



**Striving for
Academic Excellence**

*A Profile of Seven Economically
Disadvantaged School Districts*

Conducted by
McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy, LLP
for the
Legislative Budget Board

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**INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT PROFILE**

FRIONA

FRIONA ISD

BACKGROUND

Friona is located in Parmer County in West Texas and has a population of 3,854. About one-third of the population is under 18 years old. About 14.1 percent of the families and 15.5 percent of the population is below the poverty line, including 17.5 percent of those under the age of 18. Friona's major employers, in addition to the school district, are a meat packing plant and dairy farms.

In 2006–07, the Friona Independent School District (FISD) had 1,255 students. The district has four schools: Friona Primary, Friona Elementary, Friona Junior High, and Friona High School. As of April 7, 2008, Friona Primary has 253 students, Friona Elementary has 377 students, Friona Junior High has 266 students, and Friona High School has 319 students for a total of 1,215 students, down from 1,276 in fall 2007–08. The district's student population has increased 5.8 percent from 2004–05, but less than one percent in the last five years (2002–03 to 2006–07).

As shown in **Exhibit 60**, the majority of the students are Hispanic. The percentage of Hispanic students has increased slightly from 74.8 percent in 2004–05 to 76.5 percent in 2006–07. The percentage of Hispanic students in FISD is about 30 percentage points higher than the state average and about 36 percentage points higher than the Region 16

average. FISD also has a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students: 76.3 percent in 2006–07. Its percentage of economically disadvantaged students is more than 20 percentage points higher than the state and Region 16 averages.

As of April 2008, more than 60 percent of FISD students were designated as migrants: 748 out of 1,215 or 61.6 percent.

As shown in **Exhibit 61**, in 2006–07, FISD had 609 students or 48.5 percent of its students classified as at-risk—a higher percentage than Region 16 (46.1 percent), but similar to the state percentage of 48.3 percent.

FISD has a staff of 230.2 full-time equivalents (FTEs), including 108.3 FTE teachers, as shown in **Exhibit 62**.

Exhibit 63 indicates that in 2006–07 FISD had a larger percentage of students in bilingual/ESL and a lower percentage of students in special education than Region 16 or the state. Its percentage of Gifted and Talented (G/T) students was higher than Region 16 but lower than the state rate, and the percentage of its students in Career and Technology Education (CATE) was similar to the state average but lower than the Region 16 percentage rate.

EXHIBIT 60
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

ENTITY	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	RACIAL/ETHNIC PERCENTAGE				PERCENTAGE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
		AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	WHITE	OTHER	
2004–05						
Friona	1,186	0.9%	74.8%	23.9%	0.4%	79.7%
Region 16	77,857	5.7%	38.3%	54.3%	1.8%	53.1%
State	4,383,871	14.2%	44.7%	37.7%	3.3%	54.6%
2005–06						
Friona	1,242	0.8%	74.7%	24.1%	0.4%	78.7%
Region 16	78,622	5.8%	39.2%	53.3%	1.8%	54.3%
State	4,505,572	14.7%	45.3%	36.5%	3.4%	55.6%
2006–07						
Friona	1,255	0.7%	76.5%	22.3%	0.5%	76.3%
Region 16	79,153	5.9%	39.8%	52.5%	1.9%	53.9%
State	4,576,933	14.4%	46.3%	35.7%	3.6%	55.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 61
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF AT-RISK STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS
Friona	1,255	609	48.5%
Region 16	79,153	36,484	46.1%
State	4,576,933	2,209,538	48.3%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 62
FISD AND STATE STAFF
2006–07

