan's administration, the district should ensure that the TPA meets the following requirements:

- is licensed to do business in Texas;

- has a good track record and history of cafeteria plan administration;

- issues a contract stating what the district wants accomplished;

- issues a contract stating the TPA or outsource representative accepts responsibility for its administration and they should not be held harmless;

- does not confuse the roles of "enroller" with that of marketer;

- properly calculates salary reduction contributions and guarantees that they are correct; and

- protects the district employee's rights.

To ensure compliance with the IRS Code Section 125 for cafeteria plans, many districts develop a cafeteria plan document with the assistance of legal counsel for board approval. The document includes the board approved benefit options that can be placed under the cafeteria plan. Written employee communication includes a corresponding summary plan document with employee election agreements and change forms. The process of contracting with a TPA includes requesting proposals, evaluating submitted proposals to assure all services are included, and having a written agreement that identifies district and TPA responsibilities and addresses liability issues. The written agreement includes hold harmless agreements that protect the district from administrative errors resulting from the TPA staff. These districts do not allow the agent for the TPA to market products while counseling employees on cafeteria plan elections during the cafeteria enrollment period. District staff monitors the TPA to ensure compliance with the IRS Code Section 125.

The district should develop a process to manage the district's cafeteria plan that ensures compliance with the Internal Revenue Service rules for cafeteria plans. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with legal counsel to develop a cafeteria plan document in compliance with the IRS Code Section 125 for board approval and a summary plan document for employees with a corresponding election agreement. The district should make a request for proposals for third party administrator (TPA) services for the cafeteria plan and develop a TPA service agreement that identifies liability exposures and cafeteria plan administration responsibilities assigned to the TPA and the district, along with performance measures that the district can use to evaluate services delivered by the TPA. The administrative assistant for Business Services should monitor the TPA services to ensure compliance with IRS Code Section 125.

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROCEDURES (REC. 65)

ZCISD does not have written procedures that provide an efficient process for the district to offer competitive benefit programs and address related employee benefit liability issues. The district's employee benefits administration is assigned to the Business office. At the time of the review team visit, the Business Services director was responsible for obtaining benefit programs offered to employees. The district did not have any record of requesting proposals during the past three to five years for any of the benefit programs currently offered through payroll deduction. Vendors contact the Business office in August each year and request placement on a list of approved vendors for the district. The Business Services director notifies the principals by written memo that a vendor has permission to visit the campus during the open enrollment period to "sell insurance at the campuses." This memo states that the principal can approve any vendors coming to their campus. The principals are authorized to allow or disallow time for any sales and/or presentation. The letter does not identify what benefit programs have been approved by the ZCISD central administration to market on the campus.

The district staff could not provide the review team with copies of any agreements or contracts on file for any of the employee benefit programs. Consequently, guarantees for coverage and liability issues are not addressed in writing by the district or vendors. For example, the district did not have agreements or contracts on file with any annuity companies, although there are 11 companies identified for annuity payroll deductions. In addition, there were no agreements or contracts available for any of the supplemental coverages offered to employees through payroll deduction. It was difficult to determine how many vendors visited the campuses and the number of benefits offered to employees. The Payroll staff provided a printout of payroll deductions. **Exhibit 3–35** lists benefits identified on the payroll system.

The district also offers a flexible spending account for medical reimbursement and dependent care. There was no written employee communication available to describe the benefits and IRS compliance requirements. The district also does not include a description of the flexible spending account for medical reimbursement and dependent care in the ZCISD 2004–05 employee handbook. In addition, the employee handbook does not provide accurate information on the benefit programs offered in the district or information regarding rules on various benefit plan options, enrollments, and election changes.

The district does not have administrative regulations or procedures to guide employees in handling benefit programs and compliance with various laws. The Payroll staff does not receive regular training on benefit-related laws such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconstruction Act (COBRA), IRS Code Section 125 Cafeteria Plan, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Payroll staff learned their job-related procedures through on-the-job training from their predecessors. The Payroll clerk did receive training at the TASB Risk Management Fund Conference in 2004 for workers' compensation claims, coverage, and compensability; Section 125 rules and regulations; update on TRS ActiveCare; and unemployment claims. There was no evidence of districtwide training for employees who communicate benefits at the campuses, including administrators and paraprofessional staff, and employees have not received training on FMLA benefits. According to the Payroll clerk, the district has not placed any employees on FMLA in three years. The staff does not evaluate employee absences to determine if absences qualify for FMLA leave. The ZCISD employee handbook does not provide accurate leave information to coincide with the district's policy or the guidelines for the sick leave pool and extended leave.

Periodically requesting proposals for benefit programs allows districts to obtain the most comprehensive coverages at the most competitive rate for employees. Several vendors competing for one product within a district can result in higher premiums because the individual program participation is reduced by being spread among several vendors. Allowing vendors to market their products to employees without any type of screening process or research to verify financial stability, company and agent licenses, and their reputation for claims service and benefit payments puts the employees and the district at risk of doing business with a company that may not be financially sound. Without contracts or agreements for each company, the district has not identified the expectations for service or assigned the responsibility for liability if coverage is not provided to the employee. It is reasonable for employees to assume that the district has reviewed each company for financial stability and service reputation prior to authorizing the agent to sell the product. In addition, the district has allowed several vendors to market similar products to

EXHIBIT 3–35
ZCISD PAYROLL DEDUCTION LIST OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

	BENEFIT	COMPANY
1.	Health Insurance	TRS Active Care 1
2.	Health Insurance	TRS Active Care 2
3.	Health Insurance	TRS Active Care 3
4.	Health Insurance	Mercy Health Plans
5.	Reimbursable Medical Account	AFLAC
6.	Health Insurance - Cancer	National Teacher's Association
7.	Health Insurance - Cancer	AFLAC
8.	Health Insurance - Cancer	American Heritage Insurance
9.	Health Insurance - Cancer	Conseco
10.	Health Insurance - Cancer	EMC National Life Company
11.	Health Insurance - Heart Stroke	American Heritage Insurance
12.	Health Insurance - Heart	Conseco
13.	Health - Hospital Indemnity	American Heritage Insurance
14.	Health - Hospital Indemnity	Conseco
15.	Health - Hospital Income	Colonial Life and Accident
16.	Health Insurance	Central State of Omaha
17.	Health Insurance - Cancer	Colonial Life and Accident
18.	Health - Intensive Care	Conseco
19.	Long Term Care	Conseco
20.	Dental Insurance	LifeRe
21.	Vision	Trustar Vision Services
22.	I Care	AFLAC
23.	Disability	Fortis Disability
24.	Disability	American Heritage Insurance
25.	Disability	Conseco
26.	Short Term Disability	AFLAC
27.	Short Term Disability	Colonial Life & Accident
28.	Accident	AFLAC
29.	Accident	American Heritage Insurance
30.	Accident	Colonial Life & Accident
31.	Accident	Conseco
32.	Life Insurance	AFLAC
33.	Life Insurance	American Heritage Insurance
34.	Life Insurance	Colonial Life & Accident
35.	Life Insurance – Universal Life	Colonial Life & Accident
36.	Life Insurance	New York Life
37.	Life Insurance	Jefferson National Life Insurance
38.	Life Insurance	Horace Mann Life Insurance
39.	Life Insurance	MetLife
40.	Life Insurance	Fort Dearborn Life Insurance
41.	Life Insurance	Humana Life Insurance
42.	Life Insurance	Americo Financial Life Insurance
43.	Life Insurance	Conseco Health
44.	Life Insurance	Lafayette Life Insurance Company
45.	Life Insurance	General American
46.	Annuity	American Heritage Insurance
48.	Annuity	United Teachers Association
49.	Annuity	Aviva Life Insurance
50.	Annuity	Annuity Services Group
51.	Annuity	National Health Insurance Company
52.	Annuity	Capital Bank & Trust Co.
53.	Annuity	Life Insurance Company of Southwest
54.	Annuity	Veritrust Financial
55.	Annuity	Jefferson NLI Co.
55.	Annuity	Western Reserve Life
56.	Annuity	Western Reserve Life Assurance
57.	Pre-paid Legal	Pre-Paid Legal Services

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Office, January 2005.

employees, creating a significant burden on the Payroll staff to process several different enrollment forms during the months of August and September. The cafeteria plan TPA is also allowed to market individual products. Since the agent must meet with each employee of the district to communicate the cafeteria plan requirements and identify supplemental coverages that qualify for the cafeteria plan, the TPA has an advantage over its competitors. Other vendors are at an additional disadvantage because the district does not publish a list of all the supplemental coverages or benefits.

Operating without written benefit procedures puts the district at risk for noncompliance with benefit laws and plan requirements. Procedures provide payroll and campus staff guidelines for processing and communicating benefits consistently. Failure to comply with plan requirements can jeopardize employee coverage under the plan. Failure to comply with benefit laws creates potential liabilities for both the district and employee. For example, if the district does not require the annuity companies to inform the employee of the maximum exclusion allowance set by the Internal Revenue Service for tax sheltered annuities, both the district and the employee can be liable for the any excess taxes that were not paid. Written procedures regarding compliance issues and employee communication are critical to limiting liability exposure related to such laws as FMLA, COBRA, and HIPAA.

Effective school districts develop procedures for managing employee benefit programs. These procedures include requesting proposals for programs and selecting benefit options that provide the best coverage at the most affordable price. The procedures include guidelines for benefit administration to ensure consistency in employee communication across the district, vendor guidelines for marketing within the district, and compliance with benefit laws. Benefit options and employee rights are clearly communicated to all district staff. Employees responsible for benefit administration receive adequate training on legal updates on a routine basis. This training includes campus-based personnel who assist with benefit communication at the schools. Some districts establish insurance committees to assist with benefit selection and employee communication.

Donna ISD (DISD) established an insurance committee of 20 staff members to represent administrators, supervisors, teachers, and paraprofessionals throughout the district. The committee educates district decision makers on benefit issues so that the district can make the best decision regarding benefit options. Insurance agents make presentations to the committee explaining their benefits and associated costs on benefit plans under consideration. The committee develops recommendations regarding the benefit options for the district, which is submitted to the superintendent and school board for approval. Although DISD is a larger district than ZCISD, this approach could work in a smaller district as well.

The district should develop employee benefit procedures to provide guidelines for the selection and administration of benefit programs to ensure efficient operation, consistency in employee communication, and compliance with benefit-related laws. The administrative assistant for Business Services should evaluate the current benefit programs to determine benefit needs and identify duplicate benefit programs that have minimum participation. A request for proposals should be advertised for supplemental coverages based on the evaluation. An insurance committee should be established consisting of representatives from all employee groups to review proposals and develop recommendations. Each benefit program should submit a contract or agreement to the committee for review prior to board approval. A list of authorized agents for selected benefit plans should be compiled for the campuses along with vendor guidelines. The district should conduct annual training on employee benefit procedures with central office and designated campus staff.

COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT PROCESS (REC. 66)

ZCISD is not complying with state regulations governing competitive procurement. The review team identified several contracts for the purchase of goods and services that were not developed through the use of one of the competitive procurement methods prescribed by the Texas Education Code (TEC). These contracts violate one or more state laws and place school administrators and the Board of Trustees at risk for legal action. For example, the district spent a total of $20,506 for auto parts in 2003–04 without taking any written quotations or documenting any telephone quotes to justify the use of any of the three vendors used for these parts, as required by TEC §44.033. According to the Student Services and Operations coordinator, the district bought parts from all three automotive parts suppliers in Zapata. The expenditures report for 2003–04 indicates the district spent $2,563 at Zapata Auto Parts, $6,567 at Gonzales Auto Parts, and $11,374 at Guevara Auto Supply.

The review team also identified a roofing project, mold remediation services, and communication

services that were obtained without evidence to support use of a competitive bid process. In 2002, ZCISD paid $29,770 for a roofing project. The superintendent's secretary remembered the project was bid, but the staff could not provide the bid, engineering information, a payment bond, or a contract between the district and the contractor for the project.

In 2002–03, the district paid Biotech Solutions $125,968.29 for mold remediation services. Based on the board meeting minutes, district administrators informed the board of the mold problem at a March 2003 meeting. Also at this meeting, the superintendent told the board that Biotech had performed the mold remediation at South Elementary on an emergency basis and that the district would obtain bids to decide on a vendor for the remaining mold remediation work. The board awarded the contract to Biotech Solutions during the May 2003 board meeting; however, the minutes do not indicate that any bids or quotations were considered. The TEC makes a provision that allows school districts to bypass the normal bid process if the delay caused would severely impair normal school operations. TEC §44.031 (h) states "that if the Board of Trustees determines that the delay posed by the methods provided for in this section would prevent or substantially impair the conduct of classes or other essential school activities, then contracts for the replacement or repair of the equipment or the part of the school facility may be made by methods other than those required by this section." Based on the minutes, the board did not declare such an emergency before awarding the contract to Biotech Solutions.

Another example of an award granted without evidence of the district taking bids or quotations is with the vendor Cingular Wireless. The district paid this vendor more than $63,000 for communication services on the school buses. None of the cooperatives used by ZCISD had agreements with Cingular Wireless, and the district could not show that it received proposals for this service. Purchase orders did not have state contract numbers that are required if a school district uses a contract through the Texas Building and Procurement Commission.

When a district purchases items valued at $25,000 or more in aggregate, or multiple like-items with a cumulative value of more than $25,000 over a 12-month period, it must use one of the following TEC methods for purchasing, as illustrated in **Exhibit 3–36**. These methods are also described in ZCISD board policy CH (LEGAL).

In 1999, Attorney General Opinion (OP. JC-37) stated that school district procurement through an inter-local agreement or a cooperative purchasing arrangement satisfies competitive bidding requirements. An inter-local agreement allows a district to contract or agree with another local government entity to purchase goods and any services reasonably required for the installation, operation, or maintenance of the goods.

TEC also requires districts to provide notice of bidding opportunities and give prospective bidders a sufficient amount of time to respond. Districts must advertise contracts valued at $25,000 or more once a week, for at least two weeks, in any newspaper published in the county in which the school district's central administration office is located. Contracts for personal property of at least $10,000 but less than $25,000 for a twelve-month period must also be advertised in two successive issues of a newspaper. The advertisements must specify the categories of property projected for procurement and solicit bids from vendors that are interested in supplying the goods or services. Before making a purchase, the district must obtain written or telephone price quotations from at least three vendors on an approved list of vendors for that item. TEC states that the purchase shall be made from the lowest responsible bidder. In determining the lowest responsible bidder, the district may consider the following:

- purchase price;

- reputation of the vendor and of the vendor's goods and services;

- quality of the vendor's goods or services;

- extent to which the goods or services meet the district's needs;

- vendor's past relationship with the district;

- impact on the ability of the district to comply with laws relating to historically underutilized businesses;

- total long-term cost to the district to acquire the goods or services; and

- any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposals.

Exceptions to the competitive bidding requirements include contracts for professional services including architect fees, attorney fees, and fees for fiscal agents. The TEC also allows a district to purchase items that are available from only one source ("sole-source" purchases) if certain criteria are met, including:

EXHIBIT 3–36
COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT METHODS

PURCHASING METHOD	METHOD DESCRIPTION
Competitive bidding	Requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based upon bid specifications, terms and conditions contained in the request for bids, bid prices offered by suppliers and pertinent factors affecting contract performance. Forbids negotiation of prices of goods and services 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 prices after proposal opening. Primarily used for construction contracts.
Request for proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding, but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after proposal opening. Primarily used for service contracts.
Catalog Purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software, and services based on vendor discounted prices.
Inter-local contracts	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state, or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build contracts	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity for both the design and construction of a project.
Job order contracts	A method based on a sealed proposal where a district selects a contractor and contractor's cost guide to perform building and grounds repair and renovation projects.
Construction management contracts	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter, or repair facilities using a professional construction manager.
Reverse Auction Procedure	Outlines a bidding process that involves submission of bids by multiple suppliers, unknown to each other, in a manner that allows the suppliers to bid against each other.
Political Subdivision Corporation	This mechanism allows school districts to purchase electricity from a company designed to seek competitive electricity prices.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, FASRG.

- 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 replacement part or component for equipment to a particular piece of equipment and not available from more than one vendor.

The sole source exception does not apply to mainframe data processing equipment and peripheral attachments with a single-item purchase price in excess of $15,000.

ZCISD board policy CH (LEGAL) describes these procurement methods. Districts should make aggregate purchases of $10,000 but less than $25,000 over a 12-month period by soliciting vendors and obtaining quotes.

The Regional Educational Service Centers and the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) offer training opportunities through workshops and online courses that provide valuable instruction on school district purchasing procedures and state purchasing laws.

ZCISD should develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods to comply with state purchasing laws. The Business office should develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods that result in future contracts complying with state purchasing laws and board policy. The administrative assistant for Business Services should require that all staff understand the guidelines to ensure compliance.

PURCHASING OPERATION (REC. 67)
ZCISD staff is circumventing the purchasing process at the campus and department levels. The purchasing process is decentralized, which has resulted in district staff bypassing the approved purchasing process by ordering supplies and materials without first obtaining a valid purchase order. This practice violates ZCISD policy CH (LOCAL), which requires that the superintendent or designee make all purchase commitments on a properly drawn and issued purchase order. The Business Services director stated that the superintendent decentralized the purchasing process in an attempt to make the process less time-consuming. An unintended result of decentralization has been that campus and departmental staff are making purchases without approved purchase orders.

The purchasing and payment process in ZCISD is designed to begin with the budget managers on each campus and/or department or their staff preparing a requisition form and forwarding it to the Business office to begin the approval process. The form contains spaces for the following:

- vendor information;

- budget code and program selection;

- item description including unit price and extended amount;

- reason for purchase;

- ship to and bill to addresses; and

- approval signatures.

Exhibit 3–37 illustrates ZCISD's current purchase order/vendor payment process. The school or department sends a completed requisition form, with an invoice attached if the item has already been purchased, to the Accounts Payable clerk.

The Payroll clerk date stamps the requisition and forwards it to the staff accountant. The staff accountant checks the budget code for available funds, assigns a budget code if necessary, and sends the paperwork back to accounts payable. The Accounts Payable clerk types a purchase order (PO) and assigns a purchase order number. The PO moves to the administrative assistant for Business Services for a final review. The completed PO returns to the originating campus or department for mailing. If the goods have been received, the Accounts Payable clerk holds the purchase order and invoice for payment.

EXHIBIT 3–37
ZCISD CURRENT PURCHASE ORDER/VENDOR PAYMENT PROCESS
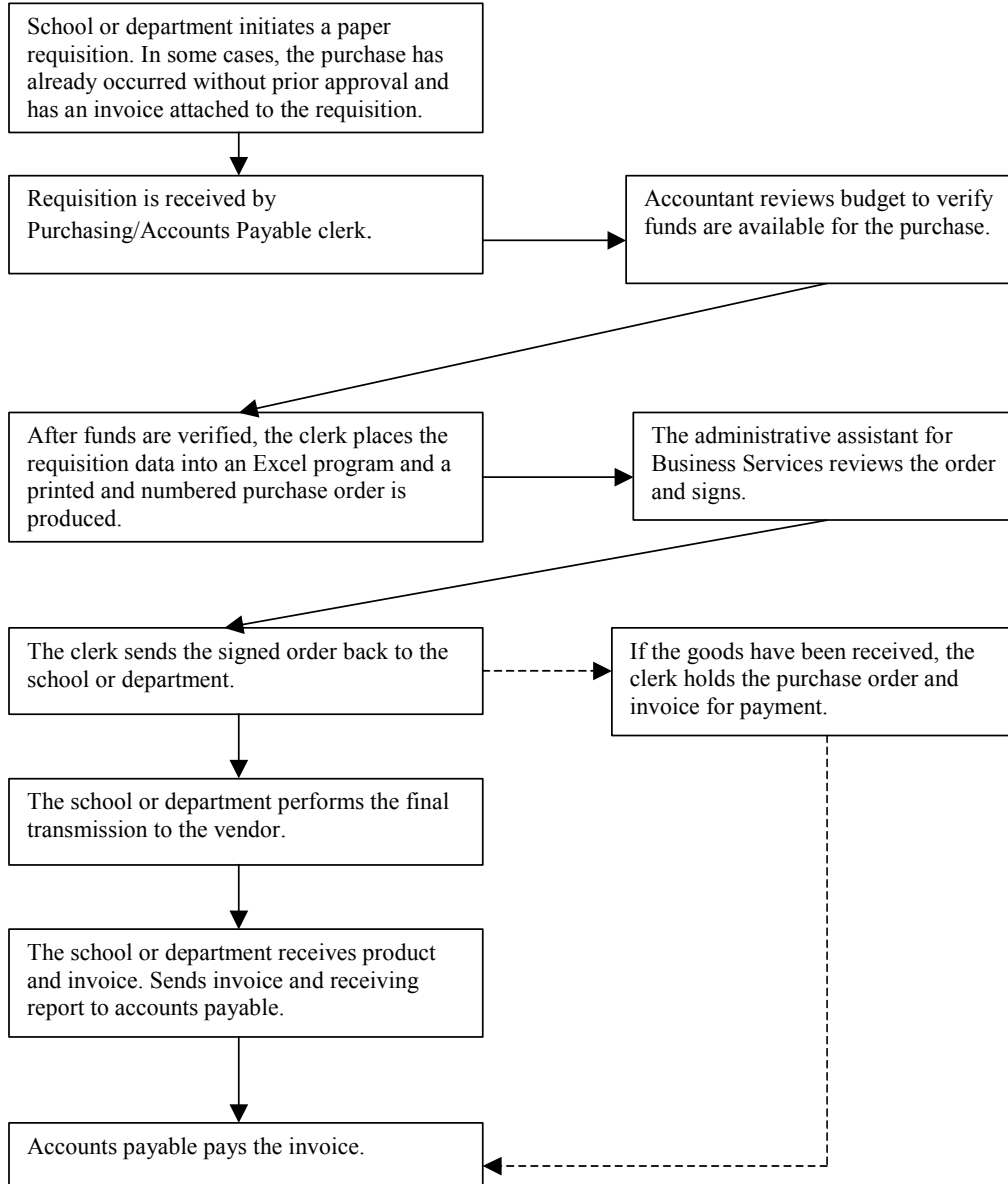
A significant number of the administrators and teachers who responded to a survey administered by the review team indicated that they could not obtain needed goods in a timely manner. Even though the purchasing process is decentralized, some principals think the process is cumbersome and ineffective.

Exhibit 3–38 shows ZCISD's responses to the review team's survey regarding purchasing practices. The responses indicate that a significant number of district employees are not satisfied with purchasing operations.

In a focus group session, community and business members made the following comments regarding the district's purchasing operations:

- We have not been paid from the accounting department at our store. We have invoices due over a year. We go over and over the invoices with the district staff, we explain the invoice, and then they pay us half of the amount due. It is not just the current person but also the previous person.

- They pay a portion. We have a purchase order but it has never been paid.

Teachers made the following statements about the district's purchasing process:

- The only concern we have is (when we order our supplies), our principal gives us a deadline. The deadline is about two weeks before the principal's deadline so the principal can review it. The process takes so long before we can get our supplies.

- After that, it takes months to get our supplies.

When reviewing requisitions waiting for budget approval, the review team noted the majority had invoices attached indicating that the merchandise was received prior to initiating the requisition. By allowing campuses and departments to obtain

supplies without a PO, the purchaser does not feel an urgency to provide the Business office with the information it needs to pay the invoices. The result can be failure to pay vendors in a timely manner. Business office staff said vendors call to complain about late payments and blame the Business office, which may not have any knowledge of the purchases. Some vendors said they refuse to do business with ZCISD because of a history of untimely payments.

The role of district purchasing functions is to obtain goods and services that meet the needs of schools and departments within the requirements set forth by purchasing laws. Many districts centralize their purchasing operations so that they can better monitor purchasing practices and ensure compliance with purchasing laws. Without a system to track purchases and vendors used, districts risk exceeding monetary thresholds that require competitive procurement. ZCISD may have contracts that meet competitive purchasing requirements, but there is no evidence the schools and departments receive information of which vendors to use for purchases. The decentralized system used by ZCISD has no component to educate or inform staff requesting goods and services on the proper actions to take in making a purchase. This places the district at risk of violating legal requirements.

The Texas Education Agency's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) states that numerous problems can occur without an established purchasing process that incorporates ethical standards, such as:

- Employees, in an effort to get the job done successfully and on time, are tempted to circumvent policies, procedures, and laws or make their own liberal "legal" interpretations of existing policies.

- Sequential purchasing of the same items or type of items over the course of twelve months may exceed the school district and/or

EXHIBIT 3–38
ZCISD PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF
PERCEPTIONS OF PURCHASING OPERATIONS
2004–05

SURVEY QUESTION: PURCHASING GETS ME WHAT I NEED WHEN I NEED IT.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Teachers	0%	28%	28%	39%	6%
Principals	0%	22%	22%	56%	0%
Administrative and support staff	18%	23%	14%	27%	18%
SURVEY QUESTION: PURCHASING PROCESSES ARE NOT CUMBERSOME FOR THE REQUESTER	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Teachers	0%	33%	50%	17%	0%
Principals	0%	44%	11%	44%	0%
Administrative and support staff	5%	27%	36%	23%	14%

SOURCE: Review Team Survey, December 2004.

state competitive quotation and procurement requirements.

- Purchasing component parts to complete an item. Component purchasing usually is an attempt to circumvent bid or proposal laws or other requirements by buying an item through the issuance of multiple purchase orders for the component parts of the item versus a single purchase order for the entire item. Repeated purchases of additional optional equipment or parts after an initial purchase may create the perception of component purchasing.

Effective school districts use purchase orders to serve as a formal order for goods, materials, and/or services from a vendor. An approved purchase order is a binding commitment for the district to pay the vendor after receipt of an invoice. The purchase order documents the expenditure and related account code used for encumbering funds. The FASRG states that a strong control environment is required for the expenditure of public money and recommends the following items be present in a district's purchasing environment:

- approval of purchase requisitions by campus principal or department head before they are submitted to the centralized purchasing department for processing;

- approval of purchase orders by the purchasing director or other designated official to ensure compliance prior to issuance to vendors, and if a purchase is to be federally funded, approval should first be obtained from a special programs administrator;

- supervision of the entire purchasing process on a daily basis;

- segregation of duties among purchasing and accounting personnel to provide a checks and balances environment;

- maintenance of purchasing files and records for the period required by law;

- control over incoming merchandise to ensure that proper procedures are followed with incoming merchandise;

- verification of invoices with purchase orders and receiving reports;

- verification of delivery; and

- internal review of the purchasing process to ensure that district personnel are following purchasing policies and procedures.

The Business Services director stated that he intended to implement the automated business and financial accounting program offered by the Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) to streamline the purchasing process. Region 1 confirmed that staff members from ZCISD completed training and that the district can begin using its business software in 2005.

Exhibit 3–39 displays how an automated requisition process operates.

Venus ISD (VISD) uses the Regional Educational Service Center XI's (Region 11) online requisition software to facilitate the requisition and purchase order process. The software provides for requisition entry at the school or department level. A staff member enters the requisition; the system validates the account code, account balance, and vendor upon entry. The system reserves funds while the requisition channels through the online approval process. The lines of approval are set in the system so that staff cannot convert the requisition to a purchase order without approval. Following approval, a requisition becomes a purchase order and the Business office prints and disseminates it. Upon receipt of the ordered items, school or department staff record the delivery of the items online. When the district receives invoices, Accounts Payable processes the payment unless there is a discrepancy between the ordered items and received items. The Accounts Payable/Purchasing clerk enters and prints the purchase orders, obtains the appropriate signatures from the Business director and other administrators, and distributes copies to the appropriate district offices and vendors. By using an online purchase order system, VISD reduces processing time and provides services that are more efficient.

The district should centralize the purchasing operation to increase its effectiveness and efficiency. The Business office should prepare a list of approved district vendors and post the list on the Internet for staff use. The district should also fully implement the automated business and financial accounting program offered by Region 1 to reduce processing time and provide a more efficient service to staff and vendors. The district has already appropriated funds to pay for the Region 1 service.

EXHIBIT 3–39
EFFICIENT PURCHASE ORDER/VENDOR PAYMENT PROCESS MODEL

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ School or department inputs a requisition │
│ relying on an approved contract list and its │
│ own budget code.                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Software program requires proper coding  │
│ and verifies budget availability.        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Purchasing clerk receives the requisition on │
│ line, verifies the contractor, and processes │
│ the order.                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Administrative assistant for Business    │
│ Services signs the order.                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Purchasing clerk mails or faxes the      │
│ purchase order to the vendor.            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ School or department receives product and │
│ sends receiving report online.           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Accounts payable receives invoice from   │
│ vendor and receiving report. Once verified, a │
│ check is sent to the vendor.             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

SOURCE: Texas Public School Consulting, Inc., January 2005.

PURCHASING MANUAL (REC. 68)

ZCISD does not have a purchasing procedure manual to effectively guide staff on the purchasing process. The ZCISD purchasing manual, written in 1995, is outdated and does not provide specific instructions for making purchasing decisions. The majority of the document is copied excerpts from TEA Bulletin 679, which has been replaced by the FASRG.

Secretaries, clerks, librarians, and administrators all said they did not have a written copy of purchasing procedures. They have learned the purchasing procedures from other staff members or developed their own through job experience. For example, the special education secretary said she has developed her own purchasing procedures through "trial and error" and can process purchase orders for payment in less than three days. The special education secretary has reduced her payment cycle time by one-third of the average time it takes accounts payable to approve payments.

Purchasing manuals explain allowable purchasing thresholds, allowable purchases, local policy, and the approval process and serve as a resource to maintain consistency in purchasing practices throughout the district. It provides a reference for how purchasing staff should receive goods and reconcile and process invoices. A purchasing manual also can serve to communicate and explain the district's established policies and procedures to vendors. A purchasing manual should list staff members authorized to make purchases and explain how to make emergency purchases.

A comprehensive purchasing manual includes the following topics:

- purchasing goals and objectives;

- statutes, regulations, and board purchasing policies;

- ethical standards;

- purchasing authority or agent for the district;

- requisition and purchase order processing;

- competitive procurement requirements and procedures;

- vendor selection and relations;

- distribution;

- disposal of obsolete and surplus property; and

- consequences for noncompliance with the district's established procedures.

TEA purchasing guidelines recommend that every school district have a written manual describing its purchasing policies and procedures. A properly designed manual assists school level and department level personnel in purchasing supplies and services. Most larger school districts have purchasing manuals. Some districts place the manuals on the their website. By reviewing several of these manuals, a district can locate information that best meets its needs without having to expend many hours developing procedures. Conroe Independent School District and Spring Independent School District are two of several Texas school districts that make purchasing policy manuals available online. Obtaining copies of manuals online simplifies development of a manual.

The district should develop and implement a comprehensive purchasing procedure manual that covers the purchasing process. Using sample manuals from other Texas school districts and Region 1, the administrative assistant for Business Services should develop a purchasing manual that accurately describes the purchasing process at ZCISD. Placing the manual online on the district's website will allow easy updating and access. All district staff involved in the purchasing process should receive training on accessing the purchasing manual to ensure they understand the policies and procedures.

PROCUREMENT TRAINING (REC. 69)

ZCISD does not provide adequate staff training on purchasing procedures. The Business Services director is the only staff person involved in

purchasing that has attended external training on purchasing laws and processes. The district lacks internal in-service programs to inform principals, administrators, and clerical staff about purchasing laws, ethics, and proper procedures.

The lack of legal and ethical training for administrators has contributed to incorrect purchasing procedures. For example, the coordinator for Student Services and Operations said he used all three automotive parts suppliers in Zapata County because he needed multiple sources for parts, and he wanted to maintain good relations with local businesses. In effect, the coordinator split purchases and circumvented the required quotation process for procuring like-items exceeding $10,000. The Texas Education Code requires districts to annually publish a notice in two successive issues of any newspaper in general circulation in the county soliciting the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of vendors that are interested in any of the supply categories in which the district expects to make purchases in amounts from $10,000 to $25,000. The district must take quotations from three of the vendors identified by the solicitation. The district could provide no documentation that it advertised or took quotations for the automotive parts.

As the district transitions into using an automated business and accounting system through Region 1, a comprehensive training program will be a necessity for the successful implementation of the online purchasing system. Training will help ensure that staff has a uniform understanding of the process and data needs of an automated system. Staff involved in purchasing should be trained on the process and systems they will use, and administrators will require training on budget management responsibilities and standards of conduct in dealing with vendors.

Based on the size of the district, a business office can provide adequate training to administrators in as little as two or three hours per year. Clerical staff directly involved in data gathering and processing will require about four hours of general procedures training and two to three hours of peer training with the purchasing clerk to ensure clear communication in requisition input, processing, and receiving orders. This training will help create maximum efficiency in the operation of the automated system.

ZCISD should provide a comprehensive training plan to ensure that all employees involved in the purchasing process can perform their duties effectively. The administrative assistant for Business Services should budget time and funds

for those directly involved in purchasing functions to attend classes on purchasing laws and procedures. Part of each annual administrative in-service should cover business legal requirements and ethics. The administrative assistant for Business Services should also create an annual in-service for clerical staff involved in purchasing operations. The Business office should also develop peer training between the Accounts Payable clerk and those involved in requisition input to improve the speed and effectiveness of purchasing operations.

The Texas Association of School Business Officials offers certification classes in purchasing for approximately $155 per class. The Business office clerks should have the opportunity to attend at least one of these classes annually. The Business Services director and accountant should also attend at least one purchasing-related class in conjunction with other classes on business subjects. Tuition for the Business director, accountant, and two clerks to attend an annual TASBO class is estimated at $2,020 [(4 classes x $155 per class = $620 annually) + (4 nights lodging x $350 = $1,400)].

TEXTBOOKS MANAGEMENT (REC. 70)

The district does not have a centralized textbook inventory and management system that would enable staff to effectively manage textbook operations. The Student Services and Operations coordinator is responsible for textbook coordination in the district. Based on questions about written textbook procedure manuals and written instructions for schools and teachers, the Student Services and Operations coordinator stated this area had not been addressed at this time because of limitations in time and resources. The Student Services and Operations coordinator does use TEA's Educational Materials and Textbooks (EMAT), an online textbook management system used to input the annual textbook orders.

The district stores all textbooks in clean and well-maintained bookrooms on school campuses but had not completed an annual book inventory for 2003–04. After the review team's on-site visit, the district completed an inventory of the district's textbooks and gave a copy to the review team.

Effective textbook management systems help districts ensure that schools have an adequate number of textbooks and that those textbooks are properly safeguarded from loss. In ZCISD, principals and school secretaries rely on verbal directions to learn how to manage their textbook responsibilities.

Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines for school district textbook operations require the preparation of an annual inventory. TEC §31.102 makes the Board of Trustees responsible for the custody of state textbooks. Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part II, Chapter 66.107 states, "a school district…shall conduct an annual physical inventory of all currently adopted instructional materials that have been requisitioned by, and delivered to, the district. The results of this inventory shall be recorded in the district's files." Based on the inventory, districts are required to reimburse or replace all lost instructional materials. Although no major problems with textbooks were noted, the district has a financial risk due to poor standards for textbook control.

Many school districts develop textbook procedure manuals to manage textbook operations and to help staff understand how to comply with applicable textbook rules and regulation. An example of a comprehensive textbook procedures manual includes the following topics:

- board policies related to textbooks;
- role of the textbook custodian and textbook clerks;
- textbook selection committee guidelines and procedures;
- textbook quotas;
- textbook number and stamping procedures;
- textbook requisition procedures;
- textbook shipment verification requirements;
- shipping error procedures;
- guidelines for bookrooms, including environment, security, and how to stack textbooks;
- information on book covers;
- transferring textbooks from one school to another;
- distribution of textbooks in schools;
- textbook audit procedures;
- lost or damaged textbook procedures;
- year-end physical inventory procedures;
- out of adoption textbook procedures; and
- textbook inventory software procedures.

These manuals provide guidance to administrators and support staff and serve as a reference for answers to questions regarding textbooks.

Cayuga ISD and Andrews ISD are small districts that have taken advantage of EMAT, TEA's online textbook management system. The online service provides districts the ability to complete many tasks, including the following:

- viewing and updating textbook information;

- viewing and updating school district populations (enrollments);

- completing annual and supplemental requisitions;

- reporting textbooks for interim shipment;

- reporting payment for textbooks;

- reporting destroyed textbooks;

- viewing school district online inventory; and

- scheduling and printing reports from diverse formats.

Districts access the EMAT application through the Internet. The electronic data interchange (EDI) allows direct contact with the system of depositories and freight companies. This application automates many of the processes involved in ordering and shipping textbooks.

ZCISD should implement a textbook inventory and management system. State law requires an annual inventory of all textbooks. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should contact TEA regarding training and apply for all EMAT services. The coordinator should also develop written procedures to provide campus administrators and support staff with guidelines for complying with textbook rules and regulations.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 71)

ZCISD has no system to manage contracts, creating a liability for the district in dealing with vendors. The district does not maintain a centralized depository or file for all district contracts, which makes it difficult to determine the district's current contractual obligations. The secretary for the Business Services director provided a few files with contracts. In most cases, administrators rely almost exclusively on the bid file to serve as the contract. Architectural building contracts are in order, but contracts for renovation, supplies, and services are incomplete or non-existent.

District staff said that most purchases greater than $25,000 were made from vendors available

through purchasing cooperatives. The review team requested vendor contracts covering recent bids for a la carte foods, motor fuel, and uniforms, but district staff could only provide the bid files.

The district has no enforceable guarantees or insurance protection for long-term service and supply contracts. For example, the district took bids for garbage collection services and motor fuel purchases as required by TEC §44.031, but there are no written contracts with these vendors and no proof of liability insurance. These vendors have vehicles that regularly visit school campuses, which exposes the district to liability risks.

Several contracts had incomplete vendor signatures, including the district's coverage agreement with the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund for property and casualty coverage; the Value Office Systems Texas lease agreement for copiers; the Interlocal Participation Agreement for Region One Electricity Aggregation Pool; and a five-year agreement with the Laredo Coca-Cola Bottling Co. which expired in December 2004. In addition, the Business office did not have any agreements or contracts for the supplemental employee benefits offered to employees or annuity agreements with vendors.

ZCISD does not have contract procedures to provide staff guidance for reviewing contracts nor does it require a legal review of contracts prior to execution. The lack of contract procedures creates a risk of entering into a contract that is advantageous to a vendor but not in the best interest of the district. For example, a lease agreement with Value Office Systems Texas (VOS) has a hold harmless agreement that requires ZCISD to pay for future damages. It states the following:

> We (VOS) are not responsible for any losses or injures caused by the installation or use of the Equipment. You shall indemnify and hold us harmless from and against any claims, actions, proceedings, damages, expenses and costs (including pre- and post-judgment attorney's fees and costs) arising out of or in connection with the Equipment or this Agreement including without limitation, the possession, use, rental, operation and return of the Equipment.

When the district does have legal counsel review the contract, it does not necessarily implement the recommended changes. For example, legal counsel reviewed the energy conservation contract with Energy Education, but the final contract did not

include the recommended changes. The recommendations addressed a lack of a properly worded non-appropriation agreement as required by law and a lack of a clause indicating ZCISD would protect Energy Education's confidential materials to the extent allowed by the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA) §552.305.

The district did not have any documentation of legal review for the oil and gas lease by Chesapeake Zapata, L.P. that allowed drilling on the elementary campus site. The agreement did not include the assignment of liability to the company, nor did it require the company to provide any proof of insurance coverage or name ZCISD as an additional insured on their policies. The district obtained a proof of insurance certificate on March 15, 2005, although the drilling project occurred December 2004. The certificate did not name the district as an additional insured.

Proper contract review and management ensure that districts comply with all applicable statutes and laws. For example, the Texas Business and Commerce Code requires that contracts be in writing for the purchase of goods valued at more than $500. While this may not be necessary for single purchases using purchase orders, the district needs a clear understanding of the contract terms and performance measures with long-term service and supply vendors. Providing terms in a written contract that is reviewed by legal counsel ensures the contract is in compliance with all applicable laws.

The Texas Government Code, Section 2253.021–.071 requires school districts to request payment bonds on all construction contracts exceeding $25,000, or the district assumes full liability for the contract. The Texas Occupations Code §1001.053 requires the use of an engineer for all public works contracts above $20,000 that do not involve electrical or mechanical engineering. Federal Title 34 Education, Part 80 requires child nutrition contracts comply with the Clean Water Act and Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

The Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code (TCP&RC) §101.023 (b) indicates that school districts are liable for money damages against the district of $100,000 for each person, $300,000 for each single occurrence of bodily injury or death, and $100,000 for each occurrence of property damage or destruction. Given this exposure, it is prudent that school districts carry their own liability insurance and require those who perform services on school property to do the same.

Contract management procedures provide guidance in executing contracts properly and establish a system for managing and monitoring the contracts once they are approved by the district. When entering into a contract, districts often do the following:

- Employ legal counsel to draft or review the final contract prior to signing.

- Identify how the district's liability is addressed in the contract.

- Identify who has the authority to enter into the contract on behalf of the district.

- Attach all supporting documents to the contract.

- Retain an original contract with signatures of all district parties.

- Describe the specific services to be performed.

- Identify when and how the contractor will report to the district.

- Identify a clause for changing the contract.

- Describe the cost to the district and any changes that may occur.

- Describe how the district may terminate the contract and under what conditions.

- Identify how the vendor's performance will be reviewed and documented.

- Describe remedies for a contractor's failure to perform services.

The district should develop a contract management policy with procedures to effectively manage and monitor ZCISD's contracts. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with legal counsel to develop a contract management policy with procedures that include a uniform set of contract standards and a generic district vendor contract. Procedures should include the following:

- a vendor file created for every service provider contract whether developed through the district's bid/proposal process or a cooperative purchasing agreement;

- a contract file created for annual supply contracts whether developed through the district's bid/proposal process or a cooperative purchasing agreement;

- contract files covering the terms for purchase of goods or services and appropriate proof of insurance for service providers;

- public works project files with appropriate engineering and bonding information as required by law;

- contracts for services containing payment information, state law pertaining to the purchase, a non-collusion statement, and a safe harmless clause to protect the district; and

- Child Nutrition contracts that include clauses covering compliance with Clean Air and Clean Water standards as required by federal regulations.

The first exhibit in each district contract file should be the bid or proposal document the vendor submitted and signed.

For more background information on Chapter 3, Financial Management, see page 201 in the General Information section of the Appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

	RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
	CHAPTER 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT							
45.	Reorganize the Business office, eliminate the staff accountant position, and replace it with a coordinator of Business.	($23,082)	($23,082)	($23,082)	($23,082)	($23,082)	($115,410)	$0
46.	Develop a plan to actively manage the fund balance.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
47.	Develop a budget process that includes stakeholder training and a comprehensive budget calendar.	($625)	($625)	($625)	($625)	($625)	($3,125)	($2,500)
48.	Provide the board and district administrators with monthly detailed budget-to-actual expenditure reports.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
49.	Review all account code assignments to ensure they meet state requirements.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
50.	Establish internal control procedures for payroll that segregate duties to safeguard district assets.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
51.	Direct the administrative assistant for Business Services to process all extra duty payments through the payroll system.	($104)	($104)	($104)	($104)	($104)	($520)	$0
52.	Adopt a policy for the periodic, competitive procurement and rotation of external audit services.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
53.	Establish procedures to ensure that all funds in the district's depository bank are fully collateralized and monitored on a daily basis.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
54.	Close all unnecessary bank accounts and limit campuses to one bank account each.	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$50,000	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

	RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
				CHAPTER 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT				
55.	Reconcile all bank accounts on a monthly basis ensuring that adjustments are researched and posted to the district's books.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
56.	Require the Tax Assessor-Collector of Zapata County to make distribution payments in accordance with the inter-local agreement and immediately invest tax receipts directly into an interest earning account.	$9,624	$9,624	$9,624	$9,624	$9,624	$48,120	$0
57.	Prepare the required investment reports and present them to the board on a quarterly and annual basis.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
58.	Diversify the investment portfolio by scheduling maturities and making alternative investments when appropriate.	$5,625	$5,625	$5,625	$5,625	$5,625	$28,125	$0
59.	Develop a cash flow spreadsheet to assist the investment officer in determining what portion of available cash should be invested long–term.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
60.	Develop a comprehensive safety program to address workers' compensation losses.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
61.	Evaluate the current the workers' compensation program and request proposals for workers' compensation coverage on a periodic basis.	$0	$57,052	$57,052	$57,052	$57,052	$228,208	($7,500)
62.	Conduct a periodic review for the property and casualty insurance program to ensure the district is obtaining the most comprehensive and cost-effective coverage.	$18,159	$18,159	$18,159	$18,159	$18,159	$90,795	$0
63.	Evaluate the loss exposures related to equipment breakdown that are excluded under the current property coverage and determine the feasibility of purchasing equipment breakdown coverage to address those exposures.	($3,314)	($3,314)	($3,314)	($3,314)	($3,314)	($16,570)	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT							
64. Develop a process to manage the district's cafeteria plan that ensures compliance with Internal Revenue Service rules for cafeteria plans.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
65. Develop employee benefit procedures to provide guidelines for the selection and administration of benefit programs and to ensure efficient operation, consistency in employee communication, and compliance with benefit-related laws.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
66. Develop district guidelines for the use of competitive procurement methods to comply with state purchasing laws.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
67. Centralize the purchasing operation to increase its effectiveness and efficiency.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
68. Develop and implement a comprehensive purchasing procedure manual that covers the purchasing process.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
69. Provide a comprehensive training plan to ensure all employees involved in the purchasing process can perform their duties effectively.	($2,020)	($2,020)	($2,020)	($2,020)	($2,020)	($10,100)	$0
70. Implement a textbook inventory and management system.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
71. Develop a contract management policy with procedures to effectively manage and monitor ZCISD's contracts.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Totals–Chapter 3	$14,263	$71,315	$71,315	$71,315	$71,315	$299,523	($10,000)

Chapter 4

Operations

Zapata County Independent School District
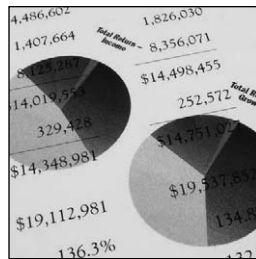
CHAPTER 4
OPERATIONS

Effective school operations and quality pupil services are essential to the success of a school district's educational mission. To teach students effectively, districts must provide adequate facilities to accommodate student enrollment, manage their facilities to create an environment conducive to learning, and maintain these facilities appropriately to ensure student and employee safety. Food must be nutritious, appealing, and available to all children, regardless of economic status. Pupil transportation must be safe and prompt.

Efficient operation of facilities helps districts keep up with changing enrollment and the needs of instructional programs while building confidence and trust in district management. A comprehensive facility, maintenance, and energy conservation program coordinates all of the district's physical resources. Facility management ensures that district facilities are designed and maintained in a manner consistent with the educational process. This process includes providing a clean school and work environment; ensuring that facilities comply with local, state, and federal regulations; and minimizing the district's utility and maintenance expenses.

The district maintains 445,795 square feet of educational, athletic, and administrative support facilities. In 2004–05, the facilities served 3,143 students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Instructional facilities within the district include one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools. Other buildings include a central office, professional development center, 16 portable buildings, a transportation center (which also houses maintenance), and athletic facilities.

The plant and maintenance expenditures in 2002–03 were more than $2.5 million. The oldest building in the district is the Zapata South Elementary School, which was constructed in 1954. The newest building is the high school, which was built in 2001. Currently, two new schools are under construction that will be completed in fall 2005 and will replace Zapata Central and Zapata South Elementary Schools.

ZCISD participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and serves more than 5,600 meals or 3,770 meal equivalents per day. The district is a Provision 2 food service program, which allows all the students to eat for free. The lunch program participation in ZCISD is 85.7 percent, and the breakfast program participation is 93.0 percent. In 2002–03, the program had expenditures of $1,482,803 and revenues of more than $1,488,516. The unaudited ending fund balance

in August 2004 was $401,558. The district has six schools and each has its own cafeteria for food preparation and serving.

The ZCISD Transportation office consists of 26 regular and three special education routes serving approximately 1,100 students daily. The operation is housed in a single centralized facility.

Chapter 34 of the Texas Education Code authorizes, but does not require, Texas school districts to provide transportation for students in the general population to and from home and school, school and career and technology training locations, and extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a school district provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to special education services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ZCISD places the majority of maintenance workers on the campuses so that preventive maintenance and repairs can be completed quickly and with minimal paperwork.

- The Child Nutrition specialist effectively communicates the activities of the Child Nutrition office throughout the district. Newsletters, staff meetings, student committees, and surveys are used to inform the staff, parents, students, and community.

- The district provides incentives that encourage student participation in the lunch and breakfast programs. The district offers Breakfast-in-a-Bag, a la carte, snack bars, and salad bars that attract more students to eat.

- The Transportation department is extremely responsive to requests for additional service through a telephone request process.

FINDINGS

- ZCISD does not have a comprehensive facility master plan to provide a basis for planning for any future facility needs.

- The district has not reduced energy costs because it has not closely monitored its energy management program.

- ZCISD has no evidence that an energy audit has ever been performed in the district.

- The district does not efficiently use its custodial staff.

- ZCISD does not have a plan for its excess space when two new elementary schools open in 2005–06.

- ZCISD Maintenance and Custodial departments do not have written procedure manuals for effective operations.

- The district does not have a policy or procedure that provides accurate accounting of all keys distributed to employees.

- ZCISD school kitchens and cafeterias are not regularly inspected as required by federal law.

- The district does not have a plan to ensure compliance with the 2001 state law requiring a coordinated health program in each elementary school that combines health education, physical education, physical activity, and parental involvement with nutrition services.

- The ZCISD Child Nutrition office does not reimburse the district's General Fund for utility and other overhead expenses it incurs in the operation of the food service program.

- The Child Nutrition office does not have a procedures manual that directly relates to the operations, practices, and procedures of the Child Nutrition Program.

- The Child Nutrition office staffing levels are not monitored or controlled based on meals per labor hour.

- ZCISD does not keep complete bus fleet maintenance records, a vital process for ensuring a safe bus fleet.

- ZCISD's diesel fueling system does not have controls to maintain accountability and prevent possible theft.

- The Transportation office is not properly accounting for the cost of services its staff provides to other departments.

- ZCISD does not have an adequate process for preventive maintenance of its bus fleet.

- The district does not have a process for assessing or adequately maintaining an inventory of the parts and tools needed to effectively maintain its bus fleet.

- The Transportation office does not have a safe process for disposing of waste oil and filter products.

- ZCISD bus drivers are not performing pre-trip inspections on school buses.

- ZCISD bus drivers and aides are not receiving regular mandatory training in accordance with federal law.

- The district is not enforcing safe bus riding procedures for the district's passengers.

- ZCISD has not established a designated safety zone for students waiting for buses.

- ZCISD does not maximize potential efficiencies in bus routing and has an excessive number of bus routes.

- The district has an inefficient bus driver and aide scheduling process that contributes to excessive payroll expenditures in the Transportation office.

- ZCISD does not have a procedures handbook in the Transportation office that provides performance expectations for employees.

- ZCISD does not have a formal fleet replacement policy, and the district is operating several buses that are excessively old.

- ZCISD lacks a process to ensure that state transportation reports are completed and submitted on time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 72 (p. 157): Develop a comprehensive facility master plan.** The superintendent should form a committee to include community members, business owners, faculty, staff, and board members. The committee should address the issues of retrofitting older buildings for modern technology, identifying maintenance needs, and evaluating the present condition of all the buildings and their system components such as roofs, plumbing, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. The committee should develop a plan that includes projections for enrollment, budgeting, source of funds, and a timeline for the completion of any projects. Any new programs that schools initiate should also be addressed in the facility master plan.

- **Recommendation 73 (p. 158): Renegotiate the energy management contract and require district oversight and monitoring of the agreement.** ZCISD should renegotiate this agreement with the vendor to establish a new beginning date, and the district should request a credit from the vendor for any services that have been paid for but not yet received. The vendor should be given the opportunity to recalculate the district's savings. The district should have legal counsel review the energy management

contract to ensure it is meeting performance measures, providing contractual services, and complying with the Texas Education Code and board policy. ZCISD should monitor the energy management contract to ensure that the district is performing its duties and receiving the contractual services agreed to by the vendor.

- **Recommendation 74 (p. 161): Conduct an energy management audit.** The energy management audit can serve to complement present energy conservation efforts by providing additional information on equipment and procedures to consider to reduce energy costs and to involve students in the process of energy conservation.

- **Recommendation 75 (p. 162): Develop a custodial allocation formula using industry standards and assign custodians based on the formula.** ZCISD should implement a hiring freeze for custodians until the district is able to determine the custodial square footage space assignments. ZCISD should review the square footage of areas to be cleaned and allocate the custodial staff as per industry standards. The district will be opening two new elementary schools in 2005–06 that will replace Zapata Central and Zapata South Elementary Schools. Each new elementary will be 75,347 square feet, and depending on what the district plans to do with the two old elementary schools, the assignment of custodians could shift.

- **Recommendation 76 (p. 163): Develop a plan to dispose of excess portable building space upon the completion of the two elementary schools under construction.** The district should develop a plan to dispose of unneeded portable buildings. The superintendent should determine the condition of the portables to be sold and sell the buildings either by sealed bids or auction. All support services offices other than the Superintendent's office and the Transportation building should be centralized in Zapata Central Elementary School when it is vacated after the opening of the new elementary schools.

- **Recommendation 77 (p. 165): Develop and implement comprehensive maintenance and custodial procedures.** The Student Services and Operations coordinator should develop detailed written procedures for the maintenance and custodial areas. The manual should be written in English and Spanish and should clearly communicate acceptable and unacceptable practices. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should update the manual regularly to ensure that staff receives accurate information.

- **Recommendation 78 (p. 165): Establish a policy and set of procedures designed to assign and track all district keys.** The Student Services and Operations coordinator should take inventory of the personnel that have been issued master and room keys for all district facilities by having each campus provide a list of employees who have been issued keys and identify the areas to which they have access. A district policy and supporting campus procedures should be developed to ensure that the distribution of keys is strictly monitored. Each key should be manually coded and assigned to a specific staff member, who should be required to sign a document for their keys and be held accountable if their key is lost. The document should state that the employee would be responsible for reimbursing the district for the costs of any new keys and locks if a key is lost. In addition, it should clearly state that lending keys without permission is prohibited.

- **Recommendation 79 (p. 166): Conduct mock inspections and document requests for kitchen and cafeteria inspections.** The Child Nutrition specialist should conduct unannounced mock inspections to keep the kitchens up to required health standards. At least monthly written requests, confirmed by telephone follow-up requests, should be made to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). If necessary, the district should then follow up further by filing open records requests with the DSHS in order to ensure compliance with federal law.

- **Recommendation 80 (p. 167): Initiate the planning for implementing the elementary school health program.** The Child Nutrition specialist should contact Region 1 to request information on coordinating the activities to prepare for compliance with TEC §38.013 and §38.014. The Child Nutrition specialist should also notify or meet with the health and physical education educators to begin planning in the elementary schools.

- **Recommendation 81 (p. 167): Develop Child Nutrition fee reimbursement guidelines for the operating costs in each kitchen based on square footage averaging.** The Child Nutrition office should be self-sustaining and pay its cost of utilities and other overhead costs including telephone, water, garbage, electricity, and district maintenance repairs. If the ZCISD cafeteria funds reimburse the district for all of

its operational costs, including utilities, this reimbursement will provide more funds in the general operating fund to spend on educational activities or personnel.

- **Recommendation 82 (p. 168): Develop a procedures manual for the cafeteria program.** A comprehensive written procedures guide will ensure activities in the Child Nutrition office and cafeterias are consistent and efficient. The manual should be developed by the Child Nutrition specialist and reviewed with the Child Nutrition staff at least annually and should be available in both English and Spanish.

- **Recommendation 83 (p. 169): Establish a food service staffing formula based on the industry standard of meals per labor hour, and adjust Child Nutrition staff accordingly.** The Child Nutrition specialist should evaluate the staffing at each campus and establish a staffing formula. The district should reduce the daily hours worked by 19–20 hours.

- **Recommendation 84 (p. 170): Improve the vehicle maintenance record-keeping process to show all costs associated with each vehicle.** All maintenance records should include all services performed, all parts used for the repair, mechanic time, and labor costs. The work orders should also track the dates that services are requested and the dates that repairs are completed to document that repairs are handled in a timely manner.

- **Recommendation 85 (p. 170): Purchase a computerized fuel management system to track diesel fuel use.** The diesel fuel pump should have access controls. Access controls only allow dispensing of fuel to approved buses and personnel. The fuel controls are computer activated and generate a complete accounting of all transactions.

- **Recommendation 86 (p. 171): Track all transportation expenditures related to other functions and departments for repairs and additional duties.** The expenditures should be coded to the appropriate account to enable tracking of expenditures by specific area. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with the Student Services and Operations coordinator to develop a system to accurately track and code expenditures to the appropriate accounts.

- **Recommendation 87 (p. 171): Develop a comprehensive preventive maintenance program that ensures the safety of all buses on a continuous basis.** The Student Services and Operations coordinator should develop and implement a program to inspect every aspect of every bus on a consistent basis. All items needing adjustment, repair, or replacement should be addressed when the vehicle is brought in for inspection to ensure a safe bus fleet.

- **Recommendation 88 (p. 172): Develop and implement procedures to control the Transportation office's parts and tools inventories.** The room containing parts and tools should be secured to discourage and prevent potential theft. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should ensure that an inventory of all assets is completed and maintained annually to minimize excessive expenditures and better control assets. The district should also identify the parts and supplies needed in order to complete repairs in a timely manner.

- **Recommendation 89 (p. 173): Control waste oil and used oil filter storage and containment.** The district can contract with an approved vendor to empty the oil drums or move the drums into a covered setting to avoid potential oil leakage. The administrative assistant for Business Services and the Student Services and Operations coordinator should identify a vendor to dispose of waste oil.

- **Recommendation 90 (p. 173): Implement a pre-trip inspection process for all school buses.** Pre-trip inspections should be completed before every bus run. The district should provide all drivers with a complete written pre-trip inspection list in both English and Spanish.

- **Recommendation 91 (p. 175): Expand bus driver and aide training to satisfy mandatory requirements and develop a continuing training program for all Transportation personnel.** The program should begin with required training and expand to monthly safety workshops. Defensive driving should be a starting point for training, followed by other various topics. Courses can be taught locally with support materials from outside vendors. Monthly safety training should focus on short segments such as videos on subjects that vary regularly. The individual topics should be selected based on district needs.

- **Recommendation 92 (p. 176): Train all bus drivers and aides to enforce safe riding procedures to minimize potential injuries on school buses.** All passengers should be required to be completely seated in the bus seat. The Student Services and Operations

coordinator should routinely observe bus operations in the field to ensure proper techniques are being followed. Guidelines should be in place to provide sanctions for both students and staff that do not follow proper riding procedures.

- **Recommendation 93 (p. 176): Create a buffer zone between moving buses and students waiting to board to minimize the potential for accidents.** This action would minimize the risk of students being injured by moving buses. The buffer zones can be created by painting sidewalks and/or streets with markings to separate buses and students. Students should be kept out of the danger zones of the buses anytime the buses are in motion. The district should implement supervision of the loading areas by campus personnel to enforce the buffer zones. These buffer zones provide a very effective safety resource for students if staff are present to enforce the area.

- **Recommendation 94 (p. 176): Implement an effective routing and scheduling process and reduce the number of bus routes by four to increase efficiency.** These routes were temporarily eliminated in fall 2004, but the drivers remained on the payroll. The routes should be permanently eliminated. Routes should be written by trained staff and then given to drivers to implement. Staff should complete training in routing and scheduling through one of the state professional associations, Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) or Texas Association for Pupil Transportation (TAPT). ZCISD should purchase computerized routing and scheduling software to begin the process. Effective routing and scheduling is a process that must be used on a daily basis to ensure efficiency.

- **Recommendation 95 (p. 178): Improve bus driver scheduling to reduce overtime for all employees and eliminate bus aides.** ZCISD should schedule bus driver daily assignments to avoid overtime. Bus aide positions for regular bus routes should be eliminated.

- **Recommendation 96 (p. 178): Develop a transportation procedure manual to outline expected duties and provide sanctions for substandard performance.** The Student Services and Operations coordinator should review transportation policies and procedure manuals from other districts and develop policies and procedures specific to ZCISD. Employees should be trained on the procedures

annually. The manual should be available in English and Spanish.

- **Recommendation 97 (p. 179): Adopt a formal bus fleet replacement policy.** ZCISD should review route conditions in the area and consider maintenance expectations and determine an appropriate bus replacement schedule for its bus fleet. A conservative estimate would be maintaining a bus fleet that is not older than 15 years old or has more than 250,000 miles of service. Additional buses would be replaced as they reach 15 years of age or 250,000 miles of service.

- **Recommendation 98 (p. 180): Develop a process for completing and submitting all required transportation reports within state mandated timelines.** State reports are a requirement and should be submitted in a timely manner. State reports provide a basis of comparison between districts that can be useful in comparing efficiency between similar districts. The administrative assistant for Business Services should verify that the reports are submitted each year.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MAINTENANCE STAFFING ASSIGNMENT

ZCISD places the majority of maintenance workers on the campuses so that preventive maintenance and repairs can be completed quickly and with minimal paperwork. Minor repairs do not get pushed aside by the urgency of major maintenance.

The ZCISD Maintenance department has 26 maintenance workers who work a total of 204 hours per day. **Exhibit 4–1** shows 16 of these workers are assigned to schools, support services, or district offices where they are housed and supervised by a principal or administrator.

These 16 workers are not skilled tradesmen but perform more generalized maintenance duties. This practice allows minor daily repairs to be completed on-site without the necessity of work order paperwork. The types of repairs these on-site maintenance workers do include changing filters, replacing light bulbs, painting, repairing door fixtures, removing graffiti, and minor plumbing problems. The on-site maintenance workers also assemble and repair furniture. The maintenance workers assist in moving large items when relocating classrooms and offices when needed.

The five workers comprising the district maintenance crew are skilled laborers who do major plumbing, concrete work, electrical work, and carpentry. There

**EXHIBIT 4–1
ZCISD MAINTENANCE WORKERS LOCATION,
NUMBER, AND HOURS WORKED
2004–05**

LOCATION	NUMBER OF MAINTENANCE WORKERS	TOTAL HOURS OF MAINTENANCE WORK PER DAY
Zapata High School	3	24
Zapata Middle School	2	12
Zapata Central Elementary	3	24
Zapata South Elementary	3	24
Zapata North Elementary	2	16
Benavides Elementary	1	8
Support Services	1	8
District Offices	1	8
Field Crew	3	24
District Maintenance Crew	5	40
Air Conditioning Technicians	2	16

SOURCE: Student Services and Operations Coordinator, December 2004.

are two additional air conditioning technicians who only work on the air conditioning systems. The three members of the field crew are responsible for cutting the lawns and doing other grounds activities such as repairing fences and trimming shrubbery.

Placing 16 of the 26 maintenance crew members on the campuses under the supervision of the building administration eliminates travel time between work sites and reduces paperwork approval between the campus and the Student Services and Operations coordinator. The building administrator only processes work orders to the Student Services and Operations coordinator for significant repairs or maintenance items such as major electrical, plumbing, or concrete work. Work orders are required for air conditioning repairs, but the campus-based maintenance workers are trained to perform the preventive maintenance of changing air filters, cleaning return air vents, and monitoring overflow pans and drains, which helps the equipment last longer. Repairs are addressed when identified so that minor problems do not become major repairs due to a lag in response time.

CHILD NUTRITION OFFICE COMMUNICATION
The Child Nutrition specialist effectively communicates the activities of the Child Nutrition office throughout the district. The Child Nutrition specialist communicates regularly with staff. Meetings with the cafeteria managers and the Child Nutrition specialist are held twice a month to discuss child nutrition news, updates, new policies, and issues that are affecting the department. At these department meetings, informal training is also held on issues like safety and sanitation, food production records, reimbursement claim reports, and all other required records of the department. The school cafeteria managers meet with their staff at least once a month. The Child Nutrition specialist publishes

printed menus in the school newsletters so that all parents and students know what will be served daily.

In October 2004, a student advisory committee was selected to meet monthly to provide input regarding the food service program. The students completed surveys that provided feedback to the Child Nutrition specialist and the cafeteria managers. Survey results indicated the staff was friendly, the food was fair, and some would like larger portions. Pizza was overwhelmingly the favorite dish.

Frequent internal meetings keep the staff current on topics such as menu changes, new preparation techniques, nutrition updates, and reporting and record keeping changes. External communication such as publishing the schools' menus keeps parents informed. The student advisory committee provides suggestions to the Child Nutrition specialist and managers regarding program improvement.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES
The district provides incentives that encourage student participation in the lunch and breakfast programs. At Zapata North Elementary, Zapata South Elementary, Zapata Central Elementary, and Zapata Middle School breakfast is served to all the students in their classroom. Breakfast-in-a-Bag is prepared in the kitchen and then delivered to each classroom on a cart. Each teacher completes a daily participation log that shows the number of students in attendance and how many ate the breakfast. The high school offers a la carte meals and has a snack bar and salad bar. McDonald's and Pizza Hut both provide food for the middle school and high school snack bars on a daily basis. McDonald's provides hamburgers and chicken nuggets, and Pizza Hut provides pizzas.

Lunch participation is over 85 percent, and breakfast participation is over 93 percent.

High participation in the breakfast and lunch programs ensures students have eaten and will be at optimal learning capability. By increasing student participation at the cafeterias, students should be healthier, more attentive, and actively involved in the learning environment.

STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION WITH TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

The Transportation department is extremely responsive to requests for additional service through a telephone request process. Administrators stated that the Transportation office also responds to discipline issues very quickly. This process is carried out through telephone communication. The schools call the Transportation office, which provides a note to the driver to make requested changes. Every group and individual interviewed praised the Transportation office for rapid service. All field trips appear to arrive on time, and daily route service picks up and delivers students in a timely manner. Additionally, special education students are scheduled for transportation within a day of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

Principals stated that drivers and aides handled student discipline issues on the bus quickly and effectively. The Transportation staff has a continuous process for student discipline management on the buses, which handles most of the issues. There have been very few discipline issues reported to school administration due to their work with the students.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN (REC. 72)

ZCISD does not have a comprehensive facility master plan to provide a basis for planning for any future facility needs. The district planned its last bond program around building two elementary schools and did not look at strategies other than new facilities. The district does not have a board or administrative committee to do long-range planning. One member of the board stated he ran for the board just to get the new elementary school built. There is no indication that the condition of the schools is routinely evaluated. The district provided the review team with a student projections chart (1988–2010), but it has not been updated since 2000–01. The chart shows a projected enrollment for 2004–05 of 3,315. The actual enrollment for 2004–05 is 3,143, which might indicate the district is not growing at the rate anticipated.

A district's long-range comprehensive master plan provides a basis for planning the facilities that are necessary to meet its changing educational needs. The plan incorporates district policies with

information and statistics to help the district allocate resources. Effective school facilities master planning incorporates the following elements:

- Facility Capacity: Each school's capacity should be established by setting standards that govern student-to-teacher ratios and the required square feet of classroom space per student. These standards should also deal with the minimum size of core facilities such as cafeterias, libraries, and gyms.

- Facility Inventory: An accurate inventory of facilities is a tool for managing the efficient utilization of facilities. Each school inventory should identify the use and size of every room to enable planners to judge the school's capacity.

- Enrollment Projections: Accurate enrollment projections are vital to effective facilities planning. Projections should examine neighborhood demographics and track new construction in the school district. Working with county and city planners is a good way to track growth patterns.

- Attendance Zones: The use of portable classrooms can temporarily alleviate overcrowding but can also become a detriment to the district if they are overused when handling the overflow from core facilities. Effective enrollment management dictates attendance zone adjustments to ensure all students have equal access to school facilities.

- Capital Improvement Master Plan: Effective planning requires the district to anticipate future needs and balance them against resources. A capital master plan charts future improvements to school facilities and identifies funding sources. The planning process, which should involve members of the community, identifies district goals and objectives and prioritizes projects based on those goals and objectives.

When formulating a plan, the school district's process should allow for input from students, parents, teachers, taxpayers, and other interested parties that reside within the school district. Major considerations should include the following:

- a description of the current and future instructional program and instructional delivery issues;

- the age, condition, and educational usefulness of all buildings in the district and consideration of the condition of all components and systems as well as design flexibility, including an estimate of cost to replace or refurbish with appropriate recommendations;

- verification of the suitability of school site(s) for intended use, considering size, shape, useable land, suitability for the planned improvements, and adequate vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, playgrounds, fields; and

- a timeline and series of recommendations to modify or supplement existing facilities to support the district's program.

Dripping Springs ISD (DSISD), a district of comparable size to ZCISD, approached their long-range planning by utilizing several methods. For enrollment projections, DSISD used a private vendor to study the demographics and estimate potential growth. The second component of the DSISD facility planning involved assembling a 50-member Facility Advisory Task Force composed of representatives from local business, civic, and community organizations; parents; community members; district staff; and technical advisors. The charge of the task force was to assess the existing facilities, prioritize the facility needs, and recommend facility improvement projects.

Without a facility master plan, a district misses an opportunity to inform the community of continuing facility needs. The facility master plan serves as an excellent tool to create a dialogue with parents and the community regarding the opportunities and challenges a district faces in providing an appropriate educational setting for its children.

The district should develop a comprehensive facility master plan. The superintendent should form a committee to include community members, business owners, faculty, staff, and board members. The committee should address the issues of retrofitting older buildings for modern technology, identifying maintenance needs, and evaluating the present condition of all the buildings and their system components such as roofs, plumbing, and HVAC. The committee should develop a plan that includes projections for enrollment, budgeting, source of funds, and a timeline for the completion of any projects. Any new programs that schools initiate should also be addressed in the facility master plan.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS (REC. 73)

The district has not reduced energy costs because it has not closely monitored its energy management program. The district's energy costs are almost double the industry standard of $1.00 per square foot. The amount of money spent on energy management contracts without a reduction in energy cost is a waste of financial resources and a duplication of effort. One contract is with Johnson Controls, and the other one is with Energy

Education, Inc. As a result of utility deregulation, ZCISD has an inter-local agreement with Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) that began in August 2004. The purpose of this inter-local agreement between Region 1 and some other area districts, referred to as an aggregation pool, is to do the following:

- Facilitate compliance with state bidding requirements;

- Identify qualified vendors or commodities, goods, and services;

- Relieve the burdens of the governmental purchasing function; and

- Realize the various potential economies, including administrative cost savings.

The districts are assessed a cost recovery fee to pay for the consultant based on the number of electric meters operating in each district.

The district is in its eighth year of the contract with Johnson Controls. The Johnson Control contract primarily monitors the air conditioning systems. The controls are on timers that shut off the air conditioning units in areas when not in use. The district has no measurement to determine the savings. The contract price for year eight is $69,934.

The district is in its first year of a four-year contract with Energy Education, Inc. The contract states that it will train a district employee, called the energy manager, to collect and record energy data on a software program that maintains the district's energy consumption data. The contract refers to training of district personnel, but it does not provide how many training hours will be conducted. The contract uses vague terms such as "extensively," "one-on-one," and "on the job training." The contract states this training will include the following:

- temperature settings and run times for the HVAC and boilers;

- building lighting;

- sewer and water usage; and

- time clocks and thermostat settings.