CATEGORY	DISTRICT TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF	STATE TOTAL	STATE PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF
Teachers	108.3	47.1%	311,466.3	50.7%
Professional Support	10.5	4.6%	50,333.9	8.2%
Campus Administration	5.7	2.5%	17,098.1	2.8%
Central Administration	2.5	1.1%	6,202.1	1.0%
Educational Aides	47.1	20.5%	61,344.6	10.0%
Auxiliary Staff	56.1	24.4%	167,469.2	27.3%
TOTAL	230.2	100.0%	613,914.2	100.0%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 63
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND TEACHERS BY PROGRAM
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	BILINGUAL/ESL	CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SPECIAL EDUCATION	REGULAR EDUCATION
Friona					
Students	18.6%	20.7%	7.2%	9.6%	*
Teachers	8.1%	6.4%	1.3%	9.9%	66.5%
Region 16					
Students	8.9%	23.1%	6.6%	11.9%	*
Teachers	2.7%	5.1%	0.3%	9.6%	76.2%
State					
Students	14.8%	20.6%	7.5%	10.6%	*
Teachers	7.6%	3.9%	2.0%	10.0%	70.6%

* AEIS does not provide number of students in regular education.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

For 2006–07, compared to both Region 16 and the state, FISD has smaller class sizes for most grades including kindergarten, grade 2, grade 3, grade 6, and all secondary grade levels, as shown in **Exhibit 64**.

FISD did not have any annual dropouts in 2003–04, 2004–05, and 2005–06 in grades 7 and 8. FISD annual dropout rates for grades 7 to 12 were lower or equal to the state averages in 2003–04 through 2005–06 and its annual

high school dropout rate in 2005–06 was lower than the Region 16 and the state average, as shown in **Exhibit 65**. FISD's longitudinal dropout rates were lower than Region 16 and the statewide during 2003–04 and 2004–05, but exceeded both in 2006–07.

As shown in **Exhibit 66**, FISD exceeded the graduation rates of both Region 16 and the state for the classes of 2004 and 2005 but dropped below Region 16 after the class of 2006.

EXHIBIT 64
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE BY GRADE LEVEL
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2006–07

GRADE	FRIONA	REGION 16	STATE
ELEMENTARY			
Kindergarten	17.8	18.2	19.5
Grade 1	19.4	16.8	19.5
Grade 2	15.5	17.4	19.6
Grade 3	13.4	17.0	19.5
Grade 4	18.6	18.0	20.2
Grade 5	20.4	19.7	22.3
Grade 6	16.4	20.1	21.8
SECONDARY			
English Language Arts	13.1	16.5	20.0
Math	15.0	15.9	20.0
Science	15.6	17.2	21.0
Social Studies	16.1	18.7	22.0

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 65
ANNUAL AND LONGITUDINAL DROPOUT RATES
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2003–04 THROUGH 2005–06

ENTITY	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 7–8			
Friona	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 16	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
State	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 7–12			
Friona	0.5%	0.9%	1.3%
Region 16	0.7%	0.6%	2.0%
State	0.9%	0.9%	2.6%
ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 9–12			
Friona	*	*	1.9%
Region 16	*	*	2.9%
State	*	*	3.7%
LONGITUDINAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 9–12			
Friona	2.1%	0.0%	9.4%
Region 16	2.8%	3.0%	6.0%
State	3.9%	4.3%	8.8%

* Information not available on AEIS.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

COMMENDABLE PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES
AVAILABILITY AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Friona ISD (FISD) has a wide-range of instructional and administrative technology at all grade levels and subject areas that has been directly integrated into district instructional

EXHIBIT 66
PERCENT OF STUDENTS GRADUATING, RECEIVING A
GED, CONTINUING HIGH SCHOOL, OR DROPPING OUT
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
CLASS OF 2004 THROUGH CLASS OF 2006

GRADUATING CLASS	FISD	REGION 16	STATE
CLASS OF 2006			
Graduated	82.4%	85.9%	80.4%
Received GED	2.4%	3.7%	2.3%
Continued HS	5.9%	4.3%	8.6%
Dropped Out (4-year)	9.4%	6.0%	8.8%
CLASS OF 2005			
Graduated	94.7%	89.3%	84.0%
Received GED	2.6%	5.1%	3.8%
Continued HS	2.6%	2.5%	7.9%
Dropped Out	0.0%	3.0%	4.3%
CLASS OF 2004			
Graduated	91.8%	88.2%	84.6%
Received GED	2.1%	5.7%	4.2%
Continued HS	4.1%	3.3%	7.3%
Dropped Out	2.1%	2.8%	3.9%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

strategies. The technology coordinator manages the FISD technology and is supported by a technician.

District-wide, FISD has more than 500 computers, including 256 laptops. The ratio of students to computers in FISD is 2 to 1. Each of the teachers has a computer. Each board member has a laptop. The FISD Technology Office also has seven laptops that administrators and teachers can check out. FISD has computer labs in its elementary, junior high, and high school and classroom computers at the primary school.

- The elementary, junior high, and high school each have three mobile wireless labs. Each mobile lab has 25 laptops. The district started using mobile labs in 2000–01. Friona Primary School is writing a grant for a mobile lab.
- The high school also has two Business Computer Information Systems (BCIS) classrooms with 20 computers; a credit recovery lab with 11 computers; and an agricultural, woodworking, and career connections outbuilding with 12 computers.
- Every classroom has a mounted projector. The elementary school has 26 projectors in classrooms, the junior high school has 18 projectors in classrooms, and the high school has 23 projectors in classrooms. FISD plans to purchase 12 to 14 projectors for the primary school, add one projector in junior high, and add three projectors in the high school in 2008–09.

- Each classroom in the district has a teacher computer.
- Primary school classrooms have three to four student computers. The kindergarten grade classrooms have three student computers and the first grade has four student computers.
- Elementary special education classrooms have four student computers; regular education classrooms have three student computers.
- The number of student computers in junior high classrooms varies. The behavioral unit has six student computers, the life skills classroom has three student computers, the two special education classrooms have 10 student computers each, the GT classroom has four student computers, and the computer classroom has 20 computers. The number of computers in other classrooms ranges between none to three.
- The number of student computers in high school classrooms varies. The three special education classrooms have six student computers each, one English classroom has 12 student computers, and the high school library has eight student computers. The number of computers in other classrooms ranges between none to three.
- The district has nine DVD players, 30 digital cameras and camcorders, 10 scanners, 14 elmos in high school, and one smart board. The primary school teachers each have a digital camera. FISD plans to purchase smart boards for teachers in 2008–09.

FISD has a three-year computer upgrade plan. In 2004–05, FISD updated its Internet connections. In 2006–07, FISD added a mobile computer lab at the elementary school. In 2007–08, FISD updated its e-mail system. FISD plans to purchase a wireless mobile lab and classroom projectors for its primary school in 2008–09.

Technology is a high priority for FISD. FISD campus improvement plans present the integration of technology into instruction as one of its key goals at all school levels as demonstrated in **Exhibit 67**.

The district understands that its educators need to update their technology knowledge as well. To achieve this, FISD teachers received training from the technology coordinator and the Region 16 education service center on the different software programs. The technology coordinator provides training during three afternoons at the start of the school year. During the summer, the technology coordinator offers workshops on the different MS Office programs that the district pays teachers for attending. FISD teachers also attend the Texas technology conference each summer.

Some examples of how technology has been integrated into instruction at all grade levels:

- Primary and elementary teachers use palm pilots for TPRI testing.
- Pre-kindergarten students use technology twice a week with an alphabet program and a math counting and labeling program.
- Elementary school teachers use online math programs for tutorials in grade 2.
- Elementary students used technology for a project on bats in grade 2, a writing project in grade 4 for research, and a PowerPoint presentation on U.S. presidents in grade 5. Students also complete science projects on the periodic table elements.
- FISD uses electronic programs such as Lexia and My Reading Coach with its special education students.
- FISD uses the Waterford program with its bilingual students.
- Junior high students did Internet research and wrote a paper on the U.S. Constitution.
- High school AP classes use the mobile labs extensively in English and social studies.
- Students use technology in preparation for UIL competition.
- In art, the teacher did a virtual tour of a museum.
- FISD offers keyboarding classes to students in grades 2 and 3 and in junior high to improve keyboarding skills.

FISD also uses technology to increase parental involvement. In 2007–08, FISD added a parent portal on the district website allowing them to check the attendance and grades of their children. FISD invited parents to see a demonstration of the portal and to get information on how to access it. According to the technology coordinator, 200 parents attended the demonstration and signed up.

FISD also provides access to technology to all its employees. For example, the elementary cafeteria aides use Rosetta Stone, a bilingual software program, once a week to study English after school.