The district has assigned one of the district's air conditioning technicians as the energy manager. This employee is paid a $1,000 per month stipend for the energy manager duties, although he is an hourly employee. The energy manager stated he had received no training as of December 2004, although there was an orientation in November 2004 in which the vendor explained what was expected of the energy manager. At the time of the on-site visit, the

vendor had come to the district three times for one-hour visits. The energy manager stated that the vendor demonstrated turning off lights. When the review team asked the vendor's representative about the energy manager's training, the representative confirmed turning off lights was part of the training. The written materials provided by the vendor were unopened and in the original packaging box at the time of the review team visit. No vendor employee had come to the district to explain the program or train the energy manager on the use of the materials.

The contract states that it will assist the energy manager in collecting and recording the relevant data on the district's energy consumption. The contract includes software training to create and maintain the data in order to effectively monitor the district's utilities consumption and costs. Although the contract began in July 2004, as of March 2005, the software had not been purchased and installed, nor had the energy manager received any training on the software program. In December 2004, the district had already paid the vendor $51,000 (5 months at $10,200 per month). The district did not designate the energy manager until November 2004, after four and one-half months of the contract lapsed. The vendor requested payment for the first five months of the contract even though it appears few services had been rendered. When the review team asked the superintendent why the vendor had been paid when it appeared that only a few services had been received, he stated the district was under contractual obligation to pay the invoice.

The vendor's monthly fee is $10,200. The monthly fee is to provide training and monitoring of the software program and activities of the energy manager. The fee also covers seminars and user group meetings organized and sponsored by the vendor. The only seminar the energy manager has attended was for boilers, but the district does not have boilers. The software purchase price is $10,000, then $1,000 per year for the following three years. The energy manager's annual stipend will be $12,000. The first-year totals for the program are $144,400 (plus any travel expenses for the energy manager) and $135,400 for each of the subsequent three years as per the contract. The total four-year contract price is $550,600. **Exhibit 4–2** shows the total for both contracts.

The vendor's representative told the review team the district would save $150,000 in utilities per year under the contract. This estimated savings was not based on any energy audit conducted in ZCISD; instead, the savings estimate was based on results in similar districts. The superintendent told the review team that he thought an energy audit had been conducted and could not explain where the $150,000 energy savings would come from. In March 2005, the review team discussed the contract with the vendor's representative. The representative stated the software installation and related training had not been initiated but was expected to occur in late March 2005. This date is nine months into the contract, and few services have been rendered other than to assist in designating the energy manager.

In the March 2005 interview, the representative stated the implementation process had been very slow in ZCISD. Typically, an energy manager is hired within two months of the beginning of the contract and begins inputting the cost and consumption of the electricity, water, and gas for the previous twelve months to determine the baseline year for comparison. Every year after the baseline year is called a performance year. The district's lack of monitoring the program to ensure its effective implementation has resulted in at least a seven-month delay in establishing the baseline year. Consequently, any determination of savings through the program will be delayed.

Exhibit 4–3 compares ZCISD's electricity costs in the first academic quarter of 2004 (September, October, November) of $189,140 to the same quarter in 2003 of $158,440. The gas (propane) price of $933 was the same for the first quarter in 2003 as in 2004.

The vendor's proposal states "none of our client districts have ever budgeted new funds for our fee; they pay our fee out of the existing utility budget because the savings that result will cover all costs." The district requested a legal review of the vendor's contract in March 2004. A copy of the contract that the review team received in December 2004 did not reflect the changes requested by legal counsel. The superintendent told the review team that he signed the contract without the changes recommended by legal counsel because the vendor stated those items were non-negotiable.

EXHIBIT 4–2
ZCISD ENERGY CONSERVATION CONTRACT COSTS
2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08

COMPANY	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	COMPANY TOTAL
JohnsonControls	$69,934	$72,032	$73,374	No contract	$215,340
Energy Education, Inc.	$144,400	$135,400	$135,400	$135,400	$550,600
Total	**$214,334**	**$207,432**	**$208,774**	**$135,400**	**$765,940**

SOURCE: ZCISD District Contracts, December 2004.

EXHIBIT 4–3
ELECTRICITY COMPARISON
OF PAYMENTS BETWEEN
FIRST QUARTERS
2003–04 AND 2004–05

MONTH IN FIRST QUARTER	AMOUNT PAID FOR ELECTRICITY 2003–04	AMOUNT PAID FOR ELECTRICITY 2004–05
September	$26,904	$57,481
October	$59,357	$57,481
November	$72,178	$74,178
Total	**$158,439**	**$189,140**

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Office, January 2005.

Under the first contract year, the district would need to realize a total savings of $294,400, which is the cost of the contract ($144,400) plus the $150,000 savings as stated by the vendor's representative. This is a savings of $73,600 per quarter. The actual utility costs for the first quarter of 2004 is $30,701 more than 2003, an increase in expenses instead of a savings. Since the district also contracts with Johnson Controls for operating equipment for air conditioning cost savings, it would be difficult to determine how to attribute savings to each company. The Business Services director stated the contract of $144,400 would be paid out of the money budgeted for electricity. There is no line item in the budget to pay for these contracts. The district has budgeted $700,000 for electricity for 2004–05. If the district's electric consumption continues in the trend of the first quarter for the remaining three quarters ($189,140), the annual electric charges would be $756,560. The budget would be short $56,560 to pay the current year's electricity and would have no funds to pay the two energy contracts of $214,334 (excluding travel and expenses) for 2004–05.

In the past three years, the district has not had annual electric bills of less than $642,049. **Exhibit 4–4** shows the last three years of electric bills. The

Business Services director could not explain the large discrepancies between the monthly bills other than that the charge for kilowatts per hour may have changed.

In the March 2005 conversation with the vendor's representative, the representative explained the calculation for the cost saving projections. The vendor used the 2001–02 expenditures for electricity, gas, and water obtained from the district as the basis for the projections. The amounts the vendor was given were electricity-$760,543; natural gas-$80,748; and water/sewer-$447,321. The amounts for that same year, 2001–02, that were given to the review team by the district were electricity-$778,830; natural gas-$1,979; and water/sewer-$82,573. The amounts given to the vendor for natural gas and water/sewer, which were used to calculate the cost savings, were considerably higher than the amounts provided to the review team.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 44.901 addresses energy savings performance contracts. **Exhibit 4–5** contains clauses in the TEC that relate to the contracts ZCISD has entered into for energy management.

ZCISD has also adopted board policy CL (Legal), which follows the language of TEC §44.901 and requires a performance and payment bond of any provider of energy contracts. The district did not receive a performance and payment bond from Energy Education, Inc. or Johnson Controls, nor did the district have a licensed professional engineer review the contracts. Since there was no energy audit conducted, the district will have no basis or base line to determine performance, nor will the district have the figures to support or refute any guaranteed savings from the vendor.

EXHIBIT 4–4
ZCISD ELECTRIC BILLS FOR
2001–02, 2002–03, AND 2003–04

MONTH	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
September	$62,451.21	$55,787.81	$26,904.51
October	$48,152.20	$40,976.85	$59,357.30
November	$87,713.66	$96,384.94	$72,178.90
December	$56,941.24	$79,475.36	$90,623.35
January	$64,914.85	$60,852.63	$42,347.27
February	$50,469.70	$35,260.44	$154,629.67
March	$17,124.71	$42,827.68	$66,891.44
April	$497.04	$51,962.20	$97,492.91
May	$43,784.16	$1,606.79	$30,207.60
June	$80,748.48	$75,599.61	$68,442.67
July	$711.26	$81,485.64	$42,349.59
August	$305,361.52	$19,829.58	$26,904.51
Total	**$818,870.03**	**$642,049.53**	**$778,329.72**

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Office, January 2005.

EXHIBIT 4–5
TEXAS EDUCATION CODE 44.901

§ 44.901. ENERGY SAVINGS PERFORMANCE CONTRACTS

(a)	In this section, "energy savings performance contract" means a contract for energy or water conservation measures to reduce energy or water consumption or operating costs of school facilities in which the estimated savings in utility costs resulting from the measures is guaranteed to offset the cost of the measures over a specified period. The term includes a contract for the installation or implementation of:
	(3) automatic energy control systems, including computer software and technical data licenses;
(e)	Before entering into an energy savings performance contract, the board shall require the provider of the energy or water conservation measures to file with the board a payment and performance bond relating to the installation of the measures in accordance with Chapter 2253, Government Code. The board may also require a separate bond to cover the value of the guaranteed savings on the contract.
(g)	An energy savings performance contract shall contain provisions requiring the provider of the energy or water conservation measures to guarantee the amount of the savings to be realized by the school district under the contract. If the term of an energy savings performance contract exceeds one year, the school district's contractual obligations in any one year during the term of the contract beginning after the final date of installation may not exceed the total energy, water, wastewater, and operating cost savings, including electrical, gas, water, wastewater, or other utility cost savings and operating cost savings resulting from the measures, as determined by the school district in this subsection, divided by the number of years in the contract term.
(i)	Before entering into an energy savings performance contract, the board must require that the cost savings projected by an offeror be reviewed by a licensed professional engineer who is not an officer or employee of an offeror for the contract under review or otherwise associated with the contract or the offeror. An engineer who reviews a contract shall maintain the confidentiality of any proprietary information the engineer acquires while reviewing the contract. Sections 1001.053 and 1001.407, Occupations Code, apply to work performed under the contract.

SOURCE: Texas Education Code Chapter 44, Section 44.90.

The district has entered into a contract without a comprehensive understanding of the process, outcomes, and obligations of both the district and the vendor. The vendor received inaccurate utility expenditures for 2001–02, which will have an impact on the actual cost savings. The district has not monitored the activities of the vendor.

The district should renegotiate the energy management contract and require district oversight and monitoring of the agreement. ZCISD should renegotiate this agreement with the vendor to establish a new beginning date, and the district should request a credit from the vendor for any services that have been paid for but not yet received. The vendor should be given the opportunity to recalculate the district's savings. The district should have legal counsel review the energy management contract to ensure it is meeting performance measures, providing contractual services, and complying with the Texas Education Code and board policy. ZCISD should monitor the energy management contract to ensure that the district is performing its duties and receiving the contractual services agreed to by the vendor.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT AUDIT (REC. 74)
ZCISD has no evidence that an energy audit has ever been performed in the district. Energy management contractors have projected savings using districts of comparable size, but none have evaluated the ZCISD facilities. An energy audit would give the district a clearer picture of its utility costs and cost saving measures. **Exhibit 4–6** displays the utility cost breakdown for a three-year period.

EXHIBIT 4–6
ZCISD UTILITY COSTS
2001–02 THROUGH 2003–04

UTILITY	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Electric	$818,870	$642,049	$778,329
Gas	$1,979	$2,244	$3,732
Water	$82,573	$57,636	$60,393
Total	**$903,422**	**$701,929**	**$842,454**

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Services Director, December 2004.

Exhibit 4–7 shows that the district energy costs significantly exceed the national median average of $1.00 per square foot.

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) provides free energy management audits to public sector entities, including school districts. The audits provide detailed recommendations of equipment and procedures to implement, which serve as a basis of an energy management plan and estimate the amount of time it will take to recoup money spent on energy efficient equipment through lower energy costs.

SECO also has a Watt Watchers Program for schools that promotes energy conservation awareness. SECO provides free materials, training, and support.

EXHIBIT 4–7
ZCISD ENERGY COST PER SQUARE FOOT
2003–04

2003–04 FACILITY SQUARE FEET	2003–04 AMOUNT SPENT ON UTILITIES	ZCISD AVERAGE COST PER SQUARE FOOT	NATIONAL MEDIAN AVERAGE COST PER SQUARE FOOT
445,795	$842,454	$1.89	$1.00

SOURCE: District ledger, 2003, Business manager for utility costs; Student Services and Operations coordinator for square footage, December 2004.

Student councils, science clubs, activity clubs, and grade levels from first through twelfth grade can participate in the program. Students gain self-esteem, learn about energy resources, and take an active role in teaching others the importance of energy efficiency, all while having fun participating in the program. This program will not only save money at the school, but students will learn how to develop a habit of saving energy in their homes as well.

The Watt Watchers Program also involves starting an energy patrol at individual schools to implement small but effective ways to reduce energy consumption at the schools. The energy patrol consists of teachers, students, parents, and community volunteers who work together to implement energy conservation practices, such as:

- planting trees around the building to reduce the amount of heat reaching the buildings;

- replacing old or broken caulking and weather stripping in doors and windows to stop energy dollars from leaking through cracks;

- checking outside air dampers, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning filters;

- turning off lights in unoccupied areas; and

- developing maintenance schedules and performing random checks on facilities for monitoring energy conservation.

An energy management program can range from basic efforts to encourage people to switch off lights when not needed to adding insulation, replacing inefficient equipment, computerizing heating, and cooling equipment that automatically functions at optimum efficiency based on temperatures.

Killeen ISD's conservation coordinator, along with school and department administrators and staff, developed a conservation program for the district. Each school or support facility developed its own individual conservation plan to meet its specific needs and requirements. Students and staff were allowed to participate in energy conservation planning and implementation. Each campus designated a person to be responsible for shutting off energy-consuming equipment each day. Each campus also used shutdown checklists for daily use as well as for holidays and summers.

The district should conduct an energy management audit. The energy management audit can serve to complement present energy conservation efforts by providing additional information on equipment and procedures to consider to reduce energy costs and to involve students in the process of energy conservation. The fiscal estimate is based on a free energy audit, so there would be no cost to the district.

CUSTODIAL STAFFING (REC. 75)

The district does not efficiently use its custodial staff. ZCISD does not have a custodial staffing allocation formula and does not use industry standards to adjust and distribute staff adequately; consequently, custodial staff is not equitably assigned to schools.

The campus assistant principals supervise and evaluate the day custodians, and the Student Services and Operations coordinator supervises and evaluates the night custodians. The custodians receive most of their training through product vendors. Principals request custodians, and the Student Service and Operations coordinator hires and assigns the custodians to the schools or departments. There is no staffing formula or allocation plan to assist in this process.

Exhibit 4–8 displays the custodial coverage per facility and the variance to the industry standard. ZCISD custodial staff workloads per custodian vary from 5,205 square feet to 21,849 square feet.

Industry standards show that all schools are overstaffed except Zapata Middle School. ZCISD has the equivalent of 34.5 eight-hour custodians. (The district employs a mix of four- and eight-hour per day custodians). **Exhibit 4–9** shows that district custodians clean an overall average of 12,281 square feet. Industry standards normally assign one custodian per 19,000 square feet of space.

Corpus Christi ISD accomplished a reduction of their overstaffed custodial department through attrition and reassignment. Other school districts have developed formal custodial training in areas such as proper use of cleaning supplies and equipment, efficient cleaning methods, time management, and hazardous materials, which have been instrumental in improving productivity objectives.

EXHIBIT 4–8
ZCISD CUSTODIAL COVERAGE PER FACILITY

FACILITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE	NUMBER OF CUSTODIAL HOURS PER DAY	HOURS CONVERTED TO 8 HOUR CUSTODIANS***	AVERAGE SQUARE FOOTAGE PER CUSTODIAN	VARIANCE ABOVE + OR BELOW - STANDARD	RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF CUSTODIANS
North Elementary	33,835	52	6.5	5,205	+4.5	2.0
South Elementary	46,820	28	3.5	13,377	+1.0	2.5
Central Elementary	47,341	48	6.0	7,890	+3.5	2.5
Benavides Elementary	18,062	12	1.5	12,041	+0.5	1.5**
Middle School	131,094	48	6.0	21,849	-0.5	6.5
High School	125,409	68	8.5	14,754	+2.0	6.5
Support areas*	10,560	8	1.0	7,040	+0.5	0.5
District Office	10,570	12	1.5	7,046	+1.0	0.5
Total	**423,691**	**276**	**34.5**	**–**	**12.5**	**22.5**

SOURCE: ZCISD Student Services and Operations coordinator, December 2004 and Review Team analysis.
*Refrigerated storage space of 600 square feet not included.
**Due to the age of the school 1.5 custodians is recommended even though it is .5 custodians over the standard.
*** Custodians work different number of hours. Some are 8 hours and some are 4 hours. The column converts the total custodial hours worked into eight-hour units equal to one custodian.

EXHIBIT 4–9
ZCISD CUSTODIAL COVERAGE PER SQUARE FOOT AVERAGE

NUMBER OF 8 HOUR EQUIVALENT CUSTODIANS	TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE*	AVERAGE PER CUSTODIAN
34.5	423,691	12,281

SOURCE: Student Services and Operations coordinator, December 2004 and Review Team analysis. *Refrigerated storage space of 600 square feet not included.

The district should develop a custodial allocation formula using industry standards and assign custodians based on the formula. ZCISD should implement a hiring freeze for custodians until the district is able to determine the custodial square footage space assignments. ZCISD should review the square footage of areas to be cleaned and reduce the custodial staff as per industry standards. Based on the current square footage of 423,691 and using the industry standard of 19,000 square feet per custodian, the district needs 22.5 custodians or 180 hours per day (22.5 X 8). The district has 34.5 eight-hour equivalent or 276 hours per day of custodians. The beginning custodian hourly rate is $5.84 plus 12 percent for benefits. Based on an eight-hour day and 192 work days per year, the district would save $120,545 per year by reducing the custodial staff by 12 custodians or 96 hours per day ($5.84 x 1.12 = $6.54 per hour) (192 days X 8 hours X 12 positions = 18,432 hours) (18,432 X $6.54 = $120,545).

The district will be opening two new elementary schools in 2005–06 that will replace Zapata Central and Zapata South Elementary Schools. Each new elementary will be 75,347 square feet, and depending on what the district plans to do with the two old elementary schools, the assignment of custodians could shift.

PORTABLE BUILDINGS AND OTHER EXCESS SPACE (REC. 76)

ZCISD does not have a plan for its excess space when two new elementary schools open in 2005–06. The ZCISD currently has 445,795 square feet of space. **Exhibit 4–10** identifies the buildings, the square feet (including portables), and the year built.

Exhibit 4–11 shows the current capacities of the schools and total classroom percent utilization.

Exhibit 4–12 shows the projected capacity of the schools in fall 2005. The two new facilities under construction, Zapata Central and Zapata South Elementary Schools, each have 75,347 square feet and will both increase in capacity. In 2005, the district will have ample capacity for growth in all the schools. At that time, the district should be able to dispose of unneeded, excess space in all the portable buildings except the one at the remote elementary campus, Benavides Elementary School in San Ygnacio.

Exhibit 4–13 indicates the number, size, and location of the ZCISD portable buildings.

The Zapata Central Elementary student population will be moved into a new school, and the middle school that is located in the same complex can expand into the elementary's vacant space, eliminating the middle school's five portable buildings. Zapata Central Elementary will no longer need their two portable buildings, and South Elementary will not need its four portables since both are moving into new facilities with increased capacity. North Elementary will need to retain its two portables, and Benavides will need to retain its 0.5 portable. A total of 11 portables will not be needed.

Zapata Central Elementary comprises two areas called Central A and Central B. Central A could be used to house all of the central academic support areas, such as Special Education director; Federal Programs director; director of Personnel and

EXHIBIT 4–10
ZCISD FACILITIES, SQUARE FOOTAGE, AND YEAR BUILT

BUILDING	SQUARE FEET	PORTABLE SQUARE FEET	ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION DATE	MAJOR RENOVATIONS
Zapata North Elementary	33,835	3072	1982	
Zapata South Elementary	46,820	6144	1954	1977
Benavides Elementary	18,062	1536	1955	
Zapata Central Elementary	47,341	3072	1964	1981
Middle School	131,094	7680	1979	
High School	125,409		2001	
Superintendent's Office	2,736		1979	
Refrigerated Storage	600		1979	
Professional Development Center	3,078		1965	
Technology	4,756		1954	
Warehouse/Office	5,500		1954	
Transportation	5,060		2001	
Sub-total	424,291	21,504		
Total		**445,795**		

SOURCE: Interview with Student Services and Operations coordinator, December 2004.

EXHIBIT 4–11
ZCISD SCHOOL CAPACITY, ENROLLMENT AND UTILIZATION
2004–05

SCHOOL	CLASSROOM CAPACITY	2003–04 ENROLLMENT	TOTAL CLASSROOM PERCENT UTILIZATION
South Zapata Elementary	682	592	87%
North Zapata Elementary	638	445	70%
Central Zapata Elementary	528	503	95%
Benavides Elementary	162	85	52%
Middle School	924	703	76%
High School	1200	815	68%

SOURCE: Student Services and Operations Coordinator, December 2004 and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 2003–04.

EXHIBIT 4–12
ZCISD SCHOOL CAPACITY, ENROLLMENT, AND UTILIZATION
FALL 2005

SCHOOL	FALL 2005 CLASSROOM CAPACITY	2004–05 ENROLLMENT*	TOTAL CLASSROOM PERCENT UTILIZATION
North Elementary	638	600	94%
New South Elementary	750	630	84%
New Central Elementary	750	489	65%
Benavides Elementary	162	117	72%
Middle School	924	743	80%
High School	1200	806	67%

SOURCE: Student Services and Operations Coordinator Interview, December 2004; Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2004–05. * In membership.

Compliance; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment director; Attendance officer; and Athletic director. Central B can be closed to eliminate operating costs. The superintendent expressed a desire to create what he called "an incubator" facility for state and county agencies such as South Texas Work Force, State Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and South Texas Alcohol and Drug Abuse. If the district decided to pursue this idea, Central B could be rented to these agencies to generate income for the district.

Uvalde Independent School District and San Antonio Independent School District have auctioned off excess portable buildings within the last year.

Some of the buildings were salvage materials only because of their poor conditions, but the portable buildings in good condition sold for $3,000–$5,000.

The district should develop a plan to dispose of excess portable building space upon the completion of the two elementary schools under construction. The district should develop a plan to dispose of unneeded portable buildings. The superintendent should determine the condition of the portables to be sold and sell the buildings either by sealed bids or auction. All support services offices other than the Superintendent's office and the Transportation building should be centralized in Zapata Central

EXHIBIT 4–13
ZCISD LOCATION AND SIZE OF PORTABLE BUILDINGS

LOCATION OF PORTABLE	NUMBER OF UNITS	SQUARE FEET
South Elementary	4	6,144
North Elementary	2	3,072
Central Elementary	2	3,072
Middle School	5	7,680
Benavides	.5*	1,536

SOURCE: Operations coordinator, December 2004.
*All portables in the district are double classrooms except the one at Benavides Elementary that is only one classroom.

Elementary School when it is vacated after the opening of the new elementary schools.

The average sale of portable buildings is estimated to range from $3,000 to $5,000 depending on age and condition. The sale of 11 portable buildings at $3,000 would generate one-time revenue of $33,000 (11 X $3,000 per building = $33,000).

MAINTENANCE AND CUSTODIAL PROCEDURE MANUALS (REC. 77)

ZCISD Maintenance and Custodial departments do not have written procedure manuals for effective operations. There are no written procedures for preventive maintenance, use and purchase of materials, custodial activities, and injury guidelines. The district has a work order submission process, but it is not documented.

The primary purpose of a comprehensive procedures manual is to ensure employees are informed and school district operations are consistently maintained. A procedures manual also ensures employees are treated fairly and held to common standards and procedures. In the absence of a current procedures manual, supervisors and employees do not always know what the organization is supposed to do, what is expected of employees, what the work standards are, or how various situations are to be handled.

When staff performs their duties without the benefit of up-to-date written procedures, they may fail to perform those functions in an acceptable manner. Written policies and procedures also preserve institutional knowledge in the event of staff turnover. Maintenance management best practices have shown that formal management procedures are essential for effectively managing and maintaining buildings. At a minimum, such procedures should cover work requests and work orders; work identification; job planning; cost estimates; materials procurement and control; work scheduling; effectiveness measurement of performance and costs; and historical statistical data.

Comprehensive written custodial management procedures are necessary to ensure that schools are kept clean and safe. The procedures also ensure that the district provides minor maintenance services and staff monitors and reports facility repair needs to the appropriate staff. For example, Brevard County Public Schools in Florida has adopted comprehensive custodial procedures that cover all aspects of custodial services to inform its custodians of their roles and expectations. The procedures inform custodians of the required standard procedures, such as restroom cleaning and sanitation, basic office cleaning, and hard surface floor cleaning and maintenance.

ZCISD should develop and implement comprehensive maintenance and custodial procedures. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should develop detailed written procedures for the maintenance and custodial areas. The manual should be written in Spanish and English and should clearly communicate acceptable and unacceptable practices. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should update the manual regularly to ensure that staff receives accurate information.

KEY DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNTABILITY (REC. 78)

The district does not have a policy or procedure that provides accurate accounting of all keys distributed to employees. Interviews with campus principals and central office staff identified that the district does not have an established policy or consistent procedures to account for all keys issued to district employees. During focus groups, principals stated various procedures for handling keys on their campuses.

At the high school, teachers have room keys but not a master key, and the assistant principal is responsible for the record keeping of keys issued to staff. Only the principal, assistant principal, athletic director, and security guards have master keys. At the middle school, the teachers have keys to their rooms, and the athletic and UIL coaches have keys to the main building. The middle school campus does not maintain a list of people who have been issued keys. The employees are expected to turn in the keys at the end of the year, but there is no tracking system in place on this campus. The elementary schools also do not have an established tracking system for keys.

The supervisor for Security stated that all security guards have master keys. The Student Services and Operations coordinator confirmed that although the high school can account for their keys since it is a new facility and issued keys within the last two years, the other campuses cannot. He said that the maintenance employees are also issued master keys. The coordinator further stated that through the years employees have made copies of district keys issued

to them, and there has been turnover in the district and not all keys have been returned when employees resigned.

Staff interviews indicated that theft was not a big problem in the district. The district provided copies of four incident reports of theft without forcible entry taken by the Zapata County Sheriff's Office between 2001 and 2003. Two reports stated entry was possibly gained with keys.

Without an effective key control system, the district cannot control access to its buildings or maintain building security. If keys are lost, not returned, or duplicated, the district facilities have an increased risk of loss or exposure to vandalism, and the safety of the students and staff may be compromised. Missing keys cannot be easily identified without a tracking system.

Many districts hold employees accountable for the keys that they are issued by physically labeling all keys and requiring employees to sign for each key. Keys should be turned in at the end of the year as well as upon an employee's termination. A district can conduct random physical key counts to ensure employees still have the keys that correspond to the signed documents in their personnel files. If a key is missing, the district can then take immediate action to re-key corresponding locks in affected areas. Since the district does not have security alarms installed in the buildings to alert authorities of intrusions, setting up a key control system is an essential step in protecting the district's property, personnel, and students.

The district should establish a policy and set of procedures designed to assign and track all district keys. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should take inventory of the personnel that have been issued master and room keys for all district facilities by having each campus provide a list of employees who have been issued keys and identify the areas to which they have access. A district policy and supporting campus procedures should be developed to ensure that the distribution of keys is strictly monitored. Each key should be manually coded and assigned to a specific staff member, who should be required to sign a document for their keys and be held accountable if their key is lost. The document should state that the employee would be responsible for reimbursing the district for the costs of any new keys and locks if a key is lost. In addition, it should clearly state that lending keys without permission is prohibited. The keys should be stamped: "Not to be duplicated." The key assignments can be tracked on standard spreadsheet software with existing resources.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT INSPECTIONS (REC. 79)

ZCISD school kitchens and cafeterias are not regularly inspected as required by federal law. The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, Public Law 108–265 Section III, requires local, state, city, or county representatives to perform a sanitation inspection at least once a year in all school kitchens and cafeterias. The reauthorization of this law requires two yearly inspections beginning July 5, 2005. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is responsible for the inspecting school cafeterias.

According to a consultant for the Texas Department of Agriculture, the state Health Services Department does not have enough inspectors to inspect schools; instead they concentrate their inspections on restaurants and public facilities. At the time of the review, the cafeteria supervisor stated she called the Health Services Department, which is located in Laredo, most recently on September 1, 2004 and requested cafeteria inspections. On September 13, 2004, an inspector came but only two cafeterias were inspected—Zapata Middle School and Zapata Central Elementary. In December 2004 an Open Records Request was sent to the DSHS requesting copies of all inspection reports for ZCISD. Prior to complying with the Open Records Request, the DSHS completed inspections of the four remaining cafeterias. The last year all of the schools had been inspected was 2001–02.

Health inspections are necessary to ensure compliance with the laws. Health inspections can also identify health issues before they become a problem such as water not being hot enough or cooler refrigerators not being cool enough, resulting in food spoilage, contamination, or spread of disease.

Socorro ISD (SISD) has a plan in place in which the district conducts unannounced inspections of the cafeterias. By routinely conducting unscheduled inspections, Socorro ISD ensures that its kitchens are always prepared for review by state inspectors. This has enabled SISD kitchens to score 87 or above on all state Health Service Department inspections over a three-year period.

ZCISD should conduct mock inspections and document requests for kitchen and cafeteria inspections. The Child Nutrition specialist should conduct unannounced mock inspections to keep the kitchens up to required health standards. At least monthly written requests, confirmed by telephone follow-up requests, should be made to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). If necessary, the district should then follow up further

by filing Open Records Requests with the DSHS in order to ensure compliance with federal law.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION EDUCATION (REC. 80)

The district does not have a plan to ensure compliance with the 2001 state law requiring a coordinated health program in each elementary school that combines health education, physical education, physical activity, and parental involvement with nutrition services. Interviews indicated that the ZCISD Child Nutrition specialist had heard about the law but was waiting for Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) to provide in-service training before developing the program.

Exhibit 4–14 is an excerpt from the Texas Education Code §38.013 and §38.014 regarding coordinated health programs for elementary students. Each school district is required to implement a program no later than September 1, 2007.

Designing and implementing a health program that combines health education, physical education, nutrition services, and parental involvement will help prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes.

The Spring ISD Food Service department has improved its nutrition education efforts by offering programs such as National School Breakfast and Lunch Week, 5-A-Day, Texas School Breakfast and Lunch Week, printed menus that include nutrition games and information, and a Food Service department website.

ZCISD should initiate the planning for implementing the elementary school health program. The Child Nutrition specialist should contact Region 1 to request information on coordinating the activities to prepare for compliance with TEC §38.013 and §38.014. The Child Nutrition specialist should also notify or meet with the health and physical education educators to begin planning in the elementary schools.

CHILD NUTRITION OFFICE REIMBURSEMENT FOR OPERATING EXPENSES (REC. 81)

The ZCISD Child Nutrition office does not reimburse the district's General Fund for utility and other overhead expenses it incurs in the operation of the food service program. ZCISD's Child Nutrition program operates six cafeterias. Even though the cafeterias pay for the food, equipment, salaries, and supplies necessary for operation, the Child Nutrition office does not reimburse the district for the cost of electricity, garbage, water, telephone, and maintenance repairs performed by district maintenance workers. The Business Services director stated the cafeterias had never paid these expenses because food service operations in the past had not been self-sustaining. The cafeteria fund balance has been growing, as illustrated in **Exhibit 4–15**, and the food service fund could now reimburse the district for its portion of the utilities and maintenance services.

EXHIBIT 4–14
TEXAS EDUCATION CODE
COORDINATED HEALTH PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IMPLEMENTATION OF COORDINATED HEALTH
PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

§38.013. COORDINATED HEALTH PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

(b) The agency shall make available to each school district one or more coordinated health programs designed to prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease, and Type 2 diabetes in elementary school students. Each program must provide for coordinating:
    (1) health education;
    (2) physical education and physical activity;
    (3) nutrition services; and
    (4) parental involvement
(a–1) The commissioner by rule shall adopt criteria for evaluating a coordinated health program before making the program available under Subsection (a). Before adopting the criteria, the commissioner shall request review and comment concerning the criteria from the Department of State Health Services School Health Advisory Committee. The commissioner may make available under Subsection (a) only those programs that meet criteria adopted under the subsection.
(c) The agency shall notify each school district of the availability of programs.

§38.014 IMPLEMENTATION OF COORDINATED HEALTH PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

(a) each school district shall:
    (1) participate in appropriate training for the implementation of the program approved by the agency under Section 30.103; and
    (2) implement the program in each elementary school in the district.
(b) The agency, in cooperation with the Department of State Health Services, shall adopt a schedule for regional education service centers to provide necessary training under this section.

SOURCE: Texas Education Code Section 38.013 and Section 38.014.

EXHIBIT 4–15
ZCISD FOOD SERVICE FUND BALANCE
2001–02, 2002–03, AND 2003–04

2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
$385,203	$448,388	$453,078	$401,558*

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Services Director, December 2004; ZCISD audit reports 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, and *2003–04 unaudited.

Tyler ISD developed a cost allocation system that enabled the district to recover costs for utilities and custodial/maintenance services resulting from food service operations. Custodial and utility costs were developed on a per square foot ratio, and costs were transferred to the General Operating budget from the Food Service budget. Developing a cost allocation for the ZCISD cafeterias would make the department completely self-sustaining.

Since the cafeterias currently do not have electricity and water meters that are separate from the school, and the telephone line is an extension of the school's main line, the Child Nutrition office would have to negotiate a fee based on the average space of the cafeteria within the school. The garbage collection fee is based on a $168 per dumpster charge for collection five days per week. The cafeterias have a total of ten dumpsters.

The ZCISD Child Nutrition specialist should develop Child Nutrition fee reimbursement guidelines for the operating costs in each kitchen based on square footage averaging. The Child Nutrition office should be self-sustaining and pay its cost of utilities and other overhead expenses including telephone, water, garbage, electricity, and district maintenance repairs. If the ZCISD cafeteria funds reimburse the district for all of its operational costs, including utilities, this reimbursement will provide more funds in the general operating fund to spend on educational activities or personnel. The cafeteria square footage is known in four of the schools. (The square footage for Zapata High School and Benavides is unverifiable for calculation purposes.) The total square footage for these four schools is 259,090, and the total square footage for the cafeterias is 19,546, which is approximately eight percent of the total. The total utility costs for water, electricity, and garbage for 2003–04 was $842,454. Eight percent of $842,454 is $67,396 per year. In addition, the Child Nutrition's share of the cost of ten dumpsters for ten months is $168 per month per dumpster for a total cost of $16,800. This would move the $84,196 reimbursement for utilities and garbage to the general operating fund's undesignated unrestricted fund balance. The Child Nutrition fund balance could be reduced by this amount and the general fund could be increased by the same amount, resulting in additional monies available to be used for educational purposes.

OPERATING PROCEDURE MANUALS (REC. 82)

The Child Nutrition office does not have a procedures manual that directly relates to the operations, practices, and procedures of the Child Nutrition Program. The ZCISD Child Nutrition office uses the same employee handbook as all the other employees of the district, none of which is translated into Spanish. The department follows the same district policies that apply to timekeeping, leave, accounting, and the payroll process.

The purpose of a comprehensive departmental procedures manual is to ensure employees are informed and consistency is maintained in operations. A procedures manual also ensures employees are treated fairly and held to common standards and practices. In the absence of a current procedures manual, supervisors and employees do not always know the organization's role, employee expectations, work standards, or how to handle various situations. The procedures manual should cover food, preparation techniques, sanitation and cleaning processes, how to respond to injuries, work assignments, appearance and behavior, and reporting requirements. Comprehensive written food service procedures are necessary to ensure breakfast and lunch programs meet the requirements of the agencies that provide funding for the school lunch and breakfast program.

Written policies and procedures assist in transition in the event of staff turnover or the need for substitute employees. The lack of written procedures also affects the efficiency and consistency in the program. Menu planning, food preparation, serving styles, and health and sanitation techniques should be written in such a manner that all cafeteria workers could follow the guide.

The director of Food Service for San Marcos CISD designed a detailed procedures manual for employees in the Food Service department. The director of Food Services designs and implements an employee training program focused on the procedures manual. The manual also provides an instrument for the director of Food Service to monitor employee performance.

ZCISD should develop a procedures manual for the cafeteria program. A comprehensive written procedures guide will ensure activities in the Child

Nutrition office and cafeterias are consistent and efficient. The manual should be developed by the Child Nutrition specialist and reviewed with the Child Nutrition staff at least annually and should be available in both English and Spanish.