SERVICE LEARNING

FISD integrated service learning into its instructional program enriching students' learning experience and helping the community.

EXHIBIT 67
FISD CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN STRATEGIES
2007–08

FRIONA PRIMARY SCHOOL	FRIONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	FRIONA JUNIOR HIGH	FRIONA HIGH SCHOOL
Continue to integrate technology into classroom instruction.	Continue to integrate technology into classroom instruction.	Integrate technology throughout the instructional program at all grade levels and in all subject areas.	Continue to integrate technology into classroom instruction.
Staff development	Staff development	Technology workshops	Staff development
Integration of technology into instructional program across the curriculum (all subjects/grade levels)	Integration of technology into instructional program across the curriculum (all subjects/grade levels)	Staff development on Saturdays or after school to refresh or retrain	Integration of technology into instructional program across the curriculum (all subjects/grade levels)
Provide parent communication with K-12 Planet, a computer program that allows parents to access children's grades and attendance.	AR Enterprise networked 2007. Internet availability to staff	Develop skill levels for administrators and teachers.	Provide computer literacy for parents: - Bridges CX Online - FAFSA
Provide computer literacy for parents.	Equipment maintenance, software upgrades		Diverse library software to support reading program
Diverse library software to support reading program	Student assignments include technology.		Internet availability to staff
Internet availability to staff	Computerized TEKS access		Equipment maintenance, software upgrades
Equipment maintenance, software upgrades	24 station mobile computer lab (3 mobile labs)		Student assignments include technology.
Student assignments include technology.	New software for student word processing		Computerized TEKS access
Computerized TEKS access			Technology Leadership Academy

SOURCE: Friona ISD Campus Improvement Plans, 2007–08.

Service learning is a method of teaching, learning, and reflecting that combines academic classroom curriculum in areas such as history, science, and language with meaningful service in the community. In so doing, the district is enriching the learning experience, teaching civic responsibility, encouraging lifelong community engagement, and strengthening the community. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 describes service learning as an activity that promotes learning through active participation in service experiences; provides structured time for students to reflect by thinking, discussing, or writing about their service experience; and gives students an opportunity to use knowledge and skills such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, conflict resolution, and compromise in real-life situations. This extends learning beyond the classroom and into the community and fosters a sense of caring for others.

FISD received a three-year \$100,000 Service Learning grant in 2003–04 and has continued to implement service learning projects since the grant's completion. FISD has integrated

service learning at all grade levels. According to FISD campus improvement plans, teachers use service learning projects to incorporate higher level thinking strategies in all core subject areas.

Since 2003–04, FISD conducted multiple service learning projects. The early projects focused on Friona's history.

- A Heritage Fair organized by high school and elementary school students showcased activities illustrating Friona's culture. The event helped students realize that their cultures had a lot in common, and that their combined efforts could make a huge impact and foster greater understanding and unity in the community. During the event, Spanish class students presented Hispanic dances, and music and speech class students wrote a play about Cesar Chavez. Agriculture classes did roping and cowboy demonstrations. Fifth and seventh grade students helped at the Parmer County Museum—a historic building that Friona High School students helped renovate. The fair included a presentation by the granddaughter of Cesar Chavez about his leadership

and the importance of his legacy to all people. Three of the students who helped renovate the museum received \$1,000 scholarships from the *Amarillo Globe News*.

- Jointly with the Parmer County Pioneer Heritage Museum, FISD high school students interviewed and videotaped community members and collected photos and documents about the history of Parmer County. Through this project, students discovered that Friona was the first school district in Texas to integrate. The students applied for a historical marker from the Texas Historical Commission to document this fact for the Friona community and received it after three years. Students planned a dedication for the marker, invited the families who were involved in that first integration, and studied about racial problems of that era. Students invited Ruby Bridges, who brought integration to the New Orleans schools at age six, under presidential order, to the dedication. She came and conducted workshops for high school and elementary students about racism and violence. Each student also received a personally autographed copy of her book.
- Students adopted an orphanage in Juarez, Mexico and collected a backpack of supplies for each child. The students then visited the orphanage and distributed the supplies to the children.
- Students produced a video for the Texas Historical Commission on the Texas Plains Trail. The video is used in museums and has been shown during the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) convention.

Key service learning projects conducted in 2006–07 and 2007–08 included:

- In 2006–07, fifth grade classes and high school students hosted a Playa Lake Festival that focused on the water issues Friona faces. The project involved fieldwork, a study of Texas history, and art. Several Texas Tech University professors, authors, and scientists worked with the students to understand what playa lakes are and their significance to the town's water supply. Students also published a book about their experiences. The project culminated in a community fair on May 15, 2008, on water conservation to teach others throughout the area about the water concerns.
- Learning about teenage pregnancy in Texas motivated students to organize an awareness campaign with the focus of teaching peers and the community that Texas has the highest rate of teen parents in the U.S. The students produced videos and provided interactive workshops in all Family and Consumer Science and Health classes and conducted a label campaign on items

in the vending machines and concession stands with facts about teen pregnancy. The students also raised \$1,000 for the March of Dimes by hosting a winter formal dance.

- Students organized a committee on Internet and dating violence and identified three dating problem areas at Friona High School. The students created videos about the topic that were shown at school and in workshops that taught strategies for staying safe. The students designed an informational web page, used a blog, and disseminated facts about this problem throughout the school and community with a cell phone text-a-thon. The students wrote a dating violence policy that was approved by the principal and superintendent and presented it to the School Board at the May 2008 meeting. The project won first place at the Texas Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Leadership Conference and will be competing at the national meeting in Orlando, Florida.
- Students chose to support the Feed the Children charity in 2008. The students researched the charity and implemented a campaign with posters, videos, web pages, and announcements about child hunger throughout the world. The students also donated proceeds from the winter formal dance to the charity.
- After a student and her mother were critically injured, and officials could not find their relatives, the students organized an In Case of Emergency (ICE) project. FISD students campaigned for people to put an ICE number in their cell phones so that if injured, emergency medical personnel could call the ICE number to notify family members. The students also made cards for wallets. All high school students filled out a card and programmed their ICE numbers.
- This is the sixth year that Friona High School seniors tackle big clean-up jobs in the city of Friona. Their goals are to pay back those who have sponsored them and to be remembered as the class that worked the hardest. Students contact businesses and partners that have contributed to projects implemented by the students. The seniors then spend TAKS testing week working, free of charge, in the community. The pupils plant gardens, paint the hospital, haul trash, make museum exhibits, repair playgrounds, and work with city employees. Each business has to provide at least one employee to work with the seniors.

Friona students received several service learning awards. In 2007–08, they received an award from the Texas Association of Resource & Development Councils for Outstanding

Youth Involvement. The students also received the Mitchell A. Wilder Award for Excellence in Publication and Media Design from the Texas Association of Museums for their Texas Plains Trail video and promotion materials. In addition, several FCCLA students have won state and national gold medals for their efforts.

FISD benefited from participation in service learning projects. The benefits, according to an FISD teacher in charge of service learning, include improved attendance, fewer discipline referrals, and better grades. Students have to pass their classes in order to participate in any service learning activity. Students include their service learning projects in scholarship and college applications. Former Friona students have reported that they also got involved in community service after leaving school, usually in leadership positions.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

To recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, FISD offers a variety of stipends. FISD uses stipends to encourage teachers to get multiple certifications. As a recruitment and retention

incentive, FISD also offers a childcare center at minimum cost for employees with three- and four-year old children.

As indicated in **Exhibit 68**, in 2006–07, FISD had 108.3 teachers. FISD percentage of teachers relative to the total number of staff was below the state average of 50.7 percent.

FISD prefers to hire and retain teachers with experience. FISD teachers had, on average, 2.3 years more experience than the state average and 0.8 years longer tenure in the district than the state average. This holds true across all FISD campuses, as shown in **Exhibit 69**. In 2006–07, across all schools Friona teachers had more years of experience and more years in the district than each school's campus group.

FISD had lower percentages of beginning teachers, teachers with one to five and with six to ten years of experience, than either Region 16 or the state, as shown in **Exhibit 70**. FISD exceeded both Region 16 and the state in the percentage of teachers with 11 or more years of experience. FISD had 9 percentage points more teachers with 11 to 20 years experience and 6.1 percentage points more teachers with more than 20 years of experience than the state.