STAFFING UNDER MEALS PER LABOR HOUR STANDARD (REC. 83)
The Child Nutrition office staffing levels are not monitored or controlled based on meals per labor hour (MPLH). School districts use MPLH analysis to determine and measure food service productivity and assign labor hours to their kitchens. MPLH, which is the number of meal equivalents served divided by total hours worked, is the staffing pattern formula used by the food industry. If the MPLH rate is lower than the recommended rate, either the number of meals served is too low or the number of hours worked is too high. The number of hours worked is a function of two variables: the number of staff employed and the hours worked per worker. Both variables are controllable. For schools with MPLH below industry standards, a school food service operation would have to increase the number of meals served or reduce the number of staff or the hours worked by each employee to achieve the recommended MPLH.

Meal equivalents are the average daily participation involving reimbursable lunches, a la carte sales converted to meal equivalents, and breakfast adjusted for the degree of complexity in preparation and the labor needed. ZCISD uses the meal equivalent standard from Region 1, which is based on the *School*

Food Service Management for the 21st Century, presented in **Exhibit 4–16**.

There are two systems of meal preparation: conventional and convenience systems. The conventional system involves using raw ingredients in the preparation of meals; the use of some bakery bread and prepared pizza; and involves washing dishes. In contrast, the convenience system maximizes the amount of processed foods and disposable wares. ZCISD uses the conventional system of meal preparation except when some breakfast foods are convenience products. **Exhibit 4–17** shows the staffing guidelines for on-site production using the conventional system.

Exhibit 4–18 calculates the meals per labor hour per school. ZCISD is overstaffed at schools by 19.2 labor hours per day based on recommended staffing.

ZCISD should establish a food service staffing formula based on the industry standard of meals per labor hour, and adjust Child Nutrition staff accordingly. The Child Nutrition specialist should evaluate the staffing at each campus and establish a staffing formula. The district should reduce the daily hours worked by 19–20 hours. The reduction of the hours could be spread across the five largest campuses. Since Benavides Elementary is so small and only has two cafeteria workers, it would be difficult to eliminate a person or cut hours at that school. The district essentially needs to reduce the food service staff by 2.5 workers based on an eight-hour day. Based on an entry hourly wage for food service workers of $6.41 per hour plus 12 percent

EXHIBIT 4–16
CONVERSION RATE FOR ZCISD MEAL EQUIVALENTS
2004–05

CATEGORY	CONVERSION RATE
Student Lunch	One lunch equals one equivalent
Adult Lunch	One lunch equals one equivalent
Student and Adult Breakfasts	Three breakfasts equal one equivalent
A la Carte Sales	Sales divided by $3.00*

SOURCE: School Food Service Management for the 21st Century.
*When the purchase of individual items total $3.00 this equals one meal equivalent.

EXHIBIT 4–17
MEALS PER LABOR HOUR STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM

MEAL EQUIVALENTS	LOW	HIGH
Up to 100	8	10
101–150	9	11
151–200	10–11	12
201–250	12	14
251–300	13	15
301–400	14	16
401–500	14	17
501–600	15	17
601–700	16	18
701–800	17	20
801–900	18	20
901–Up	19	21

SOURCE: School Food Service Management for the 21st Century, 5th Edition.

EXHIBIT 4–18
MEALS PER LABOR HOUR PER SCHOOL

SCHOOL	TOTAL MEAL EQUIVALENTS SERVED DAILY	NUMBER OF STAFF	NUMBER OF HOURS PER DAY	TOTAL NUMBER OF LABOR HOURS	MEALS PER LABOR HOUR	INDUSTRY MPLH STANDARD	HOURS ABOVE (BELOW) STANDARD
Zapata High School	850	9.75	8	76	11.2	18	(6.8)
Zapata Middle School	835	7	8	56	15.0	18	(3.0)
Central Elementary	584	6	8	48	12.1	15	(2.9)
South Elementary	751	6	8	48	15.6	17	(1.4)
North Elementary	648	6	8	48	13.5	16	(2.5)
Benavides Elementary	102	2	8	16	6.4	9	(2.6)
Total	3,770	36.75	48	292			(19.2)

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Services director and Child Nutrition specialist, December 2004.

benefits and a standard 181 working days, implementing industry standards would compute to a total of $25,992 in salary savings in one year [($6.41 X 1.12 = $7.18 per hour) (2.5 X 8 = 20 hours per day) (20 X 181 = 3,620 hours) (3,620 X $7.18 = $25,992)].

TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE RECORD KEEPING (REC. 84)

ZCISD does not keep complete bus fleet maintenance records, a vital process for ensuring a safe bus fleet. The district does not have a record of all maintenance expenditures for vehicles in the fleet. The work orders for repairs to the fleet do not adequately reflect costs or have a complete description of the work performed. The work order lists the parts used to repair the vehicle, the date the vehicle was repaired, and the odometer reading. Other required items such as mechanic time, labor costs, and other items inspected while the vehicle was in the repair facility are not listed. The work order also fails to list the date the repair was requested.

Complete maintenance records are a vital part of ensuring a safe bus fleet. Complete records allow management to review mechanic effectiveness. The district does not currently track when a vehicle problem is reported or how long it takes to be repaired. This may result in buses being driven days or weeks with mechanical defects that could lead to breakdowns or accidents.

The *National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures 2000 Revised Edition* provides guidelines for vehicle maintenance records. The intent of vehicle maintenance records is to allow a comprehensive analysis of all expenditures and document that all vehicles have been adequately maintained. It is also required to ensure that mechanical problems are handled quickly so that vehicles not meeting minimum operational requirements are taken out of service. Best practices use computerized records to allow easy accountability. Several fairly low cost commercial programs are available that would fit the needs of the district.

The district should improve the vehicle maintenance record-keeping process to show all costs associated with each vehicle. All maintenance records should include all services performed, all parts used for the repair, mechanic time, and labor costs. The work orders should also track the dates that services are requested and the dates that repairs are completed to document that repairs are handled in a timely manner.

The one-time fiscal impact for implementing a vehicle maintenance records program is estimated at $3,000. Single-user fleet maintenance programs typically cost about $2,500. A computer for this program in the shop area would cost $500. In addition to the $3,000 one-time cost, an annual program maintenance fee is estimated to be $200.

DIESEL FUEL PUMP CONTROLS (REC. 85)

ZCISD's diesel fueling system does not have controls to maintain accountability and prevent possible theft. The diesel fuel pump lacks access controls. Access controls allow dispensing of fuel only to approved buses and personnel. The fuel controls are computer activated and generate a complete accounting of all transactions. The current diesel fuel pump is located in an area that is not visible from the offices or shop area.

The lack of automated controls does not allow for easy tracking of fuel usage by vehicle. The lack of specific tracking by vehicle creates an opportunity for inappropriate use of district fuel. Controls on fuel dispensing ensure that pilferage does not occur. They also provide automatic records of fuel cost and miles per gallon per vehicle.

Round Rock ISD has computerized fuel-dispensing controls on all pumps. The fuel usage records are tied back to the vehicle maintenance system. All fuel use is logged to the individual vehicle with pump controls that prevent dispensing unless miles per gallon readings are within acceptable limits. The odometer reading from each fuel transaction are automatically loaded into the maintenance software

and aids the district in scheduling preventive maintenance.

The district should purchase a computerized fuel management system to track diesel fuel use. The diesel fuel pump should have access controls. The estimated one-time cost of computerized fuel control hardware and software programs is $8,500. An annual program maintenance fee is estimated to be $595.

DOCUMENTING EXPENSES TO CORRECT FUNCTIONS (REC. 86)

The Transportation office is not properly accounting for the cost of services its staff provides to other departments. The district lacks a process for correctly coding expenditures so that they are charged to the correct source. For example, the Transportation office repairs vehicles for maintenance and other departments, but the expenses are coded under transportation costs. Additionally, all but three drivers and aides work additional duties outside the Transportation office, but all their salaries are coded as transportation duties (function 34). The drivers and aides are guaranteed eight hours per day, all coded to Transportation. According to staff, most transportation drivers and aides spend two to four hours completing other duties, including helping as lunch monitors and classroom aides. Several administrators and staff said the district lacks accounting processes to correctly code expenses.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) §44.007 (d) requires that accounting practices enable the costs for each program to be uniquely identified. The district cannot track expenditures by program under the current system. Correct tracking of expenses by department or function allows for an accurate picture of each function's expenditures.

ZCISD's Transportation office should track all transportation expenditures related to other functions and departments for repairs and additional duties. The expenditures should be coded to the appropriate account to enable tracking of expenditures by specific area. The administrative assistant for Business Services should work with the Student Services and Operations coordinator to develop a system to accurately track and code expenditures to the appropriate accounts.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE (REC. 87)

ZCISD does not have an adequate process for preventive maintenance of its bus fleet. A review of maintenance files shows that the Transportation office does not follow a written format for conducting preventive maintenance. Vehicles are

scheduled for preventive maintenance every 4,000 miles, but actual maintenance is limited to fluid changes. Inspection of maintenance documents shows that buses have traveled more than 20,000 miles in some instances without preventive maintenance. There is not a preventive maintenance form listing items to be routinely checked by the mechanic to keep the fleet running safely. Observations show the fleet in need of routine repairs that would have been addressed in an effective preventive maintenance program. For example, some buses have major portions of seats missing or poorly repaired, accident damage not repaired, bus floors rotting away, and fluid leaks forming pools under parked buses. This lack of adequate preventive maintenance can result in accidents or mechanical failure. Some bus seats lack required protective foam padding. Emergency braking could throw students into unpadded steel seat frames that could cause injuries. Other maintenance issues could lead to mechanical breakdowns and student injuries.

An effective preventive maintenance process routinely checks and repairs every aspect of the bus. The goal of preventive maintenance is to keep the bus in safe and reliable condition at all times.

The district states that buses are inspected every 4,000 miles, but actual inspection intervals vary considerably, as shown from the sample of preventive maintenance records in **Exhibit 4–19**. The intervals below show a significant number of inspections have not been completed in a reasonable mileage period.

The industry guideline for preventive maintenance according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation (DOT) Code, Part 396.3 (a), is "All parts and accessories should be in safe and proper operating condition at all times."

Spring ISD tracks all preventive maintenance through odometer readings provided by the fueling system. The software schedules preventive maintenance and ensures that the fleet is maintained. Their preventive maintenance program inspects every aspect of the vehicle for wear or damage. The mechanics sign off on each aspect of the inspections and schedule repairs on any items noted.

The district should develop a comprehensive preventive maintenance program that ensures the safety of all buses on a continuous basis. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should develop and implement a program to inspect every aspect of every bus on a consistent basis. All items needing adjustment, repair, or replacement should be

EXHIBIT 4–19
ZCISD PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE RECORDS SAMPLE

BUS	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE DATE	VEHICLE MILES	INTERVAL	BUS	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE DATE	VEHICLE MILES	INTERVAL
1	9/28/01	35,382		5	8/21/01	28,384	
	11/16/01	39,815	4,433		9/19/01	32,192	3,808
	1/23/02	43,960	4,145		12/3/02	41,658	9,466
	3/4/02	48,993	5,033		1/30/02	46,591	4,933
	4/15/02	52,929	3,936		4/2/02	52,425	5,834
	6/7/02	58,490	5,561		5/7/02	57,054	4,629
	10/7/02	63,393	4,903		6/19/02	60,870	3,816
	8/12/03	90,575	27,182		8/26/02	63,097	2,227
	2/11/04	103,169	12,594		9/23/02	65,199	2,102
	3/29/04	107,264	4,095		10/28/02	68,744	3,545
	7/2/04	113,072	5,808		5/7/03	84,115	15,371
					6/13/03	87,588	3,473
					8/12/03	90,529	2,941
					9/23/03	94,773	4,244
					11/7/03	100,365	5,592
					1/13/04	104,989	4,624
					2/21/04	109,099	4,110
					4/28/04	114,269	5,170
					6/22/04	118,364	4,095
BUS	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE DATE	VEHICLE MILES	INTERVAL	BUS	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE DATE	VEHICLE MILES	INTERVAL
6	9/26/02	4,188		29	5/25/01	200,616	
	11/1/02	8,692	4,504		9/20/01	206,034	5,418
	7/31/03	24,930	16,238		10/31/01	210,000	3,966
	10/16/03	28,289	3,359		4/27/02	221,058	11,058
	3/30/04	40,020	11,731		9/26/02	230,474	9,416
	8/30/04	45,705	5,685		10/18/02	233,794	3,320
	10/4/04	47,967	2,267		11/15/04	252,306	18,512
BUS	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE DATE	VEHICLE MILES	INTERVAL	BUS	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE DATE	VEHICLE MILES	INTERVAL
33	5/19/03	14,909		35	4/29/03	726	
	8/12/03	19,712	4,803		6/17/03	21,654	20,928
	9/24/03	23,574	3,862		10/15/03	26,599	4,945
	11/17/03	28,731	5,157		1/12/04	31,859	5,260
	1/28/04	33,865	5,134		5/10/04	35,495	3,636
	4/2/04	40,037	6,172		10/13/04	44,087	8,592
	6/7/04	44,952	4,915				
	9/15/04	49,993	5,041				
	11/3/04	54,453	4,460				

SOURCE: ZCISD Transportation Office Maintenance Records, December 2004.

addressed when the vehicle is brought in for inspection to ensure a safe bus fleet.

The estimated one-time cost for the repairs needed to bring the fleet vehicles up to safety standards is $15,000. Estimates include $3,500 to repair accident damage, $1,500 for seat repair, and $10,000 for floor replacements.

INVENTORY CONTROL (REC. 88)
ZCISD does not have a process for assessing or adequately maintaining an inventory of the parts and tools needed to effectively maintain its bus fleet. ZCISD maintains parts and mechanical tool inventories but does not follow standard inventory control practices. The district has not conducted a needs assessment to determine what parts and tools are needed to complete the process.

The Transportation office does not have a list of the parts or tools available to the mechanics. In addition, the parts are kept in an unsecured area. Parts and tool inventories are assets of a district and should be monitored and secured. The Texas Association for Pupil Transportation (TAPT) offers a Transportation Purchasing Certification Course that addresses purchasing and inventory controls for transportation departments. This course outlines standard purchasing and inventory control practices based on State Building and Procurement Commission recommendations. **Exhibit 4–20** provides a list of purchasing and inventory control practices identified in the course.

ZCISD should develop and implement procedures to control the Transportation Office's parts and tools inventories. The room containing parts and tools

EXHIBIT 4–20
TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
TRANSPORTATION PURCHASING COURSE

WHAT IS THE STARTING POINT FOR ALL DISCUSSIONS ON PURCHASING?
Thoughtful consideration of many factors.
1. What is this purchase for?
2. How many items are needed today?
3. How many of these items will be needed during the school year?
4. Are the items available from the vendor for immediate use?
5. What amount of inventory will this purchase generate?
6. Can the district house the inventory in a safe, efficient manner?
7. How much of an investment is tied up in this purchase?
8. What is the usage history of items in this purchase?
9. Can the items purchased be accounted for through district control practices?
10. Can bus parts be tracked to the buses and are the records kept for future review?

SOURCE: Texas Association for Pupil Transportation, Transportation Purchasing Certification Course, December 2004.

should be secured immediately to discourage and prevent potential theft. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should ensure that an inventory of all assets is completed and maintained annually to minimize excessive expenditures and better control assets. The district should also identify the parts and supplies needed in order to complete repairs in a timely manner.

USED OIL STORAGE AND DISPOSAL (REC. 89)

The Transportation office does not have a safe process for disposing of waste oil and filter products. As of December 2004, the district has four open fifty-five gallon drums full of waste oil and filters stored outside the Transportation Office. These fifty-five gallon drums are used to store oil products but do not have spill containment. The drums are exposed to rain, which could force oil out of the drums and into the groundwater system. Even small amounts of petroleum products can damage groundwater quality.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality sets standards for the storage of used oil products (www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/registration/used_oil/generators.html). Used oil must be stored in containers that are in good condition and protected from storm water flooding. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has the authority to fine districts that violate water quality regulations. Fines may range into the thousands of dollars depending on the extent of the problem.

The district should control waste oil and used oil filter storage and containment. The district can contract with an approved vendor to empty the oil drums or move the drums into a covered setting to avoid potential oil leakage. The administrative assistant for Business Services and the Student Services and Operations coordinator should identify a vendor to dispose of waste oil. The fiscal impact for removing the hazardous material waste is estimated at $200 per 55-gallon drum, which would be an annual cost of $800 ($200 X 4 drums = $800).

PRE-TRIP INSPECTIONS (REC. 90)

ZCISD bus drivers are not performing pre-trip inspections on school buses. Pre-trip inspections are an accepted national standard that many districts perform before every bus run as a safety precaution. The pre-trip inspection process is outlined in the Texas Department of Public Safety commercial driver license testing procedures. Observations of buses leaving the ZCISD compound showed drivers not making basic inspections. Drivers and aides entered the buses, started them, and in most cases, drove out of the facility without any pre-trip inspections.

Pre-trip inspections are a vital part of ensuring bus safety. The inspections are required to check for mechanical flaws that could lead to breakdowns and accidents. The inspections are also the first step in preventing sabotage. The pre-trip inspections check for suspicious packages and bombs is outlined in the Texas Department of Public Safety "Transportation System Security Awareness for All Employees" training manual.

All school bus drivers are required to show their knowledge of the Texas Department of Public Safety commercial driver license testing handbook and 49 CFR Chapter III, 396.11 pre-trip inspection process to receive a commercial driver license. Commercial driver license testing handbooks outline a complete inspection process, including checking under the hood for fluid levels and belt wear, inspecting the operation of all lights, performing a "pull down" test on air brakes, inspecting the entire drive train, ensuring that all emergency equipment and exits are fully functional, and checking the interior of the bus for safety-related problems. Defects should be immediately turned in to the shop, and the bus should not be driven until all repairs are completed. **Exhibit 4–21** provides the pre-trip inspection

EXHIBIT 4–21
TEXAS SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION COURSE

PRE-TRIP INSPECTION CHECKLIST
Make sure the parking brake is set or wheels are chocked
Take a good overall look at the bus. Check for fluid leaks such as oil, gasoline, or water.
Check for vandalism
Open the hood
Make sure the hood is in a secure holding position

Check oil level in the engine. If the bus has been idle for some time, the oil will have drained into the crank case and an accurate reading can be made
    Oil should be above the "add oil" line.
    If oil level is over full or milky colored there may be foreign substance in oil.

If a bus doesn't have a pressure coolant system with a liquid overflow tank, remove the radiator cap and check coolant level. NEVER remove radiator cap when the engine is hot!
    Coolant should be maintained above core level.
    Pressure systems can be checked by observing the liquid level in the overflow tank.

Check fan belts.
    A loose belt can result in a depleted battery or overheating.
    Check if cracked or frayed.
    When pressing down on the belt, it should give no more than ¾ inch.

Examine the engine for loose wires or excess oil.
Close the hood.
Make sure the hood safety latch, rod, or hinge is secured.
Check battery.   Check storage battery cables for cleanliness and security.
Clean windshield, turn signals, and warning lights to enhance visibility and lighting.
Check handrails and steps.
Check gauges before starting   NOTE: If gauges are not checked before cranking, drive may not know if they are functioning. Some gauges have readings while engine is off – need to watch for changes to know if working or gauge "stuck",
Start the engine using proper engine starting procedures.
Turn on left directional signal, clearance and I.D. marker lights, and high beam headlights.
From inside the bus, check operating conditions of dash-mounted turn signal indicator, high beam indicator, and instrument panel light.
From outside of the bus, check left directional signal, I.D. Marker lights, and headlights. Check for intensity of light, condition of lens, and dark spots and cracks on sealed beam unit.
Check mirrors and brackets for tightness.
Turn on right directional signal, emergency (hazard) warning lights, low beam headlights, and passenger compartment lights.
From inside the bus, check operating conditions of switches and dash-mounted indicators.
From outside of bus, check alternately flashing lights, right directional signal, emergency warning lights, taillights, and low beam headlights. Check for intensity of light and condition of lenses.
Clean taillights, stop lights, and headlights.
Check backup lights and beeper (Blue warning) and license plate light.
Check tread depth and general condition of tires. Test inflation using a hammer or bar.
Check wheel hubs for leaks.
If you have a flat on dual tires, do not drive. Driving on a flat can ruin the tire and cause stability and handling problems.
Visually check wheel bolts for tightness and rust dust around edges of bolts or nuts. Rust dust is an indication of a loose wheel bolt.
Open and close the emergency exit door, windows, and hatches to determine if the emergency buzzer is operating.
Check door gaskets and hinges   NOTE: Bad door gaskets can cause exhaust fumes to enter bus from exhaust pipe.
Check windows and mirrors for cleanliness, cracks, or breaks. Maintain good visibility by keeping windows and mirrors clean.
View underside of bus. Check for fluid leaks such as oil or grease. Check exhaust system, springs and hangers, and body clamps.
Check fuel cap.
Check radio, if equipped.
Check inspection sticker and insurance information
Check general condition of the bus body.
Note any scratches or dents and legibility of bus markings.
Bus markings should be kept clean for safety and public relations purposes.
Check condition of seats and floor.
Check emergency exit operation form inside of bus (door and windows).

EXHIBIT 4–21 (CONTINUED)
TEXAS SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION COURSE

PRE-TRIP INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Check emergency equipment.
    Determine that first aid kit, body fluids kit, fire extinguisher, and reflectors are securely in place, complete, and in
    operable condition.
    The pressure gauge on the fire extinguisher should always be fully charged and trigger pin in place.

Check operation of horn.
Check condition of wiper blades and operation of wipers.
Check heater and defroster (if applicable)
Check special needs equipment–i.e. wheelchair lifts, belts, harnesses, baby seats, blankets, (strap cutters and gurney, if equipped), etc.

Check Brakes
    Check holding power of parking and/or emergency air brake.
    Check pedal travel on service brake and the position the pedal holds under continued pressure.
    Check brake lights. This can be done by looking for a red illumination on the surface of an object behind the brake lights
     while activating the brake lights or by noting the movement of the ammeter needle.

Check clutch for chattering or grabbing, amount of free pedal, proper release, and slipping tendency.
When leaving the parking area, check for stiffness and free play (loose movement) in steering.
When you first notice a vehicle condition requiring attention, report it immediately. Early inspection and repair by the shop staff could prevent more extensive repairs or a breakdown.

SOURCE: Course Guide for School Bus Driver Training in Texas, Rev.1999.

checklist taught in the Texas School Bus Driver Certification Course.

ZCISD should implement a pre-trip inspection process for all school buses. Pre-trip inspections should be completed before every bus run. The district should provide all drivers with a complete written pre-trip inspection list in both English and Spanish.

TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE TRAINING (REC. 91)

ZCISD bus drivers and aides are not receiving regular mandatory training in accordance with federal law. Employees interviewed by the review team stated a need for additional training. The bus drivers are not receiving mandatory yearly training. Drivers and aides have begun some training during 2004–05. They received training in fire extinguishers, state certification, and emergency evacuations.

By law, bus drivers and aides are required to have training in certain areas. The Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Subchapter H and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard require bloodborne pathogen training. This training must occur in the first 30 days of employment for positions where occupational exposure may occur and annually as a refresher. Special education training is required annually by Public Law 94–142 Section 121a.380. The law states that "Each annual program must include a description of programs and procedures for the development and includes: a comprehensive system of personnel development, which includes: (a) staff development of general and special educational instructional, related service, and support personnel." There is some special education training

that takes place for special education drivers but not aides or substitute staff. School district liability increases tremendously in transporting disabled children if adequate and responsible training is not given to its special education transportation personnel.

Additional employee training should occur on a regular basis. In addition to the yearly annual training in bloodborne pathogens, training in safe driving and student management enhance transportation operations.

Effective districts train employees in separate areas such as special education confidentiality, crisis prevention techniques, driving safety, student/ pedestrian safety, and effective and efficient operations. Districts can have monthly safety training on a variety of topics. The more training an employee receives, the more productive the employee generally becomes.

ZCISD should expand bus driver and aide training to satisfy mandatory requirements and develop a continuing training program for all Transportation personnel. The program should begin with required training and expand to monthly safety workshops. Defensive driving should be a starting point for training, followed by other various topics. Courses can be taught locally with support materials from outside vendors. Monthly safety training should focus on short segments such as videos on subjects that vary regularly. The individual topics should be selected based on district needs.

The fiscal impact for this recommendation is based on the Transportation office purchasing training materials. Training materials from the National

Safety Council School Bus Defensive Driving, *Coaching the School Bus Driver,* are $350; *Coaching the School Bus Driver* workbooks are $100; two Crisis Prevention Institute videos are $800 each; and five school bus safety videos are $750, for a total of $2,800 ($350 + $100 + $1,600 + $750).

BUS RIDING SAFETY (REC. 92)

The district is not enforcing safe bus riding procedures for the district's passengers. Buses were observed with students and aides not sitting properly while the buses were in motion. Aides were observed standing in the step wells of the buses and walking down the aisles while the buses were in motion. Students were observed sitting on their knees, leaning over seats, and standing up while the buses were moving.

Bus safety features require that riders sit flat on the seats to minimize movement in emergency situations. Allowing riders to move around while the bus is in motion eliminates the safety features built into the buses. Riders are safer in school buses than in cars if they are sitting completely down in the seat. School bus compartmentalization only functions if the riders are seated.

Students must be sitting at all times to take advantage of school bus safety features. The National Association of State School Bus Directors has issued a position paper on the benefits of compartmentalization for riders. It states that compartmentalization is more effective than seat belts in protecting riders if used properly.

ZCISD should train all bus drivers and aides to enforce safe riding procedures to minimize potential injuries on school buses. All passengers should be required to be completely seated in the bus seat. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should routinely observe bus operations in the field to ensure proper techniques are being followed. Guidelines should be in place to provide sanctions for both students and staff that do not follow proper riding procedures.

LOADING ZONE SAFETY (REC. 93)

ZCISD has not established a designated safety zone for students waiting for buses. The bus loading zones at several campuses are narrow, and the buses park right at the curb, leaving no safe space for students to wait. The industry standard set by the State of Texas School Bus Driver Certification Course is that students are to be kept a minimum of six feet from moving buses to protect them from potential accidents. When students wait within six feet of moving buses, minor horseplay can result in accidents or injury.

Exhibit 4–22 outlines the danger zones for a school bus.

While bus drivers are ultimately responsible for ensuring that a safe distance is maintained between moving buses and waiting students, the most effective practice is for campus administrators, the Transportation office, and bus drivers to collaboratively develop a system for keeping students safe in the bus loading areas.

ZCISD should create a buffer zone between moving buses and students waiting to board to minimize the potential for accidents. This action would minimize the risk of students being injured by moving buses. The buffer zones can be created by painting sidewalks and/or streets with markings to separate buses and students. Students should be kept out of the danger zones of the buses anytime the buses are in motion. The district should implement supervision of the loading areas by campus personnel to enforce the buffer zones. These buffer zones provide a more effective safety resource for students if staff are present to enforce the area. The fiscal impact for this recommendation is estimated at $200 for paint and labor to mark the buffer zone. Once painted, the zone should last at least 10 years.

BUS ROUTING (REC. 94)

ZCISD does not maximize potential efficiencies in bus routing and has an excessive number of bus routes. School bus drivers are currently writing their

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EXHIBIT 4–22
TEXAS SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION COURSE/ DANGER ZONES

DANGER ZONES
Danger Zones are those places around the school bus in which the driver cannot directly see a pedestrian. If a person is standing in a Danger Zone, any movement by the bus may cause injury or death. Younger children present the greatest danger because they are inexperienced, naïve, impulsive, and harder to see.
There are four danger zones -
a.   Directly in front of the bus, extending 15 feet from the front bumper
b.   To the left side of the bus, extending 6 feet out from the side of the bus
c.   To the right side of the bus, extending 6 feet out from the side of the bus
d.   Directly behind the bus, extending about 150 feet behind the rear bumper

SOURCE: *Course Guide for School Bus Driver Training in Texas, Rev.1999.*

own routes, but ZCISD's drivers are not trained in routing efficiency. There is evidence that the district has more bus routes than it needs to deliver effective student transportation. For example, the district operates four less routes during the fall than in the spring to accommodate the extracurricular needs of football season. Administrators and staff agreed that eliminating four bus routes in the fall has little effect on the overall transportation system. **Exhibit 4–23** shows the routes that are consolidated during the football season.

EXHIBIT 4–23
ZCISD ROUTE CONSOLIDATIONS

	NUMBER OF ROUTES	NUMBER OF CONSOLIDATED ROUTES	SAVINGS
Lopeno Area	3	2	1
Siesta Shores	5	4	1
In-Town Pre-K	6	4	2
Total Reduction			4

SOURCE: ZCISD Transportation Staff Interview, December 2004.

Total routes determine the overall spending in the Transportation office. The routes create driver positions, determine vehicle maintenance staffing levels, generate new bus expenditures, and mandate office staff positions. ZCISD currently spends approximately $30,000 each year per bus route.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has set a funding formula for transportation. It is based on a student rider per mile formula. **Exhibit 4–24** shows the current percentages of actual riders versus bus capacity for ZCISD. A minimum target of 66 percent of capacity is the goal per bus, which is two passengers per bus seat on every seat in the bus. Buses and driver salaries are fixed commodities. The only way to achieve savings is to reduce as many routes as possible and avoid these expenses. The goal of a cost-efficient student transportation operation is to safely transport as many students as possible in the fewest number of buses. The closer the buses are to two riders per seat (66 percent), the fewer buses and drivers needed. Routes such as numbers 5, 28, 29, 33, 34, and 37 could be considered for reduction.

In effectively managed transportation departments, bus routes are developed by staff that is trained specifically in routing efficiency, safety, and scheduling. This function is enhanced by routing software, which speeds up the process and provides additional resources for the drivers such as right and left turns, student rider lists, and state report forms. The Texas Association for School Business Officials (TASBO) (www.tasbo.org) and the Texas Association for Pupil Transportation (TAPT) (www.tapt.com) provide school districts training in best practices through their "Transportation Routing

EXHIBIT 4–24
ZCISD BUS RIDERSHIP

ROUTE	BUS	BUS CAPACITY	RIDERS	PERCENT OF CAPACITY
2	2	77	40	52%
4	4	77	36	47%
5	5	77	11	14%
6	6	77	50	65%
70	7	77	71	92%
8	8	77	61	79%
9	9	77	101	131%
10	10	83	58	70%
11	11	83	87	105%
47	12	83	47	57%
16	16	72	90	125%
22	22	78	84	108%
24	24	72	25	35%
25	25	78	92	118%
26	26	78	69	88%
27	27	72	39	54%
28	28	72	24	33%
29	29	72	13	18%
30	30	72	37	51%
31	31	72	76	106%
33	33	47	13	28%
34	34	47	15	32%
35	35	47	28	60%
36	36	59	35	59%
37	37	77	26	34%
38	38	83	97	117%

SSOURCE: ZCISD State Route Report Rider and Maintenance Data..

and Scheduling" certification courses offered throughout the year.

The district should implement an effective routing and scheduling process and reduce the number of bus routes by four to increase efficiency. These routes were temporarily eliminated in fall 2004 but the drivers remained on the payroll. The routes can be permanently eliminated. Routes should be written by trained staff and then given to drivers to implement. Staff should complete training in routing and scheduling through one of the state professional associations, TASBO or TAPT. ZCISD should purchase computerized routing and scheduling software to begin the process. Effective routing and scheduling is a process that must be monitored on a daily basis to ensure efficiency. The fiscal impact of eliminating four bus routes is $120,000. ZCISD spends approximately $30,000 each year per bus route, which consists of approximately $17,000 in salaries and $2,000 in benefits, with the rest spent on maintenance, depreciation, and insurance. The district could eliminate four bus routes and staff for a

yearly savings of $120,000 (4 X $30,000 = $120,000). Routing software costs approximately $10,000, and the estimated annual license fee is $500. This will result in a one-time cost of $10,000 and annual savings of $119,500 ($120,000 – $500 = $119,500).

BUS STAFFING / PAYROLL (REC. 95)

The district has an inefficient bus driver and aide scheduling process that contributes to excessive payroll expenditures in the Transportation office. The aides are all eight-hour employees even though the bus routes are only four- t o six-hours long. The aides are often assigned other non-transportation-related duties to complete their days.

Most functions performed by aides on the bus routes could be handled by the driver with minimal problems if the driver is properly trained. If student discipline is an issue, most districts use cameras on the buses to document student discipline issues on the bus rather than aides. However, some additional support may be desired on a rotating basis for long-term issues. Most districts have someone that can ride the bus on a temporary basis to help resolve problems.

ZCISD assigns some aides to routes with tutorials or University Interscholastic League (UIL) service attached to them. These assignments are paid at overtime rates.

The district has created a system that has inflated the salary structure in the Transportation department. Drivers and aides are routinely set up as eight-hour employees and given a daily overtime assignment such as tutorial or UIL service. Based on samples provided by ZCISD listing weekly overtime hours per employee, drivers and aides could work most of these assignments as a part of their regular work time. In many cases, these additional duties could be scheduled as regular duty or eliminated entirely. **Exhibit 4–25** shows ZCISD overtime costs for 2003–04. Changing duty assignments should reduce overtime expenditures by approximately 80 percent. There will always be situations that mandate overtime costs such as overnight field trips.

Routinely guaranteeing overtime increases district expenditures. Effective school districts reserve overtime expenses for emergency or exceptional duty work. These districts implement procedures to minimize overtime costs such as spreading field trips around, assigning extra duties to employees with the lowest number of hours during the specific time period, and paying hourly rather than a full-time guarantee.

ZCISD should improve bus driver scheduling to reduce overtime for all employees and eliminate bus aides. ZCISD should schedule bus driver daily

EXHIBIT 4–25
ZCISD 2003–04 OVERTIME COSTS

MONTH	DRIVER OVERTIME COSTS	AIDE OVERTIME COSTS
September	$11,074	$557
October	$17,082	$1,177
November	$13,721	$966
December	$14,911	$1,018
January	$6,323	$507
February	$21,829	$2,802
March	$15,887	$1,293
April	$6,371	$396
May	$19,335	$1,155
June	$1,012	$6,369
July	$551	$1,213
August	$13,122	$1,554
Total	$141,218	$19,007

SOURCE: ZCISD Payroll Data, December 2004.

assignments to avoid overtime. Bus aide positions for regular bus routes should be eliminated. Eliminating and/or rescheduling additional duties for drivers will save $141,218 in overtime pay for bus drivers. Eliminating 24 regular bus aides will save $223,850 (actual salary of $214,963 plus benefits of $8,887) plus an additional savings of $19,007 in overtime pay. Allowing for a minimal amount of $20,000 for overtime, the annual savings for this recommendation is $364,075 ($141,218 + $223,850 + $19,007 – $20,000 = $364,075).

PROCEDURE BOOK (REC. 96)

ZCISD does not have a procedures handbook in the Transportation office that provides performance expectations for employees. There are no established policies and procedures that provide minimum expectations and exemplary behavior guidelines for employees. There are no policies to discipline employees for problems such as accidents. Drivers and aides do not have any specific rules or guidelines for employment.

Employees cannot achieve exemplary behavior unless they know performance expectations. A handbook is critical in departments striving for superior service. Effective handbooks provide all employees with information about minimum expectations and guidelines for exemplary performance.

Round Rock ISD has a procedure book that is modeled by at least 20 other school districts. It provides a very thorough example to follow for operating a transportation department. A complete copy of the procedure book is available online at: http://www.roundrockisd.org/home/index.asp?page=501.

ZCISD should develop a transportation procedure manual to outline expected duties and provide

sanctions for substandard performance. The Student Services and Operations coordinator should review transportation policies and procedure manuals from other districts and develop policies and procedures specific to ZCISD. Employees should be trained on the procedures annually. The manual should be available in English and Spanish.

BUS REPLACEMENT PROCEDURE (REC. 97)

ZCISD does not have a formal fleet replacement policy, and the district is operating several buses that are excessively old. The district is making progress in maintaining a reasonable average fleet age, but several old buses are still in use that are in questionable mechanical shape. **Exhibit 4–26** shows the current number of buses in ZCISD's fleet and the year they were built.

EXHIBIT 4–26
ZCISD BUS FLEET AGE
2004–05

YEAR BUILT	REGULAR	SPECIAL ED
2004	0	0
2003	1	0
2002	3	2
2001	0	0
2000	1	0
1999	4	0
1998	0	0
1997	0	0
1996	4	0
1995	0	0
1994	2	0
1993	1	0
1992	1	0
1991	4	0
1990	0	0
1989	0	0
1988	1	0
1987	0	0
1986	1	0
1985	1	0
1984	1	0
1983	1	0
1982	1	0
1981	1	0
1980	1	0
1979	0	0
1978	0	1
Total	**29**	**3**

SOURCE: ZCISD Maintenance Records, December 2004.

Exhibit 4–27 shows the mileage of the ZCISD school bus fleet. The mileage indicates the use the fleet has seen and the potential wear the buses have experienced. Buses with high mileage also tend to require more maintenance expense.

School buses can have a typical life span of approximately 18 years or around 250,000 miles of service. Manufacturers stock replacement parts for 18 years after the manufacturing of the vehicle. The actual lifespan of buses will vary based on factors such as route conditions and the amount and quality of maintenance and repairs performed on a bus over its lifetime. Districts that implement good fleet

EXHIBIT 4–27
ZCISD BUS MILEAGES

BUS	YEAR BUILT	ODOMETER	CAPACITY
34	2003	36,971	47
6	2002	45,842	77
11	2002	36,297	83
16	2002	46,059	72
35	2002	40,189	47
36	2002	51,750	59
5	2000	120,605	77
1	1999	115,752	77
2	1999	87,992	77
3	1999	96,411	77
4	1999	74,145	77
7	1996	201,93	77
8	1996	180,088	77
9	1996	135,113	77
10	1996	150,288	83
30	1994	180,919	72
31	1994	190,229	72
29	1993	249,100	72
28	1992	28,923	72
24	1991	185,182	72
25	1991	130,081	78
26	1991	41,306	78
27	1991	83,087	72
23	1988	109,773	78
22	1986	33,291	78
21	1985	81,871	83
19	1984	69,365	72
17	1983	33,249	78
18	1982	268,734	78
15	1981	26,211	84
13	1980	13,622	83
33	1978	48,722	47

SOURCE: ZCISD Maintenance Records, December 2004.

management practices adopt a formal replacement policy that limits bus age to an appropriate length of time or mileage amount based on district requirements or circumstances.

The district should adopt a formal bus fleet replacement policy. ZCISD should review route conditions in the area and consider maintenance expectations and determine an appropriate bus replacement schedule for its bus fleet. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on a conservative estimate of maintaining a bus fleet that is not older than 15 years old or has more than 250,000 miles of service. Additional buses would be replaced as they reached 15 years of age or 250,000 miles of service.

ZCISD currently has eight buses that are over 15 years old and other additional buses that will turn 15 years old during the next five years. The estimated fiscal impact for this recommendation is based on the average cost of a bus, which is $65,000. The cost to replace eight buses the first year is $520,000 (8 X $65,000 = $520,000), four buses in 2006–07 is $260,000 (4 X $65,000 = $260,000), one bus in 2007–08 is $65,000, one bus in 2008–09 is $65,000, and two buses in 2009–10 is $130,000 (2 X $65,000 = $130,000). The total cost to replace all 16 buses over the next five years is $1,040,000 (16 X $65,000 = $1,040,000).

STATE REPORT FILING (REC. 98)

ZCISD lacks a process to ensure that state transportation reports are completed and submitted on time. The district has not submitted state transportation reports since 2001–02 and is in violation of state law. The Student Services and Operations coordinator does not have the ability to complete TEA required reports in the TEASE system. The reports were partially generated in the Transportation office and sent to Business office, but the reports were not completed and submitted to the state. This issue could be corrected if the Transportation staff were allowed TEASE accounts to submit the data and require annual report filing.

State reports are required and should be submitted in a timely manner. State reports provide a basis of comparison between districts that can be useful in comparing efficiency between similar districts. Three comparisons that provide meaningful insights into district efficiency are cost per mile, cost per bus, and cost per student transported. Since the reports have not been submitted, these comparisons are not available.

The district should develop a process for completing and submitting all required transportation reports within state mandated timelines. The administrative assistant for Business Services should verify that the reports are submitted on time each year.

For more background information on Chapter 4, Operations, see page 205 in the General Information section of the Appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONS							
72. Develop a comprehensive facility master plan.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
73. Renegotiate the energy management contract and require district oversight and monitoring of the agreement.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
74. Conduct an energy management audit.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
75. Develop a custodial allocation formula using industry standards and assign custodians based on the formula.	$120,545	$120,545	$120,545	$120,545	$120,545	$602,725	$0
76. Develop a plan to dispose of excess portable building space upon the completion of the two elementary schools under construction.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$33,000

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE–TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
			CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONS				
77. Develop and implement comprehensive maintenance and custodial procedures.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
78. Establish a policy and set of procedures designed to assign and track all district keys.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
79. Conduct mock inspections and document requests for kitchen and cafeteria inspections.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
80. Initiate the planning for implementing the elementary school health program.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
81. Develop Child Nutrition fee reimbursement guidelines for the operating costs in each kitchen based on square footage averaging.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
82. Develop a procedures manual for the cafeteria program.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
83. Establish a food service staffing formula based on the industry standard of meals per labor hour, and adjust Child Nutrition staff accordingly.	$25,992	$25,992	$25,992	$25,992	$25,992	$129,960	$0
84. Improve the vehicle maintenance record keeping process to show all costs associated with each vehicle.	($200)	($200)	($200)	($200)	($200)	($1,000)	($3,000)
85. Purchase a computerized fuel management system to track diesel fuel use.	($595)	($595)	($595)	($595)	($595)	($2,975)	($8,500)
86. Track all transportation expenditures related to other functions and departments for repairs and additional duties.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
87. Develop a comprehensive preventive maintenance program that ensures the safety of all buses on a continuous basis.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($15,000)
88. Develop and implement procedures to control the Transportation office's parts and tools inventories.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
89. Control waste oil and used oil filter storage and containment.	($800)	($800)	($800)	($800)	($800)	($4,000)	$0
90. Implement a pre-trip inspection process for all school buses.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
91. Expand bus driver and aide training to satisfy mandatory requirements and develop a continuing training program for all Transportation personnel.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($2,800)
92. Train all bus drivers and aides to enforce safe riding procedures to minimize potential injuries on school buses.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	TOTAL 5–YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE–TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONS							
93. Create a buffer zone between moving buses and students waiting to board to minimize the potential for accidents.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($200)
94. Implement an effective routing and scheduling process and reduce the number of bus routes by four to increase efficiency.	$119,500	$119,500	$119,500	$119,500	$119,500	$597,500	($10,000)
95. Improve bus driver scheduling to reduce overtime for all employees and eliminate bus aides.	$364,075	$364,075	$364,075	$364,075	$364,075	$1,820,375	$0
96. Develop a transportation procedure manual to outline expected duties and provide sanctions for substandard performance.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
97. Adopt a formal bus fleet replacement policy.	($520,000)	($260,000)	($65,000)	($65,000)	($130,000)	($1,040,000)	$0
98. Develop a process for completing and submitting all required transportation reports within state mandated timelines.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Totals–Chapter 4	$108,517	$368,517	$563,517	$563,517	$498,517	$2,102,585	($6,500)

Appendices

Zapata County Independent School District

GENERAL INFORMATION

CHAPTER 1
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was signed into law on January 8, 2002. Under NCLB, accountability provisions that formerly applied only to districts and campuses receiving Title I, Part A funds now apply to all districts and campuses. All public school districts, campuses, and the state are evaluated annually for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP requirements in NCLB are based on the following:

- *All Schools:* A single statewide definition of AYP applies to all districts and campuses, including Title I and non-Title I districts and campuses, alternative education campuses, and open-enrollment charter schools.

- *All Students:* All students must be tested and all results must be included in the AYP calculation. After 2002–03, reading/language arts and mathematics results for all students will be included in the AYP calculation, including results for special education students tested on either the State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) or the Locally Determined Alternative Assessment (LDAA) for students exempted from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and SDAA by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee.

- *Standards:* Baseline performance standards for reading/language arts and mathematics measures are determined using the methodology required in NCLB. The standards must increase over time to reach 100 percent by 2013–14.

- *Other Measures:* High schools must meet a graduation rate set by the state. States will individually identify an additional measure for elementary and middle/junior high schools.

- *Participation:* Districts and campuses must meet test participation standards as well as performance standards for students tested.

- *Student Groups:* All African-American, Hispanic, white, economically disadvantaged, special education, and limited English proficient (LEP) students must meet the same performance and participation standards. States will individually develop minimum size criteria for evaluation of student groups.

The statewide assessment program in Texas currently includes TAKS and the SDAA. These assessments measure student progress on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in reading at grades 3 through 9, in writing at grades 4 and 7, in English/Language Arts at grades 10 and 11, in mathematics at grades 3 through 11, in science at grades 5, 10, and 11, and social studies at grades 8, 10, and 11.

When initial AYP results were released in November 2004, three of the six Zapata County campuses, as well as the district itself, did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2003–04 school year. Zapata South Elementary did not meet TAKS participation standards in math for LEP students. Zapata Middle School did not meet TAKS performance standards in both reading and math for special education and LEP students. Zapata High School did not meet TAKS performance standards for reading for economically disadvantaged and LEP students and for math for LEP students, nor were the TAKS participation standards met in reading and math for LEP students. The district did not meet the TAKS performance standards in reading and math for special education students.

The math participation rate for LEP students on the TAKS test in 2002–03 for Zapata High School (ZHS) was 85 percent, which was below the required rate of 95 percent. The math participation rate for 2003–04 for LEP students was 93 percent. Although the participation rate increased by 8 percent from 2002–03, for a second year in a row the high school did not meet the federal requirement of 95 percent participation by LEP students on the TAKS math test, which placed the campus in year one of school improvement.

Failure to make AYP for two consecutive years identifies a school in need of improvement. A school in need of improvement must notify parents of its status, introduce a new school improvement plan, and offer the option of school choice. The high school notified parents of the school's designation (1) with an explanation of what that status means as well as an explanation of how their campus compares in terms of academic achievement to other schools at their level, (2) the reasons for the status, (3) an explanation of what the campus is doing to address the problem, (4) an explanation of what the district will do to address the problem of low achievement, and (5) an explanation of how parents can help.

Each school identified for improvement must develop or revise a two-year school improvement plan, in consultation with parents, school staff, the local educational agency, and other experts for approval by the district. The plan must incorporate research-based strategies, a 10 percent set-aside of Title I funds for professional development, extended learning time as appropriate (including school day or

year), strategies to promote effective parental involvement, and mentoring for new teachers.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) appeals process allows campuses and districts to apply for an appeal for any measure in which they did not meet AYP. All three campuses and the district applied for appeals in the areas in which they did not meet AYP. In February 2005, TEA notified the district that it had provided sufficient documentation to grant the appeals for Zapata South Elementary, Zapata Middle School, and Zapata High School. The 2004 AYP status for these three campuses was changed to *Meets AYP-Appeal*. Although the appeal was granted for the high school, the campus remains in school improvement through the 2004–05 school year and must continue to implement school choice and all other required school improvement interventions through the end of the school year, which allows the campus to continue to receive federal school improvement funds through June 2005. However, the appeal by the district regarding the TAKS reading and math performance by special education students was denied, and the status of the district remains *Missed AYP* for the 2004–05 school year.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 29 requires that every Texas student identified as limited English proficient (LEP) be provided a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) program. LEP students are those whose primary language is something other than English and whose English language proficiency limits their participation in an English-language academic environment.

All school districts with 20 or more LEP students in the same grade level are required to offer bilingual/ESL or an alternative language program. These districts must provide bilingual education in pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades, as well as bilingual education, ESL instruction, or other transitional language instruction approved by TEA in the post-elementary grades through grade 8. For students in grades 9 through 12, schools are required only to provide instruction in ESL. Districts must also hire certified teaching personnel to ensure that these students have full educational opportunities.

ZCISD offers a bilingual program from pre-kindergarten through grade 5 and an ESL program in grades 6 through 12. The district's bilingual/ESL program seeks to enable LEP students to become proficient in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding the English language. The bilingual program's goal is to achieve this objective through the development of literacy and academic skills in both English and the student's primary language.

The goal of the ESL program is to accelerate the acquisition of English and equip students with the necessary skills to succeed in the regular English curriculum. ZCISD's ESL program offers instruction in English language skills with a focus on grammar, vocabulary development, and communication. The program provides academic content support through subject content modifications based on student levels of English proficiency. ESL students attend regular subject classes with all students. Both the bilingual and ESL programs emphasize the mastery of English language skills, as well as content knowledge in mathematics, science, and social studies. By meeting the language needs of these students, the district seeks to facilitate their successful integration into the regular school curriculum.

ZCISD identifies students with limited English proficiency based on the Home Language Survey that parents must complete for all students newly enrolled in the district. Parent responses on the survey identify the primary language spoken both in the home and by the student. If a language other than English is indicated for either of these, the district administers the Oral Language Proficiency Test to the student.

The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) typically meets three or more times per year to review pertinent information on LEP students, make recommendations regarding placement of new students, reconsider interventions and placements for currently monitored students, review student progress at the end of the year, oversee program exit, and monitor progress for students who have exited the program during the previous two years. The LPAC also determines the appropriateness of an extended year program for LEP students, makes determinations regarding placement in or exit from the bilingual or ESL program, and determines eligibility for all LEP students in grades 3 through 8 for administration of the TAKS. Each campus maintains an LPAC committee comprised of the principal, counselor, bilingual teacher, and a parent representative of a LEP student.

The administrative assistant for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment coordinates the ZCISD bilingual/ESL program. In 2003–04, ZCISD served 1,106 LEP students, which represented more than a third of the district's population.

MIGRANT EDUCATION

The term "migratory child" means a child who is, or whose parent or their spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker. This category includes migratory dairy workers or migratory fishers. A migratory child has, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain or accompany such parent or spouse to obtain

temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work, moved from one district to another or resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles, and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in a fishing activity.

Section 1304(d) of NCLB requires that "in providing services with funds received under this part, each district that receives funds shall give priority to migratory children who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state's challenging academic content standards and challenging state student academic achievement standards, and whose education has been interrupted during the previous school year."

ZCISD's Migrant Education Program (MEP) helps migrant students succeed academically by implementing instructional activities for core subjects in order to improve student performance. ZCISD receives $105,706 in Title 1, Part C Migrant Education Federal funding for district activities that:

- support high quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves;

- ensure that migratory children are provided with appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner;

- ensure that migratory children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet; and

- design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems and prepare the children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education.

The district distributes an employment survey at registration to identify migrant families. The survey, which is available in English and Spanish, asks parents whether they have traveled or moved in the last three years to look for or perform temporary or seasonal agricultural work. The district encourages children to give the survey to their parents. Title I, Part C funds provide for a district migrant program recruiter who reviews the responses from the surveys, and migrant visiting teachers who contact parents who answered in the affirmative. Migrant

program staff are responsible for contacting all migrant families as well as visiting homes without telephones to verify their information and provide the services needed to ensure that migrant students are provided with appropriate educational services that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner.

The ZCISD Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), comprised of the district Federal Programs director, migrant recruiter, migrant visiting teachers, and parent representatives of migrant students, meets throughout the school year to discuss the seven areas of migrant focus, funding, and activities to be held in the district throughout the year for migrant students. The district addresses student educational opportunities and instructional strategies. The elementary, middle, and high schools in ZCISD offer tutorial classes after school and through the summer for migrant students who need additional academic support. ZCISD provides instructional materials and supplies when requested by either the parent or teacher of a migrant student. In order to monitor student achievement, teachers of migrant students submit data to the migrant visiting teachers about assistance to migrant students beyond the core content areas. Through the combined efforts of the migrant recruiters, migrant visiting teachers, and ZCISD staff, migrant families are informed about all the programs available to students. **Exhibit A–1** shows the number of identified migrant students enrolled in ZCISD during the 2004–05 school year.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), districts must provide an appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of their severity. The act requires districts to provide educational services in the least restrictive environment and include students with disabilities in state and district assessment programs. Districts also are required to develop an individual education plan (IEP) for each of these children with input from regular education teachers. The IEP must provide special education students with curricula related to those of children in regular education classrooms.

IDEA states that an effective special education program will provide:

- Pre-referral intervention in regular education: When a student experiences an academic problem in the regular education program, the regular teachers should intervene and attempt to solve the problem. If the regular education teacher cannot solve the problem, it should be referred to the special education staff.

EXHIBIT A–1
MIGRANT ENROLLMENT
2004–05

GRADE LEVEL	ZAPATA HIGH SCHOOL	ZAPATA MIDDLE SCHOOL	ZAPATA SOUTH ELEMENTARY	ZAPATA CENTRAL ELEMENTARY	A.L. BENAVIDES ELEMENTARY	ZAPATA NORTH EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
P3						9
P4						8
PK					*	
K					*	19
Grade 1			*	6	*	
Grade2			7	7	*	
Grade 3			*	7	*	
Grade 4			6	8	*	
Grade 5			8	13	*	
Grade 6		13				
Grade 7		13				
Grade 8		12				
Grade 9	16					
Grade 10	6					
Grade 11	*					
Grade 12	*					

SOURCE; Regional Education Service Center I, District Migrant Report, 2004–05.
*Results are masked due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

- Referral to special education for evaluation: Referrals to special education require an official request supported by documentation. The referral information must explain the 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 assessment within a prescribed amount of time.

- Initial placement through an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee: After the evaluation is complete, an ARD committee meets to discuss the results of the evaluation, decides if the student qualifies for special education services in one of 12 federal special education categories, and, if so, writes a plan for the student's education.

- Educational services and supports according to a written IEP: The individualized education plan developed by the ARD committee includes information about classes, subject areas, developmental areas and/or life skills courses in which the student will be instructed; the amount of time that will be spent 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 reviews the student's program to ensure it remains appropriate.

- Three-year re-evaluation: Every three years, the student undergoes a comprehensive individual assessment. The ARD committee meets to discuss the results of the re-evaluation and determines if the student still qualifies for special education services in the same category.

- Dismissal from the special education program: If and when a student no longer meets the eligibility criteria, he or she is dismissed from special education. The ARD committee must make this decision.

ZCISD has a pre-referral process to determine if students require special education services. This process includes several intervention strategies that address student needs before referral for special education services. Student assistance teams at each school meet regularly to discuss student remediation prior to special education referral. The district offers a range of instructional intervention options for teachers. Before a teacher refers a student to special education, the child is referred to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) for review. The team is comprised of the counselor, principal, special education teacher, and a bilingual teacher who share information to ensure the appropriate decision is made for the student. The district places special education students new to ZCISD in the special education program if they have been receiving special education services in their prior school district. ZCISD honors all ARD placements from other school districts. The district evaluates the documentation received from other school districts and holds a transitional ARD meeting to make sure that the needs of transferring special education students will continue to be met in accordance with the ARD recommendations.

ZCISD serves special education students in a variety of instructional arrangements:

- Mainstream: To determine the least restrictive environment for each student, district personnel first must consider providing services in regular education with supplementary aids. Students with disabilities who spend all of their classroom hours in a regular classroom are "mainstreamed." ZCISD provides two types of mainstreaming: mainstreaming with content support and mainstreaming with a co-teacher or an aide. Content mastery services are available at the middle school and high school to all students with disabilities. Co-teaching is at the high school only in the content areas of math, reading, language arts and science. Special education teachers go into regular education classes and join the regular education teacher in teaching and work particularly with the special education students.

- Resource: The placement occurs when an ARD committee recommends assigning students to a separate, special education classroom. These resource classes are offered in three core subjects of reading, language arts, and mathematics. Students may be placed in one or more of these classes based on their abilities. Resource classes are correlated with the TEKS and follow the students' IEPs as well as the sequence of study in the regular classes. Students in this category take a combination of regular classes and resource classes.

- Vocational Education Class: This class provides educational and vocational services, including training in job readiness skills, to eligible secondary students.

- Self-Contained Classes: ZCISD students with severe disabilities who cannot obtain a satisfactory education in a regular classroom are served in a separate "self-contained" classroom.

- Adaptive Physical Education: These classes provide specialized physical education instruction for students who are unable to participate in regular physical education. Following an initial evaluation by the physical therapist, physical education teachers provide these classes in conjunction with an adaptive special education teacher.

- Homebound: This program provides at-home services for students in all grades (not necessarily special education) who cannot attend school because of illness, injury or expulsion.

- Pre-school.: ZCISD provides a preschool program in which children with disabilities are included in classes with regular students.

In each of these settings, ZCISD provides curriculum modifications and services. ARD committees composed of parents and professional staff members determine program eligibility and participation, draft IEPs, and place or dismiss students from special education.

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

TEC Section 29.181 emphasizes two goals for Career and Technology Education (CATE) programs, stating "Each public school student shall 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." Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 74, Subchapter A requires school districts to offer "programs of study for broad career concentrations in areas of agricultural science and technology, arts and communication, business education, family and consumer science, health occupations technology, trade and industry and technology education that will prepare students for continued learning and postsecondary education in employment settings." The Texas State Plan for Career and Technology Education 2000–03 sets objectives for CATE programs addressing the areas of academic excellence, guidance and counseling, partnerships, curriculum, professional development, and program evaluation.

The mission of the ZCISD Career and Technology department is "to provide support and direction to all students and to create seamless educational programs that enable students to be globally life-long learners. All student populations will develop the necessary skills, and master the concepts necessary to graduate, to succeed in their career choice, and to become productive and contributing citizens in our society."

In ZCISD, CATE courses are available to students at the high school campus. Students have the opportunity to take CATE courses in the areas of agricultural science, business education, family and consumer sciences, career investigations, health science, technology education, trade, and industrial education.

Nine of the CATE courses are designated as tech prep, which allows students who successfully complete a specified course at ZCISD to be granted college credit. The credits are held in escrow until the student successfully completes the requirements of the articulating college/university. ZCISD has articulation agreements with Laredo Community College and Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, Texas. Tech prep is designed to prepare students for the future by placing emphasis on the highest-level academic courses taken in conjunction

with career and technology education courses. Tech prep focuses on academic, technical, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills that are needed to prepare students for the requirements of work in the future. The added rigor of the courses prepares students for advanced course work at the post secondary level.

The district's CATE counselor provides presentations for students, parents, and campus counselors to help them at key points to have the information needed to choose classes and prepare for college. Presentations include information on predictions for future career needs, courses available to students, financial information for parents and students as they consider college, and activities and assessments for students to match their strengths to various career requirements.

Exhibit A–2 shows the ZCISD CATE program served 999 students, or 31.8 percent of the students in the district, in 2003–04. Both of these figures were the highest for students served and for district percentage when compared to peer districts. The number and percent of CATE teachers and students in ZCISD was the highest among its peers. The percent of total budgeted expenditures was the second lowest among the peer districts and lower than the statewide percent average**.** CATE programs are funded by a combination of state, federal, and local funds.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

TEC Section 29.122 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." In addition, 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 (GT) students**.**

ZCISD provides programs for students who have been identified as gifted and talented. These students have significantly advanced general intellectual abilities and specific subject matter aptitude in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Services are available from kindergarten through grade 12.

The district's GT program provides services to 228 students. All teachers that provide services have participated in the 30 hours of state-required training in order to become accredited to teach gifted and talented students. **Exhibit A–3** displays the number of identified gifted students per grade level per campus for 2003–04.

In kindergarten through grade 1, diagnostic information is given to the teachers of the gifted students to help them design an educational program for these students. In grades 2 through 5, students are pulled out for services in language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science, but delivery methods of services may vary based on campus and student needs. Services occur in the regular classroom through the pullout program, in-class support/facilitations, cluster grouping, independent study, and in-class differentiation, depending upon the needs of the student.

In grades 6 through 8, Pre-AP courses in reading/ English language arts, math, pre-algebra, science, and social studies are available using curriculum designed specifically to meet the special needs of gifted students with emphasis on modifications in content taught, processes used for learning, and student products. Students in these courses are required to complete independent as well as guided research.

In grades 9 through 12, AP programs are provided for high achieving and GT students who demonstrate talent in academic areas. The programs are designed for those students who wish to explore

EXHIBIT A–2
CAREEER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND BUDGETED INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENDITURES
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, AND STATE
2003–04

	STUDENTS		TEACHERS		BUDGETED INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENDITURES	
DISTRICT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT
Zapata County ISD	999	31.8%	15.9	6.5%	$395,531	2.6%
Point Isabel ISD	616	24.3%	6.7	4.2%	$543,016	5.6%
Valley View ISD	519	17.6%	6.0	3.2%	$267,216	2.5%
Groesbeck ISD	396	23.9%	5.4	4.2%	$214,688	3.1%
Hidalgo ISD	570	18.1%	6.2	2.8%	$465,906	3.2%
State	867,300	20.1%	11,804.6	4.1%	$678,617,461	4.0%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Summary Report, 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A–3
ZCISD IDENTIFIED GIFTED STUDENTS PER CAMPUS
2003–04

GRADE LEVEL	ZAPATA HIGH SCHOOL	ZAPATA MIDDLE SCHOOL	ZAPATA SOUTH ELEMENTARY	ZAPATA CENTRAL ELEMENTARY	A.L. BENAVIDES ELEMENTARY	ZAPATA NORTH EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
K					*	20
Grade 1			16	7	*	
Grade2			8	*		
Grade 3			*	6		
Grade 4			7	*		
Grade 5			6	*		
Grade 6		17				
Grade 7		18				
Grade 8		16				
Grade 9	19					
Grade 10	24					
Grade 11	15					
Grade 12	23					

SOURCE: ZCISD Gifted and Talented Coordinator 2003–04.
*Results are masked due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

the disciplines in greater depth and expand their understandings at a faster pace. The structure of the classroom encourages students to be more involved in the direction of their learning and to approach their studies as though they were professionals in the field.

Exhibit A–4 shows the expenditures budgeted by ZCISD for its GT programs in 2003–04. The percent of total budgeted expenditures was the second highest among the peer districts but lower than the statewide average. GT programs are funded by a combination of state, federal, and local funds.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
ZCISD has one early childhood center, three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The mission of the counselors is to promote and support academic excellence and personal well being for all students. The district employs 8.5 counselors to provide services to the six campuses.

The high school counselor is required to provide information to a student and parents during the student's first year and senior year in high school regarding:

- the importance of higher education;

- the advantages of completing the recommended or higher high school program;

- the disadvantages of taking courses to prepare for a high school equivalency;

- coursework designed to prepare students for higher education;

- financial aid and availability and requirements;

- instructions on how to apply for federal financial aid;

- information concerning the financial aid center operated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board under TEC Section 61.0776; and

- the automatic admission of students who graduate with a grade point average in the top 10 percent of the student's graduating class as provided under TEC Section 51.803.

In 2004, TEA published the Fourth Edition of *A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools,* which is a

EXHIBIT A–4
GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION BUDGETED INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENDITURES
ZCISD, PEER DISTRICTS, AND STATE
2003-04

DISTRICT	BUDGETED INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENDITURES	
	AMOUNT	PERCENT
Hidalgo ISD	$34,049	0.2%
Point Isabel ISD	$57,104	0.6%
Valley View ISD	$5,960	0.1%
Zapata County ISD	**$60,069**	**0.4%**
Groesbeck ISD	$77,346	1.1%
State	**$285,876,980**	**1.7%**

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2003–04.

Program Development Guide for pre-K through grade 12. The guide addresses program "balance" which is to be achieved by allocating resources to both developmental guidance and counseling. The guide recommends that school counselors spend a portion of their time on each of four activities: Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and Support. The amount of time devoted to each should be dictated by student needs.

HEALTH SERVICES

The district has adequate personnel at all six campuses to provide effective school health services. The position statement of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) on caseload assignments for nurses states that the number of nurses per campus should be influenced by multiple factors, such as social, economic, and cultural status of the community, special health problems, and the mobility of people in the community. NASN and the Texas Association of School Nurses recommend a maximum ratio of 750 students per school nurse.

ZCISD provides one nurse or nurse assistant per campus, which is consistent with the NASN guidelines.

ZCISD has the following legal and local policies in place in order to provide the required health services to students:

- FFAA (Legal) Health Requirements and Services/Physical Examinations, which addresses:
    - Vision and Hearing Screening;
    - Routine Screening;
    - Acanthosis Nigricans Screening; and
    - Spinal Screening.

- FFAA (Local) Health Requirements and Screening, which addresses:
    - Tuberculosis Testing;
    - UIL Participation; and
    - Additional Screening Referrals.

- FFAB Legal) Health Requirements and Services: Immunizations, which includes:
    - Exclusions;
    - Medical Reasons;
    - Reasons of Conscience;
    - Provisional Admittance;
    - Consent to Immunization;
    - Acceptable Documents of Immunization;
    - Verification of Immunity;
    - Annual Report of Immunization Status; and
    - Transfer of Records.

- FFAC (Legal) Health Requirements and Services: Medical Treatment, which includes:
    - Consent to Medical Treatment;
    - Forms of Consent;
    - Minor's Consent for Treatment;
    - Administering Medication;
    - Self-Administration of Asthma Medicine;
    - Dietary Supplements; and
    - Psychotropics.

- FFAC (Local) Health Requirements and Services: Medical Treatment, which includes:
    - Student Illness;
    - Accidents Involving Students;
    - Emergency Treatment Forms;
    - Administering Medication;
    - Labeling of Medication;
    - Non-Prescription Drugs; and
    - Specialized Physical Health Care.

- FFAD (Legal) Health requirements and Services: Communicable Diseases, which includes:
    - Reports;
    - Exclusion;
    - Readmittance;
    - Bacterial Meningitis;
    - Chronic Reportable Diseases;
    - Confidentiality;
    - Risk of Transmission;
    - Risk of Affected Student; and
    - Referral to Special Programs.

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

Since school year 1992–93, the TEC has required each school district to have a district and campus improvement plan (CIP). The State Compensatory Education (SCE) program must be described in the CIP if the program is implemented at the campus level or be described in the district improvement plan if the state compensatory education program is implemented districtwide. Law requires the district/campus improvement plan be the primary record supporting expenditures attributed to the state compensatory education program.

In determining the appropriate compensatory programs, districts must use student performance data from the TAKS and other appropriate assessment instruments and achievement tests administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code. The district must design the state compensatory education program based on the identified needs of students at risk of dropping out of school. In addressing the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school, the district and/or campus improvement plan, as appropriate, must include the following:

- total amount of state compensatory education funds allocated for resources and staff;

- comprehensive needs assessment;

- identified strategies;

- supplemental financial resources for state compensatory education;

- supplemental Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) for state compensatory education (this is not necessary if the schoolwide campus is at or above 40 percent and is using State Compensatory Education funds to support their Title I, Part A program);

- measurable performance objectives;

- timelines for monitoring strategies; and

- formative and summative evaluation criteria.

SCE resources must be redirected when evaluations indicate that programs and/or services are unsuccessful in producing desired results for students at risk of dropping out of school. School districts are required to have local policies and procedures to identify:

- students who are at risk of dropping out of school under the criteria in TEC Section 29.081;

- students who are at risk of dropping out of school under local criteria and document compliance with the 10 percent cap in TEC Section 29.081;

- how students are entered into the SCE program;

- how students are exited from the SCE program;

- the methodologies involving calculation of 110 percent satisfactory performance on all assessment instruments, in accordance with TEC Section 29.081; and

- The cost of the regular education program in relation to budget allocations per student and/or instructional staff per student ratio.

The federal government provides compensatory education funding for students who do not meet performance standards. The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provide funds for programs that assist students in meeting performance standards. Title I, Part A funds are sent to campuses by TEA based on their number of economically disadvantaged students or those eligible for free and reduced price lunches or breakfasts. The students served, however, are selected on educational need rather than economic status. Title I funds are supplemental; they must be added to the regular program and must not take the place of, or supplant, regular funds.

Title I, Part A schoolwide programs must use their Title I, Part A funds to engage in reform strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time, and help provide a high quality curriculum for students. This effort must be in accordance with a comprehensive CIP designed to help students meet the state's challenging standards. The CIP must be:

- developed with the involvement of parents and other members of the community to be served, as well as individuals who will carry out the plan, including teachers, principals, and administrators;

- in effect during the campus's participation under Title I, Part A and reviewed and revised, as necessary, by the campus;

- available to the district, parents, and the public;

- the plan must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand ; and

- where appropriate, developed in coordination with programs under Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, and the Head Start Act.

The CIP must also include the following:

- describe how the campus will implement the 10 schoolwide components;

- describe how the campus will use Title I, Part A resources and other sources to implement those components;

- include a list of state and other federal programs that will be included in the schoolwide program; and

- describe how the campus will provide individual student academic assessment results in a language the parents can understand, including an interpretation of those results, to the parent of a child who participates in the academic assessments.

The 10 required components of a schoolwide program are required in each CIP. The campus may design the schoolwide program it wants without targeting a specific fund source to a specific activity. As long as the campus as a whole includes the 10 components, it can spend the federal resources for any allowable costs associated with improving student academic performance. The 10 components of a schoolwide program are:

1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the *entire campus* (taking into account the needs of

migratory children) that is based on information which includes the achievement of students in relation to the state academic content standards and the state student academic achievement standards;

2. Schoolwide reform strategies that:

    ▪ provide opportunities for all students to meet the state's proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement;

    ▪ use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research that:

        a. strengthen the core academic program in the school;

        b. increase the amount and quality of learning time, such as providing an extended school year, before- and after-school programs, and summer programs and opportunities, and help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum; and

        c. include strategies for meeting the educational needs of historically underserved populations.

    ▪ include strategies to address the needs of all students in the school, but particularly the needs of low-achieving students and those at risk of not meeting the state student academic achievement standards who are members of the target population of any program that is included in the schoolwide program; and address how the school will determine if such needs have been met;

3. Instruction by highly qualified teachers;

4. High-quality and ongoing professional development for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals and, if appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff to enable all children at the campus to meet the state's student academic achievement standards;

5. Strategies to attract high-quality highly qualified teachers to high-need schools;

6. Strategies to increase parental involvement, such as family literacy services;

7. Plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a state-run preschool program, to local elementary school programs;

8. Measures to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of academic assessments in

order to provide information on, and to improve, the achievement of individual students and the overall instructional program;

9. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering the proficient or advanced levels of academic achievement standards must be provided with effective, timely additional assistance which shall include measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assistance;

10. Coordination and integration of federal, state, and local services and programs, including programs supported under NCLB, violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ZCISD operates one Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) for students in grades 6 through 12 who have committed serious offenses within the educational environment. The Students Educational Adjustment and Success program (SEAS) is a short-term placement center for students who are assigned less than 90 cumulative days of enrollment. Students who have committed serious offenses in kindergarten through grade 5 are placed in an alternative education environment on their home campuses. Until June 2004, the district contracted with a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) in Laredo for the their most serious offenders. Currently, these cases are referred to the Zapata County Sheriff's Office, and sent from there to the appropriate judge for a ruling and sentencing.

STUDENT SECURITY

ZCISD has implemented safety measures to ensure campus security. Board policy FEE (Local) establishes a closed campus policy. No student is permitted to leave a campus during lunch except as approved by the principal on a case-by-case basis in response to a parent's written request. Students are not permitted to leave the campus until the end of the regular school day unless authorized by the parent, legal guardian, and/or a school administrator. A student is not allowed to go to any other campus at any time during the school day, except with a valid pass. Parents/guardians must come to the office to sign out students. All campuses have a policy requiring visitors to first report to the principal's office when visiting a

building. The campuses do not provide identification badges for visitors. Visits to individual classrooms during instruction are permitted only with the approval of the principal. Students do not wear identification badges. The supervisor of Security stated that since it is such a small community, all of the students are known, and badges are not needed.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Every Texas school district is required to adopt a code of conduct that establishes standards for student behavior and complies with the provisions of Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code. The law states the board must adopt the code of conduct and the code must be prominently displayed at each school campus. The code must provide the circumstances for removing a student from a classroom, campus, or alternative program. In addition, the code of conduct must provide guidelines for transferring a student to the alternative education program, as well as steps for suspension. The Texas School Performance Review's report, *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School*, January 2000, states, "The most successful programs require a signature from parents and students acknowledging the rules up front." ZCISD board policy FO (Local) adopts a Student Code of Conduct regarding student discipline. The student code of conduct is distributed to students and parents annually. The code is accompanied by an acknowledgement that the rules were read and understood by the parents, which students must return to the school. Revisions to the Student Code of Conduct and discipline policies are to be communicated to students, teachers, and parents promptly and posted on campus. A Spanish translation of the code of conduct is available upon request for all parents.