EXHIBIT 68 FISD AND STATE STAFF 2006–07

CATEGORY	DISTRICT TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF	STATE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF
Teachers	108.3	47.1%	311,466.3	50.7%
Race/ethnicity of teachers:				
African American	0.0	0.0%	29,062.2	9.3%
Hispanic	17.0	15.7%	64,759.7	20.8%
Anglo	91.3	84.3%	213,201.3	68.5%
Other	0.0	0.0%	4,443.1	1.5%
Average years of experience of teachers	13.6		11.3	
Average years of experience of teachers with district	9.2		7.5	
Turnover rate	6.8%		15.6%	
Number of students per teacher	11.6		14.7	

*Totals may not agree or equal 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 69 AVERAGE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS FISD CAMPUSES AND RESPECTIVE CAMPUS GROUPS 2006–07

CATEGORY	FRIONA ELEMENTARY	CAMPUS GROUP	FRIONA JUNIOR HIGH	CAMPUS GROUP	FRIONA HIGH SCHOOL	CAMPUS GROUP
Average years of experience of teachers	12.9	11.2	14.5	11.0	13.0	11.9
Average years of experience of teachers with district	9.2	8.3	8.9	7.4	8.2	7.4

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 70
PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	BEGINNING	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
Friona	2.8%	22.2%	16.6%	32.6%	25.8%
Region 16	6.8%	24.5%	18.1%	28.2%	22.4%
State	8.1%	29.1%	19.6%	23.6%	19.7%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

Since FISD teacher salaries are \$1,000 above the state base, the district has used stipends to retain teachers. In 2007–08, FISD paid stipends to math, science, foreign language, and special education teachers. FISD gave a stipend to teachers with bilingual and ESL certifications because a large percentage of FISD students are English Language Learners. The district also pays a stipend of \$1,500 for aides who participate in an alternative teacher certification program and reimburses certification test costs. FISD also awards teachers for staying in the district with 10-year and 15-year stipends. The stipends, according to the superintendent, have been an effective factor in retaining teachers. Indeed, FISD's teacher turnover rate was nearly five percentage points lower than the statewide rate. A board review of the current stipends pointed to the need to increase the amount of the stipends and to develop a consistent stipend policy. **Exhibit 71** shows the amount of stipends FISD considers paying in 2008–09.

FISD operates a childcare center, Discovery Kids, for children three to four years old. The childcare center was initially established as a program for pre-kindergarten children with disabilities. After the Texas Education Agency indicated that the center was not offering services to children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, the district decided to

open it to all FISD employees. In 2006–07, 76 students were enrolled. The center provides day care at minimal costs of \$3 a day or \$15 a week for a child who is enrolled full time and \$1 a day for a child who is four years old and is enrolled for half a day. The daycare center has two shifts from 7:30 AM to 4:15 PM daily. Children enrolled in the center receive breakfast and lunch free of charge. The district considers the program a benefit for teachers and other employees.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

FISD uses a wide range of strategies to meet student needs, improve academic performance, and ensure student success.

FISD has a challenging student population. In 2006–07, 76.3 percent of the FISD students were economically disadvantaged, 48.5 percent were classified at-risk, more than 60 percent were migrants, and 22 percent were English language learners. Some of the students whose families came to work in the meat packing plant or dairy farms never went to school or did not attend school beyond sixth grade. FISD has implemented strategies that effectively address the needs of the students and ensure high academic performance.