TRUANCY

Truancy can contribute to crime and violence. Schools nationwide are focusing on truancy. Justice agencies consider truancy a gateway to other more serious criminal offenses. High rates of truancy can be linked to higher daytime burglary and vandalism rates. Many districts throughout Texas welcome law enforcement assistance in their school attendance efforts. The Texas School Performance Review's publication, *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School* states, "An effective system to identify truant students and notify their parents can go a long way toward keeping children off the streets and away from dangerous and unlawful activities."

TEC Section 25.085, Compulsory School Attendance, provides schools the basis for attendance policies as stated below:

- A child who is required to attend school under this section shall attend school each day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided;

- Unless specifically exempted by Section 25.086, a child who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not completed the academic year in which the child's 18th birthday occurred, should attend school.

The responsibility for attendance in ZCISD is delegated to the director for Personnel and Compliance. Two attendance officers report to the director and are based at Zapata High School and Zapata Central Elementary. They provide technical assistance relating to compulsory school attendance requirements by assisting with home visits, sending out attendance letters to parents of truant students, and providing attendance information to campus and school administrators when requested. The district's truancy procedures include:

- notice of initial report on student absence by phone or in person;

- obtaining a copy of the enrollment card, attendance record, and copy of A and B truancy letters;

- following through with a home visit or phone call;

- filing a complaint with the Justice of the Peace;

- truancy summon served by truant officer; and

- court appearance.

Exhibit A–5 identifies the number of truancy cases filed with the Zapata County Justice of the Peace Court by ZCISD from 2000–01 through 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A–5
ZCISD TRUANCY CASES FILED
2000–01 THROUGH 2003–04

YEAR	NUMBER OF CASES FILED
2000–01	152
2001–02	78
2002–03	95
2003–04	69

SOURCE: ZCISD Personnel and Compliance Department, January 2005.

TECHNOLOGY OFFICE

ZCISD's Technology office is responsible for the district's entire information technology infrastructure, including the implementation, support, and administration of a wide area network (WAN) and a local area network (LAN) that spans six campuses and numerous administrative offices.

The Technology office has a director of Technology position authorized; however, this position has been vacant since December 2002. The Technology office has five full-time personnel: two computer technology specialists, one network technician, and two wiring specialists. The computer technology specialists are responsible for diagnosing problems and repairing all computer hardware and peripherals in the district. The network technician is responsible for maintaining the network. The wiring specialists are responsible for installing and maintaining the cabling throughout the district. All of the specialists and the technician are required to help in other maintenance functions in the Technology office as the need arises and time permits. The Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department has an authorized position assigned responsibilities for instructional technology.

Exhibit A–6 compares ZCISD's Technology office staffing levels to its peer districts. ZCISD falls in the middle of the student-to-technology staff ratio when compared to the peer districts.

The Texas Education Code requires school districts to prepare district and campus improvement plans that include provisions for the integration of technology into instructional and administrative programs. The TEA Educational Advisory Committee developed the School Technology and Readiness (StaR) Chart, an online resource tool for self-assessment of a school district's efforts to effectively integrate technology across the curriculum. Beginning in 2002–03, district and charter school applicants for state and federal technology grants were required to file campus level StaR Chart profiles along with the application. The StaR Chart establishes a framework for measuring how well schools are prepared to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in today's information technology economy. It is a tool for technology planning, budgeting for resources, and evaluation of progress in integrating technology into the school curriculum and technology infrastructure.

The StaR Chart and the accompanying Campus Analysis of School Technology and Readiness form produce a profile of the district's status toward reaching the goals of the Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996–2010. **Exhibit A–7** displays ZCISD's StaR Chart for 2003–04. Teachers complete the Teacher StaR Chart online. The principal then uses the data to complete the StaR Chart Summary.

EXHIBIT A–6
ZCISD TECHNOLOGY OFFICE VS. PEER DISTRICTS
2003–04

DISTRICT	ENROLLMENT	TOTAL TECHNOLOGY STAFF	STUDENT TO TECHNOLOGY STAFF RATIO
Hidalgo ISD	3,000	3	1:1000
Point Isabel ISD	2,540	3	1:847
Zapata County ISD	3,163	5	1:633
Valley View ISD	3,055	5	1:611
Groesbeck ISD	1,655	3	1:552

SOURCE: Peer district survey, December 2004 and Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2003–04.

EXHIBIT A–7
ZCISD TEXAS STAR CHART SUMMARY
2003–04

KEY AREA I: TEACHING AND LEARNING-DEVELOPING (9-14)						
TEACHER ROLE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING	PATTERNS OF TEACHER USE	FREQUENCY/ DESIGN OF INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING	CURRICULUM AREAS	TECHNOLOGY TEKS/ APPLICATIONS ASSESSMENT	PATTERNS OF STUDENT USE	SCORE
2	2	2.2	1.8	1.3	1.3	10.6
KEY AREA II: EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT-DEVELOPING (9-14)						
CONTENT OF TRAINING	CAPABILITIES OF EDUCATORS	LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS	MODELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	UNDERSTANDING AND PATTERNS OF USE	TECHNOLOGY BUDGET	SCORE
1.8	2.2	2.8	2.7	2.3	1.2	13
KEY AREA III: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES-DEVELOPING (8-12)						
VISION AND PLANNING	TECHNICAL SUPPORT	INSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING	BUDGET	FUNDING		SCORE
1.2	1.2	2	1.3	3.5		9.2
KEY AREA IV: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TECHNOLOGY-ADVANCED (13-17)						
STUDENTS PER COMPUTER	INTERNET ACCESS CONNECTIVITY AND SPEED	DISTANCE LEARNING	LAN/WAN	OTHER TECHNOLOGIES		SCORE
1.7	4	3	3	3		14.7

SOURCE: ZCISD StaR Chart Summary as reported to the Texas Education Agency for 2003–04.

The Long-Range Plan for Technology identifies four Key areas: Teaching and Learning, Educator Preparation and Development, Administration and Support Services, and Infrastructure for Technology. The Texas Campus StaR Chart reflects these areas. Each key area is divided into five to six focus areas **(Exhibit A–7)**. Within each focus area, values are assigned to arrive at a total score for assessing the campus' level of progress in each key area.

Exhibit A–8 provides the aggregate focus areas values used to determine the level of progress for each key area.

The profile indicators place the district at one of four levels of progress in each key area of the Long-Range Technology Plan: Early Technology (1), Developing Technology (2), Advanced Technology (3), or Target Technology (4). Key Areas I (Teaching and Learning), II (Educator Preparation and Development), and III (Administration and Support Services) scores place the district at the developing level, which is at the lower end of the scale for technology level. The score for Key Area IV (Infrastructure for Technology) places the district at the advanced technology level.

Districts are required to have approved technology plans to participate in E-Rate. In addition, Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education through Technology, or the federal NCLB Act requires district applications for funding to contain an educational technology plan that is consistent with the statewide educational plan. The district's Technology Plan also correlates to these applicable E-Rate and NCLB requirements. **Exhibit A–9** presents the goals in the ZCISD Technology Plan.

Nearly 50 percent of the funds appropriated to school districts each biennium are allocated by funding formulas. Consequently, accurate and timely reporting of data is critical if the institution is to receive the appropriate amount of funds. Further, accurate and timely management reports are needed to ensure that departments and schools are running as effectively and efficiently as possible.

School districts submit the data required in accordance with TEA's PEIMS Data Standards to their Regional Education Service Center. There are four submissions each year. Submission 1 is due in December and reports a snapshot of all students served and staff employed on a given date in October. Submission 2 is a report of actual financial data for the prior year and is due to TEA in February. Submission 3 is due to TEA in June and includes year-long student attendance, high school course completions, and disciplinary actions. Submission 4 is a report of extended year services student data for the preceding school year and is due to TEA in September.

On September 30, 2004, the district received notification from TEA of their 2004 Academically Unacceptable accountability rating for the district and middle school due to the student dropout rate at the middle school. The superintendent appealed the unacceptable rating to the TEA based on the fact that nine students were miscoded as dropouts rather than leavers in the fall submission. The appeal

EXHIBIT A–8
KEY AREAS AND VALUE RANGES FOR DETERMINING LEVEL OF PROGRESS

KEY AREAS	LEVELS OF PROGRESS			
	EARLY TECHNOLOGY	DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY	ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY	TARGET TECHNOLOGY
Teaching and Learning	6-8	9-14	15-20	21-24
Preparation and Development	6-8	9-14	15-20	21-24
Administration and Support Services	5-7	8-12	13-17	18-20
Infrastructure for Technology	5-7	8-12	13-17	18-20

SOURCE: 2003–04 Texas Education Agency StaR Chart Summary, www.tea.state.tx.us/technology/etac/txstar.

EXHIBIT A–9
ZCISD'S TECHNOLOGY PLAN GOALS, 2004–07

GOAL	GOAL DESCRIPTION
Goal I: Teaching and Learning	Technology will be implemented and used as a tool to individualize learning, enhance development of basic skills, improve problem solving, and strengthen critical thinking ability of all community members.
Goal 2: Educator Preparation and Development	Promote growth in the educators' effectiveness in integrating technology into the curricula, achieving proficiency in SBEC Technology Standards to effectively facilitate and manage 21st Century learning into technology and information-rich settings.
Goal 3: Administration and Support Services	Enhance quality of communications to facilitate data driven decision-making processes in the area of student records, community partnership/parent awareness and involvement, and other support services.
Goal 4: Infrastructure for Technology	Provide the technological and human infrastructure to support dynamic access to digital data, resources for teaching and learning, and electronic communications and other electronic media that provides information.

SOURCE: ZCISD Long-Range Technology Plan, 2004–07.

included supporting documentation showing the students were enrolled in another Texas school district, attending out of state schools, or being home schooled. The TEA granted the appeal request on November 29, 2004 and changed the district and middle school ratings to Academically Acceptable. The letter from TEA granting the appeal stated an expectation that the district will take appropriate actions to prevent these kinds of coding errors from happening again.

ZCISD has a PEIMS clerk at the central office that coordinates the program for the district and reports to the administrative assistant for Construction. In addition, each campus has a PEIMS secretary to coordinate the program at the campus level.

The district has taken actions to emphasize the importance of PEIMS and established procedures to ensure the accuracy of submission data to TEA. Some examples of these actions include:

- PEIMS coordinator checklist/timeline for fall PEIMS;

- 2004–05 PEIMS calendar providing specific guidance and actions for district and campus staff throughout the year;

- principals must sign an affirmation that they have taken measures to verify the accuracy and the authenticity of the PEIMS data being submitted;

- PEIMS training sessions are being regularly held for staff members; and

- central and campus administration officials are actively involved in training sessions and are emphasizing the importance of PEIMS.

CHAPTER 2
DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

BOARD GOVERNANCE
Texas law grants the board of trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the district's schools. The board is the policy-making body within the district and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, facilities, and expansions. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. ZCISD's board consists of seven trustees, three elected at-large and four elected from single-member districts in accordance with Texas law, serving terms of four years, with elections held biennially. The terms of one-half of the trustees, or as near to one-half as possible, expire every two years. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the district.

BOARD MEETINGS
Trustees regularly meet the second Monday of each month at 6:00 PM. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session. Closed sessions may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, personnel issues including conferences with employees and employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or to consult with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

The December 13, 2004 board meeting, attended by members of the review team, was orderly, well organized, and conducted using Robert's Rules of Order. The board members agreed that the board is united and works well together.

Board packets reviewed generally contained a copy of the posted agenda, minutes of the previous meeting, and a short summary of each item presented for action or information. The budget implications of each item or alternative were not included in the information packets.

BOARD POLICIES
The administrative assistant for Construction has the primary responsibility for updating policies and presenting these to the board. The board members generally approve the policies at first reading after the administrative assistant gives a brief explanation of policy changes and required modifications. The administrative assistant generally does not involve any directors and/or coordinators in other departments in making changes to local policies in their respective areas of expertise. The superintendent explained these directors and coordinators were briefed on the policies and should take that opportunity to comment regarding policies in their respective areas.

LEGAL SERVICES
The ZCISD Business office provided a summary of legal fees for the last three years. **Exhibit A–10** provides a summary of those fees for 2001–02 through 2003–04.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT
The current Personnel Department organization is displayed in **Exhibit A–11**.

The Director of Personnel and Compliance, who was hired in 2003, also supervises several other areas and is responsible for resolving compliance concerns across the district. He indicated he spends approximately 25 percent of his time directing Personnel Department activities and does not have a personnel budget and generally submits requests for funds for activities, such as recruitment, on an as-needed basis.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
The district has developed and disseminated an employee handbook. Personnel administrative procedures have not been developed. The policy governing sexual harassment defines a complaint procedure that directs staff to report allegations of

EXHIBIT A–10
ZCISD LEGAL FEES
2001–02 THROUGH 2003–04

FIRM	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Escamilla & Poneck	$30,026.24	$47,505.23	$50,430.94
Swartz & Eichelbaum	$2,295.00	$95.00	$0.00
Richards, Lindsay & Martin	$500.00	$1,841.56	$0.00
Totals	**$32,821.24**	**$49,441.79**	**$50,430.94**

SOURCE: ZCISD Business Office, 2005.

EXHIBIT A–11
PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

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            ┌─────────────────────────────┐
            │        Director of          │
            │  Personnel and Compliance   │
            └─────────────────────────────┘
                  │                 │
      ┌───────────────────┐   ┌───────────────────┐
      │   Receptionist    │   │                   │
      │    (1/2 time)     │   │     Secretary     │
      └───────────────────┘   └───────────────────┘
```
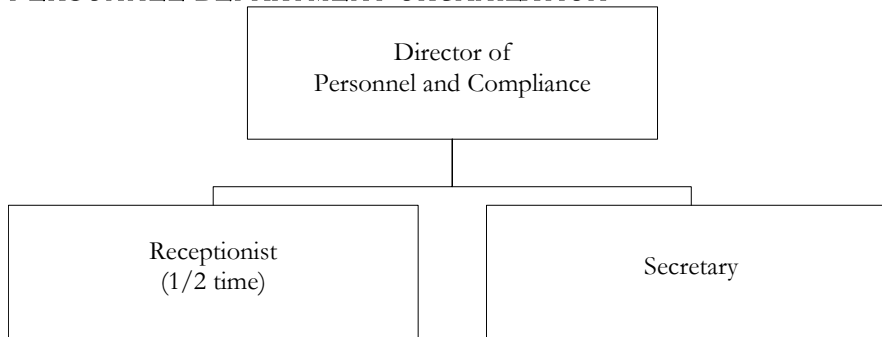
SOURCE: ZCISD Personnel Department, 2005.

sexual harassment using the employee grievance procedures. The director of Personnel and Compliance is not involved in the personnel policy development or updating process. Training on sexual harassment was provided to all employees through the Personnel Department in 2004.

RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND RETENTION

Recruitment of teachers in ZCISD is limited. The director of Personnel and Compliance made five recruitment trips in 2003–04, all to sites in South Texas. The superintendent has encouraged him to concentrate his trips primarily in the Laredo and Rio Grande Valley areas. Recruitment trips are taken based on proximity to Zapata and are not based on an analysis of sites that could produce the highest number of qualified candidates. The director of Personnel and Compliance requests a list of projected vacancies in the spring and attends job fairs to fill available positions. A small recruitment brochure has been developed to promote the district. The district website is not used to provide prospective applicants with information about ZCISD, and vacancies are not posted on the website. The Personnel secretary indicated that teacher applicant numbers decreased this year and estimated that only 40–50 applications were received.

The director of Personnel and Compliance and the Personnel secretary monitor certification requirements. A listing of teachers with pending certification status for 2004–05 showed the department has a tracking system to determine teachers still working on their certifications and the circumstances. There are 38 teachers that are not fully certified, with 27 of those teachers in an alternative certification program. The department is making a concerted effort to monitor certification to ensure compliance. The eGrants Highly Qualified

Teachers report, a Program Compliance and Performance Report required by TEA in order to monitor districts' compliance with NCLB, indicated that as of the last day of school year 2003–04, ZCISD employed 19 teachers who did not meet the highly qualified requirements of their primary teaching area. The director of Personnel and Compliance indicated he has communicated this information to principals at all campuses but has not had time to follow-up regarding their current status.

The district has partnered with United ISD in Laredo to provide instructional assistants with training that will make them "highly qualified" as required by NCLB. This program has been very successful and a report provided in October 2003 showed 50 instructional assistants had earned their highly qualified certificates.

Posting of positions in ZCISD is not consistent. There are no guidelines that indicate which positions must be posted. The superintendent determines if a position should be filled, if a posting is required, and if it should be posted internally or externally. Of the postings reviewed, approximately half were posted only internally.

According to 2003–04 AEIS data, the district has a turnover rate of 11.8 percent. The turnover rate for 2002–03 was 9 percent. The Personnel Department keeps no turnover data and does not conduct exit interviews that might provide reasons for departure. The average teacher tenure, according to AEIS 2002–03 data, is 9.9 years.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ZCISD has active participation in their parent teacher organizations (PTOs) and other meetings that pertain to student activities. **Exhibit A–12** lists the ZCISD community involvement committees that include members from the community.

EXHIBIT A–12
ZCISD COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMPONENTS

COMMITTEE	PURPOSE	LOCATION	FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS
Parental Advisory (English)	Parental information	High School	Monthly
Parental Advisory (Spanish)	Parental information	High School	Monthly
Career & Technology Education (CATE)	Provides a link between the school and industry and can advise on the many facets of a career technology program.	District	As needed
Band Boosters	To support the fine arts music program.	High School	Monthly
Mariachi Boosters	To support the fine arts music program.	High School	Monthly
Athletic	To support organized sports and recreational activities in school.	High School	Monthly
Campus Planning and Decision Making (CPDMC)	To provide recommendations to the principal and support all school initiatives.	North Early Childhood Center/Middle School	Monthly/ As needed
Special Population Advisory	To plan and implement instructional and support services for students with special learning needs.	Middle School	Monthly
Site Based Decision Making	To provide recommendations to the principal on budget, staffing, curriculum, instruction, and parental involvement.	Central Elementary	As needed
Language Proficiency Advisory Committee	To review data and make recommendations on services for the Limited English proficient student population.	Central Elementary and North Early Childhood	Monthly
Parent-Teacher Organization	To support the educational initiatives and programs at all campuses.	All campuses	As needed
Parental Advisory	Advise and support the implementation of all supplemental instructional programs.	District	As needed
District Planning and Decision Making	To participate in decision-making activities that impact on the operation of the district, the quality of service, and the performance of all stakeholders and students.	District	Monthly
Parental Involvement	To support the program and provide other parents with school information.	District	As needed
Superintendent's Round Table	Get student points of view in regards to commendations and recommendations on district services and practices.	Students from district schools	Periodically
Advisory for 504 and Dyslexia	Ensure 504/Dyslexia policies and procedures are followed.	District	Semiannually
Even Start	To review progress of Even Start program and make recommendations to improve services for all participants.	Even Start	Monthly
South Texas Rural Systemic Initiative	Enhance Math and Science education for all students.	District	Quarterly
Parents for Enrichment Programs	To inform parents about issues pertinent to gifted education and enrichment opportunities.	District	3 annual meetings
Veterans Committee	Organize Veterans Day activities	District	As needed
Zapata County Fair	To plan and implement youth involvement activities.	District	As needed
Town Meeting	To plan and implement town meetings with parents, community residents, and business representatives.	District	As needed

SOURCE: Listing provided by ZCISD Superintendent's Office, December 2004.

CHAPTER 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

ROLLBACK TAX RATE

ZCISD is considered a Chapter 41 district. The purpose of Chapter 41 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) is to equalize the wealth between Texas school districts. Districts with a tax base that exceeds the equalized wealth level of $305,000 in property value per student in weighted average daily attendance (WADA) are considered high-wealth districts and have several methods to either reduce wealth or increase WADA in order to achieve the equalized level. Districts may use four options:

- consolidating school districts;

- consolidating school tax bases;

- deannexing and annexing property between school districts; and

- contracting to educate children in another school district and paying the state for student attendance credits.

In 2004–05, ZCISD's tax base exceeded the equalized wealth level and the district is contracting with Raymondville ISD to purchase approximately $1,685,710 in WADA. In the past, the district contracted with United ISD for the purchase of WADA. According to Moak, Casey & Associates, LLP, a consulting firm dealing in state funding issues, the district may have underpaid the 2003–04 recapture by $900,000. The district's failure to properly compute recapture for 2003–04 will have an adverse impact on the fund balance by requiring the district to repay the state the amount of the error. There is also a chance the district may have overpaid recapture in other years. The consulting firm is working with the district to determine the extent of the problem.

The Business Services director, who left the district in January 2005, calculated the district's rollback tax rate. The rollback tax rate is the tax rate that, if exceeded, triggers an election where the voters decide whether to agree with a higher rate or reduce it to the rollback rate. A school district's rollback rate consists of the tax rate necessary to generate the same amount of Maintenance and Operating (M&O) funds as the previous school year based on revenue per student plus 6 cents. The district then adds the debt rate needed to meet the upcoming year's debt payments to the M&O calculation. The rollback rate is calculated using a template provided by TEA. In making the calculation, the Business Services director incorrectly computed the data to be input into the template. The error resulted in the district adopting a $1.50 M&O tax rate instead of the $1.118 rate that should have been adopted.

The Zapata County Tax Office computed a lower rollback tax rate than the rate computed by the Business Services director but only the higher rate was presented to the board for adoption. The district did not consult with the tax office to investigate the differences. The higher tax rate cost the average homeowner approximately $57 in additional taxes. There are no legal remedies available to the taxpayers and the district will be able to collect on the adopted tax rate. The board may choose to reduce a future tax rate to provide some remedy to the taxpayers. However, this action will affect future rollback calculations and may adversely affect future tax revenues.

ZCISD is working with their regional educational service center and Moak, Casey & Associates to address the problem.

CASH AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

At the time of the review team visit, the Business Services director supervised cash and asset management for the district but not for individual campuses. **Exhibit A–13** shows the positions and reporting relationships of the district's cash and asset management operations.

FIXED ASSETS

TEA defines fixed assets as items a district has purchased or had donated to it that are tangible in nature, have a useful life longer than one year, are worth $5,000 or more, and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. The Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) requires assets that cost $5,000 or more to be capitalized. Items that cost less than $5,000 are recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund under TEA guidelines. These guidelines also permit school districts to establish lower thresholds for control and accountability of equipment that costs less than $5,000.

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board issued Statement 34 (GASB 34), which establishes financial reporting standards for state and local governments. One element of the statement requires governments to report and depreciate capital assets. TEA required all districts to comply with GASB 34 for accounting periods which began after June 15, 2001.

ZCISD contracts with RCI Technologies, Inc. to provide a comprehensive fixed asset management program. In October 2004, the contractor completed counting and bar coding all 2003-04 additions to fixed assets. However, due to a computer

EXHIBIT A–13
ZCISD CASH AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL
2004–05
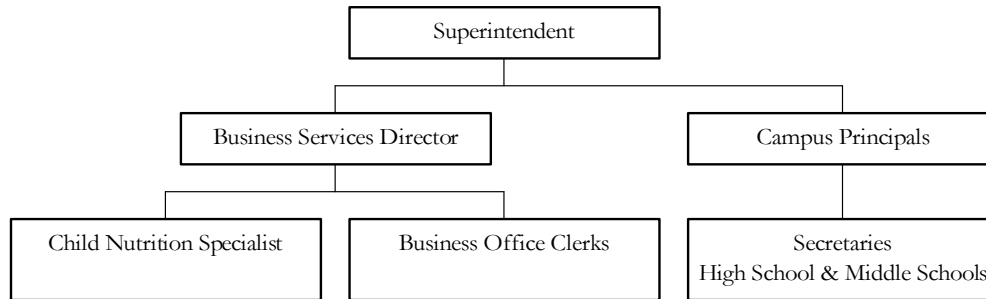
malfunction, some of the 2003–04 records were lost. The contractor was on-site correcting the problem during the review team visit.

PROPERTY CASUALTY COVERAGE

An effective risk management program controls costs by ensuring that the district is adequately protected against significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums. The first step a district can take to protect itself against significant losses is to have accurate insurable values through annual appraisals of property values. ZCISD identifies property values through a property appraisal completed by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Risk Management Fund Property and Casualty Program. The appraisal report provides district staff with a tool for making a general estimate of replacement costs of specific construction types for buildings. This appraisal, with the RCI fixed asset management program, documents property values

for future loss exposures.

ZCISD has a very good property loss record. The district has not filed any property claims under its property coverage during the past five years. **Exhibit A–14** displays the losses experienced in the district's property casualty program.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

School districts must provide unemployment compensation benefits to former employees who qualify for benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. To finance these benefits, ZCISD participates in the TASB Unemployment Compensation Program through an inter-local agreement. This risk pool provides a maximum contribution based on an approval rate for the fiscal period. **Exhibit A–15** shows ZCISD's annual contributions and claims for 1999-2000 through 2003-04.

EXHIBIT A–14
ZCISD PROPERTY CASUALTY PROGRAM
1999–2000 THROUGH 2003–04

PLAN YEAR	PROPERTY		GENERAL LIABILITY		AUTO LIABILITY		AUTO PHYSICAL DAMAGE		LEGAL LIABILITY	
	CLAIM NUMBER	CLAIM COST	CLAIM NUMBER	CLAIM COST	CLAIM NUMBER	CLAIM COST	CLAIM NUMBER	CLAIM COST	CLAIM NUMBER	CLAIM COST
1999–2000	0	$0	0	$0	0	$0	0	$0	1	$18,585
2000–01	0	$0	0	$0	0	$0	0	$0	2	$129,743
2001–02	0	$0	1	$0	1	$0	1	$0	1	$12,500
2002–03	0	$0	1	$0	3	$77,161	3	$11,185	1	$39,235
2003–04	0	$0	3	$0	1	$0	1	$4,995	0	$0

EXHIBIT A–15
ZCISD UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM
1999–2000 THROUGH 2003–04

YEAR	PAYROLL	CONTRIBUTION	CLAIM NUMBER	BENEFITS PAID
1999–2000	$14,973,837	$40,072	51	$17,500
2000–01	$15,358,469	$34,537	19	$11,331
2001–02	$16,506,759	$28,989	21	$8,040
2002–03	$17,801,759	$31,720	20	$4,103
2003–04	$8,882,475	$34,560	10	$8,081

The TASB Unemployment Compensation Program provides claims assistance and hearing representation. Each year the district's fund contribution is capped at a specified dollar amount based on the previous year's gross wages. This information makes it easier to budget for these costs annually. The program provides training so that districts know how to handle complex unemployment compensation issues. District employees can attend informal regional workshops to learn effective unemployment and loss control strategies.

CHAPTER 4
OPERATIONS

ORGANIZATION
Two administrators oversee the ZCISD facilities and construction departments. The administrative assistant for Construction is a retired, former employee who currently serves part-time as the liaison between the superintendent and architect during the construction of two elementary schools. The Student Services and Operations coordinator manages the transportation, custodial, maintenance, security, and state assessment departments.

CONSTRUCTION
In October 2003, the community passed a bond issue for $16 million to build two new elementary schools each with a 750-student capacity. These two elementary schools will replace Zapata Central Elementary and Zapata South Elementary. Both elementary schools will serve grade 1 through grade 5.

PLANT MAINTENANCE AND CUSTODIAL OPERATION
ZCISD has one supervisor for the maintenance and custodial department. This administrator, the Student Services and Operations coordinator, also oversees the transportation and security departments. The campus administrators supervise the day custodians, and the Student Services and Operations coordinator supervises the evening custodians. Each school has site-based maintenance workers supervised by the campus administrator. The Student Services and Operations coordinator supervises the field crew, district tradesmen, and air-conditioning technicians.

Exhibit A–16 shows the actual General Fund expenditures for Plant Maintenance and Operations (Function 51) for ZCISD and the peer districts for 2001–02 and 2002–03. It also displays function 51 expenditures as a percent of General Fund expenditures.

WORK ORDERS
The district has a manual work order process. The campuses complete the district work order form and fax it to the Student Services and Operations coordinator. The coordinator meets with the maintenance workers every morning and assigns the work order projects. The only repairs the district outsources are roofing, major plumbing, and major electrical projects.

CHILD NUTRITION ORGANIZATION
The ZCISD Child Nutrition department is responsible for six cafeterias, one in each school. The Child Nutrition specialist, who answers directly to the administrative assistant for Business Services, supervises the program. There is one cafeteria manager at each campus for a total of six districtwide. **Exhibit A-17** illustrates the organization of the ZCISD Child Nutrition department. All cafeteria employees work eight-hour shifts except for one six-hour employee at the high school.

The National School Lunch Program regulations contain a clause known as Provision 2. The purpose of this regulatory provision is to reduce the burden of paperwork on parents and on school districts by reducing the requirements for taking applications, notifying the public, and counting meals by category for schools that agree to serve free meals to all enrolled students.

Provision 2 qualifications are based on socioeconomic data. The district must provide documentation of the socioeconomic status of the school district population and income levels during a base year. The district must reapply every three years thereafter to determine if the socioeconomic conditions and income levels have remained stable or have declined during the three previous years of the program. Sources of data to be used to document the socioeconomic status of the district's population include:

- local data collected by either the Chamber of Commerce or economic planning offices in the county;

- census track data compiled for the local area covering most of the district population;

- unemployment data for the area from which the school district draws attendance;

EXHIBIT A–16
PLANT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS – FUNCTION 51
ZCISD AND PEER DISTRICTS 2001–02 AND 2002–03

DISTRICT	EXPENDITURES 2001–02	PERCENT OF ACTUAL 2001–02	EXPENDITURES 2002-03	PERCENT OF ACTUAL 2002–03
Groesbeck ISD	$1,383,189	12.6%	$1,591,055	14.09%
Hidalgo ISD	$2,877,341	13.6%	$2,671,524	12.58%
Valley View ISD	$1,491,272	10.9%	$1,936,330	11.73%
Zapata County ISD	**$3,083,350**	**13.4%**	**$2,528,659**	**11.20%**
Point Isabel ISD	$1,241,838	8.8%	$1,723,409	10.74%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS Standard Reports, Actual Financial reports for 2001–02 and 2002–03.

EXHIBIT A–17
ZCISD CHILD NUTRITION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
2004–05

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Administrative      │
                        │ Assistant for       │
                        │ Business Services   │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                  │
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Child Nutrition     │
                        │ Specialist          │
                        └─────────────────────┘
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Zapata High School Cafeteria Manager	Zapata Middle School Cafeteria Manager	Zapata Central Cafeteria Manager	Zapata North Cafeteria Manager	Zapata South Cafeteria Manager	A.L. Benavides Cafeteria Manager
Cafeteria Staff (8.75)	Cafeteria Staff (6)	Cafeteria Staff (5)	Cafeteria Staff (5)	Cafeteria Staff (5)	Cafeteria Staff (1)

SOURCE: Child Nutrition specialist interview and ZCISD 2004–05 Child Nutrition Organization Chart, December 2004.

- direct certification data from the four previous years; and

- other local data as approved by TEA.

Exhibit A–18 describes the base year and continuing year requirements to receive Provision 2 funding under the National School Lunch Program.

The district received approval from the Texas Department of Agriculture to continue participation in the Provision 2 program for an additional four years on May 17, 2004, which extends the ZCISD program through 2007–08.

MEAL PRICING AND REIMBURSEMENT

Since ZCISD is a Provision 2 food service program, all students eat free. Adults and student visitors do pay for their meals; all purchased meals are paid for in the office where a ticket is issued. A minimal amount of money is collected in the cafeterias, primarily for ala carte purchases. **Exhibit A–19** shows ZCISD compared to the peer districts for the prices of lunch and breakfast.

Exhibit A–20 shows the federal reimbursement rates for reimbursable meals served to students in 2004–05.

MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS

Effective August 1, 2004, all Texas public schools participating in the federal child nutrition programs (National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and the After School Snack Program) must comply with the nutrition policies outlined in the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy. ZCISD does follow the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy.

At the teachers and principals focus groups, comments were made that the portion sizes were too small for students in fifth grade and higher. The review team did observe the portion sizes and the portions were within the USDA regulation guidelines. All campuses do allow students to return for second servings if there is any prepared food left.

VENDING MACHINES

ZCISD has vending machines in the schools. The Child Nutrition office does not have jurisdiction over the machines, other than providing advice on contents that meet nutritional value guidelines. The vending company empties the machines and a commission check is sent to the district Business office. **Exhibit A–21** identifies the location, contents, and number of vending machines in the district.

EXHIBIT A–18
NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM
PROVISION 2 ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Base Year
Applications are distributed, and free and reduced-price eligibility determinations are made using the standard procedures, including the required public announcement that is regularly published at the beginning of the school year.
After all applications have been received and approved, a second public announcement is made stating that all meals will be provided free to all students regardless of economic status.
Meals are served free to all students.
Meal counts are taken and claimed for reimbursement using standard procedures; i.e., by the eligibility category of the child receiving the meal.
If the reimbursement received by the school district is not sufficient to cover total nonprofit school food service program costs, non-federal funds must be used to pay the difference.
During the Base Year, a complete review of the food service operation by the Child Nutrition Program Division of the Texas Education Agency, will be conducted to document and ensure the accuracy of the current methods being used by the district to determine free, reduced-price and paid categories, and counting and claiming procedures used to report claims for reimbursement.
The percentage of the total meals is calculated monthly by campus and by program for each category. This information is gathered in the base year for use in following years to establish the reimbursement claims.
Year 2 and 3
At the beginning of each school year, a public announcement is made stating that all meals will be provided free to all students regardless of economic status.
No distribution of applications and no eligibility determination are conducted.
Officials count only total meals served and apply the monthly percentages developed during the Base Year to determine the counts by type for the reimbursement claims.
If the reimbursement received by the school district is not sufficient to cover total nonprofit school food service program costs, non-federal funds must be used to pay the difference.

SOURCE: United States Department of Agriculture Provision 2 Guide Book.

EXHIBIT A–19
MEAL PRICES FOR ZCISD AND PEER DISTRICTS
2004–05

MEAL PRICES	HIDALGO	GROESBECK	VALLEY VIEW	POINT ISABEL	ZAPATA
Elementary Lunch Full Pay	$1.75	$1.85	$1.50	$1.50	$2.41
Elementary Breakfast Full Pay	$1.00	$0.95	$0.50	$1.25	$1.47
Secondary Lunch Full Pay	$1.75	$1.85	$1.75	$2.00	$2.41
Secondary Breakfast Full Pay	$1.00	$0.95	$0.50	$1.25	$1.47
Adult Lunch	$2.25	$2.30	$2.25	$2.25	$2.41
Adult Breakfast	$1.45	$1.15	$0.75	$1.50	$1.47

SOURCE: ZCISD Peer District Survey, December 2004.

EXHIBIT A–20
FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR
REIMBURSABLE MEALS SERVED STUDENTS
2004–05

BENEFIT CATEGORY	BREAKFAST	SEVERE NEED BREAKFAST	LUNCH
Full-price	$0.23	$0.24	$0.21
Reduced-price	$0.93	$0.24	$1.84
Free	$1.23	$0.24	$2.24
Commodity assistance	$0.15	–	$0.15

SOURCE: ZCISD Child Nutrition specialist, December 2004.

EXHIBIT A–21
ZCISD LOCATION, CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF VENDING MACHINES

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF MACHINES	TYPE OF MACHINE	LOCATION OF MACHINE
Administration Office	2	Coke	Outside building
Administration Annex	1	Coke	Outside building
High school	2	PowerAde, coke	Mariachi Hall
	4	Coke, PowerAde, Fruitopia	Hall
	2	Coke, Fruitopia	Dining Area
	1	Coke	ROTC Building
	2	Coke	Lounge
	1	Coke	Mechanic room
	2	Coke	Restroom
Middle School	1	Coke	Principal's Office
	1	Coke	Lounge
	3	Coke, PowerAde	Canopy
Central Elementary	2	PowerAde, Minutemaid	Hall
	1	Coke	Lounge
	2	PowerAde	Gym
	1	Minutemaid	Hall
	1	Coke	Lounge
South Elementary	2	Coke	Lounge
	3	PowerAde	Hall
North Elementary	1	Coke	Lounge
	1	PowerAde	Hall
Benavides Elementary	2	PowerAde	Hall
	1	Coke	Lounge
Special Education	1	Coke	Outside building
Bus shop	1	Coke	Outside building

SOURCE: ZCISD Child Nutrition specialist, December 2004.

FOOD PRODUCTION MONITORING

Each campus completes a daily food production log. The log contains information on the number of meals served (breakfast, lunch, or snack), food items served, recipe number, number of portions prepared, portion sizes, and leftovers. This information allows the managers and Child Nutrition specialist to monitor the quantity of food prepared and the disposition of left overs such as reused, thrown away, or served as seconds.

TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION

The Student Services and Operations coordinator, who reports to the district's director of Personnel and Compliance, manages the ZCISD Transportation office. **Exhibit A–22** shows the Transportation office organization.

The district is using passenger vans to transport students on field trips. ZCISD Transportation provides field trip service for many events that are considerable distances away due to the remote nature of the school district. Staff interviews indicate that different teams in the same sports may travel to different cities on the same days.

EXHIBIT A–22
ZCISD TRANSPORTATION OFFICE ORGANIZATION
2004–05

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │    Student Services and  │
                    │   Operations Coordinator │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
   │  Secretaries │   │  Bus Drivers │   │ Shop Foreman │
   │     (2)      │   │              │   │              │
   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
          │                  │                  │
   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
   │Office Assistant│ │   Bus Aides  │   │   Mechanics  │
   │              │   │              │   │      (2)     │
   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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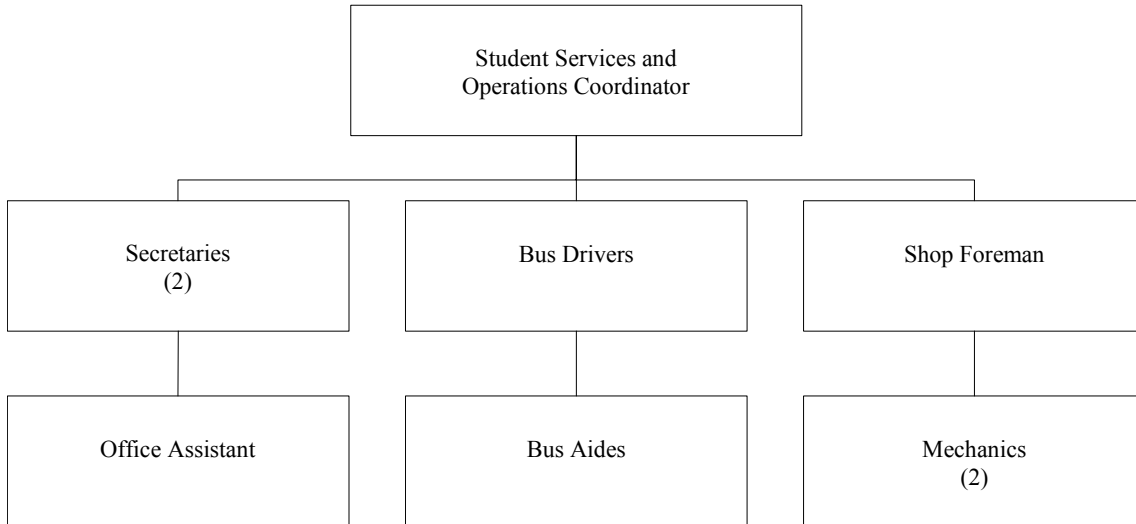
SOURCE: *Student Services and Operations Coordinator, December 2004.*

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

A community open house was held on December 6, 2004 at the Zapata County Middle School Cafeteria and produced the following comments.

The comments below illustrate community perceptions of Zapata County Independent School District (ZCISD) and do not necessarily reflect the findings and opinions of the Legislative Budget Board or the review team.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- I don't like to see the teachers having to teach for the TAKS test. They seem to be testing all the time—which its OK to test to see where the children are at but not constantly. The teachers are so pressed and stressed with all the paperwork and worrying about the test. It takes most of their time. Some are so much more creative that they could be teaching other things and teach the way they'd like to teach. Let's not teach for the test.

- I'm not really sure if our area is preparing our students for college properly. It seems a lot of the students have a problem with college after they leave here. I've talked to other parents who wonder the same thing. I've been real pleased with my children's teachers. Most of them all seem to be real concerned with the student and care. I do feel they need a more rounded gifted and talented program. They don't seem to focus on all areas, for example, math, reading, writing, etc. They do good with what they have to work with and have some wonderful teachers at the elementary level.

- I feel more attention is given to the Special Ed classes than the GT classes. GT does not have the materials they need.

- I feel we need help with the school's curriculum. Zapata needs to compete with area schools for exemplary status. A thorough research committee needs to be organized to explore the possibility of changing or revising our curriculum to meet the state's standards. Our GT students are lacking in materials and supplies. The program is always lacking funds for any special projects. I also feel our special education program is in desperate need of an overhaul. Students in Special Ed need to be evaluated by trained and professional personnel in order to be placed in the program. We have too many behavior problem kids who belong in an AEP (which we don't have) program in Special Ed.

DISTRICT MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND ORGANIZATION

- There are a lot of politics in this town.

- Many of our campuses SBDMs do not meet on a regular basis. Many times when they do meet 50% of the members are not present. The public was not notified of the oil rig until it was already up and operating. No public meetings were held to vote on this matter. This is just one example of how we as taxpayers and parents are left in the cold when important issues are discussed. Most people are just turned off.

- The administration would not release a child for an appointment and insisted that the father give permission. The administration insisted but finally released her after the mother got angry. The school was not helpful. Had to complain regarding my relationship with administration. I feel they ignore me and my concerns and do not seem interested. I want them to pay more attention to the children's welfare.

- I would like for them to make the well because it is to help the schools. That is why I am in favor of it. My children have learned a lot. Also the teachers have worked very hard so that our children have a better future.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Community Involvement is a big problem here. For some reason, people don't want to get involved. They either just don't care or are afraid to speak out. Consequently, things just go on the way that the people in power want it to go. (I feel we have no say in the matter.)

- Parent involvement is one of the greatest problems in the community. If parents do not get involved in the decisions of the school district, we have a gap in communication. It is easily seen by the attendance at this meeting. Many decisions are politically motivated and a lot of our parents are just turned off. The only people who attend meetings are Spanish speaking people who most of the time are not heard. I would like to see more Zapatans, people born and raised here, to participate in the decisions of the district.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Hiring should be based on qualifications for desired positions. We have in this district too many directors, coordinators, etc. Yet our scores do not improve districtwide. Too much of our salaries are spent on administration rather than on hiring qualified teachers! We also need to start background checks on all hired personnel.

Random drug testing of all district personnel including bus drivers and maintenance.

- School staff (teachers) should be hired by their qualifications—not who they know. If a new graduating teacher has a parent or family member here—they're automatically in. Or maybe we need to raise the teacher salaries to draw teachers into this area.

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

- The water from the water fountains is bad. Children have to purchase water or other beverages. When will the problem be fixed? In some fountains, there is not enough pressure and children have to put mouth on the spout. We are concerned about sanitation.

- We are concerned about the quality of the drinking water. The school district has not done anything to remedy this. We feel that perhaps they are not doing anything because a new school will be built.

- We are concerned about the water. We have been notified that it is not safe to drink the water but the district has done nothing to provide a solution. We have to send water or money to buy Gatorade. The district should provide bottled water because we feel the children may be sick because of the water.

- Campuses could save energy by keeping their classroom doors closed and not letting the A/C escape in our warm weather.

FINANCE

- Independent audits should be conducted at least twice a year. It seems this school district is always lacking in funds. Many teachers complain of needs such as materials and supplies related to every day teaching activities. It is embarrassing that as one of the richest districts in South Texas we still resort to an oil rig in the middle of three schools for more money. Financial reports should be accessible to parents on every campus.

FOOD SERVICE

- I am concerned about the cleanliness of the cafeterias. The food preparation is not good and the children had food which contained hair and worms. The food is not sufficiently cooked.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- We are in need of new updated computers. Central Elementary, for example, is behind. The high school seems to be OK. All classes need computers and software.

- Students do not have adequate instructional technology. Not enough computer equipment or time to teach it. Our students are expected to turn in power point presentations when they have not been taught how to do it. Many of our teachers don't know how either. Technology is a very weak spot in our district. Ask about the ratio of computers to students.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- We do not agree that there should be an oil well in the middle of the school property. We are concerned about the chemicals and the effect they may have on the children's health. We are concerned about the children's safety in case evacuation is necessary. Parents were never notified concerning the well and were never asked regarding their opinion. They just informed them last week that the well would be working from November 29 to January 3, 2005. They should have moved children or worked on the well during time when children were on Winter Break.

- We are concerned about the safety of our children because of the oil well.

- We are concerned about the oil well and the danger it may cause for the children's health. Chemicals are released and may affect the children. They should have notified the parents before it was started.

- We are concerned about the oil well in the middle of two schools and the safety of our children. There are chemicals and fumes that are not healthy. The wells are not safe.

- We are very concerned about the two oil wells in the middle of the two schools. We feel it is very dangerous and it is a safety hazard.

- I have no fears or concerns about the safety on our campuses. They do a good job. I would like to know why we have a rig drilling on school grounds. I don't feel that it's the safest thing to be doing. The school board has put thousands of kids at risk for someone (we don't know who) to profit. Our children are supposed to come first with safety and this is not it. I have considered pulling my child out of the district for this reason.

COMMUNITY LEADERS FOCUS GROUP

The review team held a business and community leaders focus group on December 9, 2004 that produced the following comments.

The comments below illustrate community perceptions of Zapata County Independent School District (ZCISD) and do not necessarily reflect the findings and opinions of the Legislative Budget Board or the review team.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP

Public Input to District

- All present have attended school board meetings. There is time provided in the meetings to allow you to speak.
- The board members are listening.
- Most of the time.

Superintendent

- The superintendent is respected and an effective leader.
- Yes, very.
- Yes.

Business Department

- We have not had good experience with the business department.
- They have not done a good job managing the money!
- I think so much is tied up in wages that they don't have money for the supplies needed.
- It is overstaffed.
- We haven't been paid from the accounting department at our store. We have invoices due for over a year. We go over and over the invoices with the district staff and we explain the invoice and then they pay us half of the amount due. It is not just the current person but also the person before.
- They pay a portion. We have a PO but it has never been paid.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Educational Services in General

- I think they try. You look at exiting ACT and SAT scores. I don't know how much of it is education or children trying. I would give it a C.
- I think they are doing okay. I think it is the parents that are the problem. There is no discipline anymore.

- The past couple of years our ACT scores have been improving.
- I am new. I think they are starting younger with the Early Childhood Center and I am very impressed with the kindergarten and pre-k. They are starting to read early. I didn't see that other places.
- I have a 4th grader who has had a reading problem. The teachers have been exceptional and caring. Overall they really are trying very hard.

Preparation for College

- No. That's why we are here. We are concerned because all of our kids are college bound.
- I think a lot of parents don't expect their children to go on. It is prevalent down here.
- My daughter graduated at the top of her class but when she got to UT she was not as prepared as the students from other areas were.
- Our daughter is home schooled. She took the SAT and scored 970. When we tried to get her into the pre AP classes, we found out that they allowed anyone into pre AP classes. The kids were going to ISS and not doing assignments. We finally pulled her out because she wasn't being prepared for college.
- We have tried to integrate technology. I work with 97 school districts and find Zapata very effective. I work for a college that offers online courses. I think the students from Zapata are pretty prepared. Students have more responsibility. The teachers can only do so much. The outside community has to provide additional support. We feel that Zapata needs to do that and they have taken the lead in the boys and girls club. We have been working with the Chamber and colleges to find transportation so juniors and seniors can attend college. We have had businesses and citizens contribute to endowment funds for scholarships. If we can get the junior and seniors to take courses online, they will be successful in the four or five year colleges. And they will become self-sufficient.
- I was in a class of 66 seniors. During the late 80s the district grew a lot and we had a large immigrant influx. That's why I think we have a larger percentage of our kids who are not going to college. There are no expectations for kids by parents. There is a lot of financial aid that parents are not aware of. We have to educate our parents.

- Our community is different from Bastrop and our culture has a big effect on the school district. For a lot of these kids, college is a foreign word. My kids are expected to go to college.

- We have to educate the parents. Most say their kids are going to work on the ranch, which is a honorable profession. But some of these kids are very bright and can go to college.

- There is a federal financial aid application. Every student that graduates will have one completed. This is a program started by the superintendent. We have programs in the evening and 40 or 50 show up out of 200.

- The real taxpayer in Texas is not getting the support. Even in the urban area there are a lot of dropouts. So when you try to get parents to meet and provide support, they stay out because they don't understand the language. I look at the numbers and we are going to meet with governor and one of the major issues on the agenda is adult education. If the parent has gone to college, most likely the student will. In some cases we need more funds, but in many cases we need more information. Some of the applications are all in English and not everybody speaks English.

- In Mexico, it is your upper tier and the wealthy that go to college, but they need to realize it is not the same here. You have to make them aware of all the tools at their disposal for their kids.

- What about the pay for teacher? There is a correlation.

Preparation for the Workforce

- I think we have developed pretty good programs in the business and vocational areas.

- We have partnered a lot with the superintendent.

- There are some of the programs in the last three years that have been pushed.

- We came here six years ago and a lot of my employees could hardly understand English but now we have seen a lot more improvement.

- There is an intern program.

- I noticed that most of the young men don't graduate from school because they can work at the oil fields.

- Even those employers want them to be able to read manuals.

Educational Programs

- I think all of the programs offered contribute to the education of children. They are serving the diverse group but not the gifted and talented.

- The school district has implemented a program where kids are mainstreamed and no longer put in the back in special education.

- They don't offer gifted and talented much.

- My son isn't getting some of the same programs for GT that he had in another school. They are even not using email. I'm not excited about the GT program.

- They focus on trying to get the majority of the kids up and then the ones that are already college bound and doing well or are advanced are not getting attention.

- The kids that are smart are self-driven.

- If they are provided the challenge. But they are not.

- They don't have the library. It is not their fault because they don't have the money. You are taking all our money

- The Robin Hood plan is hurting us.

- In better school districts they have citizens that are benefactors.

- I think it is the industry that supports the libraries in other cities. We don't have that. Zapata is wealthy but there is no money left over to support the programs.

- The students are very bright.

- There is not even a hospital in Zapata. We took kids to Rio Grande for a medical program. By the time they get there and get back, it has taken a lot of travel time. We don't even have a hospital bed here. We have great, motivated teachers but no money.

- We need someone to donate all the money.

Highly Qualified and Knowledgeable Teachers

- Some are very good. We have good and bad. Like any industry you will have your good and bad.

- We have a hard time attracting good teachers. If we are getting as much money as Laredo, how come we can't pay as well?

- One school district provides housing, subsidized housing for the teachers.

- My son had an English teacher teaching math.

- We started a teacher certification program at the college. The need will tell you. Our classes are full and have a 100 percent pass rate. We can't meet all the district's needs because we don't have the money.

- My sister was a history major. I was also an English major. You have to address the problem. Don't fill a class with someone that isn't an expert in the subject.

Access to Nurses

- Yes, but not doctors.

- The middle school and high school has a certified nurse.

- San Ygnacio does not.

Other Comments

- As a businessman from San Ygnacio, the elementary school there has 57 students with a low student teacher ratio. It doesn't make sense why they don't bus the kids to the other elementary schools. There are too many things that don't make sense.

- Regarding transportation, they will bus the kids two miles across town. Yet they expect a kid to walk two miles in another area.

- It all comes back to money. The state shouldn't be taking it. They should be looking at the needs.

- Maybe the school district needs to explain the budget.

- What's in the works to get rid of Robin Hood?

- I see it as taxation without representation.

- In this county, part of the revenue goes to other school districts. It is a double whammy. The money doesn't come back to the students. The community doesn't benefit from the oil and gas.

- Our revenues are high. What is going on? Why are our teachers not getting paid? The only way to attract good teacher is through paying well. And they do work hard.

- I think a lot of it has to do with the home environment. I feel sorry for the teacher.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Communication with Parents and Community

- We are not being informed.

- The newspaper gets an F+. The TV station is from Laredo and there is no local radio.

- They do the best they can and we don't get informed.

- We didn't know about this meeting until today.

- I got a letter.

- The superintendent has tried. It is hard to get people involved.

- It would be easier if we had some kind of newspaper.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

District Facilities

- They are available for community activities. They charge you for the auditorium and gym.

- The schools are clean. They are being improved every year.

- They are doing a very good job.

- The superintendent put a big push into maintenance and repairs.

ASSETS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

District Tax Rate

- The property tax bill is not bad right now.

- As businessperson, I have an inventory and it is a lot.

- As homeowner it is nothing

- As a business we are overtaxed.

FINANCE

Financial Information and Reports

- Never seen one.

- You can ask for it.

- They should publish it in an end of the year report.

- They should have independent audits. Do they?

- Yes.

- That information should be passed on to the stakeholder and should be made available.

- They could send it out in a flyer. They could do the same thing with the benefits.

FOOD SERVICE

Cafeterias and Food Service

▪ I think they don't offer a wide variety in all the schools, like in the high school where salads and other stuff are available. There are no healthy choices made available.

▪ My kids don't eat the food.

▪ Ours don't eat either.

▪ They serve things that they don't eat. Why not change the menu? Fifty percent of them don't make good choices.

▪ They serve pizza for breakfast.

▪ If my daughter wanted to buy a subway sandwich, she had to get a plate so they could get their federal funding. Even though all she wanted was a sandwich.

▪ If they are not eating salads at home, they are not eating salads at school.

▪ How many kids are diabetic? They don't provide choices for them and we have a huge population of diabetics.

▪ The food doesn't taste good either. My observation is at least 50 percent of the kids don't touch their food and they throw it away. Then they are hungry at 2 p.m. or starving after school. It is a waste because we are paying for it.

▪ There are a lot of kids that this is the only place they get food. They do not get food at home.

▪ I think having an access program is great.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Program

▪ I love the busing for our son. He is pre-k. They honk if he is not out there. They take such good care of him.

▪ When our child was at South, they had to walk and they had to cross a highway. You shouldn't have to beg them to bus your children. How can we have employees with children if you have to have them run back and forth to get kids?

▪ The service for extracurricular activities is very good. The bus will take a kid home at 1:00 a.m. 30 miles away.

▪ They run a second run for extracurricular activities. The kids could not participate if they did not have the transportation.

▪ Can the district provide transportation to the community college?

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Drugs and Gangs

▪ I think there may be some drugs, but not gangs. One gang tried to form but we put a stop to it.

▪ Some pills are a problem. The dogs don't detect them and they are accessible in Mexico.

▪ I had a kid that woke up in class. He didn't know where he was.

District Security and Safety

▪ We need security people for the younger ages.

▪ The high school has one way in and one way out. They have security at all the schools except at South Elementary.

▪ I would like to see the security get some training.

▪ Training on what they need to be looking for.

▪ The rig and evacuation drills are a concern. We were sent a letter after it was decided. We heard about it but people kept saying it was in the stadium. They put it in the newspaper but we only have 1,000 papers distributed. We try to stay involved and didn't know about it.

▪ Kids don't have recess because of the fumes. They snuck it in on us. They can send a flyer on Krispy Kream donuts but can't send a flyer home on the well before it happens.

▪ There is always a risk. I thought it was going to be at the high school and then one day it was there at the elementary school. The principal didn't even know about it.

▪ I hope the money doesn't go to Robin Hood!

▪ I feel because my kids are in elementary, there is a lot of bullying. There is not enough supervision. I feel that there is room for improvement.

▪ If you are scrawny and picked on, you don't want to go to school.

▪ The teacher has to be more aware of it. In ISS I don't think there is any consequence.

▪ They need to defend themselves.

▪ The counselor is talking with small groups of kids. She is great but she is one and it is difficult. Maybe the support system is not as good.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTERS

Technology Program and Computers

- There are not enough computers. We can do better in technology. We have Dell computers in Texas. We can get more with less money. Laredo has gone to that and we still are behind. I have to save every cent to buy a computer and in 3 years it is outdated.

- There is not enough. Every student should have one to be taken home with a book.

- We have the infrastructure in Zapata as a result of part of a grant that allowed us to bring in broad band Internet. It will be available to the whole county. So access is here. There is no reason why we shouldn't take advantage.

- All of the high school is wireless but we don't have the equipment.

- The kid that doesn't have a computer at home feels he is not up to par with others. Then they don't come to school.

- The biggest loss was when the state quit providing TIF. It is difficult to connect rural areas.

- We do have the connectivity, but the capital that goes inside of the classroom is still missing.

- We also need computers for the teachers. I would like to email the teachers.

- The community center has a computer lab with 48 computers. It is for the public to use. The equipment is ready to go. We are also working with the college for continuing education.

- It is an avenue for a lot of kids but the school needs more. Where is the money? That is what is really frustrating! The teachers are not paid up to par and there is no technology and we are a wealthy district.

- No one explains how the whole process works. I've never attended a budget process meeting to determine what are my program's needs.

- It is a mystery!

- No, it is being channeled somewhere else.

- At North Elementary, my wife was given a budget but told she could spend only 85%.

- When they opened up the 3-year-old program, that campus was penalized. They had to add 4 new classrooms and teachers but were not given more money to fund it.

- They just kind of hand out a budget.

- Does the state require that they print the budget? Yes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- My question is you take the central office staff, how much money or what percentage is it? Why are they writing curriculum? Why does every school district recreate the wheel?

- We were on a district committee and it was a waste of time. It was just a bleeding heart meeting. Business put up high expectation but teachers said we couldn't hold back a second grader.

- Under the No Child Left Behind Act, the teacher is teaching on different grade levels in one classroom and it hurts my child.

- There is a problem with the cost of cheerleader uniforms and dancing. It keeps the kids in lower socioeconomic families from participating. Some parents were on payment plans so their kids could participate. Some parents said "should we pay the light bill or pay for dance participation?" We have sponsored some kids.

PRINCIPAL FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

A principal focus group held on December 6, 2004 produced the following comments.

The comments below illustrate perceptions of Zapata County Independent School District (ZCISD) principals and do not necessarily reflect the findings and opinions of the Legislative Budget Board or the review team.

TRANSPORTATION

Special Education Transportation

- There is an immediate response after an ARD meeting. It has never been a problem. Special Ed buses are available for field trips.

- Regular buses were used for a field trip with 4 years olds to Laredo.

Alternative Education Program Transportation

- Not sure we are busing.

- No problems in this area. We used to bus to Laredo and the students had to leave at 6:00 a.m. Now it starts at 6:30 a.m. and they do physical training and dismiss them later.

Other Comments

- Some buses don't have air conditioning. When an air conditioned bus breaks down, the kids complain about non air conditioned buses.

- We now have vehicles available for staff development. Staff development is far away, such as Laredo or Edinburg. The district just recently purchased two cars to travel in. The district does have big vans. The district does gas up the cars for the trips.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Building Maintenance

- Whatever is needed is written down and faxed and it is followed with a hard copy. It is prioritized based on need. Most of the maintenance requests can be handled in-house. Each campus has 1½ to 3 maintenance workers.

- The grounds crew mows the lawn. The campus based person does small repairs such as pencil sharpeners, minor carpentry, carries stuff for staff.

Custodial Duties and Staffing Assignments

- They clean restrooms, sidewalks, gym, and cafeteria.

- If I find out that staffing is not enough, I may request a half-time person as long as I can justify it. During day we have custodial staff and after school custodial staff.

- The head custodian assigns cleaning duties in the high school, middle school, and in some elementary schools.

- The campus based maintenance person is also grounds crew person.

Fire Marshal and Inspections

- We file a report every year—once a month fire drills.

- Not at the high school—we have lock downs.

- The middle school also has lock downs—we try to make it once a month.

Outsourcing of Work

- Outside contractors come on campus to do repairs, roofing, and termites.

- We are notified before outside people come on campus.

General Philosophy for Building Use

- They are available to non-school organizations.

- Boys and girls clubs are housed after school until 7 p.m. Many use the public library after hours.

- Boys and girls clubs do not pay for utilities, but they do have their own snacks.

- At Central we have the Even Start Adult Literacy program—established through a grant. In return, we use their two computer labs during the day.

- There is also an intramural basketball partnership with girls and boys. The gym is open for the meetings for the community. Both gyms are used. The security guard supervises and oversees. There is no air conditioning.

- The Boy Scouts use my campus buildings.

- We don't charge a fee but ask them to pay for security at the high school. We have a form and the superintendent approves the form. Different groups have liability requirements—mostly adults. The stadium track is also open.

- No problems with vandalism.

New Schools

- The principals visited Hidalgo schools and had opportunity to provide input. We listed our needs and discussed them with the teachers. We had lots of meetings with the architect and

teachers. They used the prototype school of Hidalgo. The layout is the same with minor changes and additional classrooms.

▪ Had 493 students, now 650. There is room for growth but will be almost to capacity.

FOOD SERVICE

Cafeterias and Food Service

▪ They are campus-based cafeterias and each has their own manager.

▪ We have breakfast and lunch. At Central the quantity of food could be different. The larger children are not getting enough. At Hidalgo, they have choices. At the regular cafeteria, anything extra is not offered. Recently they offered a sandwich with an apple. There are complaints on quantity.

▪ A lot of parents are complaining of quality.

▪ There needs to be a better job in serving and serving what kids like. The variety is not there.