District-wide, there is an expectation that teachers do not let students fall behind or fail. When a teacher sees a student who is not doing well academically, that teacher contacts the student's parents and sets up a tutorial program for that student. Students know that teachers care about them. This is exemplified through the district's extensive tutorial program. The district offers early morning tutorials in reading and math, after school tutorials, and TAKS tutorials. In junior high, tutorials are offered during the last class period and after school. In high school, teachers also tutor students on Saturdays, if asked. The after school tutorial program is well funded. Students know that teachers are willing to stay

EXHIBIT 71
FISD PROPOSED STIPENDS (FOR DISCUSSION)*
2008–09

POSITION	STIPEND	POSITION	STIPEND
ESL Certification	\$500	Foreign language teacher	\$2,000
Bilingual	\$950	Computer teacher	\$500
Special education teacher	\$150	Composite social studies	\$1,000
Life skills	\$4,000	GT teacher	\$1,000
Agriculture	\$3,150	BCIS teacher	\$1,000
Industrial arts	\$2,500	Librarian	\$2,500
Counselor	\$3,500	FCCLA	\$1,000
Math teacher	\$500	Plato Lab	\$500
Science teacher	\$900	10 years at district	\$1,000
English teacher	\$50	15 years at district	\$2,000

*Partial list.

SOURCE: Friona ISD, 2006–07.

after school to help them. Students get progress reports every three weeks.

Additionally, the district offers teachers a daily common planning period, with time to work together and share ideas. This created close collaboration and good working relationships among teachers.

FISD has a high percentage of students identified as English language learners (ELL). In 2006–07, 37.2 percent of the students (103 out of 277) at the primary level and 28.0 percent (105 out of 375) at the elementary level were ELLs. FISD created small bilingual classes (with 11 students) at the primary and elementary levels after the large classes proved ineffective. FISD also added a bilingual aide to each class. At the secondary level, ESL classes are organized by beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.

FISD schools have also implemented instructional strategies that effectively meet their needs. Strategies used at the primary level:

- Teachers spend a lot of one-on-one with students before, during and after school.
- The primary level has 90-minute reading periods and uses a three-tier reading instructional approach. Struggling students are referred to tutorials.

Strategies used at the elementary level:

- All teachers have a common planning time in order to work together.
- Every spring, teachers take great care in assigning incoming students for the coming year to the most appropriate class, giving consideration to the teacher's personality and the other students' personalities.
- Math teachers go to training in the Sharon Wells curriculum every six weeks.
- Teachers do not allow failing grades on assignments. Students have to re-do their assignments until the grade is passing.
- Attendance calls are made daily and students who are absent must bring a note from their parents explaining their absence.
- To increase parental involvement, the school sends home notes in English and Spanish and has two billboards alerting parents to school events. To establish a relationship with and gain parents' trust, teachers have to make two positive contacts with parents.
- The school has established a caring and supportive environment. As part of the Caring About Others

program, teachers and staff keep on the look out for good deeds that students perform. These students receive school-wide recognition and a ribbon. Students' work is displayed in the hallways and the principal acknowledges it.

- Everyone at school is responsible for discipline, from the custodian to the principal.

Friona Elementary received two Governor's Excellence in Education grants, \$50,000 each, for academic improvement.

Strategies used at the junior high level:

- The school set high expectations for staff regarding student attendance and turning in all assignments.
- The school has created a student-focused not TAKS-focused environment. This reduces stress on the part of students.
- Teachers have access to data showing students' strength and weakness areas and use this information to structure their classes and provide individualized instruction.
- Teachers are encouraged to actively participate in collaborative work. To strengthen this collaboration, teachers meet every six weeks by grade level and by content area. The sixth grade teachers meet once a week.
- Teachers focus on teaching and using class time efficiently, teaching "bell to bell."
- Teachers use innovative instructional strategies such as peer teaching in math that pairs a weak math student with a strong math student.
- The school co-funded the content mastery lab, serving both special education students and regular education students who need academic help.
- Class sizes are small so that teachers can individualize instruction and spend a lot of time one-on-one with students.
- Teachers have the freedom to teach the way considered most effective to them. One of the math teachers wrote a curriculum telling a story that incorporates the TEKS.
- Students who do not meet certain academic performance standards have to attend a mandatory tutoring program for three weeks. The program is individualized.
- Pride Tribe is an incentive program rewarding students for good attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

Friona Junior High has been a *Recognized* school for two years: 2005–06 and 2006–07. In 2006–07, Friona Junior High students exceeded the performance of their comparison campus group on TAKS in all subject areas and grade levels with the exception of grade 7 math and grade 7 all tests as demonstrated in **Exhibit 72**.