▪ We are Provision 2 and all students can eat.

▪ They usually will eat at least one item from the plate. We have a la carte at high school. It is a closed campus with 2 lunch periods.

▪ The middle school has a la carte. A meal ticket can get a salad or sandwich with apple.

▪ They have to pay for a la carte. They bring in pizza, Chinese, and tacos—it is catered.

▪ No snacks can be sold at elementary until the end of the last class. This is a result of new legislation. If student is not eating a plate, they are not eating anything all day.

Vending Machines

▪ Tried to keep the vendors nutritious—cannot sell apples, etc.

▪ Have received no proceeds from vending machines this year—all schools.

▪ Needed the funds that those vending machines would provide.

▪ A child can bring snacks from home. Whatever they want.

▪ Secondary does have a concession stand away from the lunchroom.

▪ Funds go to child nutrition program.

▪ We have needs for cafeteria snacks for trips. As a rule, the cafeteria is not under the principal. Some will break the rule.

▪ Make hot dogs for kids, and parents send chips from home.

▪ Kitchen has a pad lock. I had to ask for a key.

▪ The custodians clean dining room but not kitchen.

▪ We had parent workshops once a month and I asked cafeteria to help me, but was told no.

▪ We have a short lunch period and most of the teachers eat.

▪ During testing we ask teachers to eat with students.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Administrator Duties

▪ We have an opportunity to affect parents, students, and instructional program. The difference you make in students and instruction.

▪ We were born and raised here—I love serving my community.

▪ New facilities will make a big difference.

▪ Stress and the new regulations I would like to change. I thought I made a difference when I worked with students—greater impact.

▪ The superintendent is our boss. We have a good relationship and it works well. There is an open door policy. We meet on a weekly basis at 7:30 Tuesday mornings.

▪ The superintendent was a principal and he understands where we are coming from. In debating what would happen when new schools were built, we got together and reviewed information. Data showed current campuses were doing well. Based on our recommendation he decided to leave it as it is.

Teacher Appraisals and Teacher Qualifications

▪ The high school wishes to change it. Veteran teachers don't need annual evaluations. It is a waste of time. They discussed it but didn't change it.

▪ At Early Childhood there is a permanent sub on campus and two non-certified teachers out of 30 teachers.

▪ At the high school I may have a couple on an emergency certificate that have not taken the test or passed it.

▪ You don't have any to cover ISS. Zapata Central has six instructional assistants assigned at first grade.

SAFETY/SECURITY/RISK MANAGEMENT

District and Campus Crisis Manuals

▪ No.

▪ High school has one. The middle school has one.

▪ Elementary schools do not have them.

Buildings and Keys

▪ In high school the principal says teachers have room keys but not a master key. On weekends, the guard will open up the up the building for teachers. The principal, assistant principal, and athletic director all have a master key to the main building. The assistant director keeps a record of the keys distributed.

▪ In the middle school, the teachers have keys to their rooms and access to main building for coaches and UIL. There is no list of people who have keys. They are supposed to turn in keys at the end of the year. There is no tracking.

▪ At Zapata Central the doors open to the outdoors and the teachers have their own keys. Other campuses distribute keys to the teachers and custodians. The assistant principal and principal will have master keys.

Security Alarms

▪ There are no alarms in the high school for security, only fire alarms.

▪ The middle school does not have security alarms, but they do have surveillance cameras in the halls.

▪ Elementary schools do not have security alarms.

Vandalism in the Schools

▪ All principals stated there was not a problem with vandalism or theft. There was one incident of a break in.

▪ The principals said they had two way radios.

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

A teacher focus group held on December 7, 2004 produced the following comments.

The comments below illustrate perceptions of Zapata County Independent School District (ZCISD) teachers and do not necessarily reflect the findings and opinions of the Legislative Budget Board or the review team.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP

Board Meetings and Agendas

- We haven't been informed when meetings are or the time they are held.

- Meetings are posted.

- I know but I haven't gone. They are held the first Monday of the month. If you have a concern or want to show them something, you go to central office staff. I went to the Technology director about a concern and they put me on the agenda. There is a time you can provide input during the meeting.

- They don't publicize the meetings everywhere.

- It is not posted at the campuses.

- The newspaper comes out only once a week on Thursday.

- The board meetings are not really well publicized and the agenda is not publicized. If the agenda was published, you might want to come.

- It is important that we know about the agenda. Like the gas well, a lot of people would have gone if they had known it was on the agenda.

- The most important thing we would have asked about is safety. We have parents asking us before they go to the administrator.

- Our superintendent told us about the drilling and safety.

- Even though I didn't attend the board meeting, I trust the superintendent and board's decision based on safety.

- I would have liked to have an open meeting and talked to the experts regarding the safety.

- We were told information was posted and information on board meeting was sent via children, but it was after the fact.

- The students received a letter the day prior to the evacuation procedure. It was after the fact and the decision was made.

- A person attended the meeting and he said the drilling was going to be made either way. It was a matter of who was going to get the money, the county or district.

- Principals attend the board meetings and the principals share with teachers what happen. It is verbally told, not written.

- Why is it taken upon the district or county to make that decision without input from the parents?

- I would be devastated as a parent if something happened.

- It seems like parent input is not important.

- I disagree. There was a meeting.

- You had a public meeting yesterday – how many people showed up – about 20. How much interest is out there?

- The meeting was posted on the access channel – a lot of us don't have it.

- Zapata News is the only newspaper we have and I have to buy it at 35 cents.

- No, it's 75 cents.

- This was a very important meeting that someone should have posted somewhere.

- You know we are not going to agree on all the decisions.

- Safety is a main concern here.

- But there are also unfortunate incidents that can happen.

District Website

- The website is in process.

- There is a website the district can use to post.

Board and Superintendent

- The board and superintendent have a good relationship.

- The superintendent has a good reputation as a respected leader in the community.

- He is very involved and very visible.

- He happens to be a Laredo resident, but he spends a lot of time here.

- He has an open door policy. He will find time to have dialogue with you. In another district I worked for, to get to the head man would take an act of Congress.

Central Administration

- Oh yes, they all have an open door policy. All are available and will talk to you.

- I feel we can use a little more support from central office.

- They take on too many tasks and wear too many hats.

- The morale of central office is low. I think they are ready to retire.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Program Input and Goals

- I think education is the primary goal. Just too many things are going on. Benchmarking is making it hard for teachers to stay on task.

- Input to programs is new. In my first year it wasn't like that. We are moving toward that. We are now asked what materials we need. Before, materials were just purchased.

- Our administrators are asking us what we need. We are the ones that work with the students. The process is improving.

- The campus improvement teams ask for our concerns. They meet with us and ask for input.

- I know we just purchased Alexia lab. It was a major project and a lot of spending. We took it up to the SBDM.

- We don't always get everything.

Budget Needs

- Our administrators attend SBDM meetings. They are told what money is available for what programs, such as math, reading. The representatives went back to the classes and told them what is available. Then they turn in their requisition forms.

- The only concern we have is once we do it, our principal gives us a deadline. The deadline is about two weeks before the principal's deadline so it can be reviewed. The process takes so long before we can get our supplies.

- After that it takes months to get our supplies.

- You can fill an order form in early August but you don't get the supplies till the end of September.

- A September request you will get in January.

- I don't understand how the budget can be frozen in March if school goes on till June. You don't know what students you are going to get

in summer school. You have to pay electricity 12 months no matter what! Why is the money frozen?

- We have a football game the last Monday in August but we cannot purchase music.

- The budget is approved too late. It needs to be approved earlier.

- New teachers start with no teacher manuals.

- If you need stuff in August, you can't get it till September. There is no start up money in August.

- The money that we are expecting is based on state fiscal money. With certain money, if you don't spend it, I was under the impression it was taken away (state and federal money). It goes to a new fiscal year.

College and Work Bound Students

- At our high school, I think their needs are being met. What we have available in scholarships for kids is incredible. We get stuff from the medical fields. It is very positive.

- Some of our kids don't want to go to college.

- We have made it mandatory for all sophomores to take the PSAT. It makes them think. We want our kids to go to college.

- Yes, but we don't prepare them because of the standards for testing. It is difficult for some of our students. They don't have opportunities or background experience coming from a small community.

- Career and tech classes are meeting the needs of college bound. We had career fairs that showed them opportunities, but testing scares them.

Kids Going to College

- A lot of them start off.

- I see a lot of students that didn't start college right out of school, but they are attending college after 2 or 3 years. They may be working part-time somewhere.

Curriculum Guides

- They work.

- It is a work in progress. You have to do it on the yearly basis.

- On the elementary level, we have had a big turnaround. It's showing on our tests.

- We have district standards to pass and the curriculum was developed based on those standards.

- The curriculum is improving. I think it is a work in progress. For the past two years the teachers have been writing benchmarks and writing curriculum during the summer.

- It's gotten a lot better.

- My sixth graders are reading a lot better. We gave up our elementary music classes so we can spend more time with kids in reading. They are stronger academically and easier to work with.

Educational Programs in General

- Fine Arts is neglected.

- Because of the TAKS test, they put more emphasis on some areas than others. Fine Arts, music, and art get hurt.

- It has to be integrated in our language art and it is not enough.

- Before we used to have our own curriculum but now with the new mandated tests, we can see if we are being effective. Before the test, there was no social studies test. We can now see if they are improving.

Special Programs

- I think we need a little more in English as a second language. Not just immigrants but those that were born here.

- I think we have tried too many different programs, different strategies on how to teach.

- We have students in Spanish bilingual all the way through fourth grade. It is sad to see them not get all the opportunities of other students. We are trying very hard to get them into English classes as early as possible. I think we are depriving the students.

- Exiting second grade is ideally our goal. We can't let the fourth and fifth grades fall through the cracks.

- We are the only district that has kids in all Spanish classes through fourth grade according to a recent conference.

- Socially, they are left out. They go with their own group. It is going to take more than a year to get out.

- We have worked on the bilingual model to exit these students.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Teacher Salaries

- Salaries are not competitive, especially not for being such a wealthy county. Salaries are not always balanced.

- I am coming from United ISD. I thought it would be more or at least the same. I didn't find out (the salary) until after I signed the contract. Why aren't stipends offered for bilingual classes? I took a cut in pay.

- There are no stipends for math, science, or special education.

- It is because the demand is not there.

- If you work in Laredo, there is a stipend.

- A lot of teachers do not want to be bilingual certified or it's too much work.

- It is an excessive amount of extra work.

- In Laredo if you were certified, you get a stipend.

- We used to be a very good paying district.

Staffing Vacancies

- We are not filling the positions in high school. Vacancies are not filled.

- You could be certified at the high school and they would just stick you in wherever. Now they are trying to get you in your area.

- Positions are not filled. The shortages are in critical needs area.

Personnel Department and Employee Relations

- I think Personnel helps. I've always gotten answers.

- I talked to the director of Personnel.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Communication with Parents

- Yes, there is.

- It kind of stops at the high school.

- We do invite them.

- I have very high parent involvement in Fine Arts/band.

Communication with Community

- We have the local newspaper that will publish articles if you send them in.

- They don't support the Fine Arts like they do other areas. Many articles have been sent in and they don't print them. We have a hard time getting them out to the events to take pictures. We are doing some pretty good things. Now if it is about touchdowns, they are there.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

New Schools

- (Applause)

- We are disappointed in the size of the school. Specifically, the classroom size in the new elementary.

- We are concerned we might outgrow the school.

- At the middle school I would like to see them complete the projects they started. We moved into an old trade building a year ago and we are still waiting for the work to be done. And that has kids in it.

- They can't find ceiling tiles to finish the high school.

- I'm excited about our new schools. New construction usually is for a high school and I am excited it is going to be an elementary school. We get the leftover stuff. It smells like mold. We are housing first graders.

- They took funding for the gym out of the new elementary.

- The high school is very nice but it is missing something. We had to move in with all old furniture. There are no provisions for safety. There are no cameras.

- The portables with heating and AC are not regulated.

- Can't regulate the heating and air in the classrooms. The thermostats are disconnected.

- The first year there were no problems. The second year all the problems came.

Vandalism in Schools

- It is very rare.

- Our school was vandalized right before the summer. Everything is open.

- Last week we had a broken door in the back but it was replaced immediately.

Buildings

- The restrooms are dirty.

- The high school did not have any furniture. It still has no furniture in places.

PURCHASING, WAREHOUSING, AND TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks

- No problems.

- It was a problem at the elementary level. They kept changing textbooks.

- There is a certain secretary we sign in and sign out textbooks from.

- We don't have enough storage to put all our stuff in.

- They put textbooks in the bus barn and then when they ship it out, they ship it to the wrong place.

FOOD SERVICE

Food Service in General

- Kids are not served at the high school.

- The last kids to eat at elementary get seconds and thirds.

- You have a lot of kids.

- High school kids stay late. They don't get home until 9 p.m. and their lunch doesn't carry them to the end of the day. Portions should be bigger.

- At one of the elementary schools, the proportions are very small. For example, there are four tater tots in a serving.

- There is often no food left over for the last classes that eat. They have to get someone to ship more food over.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and Security in General

- We need surveillance cameras.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation and Buses

- Buses were overloaded and did not have air conditioning. That was just at the beginning of school.

- I would like to see some buses with big compartments. If band has competition and the trailer is gone, we have to carry all of the equipment with uniforms. We had to pile every thing in back and then you can't get out of the emergency exit.

- The buses are being built too small.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTERS

Technology and Computers in General

- We had asked for two computer labs when the school was built for general use and we didn't get those.

- We would love to have one for reading classes, but we can't use the labs.

- We have access to a library that has computers, but our classes are really big.

- Our science class has a floating lab with 16 laptops.

- There is one per teacher housing the GED program. We have a lab from a grant. There is a training grant and six of us are training. There is one computer classroom at the high school. They have Internet access and share with students.

- A couple of years ago we had a gentleman in charge of technology. Not all of the children have access to technology. They should have access.

- Why was there no plan for a computer lab for the new school? Why are we depriving the kids?

- Here we are a rich school district but we go to others and see all the computers. They took the word processing out of our computers and they are useless. Also, the program that translates from Spanish to English was taken away.

Computer Maintenance

- We submit requests online and it takes forever. It is like putting in a PO.

- We only have a Technology Department but no Technology specialist on campus.

- You can put in your email request but there is no turn around. It can be 2 to 4 weeks or 4 months. We get no feedback from them.

- A man came down to train a few teachers on our campus. They can help if the central office staff cannot make it.

- I came from a very poor district and the technology was awesome. I can't get into the library to do the research and there is no computer lab in high school. They need a lab available for the students. The current lab is used for classes.

- If you didn't save your work from prior year they wiped it out.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- I've been here four years and I can see we have a lot of resources available. We are not coordinated together. We have more employees than bigger school districts and we have so many supervisors. There is a lack of communication. The mail travels slow. We got a letter from the textbook committee announcing a meeting. The meeting was already over. We have all these supervisors with all these secretaries. We need to be more effective.

- Look at the salaries. We need to be competitive with other districts. In turn your teachers are happy. There needs to be equality of salaries among staff. Some work hard and some don't, but they get paid the same.

- All around, in general, the salary issue is a big thing.

- There is a lot of money in the district. Where is it going? I don't feel my salary is competitive. There is a discrepancy there.

- Bottom line is we are a very rich school district and we should have good schools, technology, and salaries.

- I think we should have more input in the budget. You are kept out but it is public information. You hear there is no money.

- One of the problems started years back. In March or April, all the funds were frozen and nobody could spend any money. Then we finished the year and we found a million dollars was left over.

- I don't believe our extracurricular activities are equal between boys and girls. I'm not talking about football. I do not believe they are equal and I do not believe kids in the middle school get what they need to succeed in high school. And its just sports – Title XI.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

ZCISD MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	MALE	FEMALE
		27%	73%

2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	ASIAN	HISPANIC	OTHER	NO RESPONSE
		0%	9%	0%	82%	0%	9%

3.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY ZAPATA COUNTY ISD?	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
		18%	23%	14%	5%	36%

4.	ARE YOU A(N)	ADMINISTRATOR	CLERICAL STAFFER	SUPPORT STAFFER	NO RESPONSE
		41%	14%	45%	0%

5.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN THIS CAPACITY BY ZAPATA COUNTY ISD?	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
		32%	32%	23%	5%	9%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS
A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	23%	55%	14%	5%	5%	0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	32%	41%	9%	14%	0%	5%
3. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	50%	32%	0%	9%	9%	0%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	32%	41%	5%	14%	9%	0%
5. Central administration is efficient.	18%	41%	14%	18%	9%	0%
6. Central administration supports the educational process.	36%	45%	5%	14%	0%	0%
7. The morale of central administration staff is good.	18%	36%	9%	18%	9%	9%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
8. Education is the main priority in our school district.	59%	23%	5%	9%	5%	0%
9. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	32%	50%	14%	5%	0%	0%
10. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	9%	41%	27%	18%	5%	0%
11. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	5%	50%	32%	5%	5%	5%
12. The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
a) Reading	23%	55%	9%	9%	5%	0%
b) Writing	18%	55%	14%	9%	5%	0%
c) Mathematics	18%	68%	14%	0%	0%	0%
d) Science	18%	59%	14%	9%	0%	0%
e) English or Language Arts	23%	55%	18%	5%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY	AGREE	NO	DISAGREE	STRONGLY	NO

		AGREE		OPINION		DISAGREE	RESPONSE
f)	Computer Instruction	18%	50%	14%	14%	5%	0%
g)	Social Studies (history or geography)	18%	59%	14%	9%	0%	0%
h)	Fine Arts	23%	55%	14%	9%	0%	0%
i)	Physical Education	23%	59%	9%	9%	0%	0%
j)	Business Education	18%	64%	14%	5%	0%	0%
k)	Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	18%	50%	18%	14%	0%	0%
l)	Foreign Language	18%	45%	23%	14%	0%	0%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
a)	Library Service	14%	59%	18%	5%	0%	5%
b)	Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	5%	45%	36%	5%	5%	5%
c)	Special Education	23%	45%	18%	5%	0%	9%
d)	Head Start and Even Start programs	18%	55%	27%	0%	0%	0%
e)	Dyslexia program	27%	32%	23%	9%	0%	9%
f)	Student mentoring program	9%	45%	23%	14%	0%	9%
g)	Advanced placement program	18%	45%	27%	0%	5%	5%
h)	Literacy program	18%	50%	14%	14%	0%	5%
i)	Programs for students at risk of of dropping out of school	0%	50%	32%	5%	0%	14%
j)	Summer school programs	9%	64%	9%	5%	0%	14%
k)	Alternative education programs	5%	50%	18%	5%	9%	14%
l)	"English as a second language" program	14%	50%	14%	5%	5%	14%
m)	Career counseling program	9%	41%	36%	0%	9%	5%
n)	College counseling program	9%	45%	27%	5%	9%	5%
o)	Counseling the parents of students	9%	50%	23%	5%	9%	5%
p)	Drop out prevention program	0%	50%	36%	5%	5%	5%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	14%	36%	23%	27%	0%	5%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	5%	45%	27%	18%	0%	5%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	9%	36%	27%	23%	5%	0%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	5%	45%	23%	27%	0%	0%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	5%	32%	36%	23%	5%	0%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	5%	36%	36%	14%	5%	5%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	14%	32%	27%	23%	5%	0%
21.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	18%	55%	9%	18%	0%	0%
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	27%	68%	5%	0%	0%	0%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	18%	45%	23%	14%	0%	0%

C. HUMAN RESOURCES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
24. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0%	14%	14%	64%	9%	0%
25. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0%	45%	18%	27%	9%	0%
26. Temporary workers are rarely used.	0%	36%	32%	18%	9%	5%

C. HUMAN RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
27. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	9%	36%	32%	14%	9%	0%
28. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	9%	27%	23%	23%	14%	5%
29. The district operates an effective staff development program.	9%	59%	9%	18%	9%	0%
30. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	41%	41%	5%	14%	5%	0%
31. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	5%	36%	18%	32%	9%	0%
32. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	9%	32%	32%	23%	5%	0%
33. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	14%	50%	23%	14%	0%	0%
34. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	14%	50%	14%	14%	9%	0%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
35. The district regularly communicates with parents.	18%	64%	9%	5%	5%	0%
36. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	14%	27%	36%	23%	0%	0%
37. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	5%	32%	41%	23%	0%	0%
38. District facilities are open for community use.	14%	50%	32%	5%	0%	0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
39. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	14%	41%	36%	5%	0%	5%
40. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	14%	32%	55%	0%	0%	0%
41. Schools are clean.	27%	68%	0%	5%	0%	0%
42. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	32%	59%	5%	5%	0%	0%
43. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	27%	55%	0%	18%	0%	0%
44. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	27%	55%	5%	14%	0%	0%
45. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	5%	45%	36%	5%	9%	0%
46. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	14%	45%	18%	9%	9%	5%
47. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	5%	18%	41%	23%	14%	0%
48. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	5%	14%	50%	18%	14%	0%

F. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	18%	23%	14%	27%	18%	0%
50.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	18%	32%	23%	18%	9%	0%
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	5%	27%	36%	23%	14%	0%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	14%	23%	32%	18%	14%	0%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	18%	50%	18%	9%	0%	5%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	14%	64%	18%	5%	0%	0%
55.	The school library meets the student needs for books and other resources.	23%	55%	14%	9%	0%	0%

G. SAFETY AND SECURITY

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	18%	41%	9%	27%	0%	5%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0%	23%	9%	50%	18%	0%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	5%	45%	18%	23%	9%	0%
59.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	27%	55%	14%	0%	5%	0%
60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	27%	50%	9%	9%	5%	0%
61.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	36%	50%	5%	5%	5%	0%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	27%	50%	5%	9%	9%	0%

H. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
63.	Students regularly use computers.	41%	45%	9%	5%	0%	0%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	18%	55%	14%	9%	5%	0%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	23%	50%	14%	9%	5%	0%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	23%	45%	18%	9%	5%	0%
67.	The district meets student needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	18%	59%	14%	9%	0%	0%
68.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	18%	36%	18%	27%	0%	0%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	36%	50%	14%	0%	0%	0%

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

ZCISD MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
		0%	56%	44%

2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
		0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

3.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY ZAPATA CISD?	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
		0%	33.3%	22.2%	44.4%

4.	WHAT GRADES ARE TAUGHT IN YOUR SCHOOL?	PK-GRADE 1	GRADES 2-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12
		11%	44%	22%	22%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS
A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3. School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager	22%	56%	22%	0%	0%	0%
6. Central administration is efficient.	11%	33%	33%	22%	0%	0%
7. Central administration supports the educational process.	22%	67%	11%	0%	0%	0%
8. The morale of central administration staff is good.	22%	44%	11%	22%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
9. Education is the main priority in our school district.	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
11. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	11%	56%	33%	0%	0%	0%
12. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	22%	44%	33%	0%	0%	0%
13. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	33%	56%	11%	0%	0%	0%
14. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	33%	44%	11%	11%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
15. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	22%	44%	0%	33%	0%	0%
16. The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
a) Reading	44%	44%	0%	11%	0%	0%
b) Writing	44%	44%	0%	11%	0%	0%
c) Mathematics	44%	44%	0%	11%	0%	0%
d) Science	33%	33%	11%	22%	0%	0%
e) English or Language Arts	44%	44%	11%	0%	0%	0%
f) Computer Instruction	22%	33%	11%	33%	0%	0%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	33%	44%	11%	11%	0%	0%
h) Fine Arts	11%	44%	0%	33%	11%	0%
i) Physical Education	33%	56%	0%	11%	0%	0%
j) Business Education	0%	44%	44%	11%	0%	0%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	22%	44%	33%	0%	0%	0%
l) Foreign Language	11%	44%	44%	0%	0%	0%
17. The district has effective special programs for the following:						
a) Library Service	33%	44%	11%	11%	0%	0%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	11%	33%	11%	44%	0%	0%
c) Special Education	22%	44%	11%	22%	0%	0%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%	0%
e) Dyslexia program	11%	56%	11%	22%	0%	0%
f) Student mentoring program	11%	56%	11%	22%	0%	0%
q) Advanced placement program	22%	44%	33%	0%	0%	0%
h) Literacy program	11%	44%	44%	0%	0%	0%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	22%	33%	33%	11%	0%	0%
j) Summer school programs	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
k) Alternative education programs	11%	56%	22%	11%	0%	0%
l) "English as a second language" program	22%	44%	11%	11%	0%	0%
m) Career counseling program	22%	33%	33%	11%	0%	0%
n) College counseling program	22%	22%	33%	22%	0%	0%
o) Counseling the parents of students	22%	44%	22%	11%	0%	0%
p) Drop out prevention program	11%	56%	33%	0%	0%	0%
18. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	11%	56%	0%	33%	0%	0%
19. Teacher turnover is low.	33%	33%	0%	11%	0%	0%
20. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	44%	33%	22%	0%	0%	0%
21. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	11%	22%	11%	33%	22%	0%
22. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	0%	67%	11%	22%	0%	0%
23. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	22%	44%	0%	33%	0%	0%
24. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%

C. HUMAN RESOURCES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
26. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0%	11%	22%	56%	11%	0%
27. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	11%	33%	11%	44%	0%	0%
28. Temporary workers are rarely used.	11%	22%	33%	33%	0%	0%
29. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0%	44%	0%	56%	0%	0%
30. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0%	44%	0%	44%	11%	0%
31. The district operates an effective staff development program.	0%	89%	0%	11%	0%	0%
32. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%	0%
33. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0%	11%	33%	56%	0%	0%
34. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0%	67%	11%	22%	0%	0%
35. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
36. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	11%	33%	11%	33%	11%	0%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
37. The district regularly communicates with parents.	22%	78%	0%	0%	0%	0%
38. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	11%	44%	22%	22%	0%	0%
39. District facilities are open for community use.	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
40. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	33%	22%	22%	22%	0%	0%
41. Schools are clean.	22%	67%	0%	11%	0%	0%
42. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	22%	67%	0%	11%	0%	0%
43. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	11%	44%	22%	22%	0%	0%
44. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
45. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	11%	44%	11%	33%	0%	0%
46. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0%	44%	22%	33%	0%	0%
47. Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	11%	78%	11%	0%	0%	0%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
48. Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	0%	22%	22%	56%	0%	0%
49. Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0%	56%	11%	33%	0%	0%
50. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	0%	44%	11%	44%	0%	0%
51. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0%	33%	0%	67%	0%	0%
52. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	33%	56%	0%	11%	0%	0%
53. Textbooks are in good shape.	22%	78%	0%	0%	0%	0%
54. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	22%	44%	0%	33%	0%	0%

H. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
55. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	11%	33%	11%	44%	0%	0%
56. Food is served warm.	11%	56%	0%	33%	0%	0%
57. Students have enough time to eat.	33%	56%	0%	11%	0%	0%
58. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
59. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	22%	78%	0%	0%	0%	0%
60. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
61. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	22%	67%	0%	11%	0%	0%
62. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
63. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	11%	89%	0%	0%	0%	0%
64. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
65. Buses arrive and leave on time.	33%	56%	0%	11%	0%	0%
66. Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	22%	44%	11%	11%	0%	0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
67. Students feel safe and secure at school.	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%	0%
68. School disturbances are infrequent.	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
69. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%
70. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	11%	44%	22%	22%	0%	0%
71. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
72. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	56%	33%	11%	0%	0%	0%
73. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	22%	56%	22%	0%	0%	0%
74. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	44%	44%	11%	0%	0%	0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
75. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
76. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	22%	67%	11%	0%	0%	0%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
77. Students regularly use computers.	33%	44%	0%	22%	0%	0%
78. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	22%	56%	0%	22%	0%	0%
79. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	22%	56%	0%	22%	0%	0%
80. The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	11%	56%	0%	44%	0%	0%
81. The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	22%	11%	22%	33%	11%	0%
82. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
83. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	44%	44%	0%	11%	0%	0%

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

ZCISD MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	MALE	FEMALE	NO RESPONSE
		22%	72%	6%

2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	ASIAN	HISPANIC	OTHER	NO RESPONSE
		0%	6%	11%	72%	0%	11%

3.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY ZAPATA COUNTY ISD?	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
		50%	28%	6%	0%	17%

4.	WHAT GRADES DO YOU TEACH THIS YEAR?		
	PRE-KINDERGARTEN	FOURTH GRADE	NINTH GRADE
	17%	11%	22%
	KINDERGARTEN	FIFTH GRADE	TENTH GRADE
	11%	17%	28%
	FIRST GRADE	SIXTH GRADE	ELEVENTH GRADE
	6%	17%	33%
	SECOND GRADE	SEVENTH GRADE	TWELFTH GRADE
	28%	6%	22%
	THIRD GRADE	EIGHTH GRADE	
	17%	17%	

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS
A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	17%	39%	33%	6%	6%	0%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	11%	44%	33%	0%	6%	6%
3. School board members work well with the superintendent.	17%	56%	28%	0%	0%	0%
4. The school board has a good image in the community.	17%	50%	22%	17%	0%	0%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	33%	50%	11%	6%	0%	0%
6. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	33%	39%	11%	17%	0%	0%
7. Central administration is efficient.	6%	50%	22%	22%	0%	0%
8. Central administration supports the educational process.	11%	50%	28%	11%	0%	0%
9. The morale of central administration staff is good.	0%	50%	39%	6%	0%	6%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
10. Education is the main priority in our school district.	22%	56%	11%	11%	0%	0%
11. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	22%	50%	11%	6%	0%	11%
12. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	6%	50%	28%	17%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	11%	33%	50%	6%	0%	0%
14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	17%	44%	17%	17%	6%	0%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	11%	56%	17%	6%	11%	0%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	6%	50%	22%	6%	17%	0%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
	a) Reading	22%	67%	6%	6%	0%	0%
	b) Writing	17%	67%	11%	6%	0%	0%
	c) Mathematics	17%	72%	6%	6%	0%	0%
	d) Science	17%	61%	17%	6%	0%	0%
	e) English or Language Arts	22%	67%	6%	6%	0%	0%
	f) Computer Instruction	17%	50%	17%	11%	6%	0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	17%	61%	17%	0%	6%	0%
	h) Fine Arts	17%	28%	33%	17%	6%	0%
	i) Physical Education	22%	50%	17%	6%	6%	0%
	j) Business Education	17%	22%	56%	0%	0%	6%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	17%	17%	56%	11%	0%	0%
	l) Foreign Language	17%	22%	50%	6%	0%	0%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	17%	56%	11%	6%	6%	0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	11%	39%	33%	17%	0%	0%
	c) Special Education	17%	50%	11%	17%	0%	6%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	17%	61%	17%	0%	0%	6%
	e) Dyslexia program	11%	17%	50%	17%	0%	6%
	f) Student mentoring program	17%	17%	39%	22%	0%	6%
	g) Advanced placement program	17%	44%	17%	22%	0%	0%
	h) Literacy program	11%	44%	33%	11%	0%	0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	11%	22%	39%	28%	0%	0%
	j) Summer school programs	11%	61%	17%	11%	0%	0%
	k) Alternative education programs	11%	28%	33%	17%	11%	0%
	l) "English as a second language" program	17%	50%	28%	0%	6%	0%
	m) Career counseling program	11%	44%	44%	0%	0%	0%
	n) College counseling program	11%	44%	44%	0%	0%	0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	11%	22%	61%	0%	0%	6%
	p) Drop out prevention program	11%	17%	61%	11%	0%	0%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0%	28%	11%	56%	0%	6%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	6%	39%	39%	11%	0%	6%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	6%	22%	17%	56%	0%	0%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	11%	33%	22%	33%	0%	0%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	6%	0%	17%	67%	11%	0%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	11%	44%	17%	28%	0%	0%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	0%	83%	6%	6%	6%	0%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	6%	44%	17%	22%	11%	0%
27.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	6%	44%	11%	22%	17%	0%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	17%	67%	17%	0%	0%	0%

C. HUMAN RESOURCES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
29. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0%	0%	6%	50%	44%	0%
30. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0%	44%	22%	22%	11%	0%
31. Temporary workers are rarely used.	0%	33%	28%	33%	6%	0%
32. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0%	17%	56%	28%	0%	0%
33. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0%	22%	44%	33%	0%	0%
34. The district operates an effective staff development program.	0%	39%	22%	33%	0%	6%
35. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	6%	56%	39%	0%	0%	0%
36. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0%	11%	44%	33%	11%	0%
37. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0%	28%	44%	28%	0%	0%
38. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	0%	17%	61%	22%	0%	0%
39. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	6%	33%	17%	22%	17%	6%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
40. The district regularly communicates with parents.	0%	61%	33%	0%	0%	6%
41. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	0%	33%	33%	28%	6%	0%
42. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0%	17%	28%	50%	6%	0%
43. District facilities are open for community use.	6%	50%	39%	6%	0%	0%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
44. The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	0%	17%	22%	44%	17%	0%
45. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	0%	28%	28%	39%	6%	0%
46. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	0%	17%	67%	17%	0%	0%
47. The quality of new construction is excellent.	0%	11%	44%	33%	11%	0%
48. Schools are clean.	0%	83%	6%	11%	0%	0%
49. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0%	56%	28%	11%	6%	0%
50. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0%	39%	11%	44%	6%	0%
51. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	0%	72%	17%	11%	0%	0%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
52. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	6%	44%	33%	17%	0%	0%
53. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0%	39%	56%	6%	0%	0%
54. Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	6%	44%	17%	28%	6%	0%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
55. Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	0%	28%	28%	39%	6%	0%
56. Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0%	28%	50%	17%	6%	0%
57. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	0%	33%	50%	17%	0%	0%
58. Vendors are selected competitively.	6%	33%	50%	11%	0%	0%
59. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0%	28%	28%	44%	0%	0%
60. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	6%	44%	28%	22%	0%	0%
61. Textbooks are in good shape.	0%	78%	17%	0%	0%	6%
62. The school library meets the student needs for books and other resources.	0%	72%	6%	17%	6%	0%

H. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
63. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0%	39%	22%	28%	11%	0%
64. Food is served warm.	11%	50%	11%	22%	0%	6%
65. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	11%	67%	17%	0%	0%	6%
66. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	11%	56%	28%	0%	6%	0%
67. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	6%	67%	17%	11%	0%	0%
68. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	6%	61%	17%	17%	0%	0%
69. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	11%	78%	11%	0%	0%	0%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
70. School disturbances are infrequent.	11%	72%	11%	0%	0%	6%
71. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	17%	61%	17%	0%	6%	0%
72. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	11%	11%	22%	33%	22%	0%
73. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	6%	39%	17%	33%	6%	0%
74. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	6%	89%	6%	0%	0%	0%
75. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	17%	50%	22%	11%	0%	0%

I. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
76. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	11%	72%	11%	6%	0%	0%
77. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	6%	67%	6%	17%	6%	0%
78. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	6%	44%	17%	17%	11%	6%

J. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
79. Students regularly use computers.	0%	56%	11%	17%	17%	0%
80. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	0%	28%	22%	39%	11%	0%
81. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	6%	83%	0%	6%	0%	6%
82. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	6%	61%	6%	22%	6%	0%
83. The district meets student needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	11%	33%	17%	33%	6%	0%
84. The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	11%	17%	33%	33%	6%	0%
85. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	11%	50%	17%	22%	0%	0%

PARENT SURVEY

ZCISD MANGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.	HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN ZAPATA COUNTY ISD?	NO RESPONSE	0-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11 YEARS OR MORE
		0%	24%	15%	61%

2.	WHAT GRADES LEVEL(S) DOES YOUR CHILD(REN) ATTEND?				
	PRE-KINDERGARTEN	KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE	SECOND GRADE	THIRD GRADE
	10%	7%	6%	10%	14%
	FOURTH GRADE	FIFTH GRADE	SIXTH GRADE	SEVENTH GRADE	EIGHTH GRADE
	6%	6%	6%	8%	8%
	NINTH GRADE	TENTH GRADE	ELEVENTH GRADE	TWELFTH GRADE	
	4%	8%	7%	3%	

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	18%	29%	38%	12%	3%	0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	21%	23%	35%	15%	6%	0%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	27%	41%	23%	9%	0%	0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	24%	29%	41%	6%	0%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	0%	32%	15%	29%	3%	20%
6.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0%	35%	15%	35%	0%	15%
7.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	12%	38%	32%	18%	0%	0%
8.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	32%	48%	7%	7%	7%	0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	29%	29%	23%	12%	6%	0%
	c) Special Education	27%	46%	15%	6%	6%	0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	29%	44%	24%	0%	3%	0%
	e) Dyslexia program	18%	27%	39%	9%	6%	0%
	f) Student mentoring program	24%	29%	35%	9%	3%	0%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CONTINUED)

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
	g) Advanced placement program	24%	44%	21%	9%	3%	0%
	h) Literacy program	21%	38%	21%	18%	3%	0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	21%	24%	36%	12%	6%	0%
	j) Summer school programs	24%	41%	21%	12%	3%	0%
	k) Alternative education programs	18%	42%	30%	6%	3%	0%
	l) "English as a second language" program	24%	44%	15%	9%	9%	0%
	m) Career counseling program	24%	38%	21%	15%	3%	0%
	n) College counseling program	20%	37%	23%	17%	3%	0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	20%	20%	29%	26%	6%	0%
	p) Drop out prevention program	20%	11%	37%	26%	6%	0%
9.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	18%	21%	18%	27%	15%	0%
10.	Teacher turnover is low.	9%	31%	38%	13%	9%	0%
11.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	13%	25%	31%	22%	9%	0%
12.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	15%	21%	27%	18%	18%	0%
13.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	24%	38%	26%	6%	6%	0%
14.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	23%	32%	15%	15%	15%	0%
15.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	32%	27%	9%	23%	9%	0%
16.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	6%	44%	24%	24%	3%	0%
17.	The district provides a high quality education.	18%	44%	9%	23	6%	0%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
18.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	11%	26%	17%	40%	6%	0%
19.	District facilities are open for community use.	17%	37%	26%	17%	3%	0%
20.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	14%	11%	37%	31%	6%	0%

D. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
21.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	15%	24%	27%	29%	6%	0%
22.	Schools are clean.	17%	51%	14%	14%	3%	0%
23.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	18%	44%	21%	12%	6%	0%
24.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	18%	29%	26	18%	9%	0%
25.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	14%	40%	20%	17%	9%	0%
26.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	0%	34%	29%	23%	3%	11%

E. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
27.	My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	9%	35%	29%	21%	6%	0%
28.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	15%	21%	23%	26%	15%	0%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
29.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	12%	21%	29%	26%	12%	0%
30.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	12%	26%	21%	26%	15%	0%
31.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	12%	21%	29%	26%	12%	0%

G. PURCHASING

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
32.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	23%	44%	15%	6%	12%	0%
33.	Textbooks are in good shape.	24%	47%	23%	6%	0%	0%
34.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	29%	44%	15%	9%	3%	0%

H. FOOD SERVICES

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
35.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	21%	21%	23%	23%	12%	0%
36.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	35%	56%	6%	3%	0%	0%
37.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	18%	26%	29%	18%	9%	0%

H. FOOD SERVICES (CONTINUED)

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
38.	Food is served warm.	23%	35%	18%	15%	9%	0%
39.	Students have enough time to eat.	17%	35%	21%	21%	6%	0%
40.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	26%	53%	15%	6%	0%	0%
41.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	15%	41%	23%	18%	3%	0%
42.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	12%	38%	29%	18%	3%	0%
43.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	26%	41%	27%	6%	0%	0%
44.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	26%	59%	12%	3%	0%	0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
45.	My child regularly rides the bus.	29%	31%	14%	14%	11%	0%
46.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	20%	48%	20%	9%	3%	0%
47.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	0%	43%	17%	14%	0%	26%
48.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	26%	57%	14%	3%	0%	0%
49.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	26%	40%	26%	5%	3%	0%
50.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	26%	51%	23%	0%	0%	0%
51.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	20%	54%	20%	6%	0%	0%
52.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	25%	43%	23%	9%	0%	0%
53.	Buses seldom break down.	17%	51%	26%	6%	0%	0%
54.	Buses are clean.	23%	59%	15%	3%	0%	0%
55.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	20%	46%	23%	11%	0%	0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
56.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	14%	54%	11%	17%	3%	0%
57.	School disturbances are infrequent.	11%	43%	14%	26%	6%	0%
58.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	20%	46%	20%	11%	3%	0%
59.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	6%	11%	20%	26%	37%	0%
60.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	8%	23%	29%	34%	6%	0%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
61.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	20%	40%	29%	11%	0%	0%
62.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	17%	40%	31%	11%	0%	0%
63.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	17%	43%	20%	17%	3%	0%
64.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	11%	37%	14%	34%	3%	0%
65.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	8%	23%	23%	26%	20%	0%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

	SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
66.	Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	15%	44%	26%	15%	0%	0%
67.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	18%	41%	15%	23%	3%	0%
68.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	20%	41%	15%	20%	3%	0%
69.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	18%	29%	23%	23%	6%	0%
70.	Students have easy access to the internet.	15%	35%	15%	26%	9%	0%

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

ZCISD MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.	GENDER (OPTIONAL)	MALE	FEMALE
		68%	32%

2.	ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	ANGLO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER	NO RESPONSE
		0%	0%	98%	0%	0%	2%

3.	WHAT IS YOUR CLASSIFICATION?	JUNIOR	SENIOR
		0%	100%

PART B: SURVEY QUESTIONS
A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
1. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	2%	57%	11%	26%	2%	2%
2. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0%	53%	21%	26%	0%	0%
3. The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
a) Reading	9%	77%	13%	2%	0%	0%
b) Writing	9%	85%	4%	2%	0%	0%
c) Mathematics	13%	79%	6%	2%	0%	0%
d) Science	6%	83%	6%	4%	0%	0%
e) English or Language Arts	13%	74%	6%	6%	0%	0%
f) Computer Instruction	6%	68%	11%	9%	2%	4%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	13%	77%	6%	2%	2%	0%
h) Fine Arts	11%	64%	17%	9%	0%	0%
i) Physical Education	15%	60%	17%	2%	2%	4%
j) Business Education	4%	72%	17%	4%	2%	0%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	4%	60%	23%	4%	4%	4%
l) Foreign Language	4%	64%	19%	6%	6%	0%
4. The district has effective special programs for the following:						
a) Library Service	13%	51%	9%	26%	2%	0%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	6%	60%	21%	13%	0%	0%
c) Special Education	6%	70%	21%	2%	0%	0%
d) Student mentoring program	0%	62%	17%	11%	2%	9%
e) Advanced placement program	11%	64%	15%	9%	2%	0%
f) Career counseling program	11%	62%	11%	13%	4%	0%
g) College counseling program	15%	51%	11%	17%	4%	2%
5. Students have access, when needed, to school nurse.	17%	49%	9%	17%	9%	0%
6. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	9%	23%	36%	23%	4%	4%
7. The district provides a high quality education.	0%	51%	23%	15%	4%	6%
8. The district has high quality teachers	4%	40%	23%	21%	11%	0%

B. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
9. Schools are clean.	4%	60%	19%	13%	2%	2%
10. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	4%	53%	17%	15%	11%	0%
11. Repairs are made in a timely manner	4%	38%	23%	21%	13%	0%
12. Emergency maintenance is handled timely.	6%	49%	17%	11%	15%	2%

C. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
13. There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	2%	60%	2%	28%	6%	2%
14. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	4%	60%	15%	15%	6%	0%
15. Textbooks are in good shape.	4%	51%	9%	15%	19%	2%
16. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	13%	51%	0%	13%	19%	4%

D. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
17. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	30%	62%	4%	4%	0%	0%
18. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	4%	32%	26%	23%	15%	0%
19. Food is served warm.	13%	45%	17%	15%	11%	0%
20. Students have enough time to eat.	9%	38%	13%	23%	17%	0%
21. Students eat lunch at appropriate time of day.	13%	64%	9%	9%	6%	0%
22. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	13%	43%	19%	17%	4%	4%
23. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	6%	47%	9%	21%	15%	2%
24. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	13%	49%	17%	17%	2%	2%
25. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	11%	60%	9%	17%	2%	2%

E. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
26. I regularly ride the bus.	9%	26%	32%	13%	17%	4%
27. The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	4%	34%	49%	4%	6%	2%
28. The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	4%	34%	55%	4%	2%	0%
29. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	4%	34%	55%	4%	2%	0%
30. The bus stop near my house is safe.	4%	34%	55%	2%	4%	0%
31. The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	4%	34%	55%	4%	2%	0%
32. Buses arrive and leave on time.	4%	34%	55%	2%	4%	0%
33. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	4%	34%	55%	4%	2%	0%
34. Buses seldom break down.	4%	34%	55%	4%	2%	0%
35. Buses are clean.	4%	34%	55%	2%	4%	0%
36. Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	4%	34%	55%	4%	2%	0%

F. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
37. I feel safe and secure at school.	9%	55%	21%	11%	4%	0%
38. School disturbances are infrequent.	23%	34%	32%	2%	9%	0%
39. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	6%	45%	26%	15%	2%	6%
40. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	30%	11%	13%	36%	9%	2%
41. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	32%	6%	13%	32%	13%	4%
42. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	45%	40%	2%	11%	2%	0%
43. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	38%	17%	21%	13%	11%	0%
44. A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	21%	32%	32%	9%	6%	0%
45. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	9%	26%	13%	43%	11%	0%
46. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	34%	2%	13%	19%	32%	0%

G. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
47. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	6%	43%	2%	26%	23%	0%
48. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	13%	55%	4%	19%	6%	2%
49. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	9%	38%	11%	23%	19%	0%
50. The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	11%	49%	9%	17%	15%	0%
51. The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	11%	40%	4%	28%	17%	0%
52. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	13%	57%	2%	17%	11%	0%