Strategies used at the high school level:

- The school requires every student to be involved in at least one extra-curricular activity; this involvement increases students’ levels of connection to the school and engagement in learning. It also puts pressure on students to do well academically because if minimum standards are not met, students cannot participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Each teacher mentors five at-risk students.
- The school strengthened its science curriculum by giving all science teachers a common conference time for planning and working together, purchasing online science programs, and increasing tutoring of students.
- The principal gives teachers autonomy and supports them.
- The school offers TAKS tutorials from January on and in the summer.

COLLEGE READINESS

FISD prepares its students for post-secondary education by emphasizing the importance of college education and encourages students to participate in Advanced Placement

(AP) and dual credit courses, take the SAT/ACT, and apply to college.

FISD emphasizes the importance of college education and college readiness throughout all grade levels. The district creates college awareness using different strategies. At the elementary level, the counselor brings in persons who serve as role models to talk to students about the importance of education and college. Friona Junior High teachers frequently talk to students about higher education. For example, one of the junior high teachers gives students a survey about where they see themselves in 10 years. Friona Junior High encourages students to graduate under the Recommended and Distinguished High School program when the students reach high school. The percentage of FISD students graduating under the Recommended High School Program increased from 73.6 percent in 2004–05, to 79.4 percent in 2005–06, and to 89.9 percent in 2006–07. Friona High School brings in a former graduate who works in the admissions office of Texas A&M West Texas campus to talk to students about college and assist them with the application process. The high school teachers take students, including special education students to Amarillo College for a visit. The special education students get information on the different services and accommodations that can be received at Amarillo College. Friona High School also has a financial aid workshop for parents and students. The high school librarian helps students fill out the financial aid forms. The high school counselor helps students find and apply for scholarships. FISD offers more than 30 local scholarships. These scholarships vary from memorial scholarships to scholarships given by local businesses.

**EXHIBIT 72
PERCENTAGE OF FISD JUNIOR HIGH, CAMPUS COMPARISON GROUP,
FISD AND STATE STUDENTS MET 2007 TAKS STANDARD (IN ENGLISH)
BY SUB-TEST AND GRADE
2006–07**

PERCENTAGE OF FISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD								
GRADE	ENTITY	READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Grade 6	Friona	94%	84%					80%
	Campus Group	92%	75%					74%
	State	92%	80%					78%
Grade 7	Friona	86%	68%	97%				63%
	Campus Group	84%	71%	94%				65%
	State	85%	77%	93%				71%
Grade 8	Friona	89%	89%			74%	92%	66%
	Campus Group	87%	68%			68%	86%	57%
	State	89%	73%			71%	87%	61%

* English first administration only.
NOTE: Blank cells indicate that test not given at that grade level.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07. Met 2007 standard.

A high percentage of FISD students take AP and dual credit classes. **Exhibit 73** shows FISD, Region 16, and state performance on Advanced/Dual Enrollment courses and on AP classes and exams. FISD outperformed both the region and state by substantial margins in the percentage of students completing an Advanced/Dual Enrollment course and in the percentage of students taking an AP exam. One of the goals Friona High School set in its 2007–08 Campus Improvement Plan is to increase the percentage of students taking AP classes and the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP exams. FISD pays the fee for the AP exams.

FISD offers a wide variety of pre-AP classes. Students can choose from English I and II, AP classes in government/free enterprise, English III and IV, chemistry III, Spanish III and IV, calculus, computer science, U.S. history, biology II, and public speaking. It also offers AP Credit-By-Exam (CBE) for acceleration. FISD offers dual credit courses through distance learning with Amarillo College in English, chemistry, history, Business Computer Information System (BCIS), government, and economics. FISD students also take courses at night from South Plains College and Clovis Community College in New Mexico.

Between 79.7 and 85.9 percent of FISD students took college entrance exams as presented in **Exhibit 74**. The percentage of FISD students taking the SAT/ACT was higher than the Region 16 and statewide rates during each of these years. For the class of 2004, about 25 percent more FISD students took the SAT/ACT than the Region 16 rate or statewide rate. For the class of 2005, about 20 percent more FISD students took the college entrance exam than the Region 16 rate or the statewide rate. For the class of 2006, 15 percent more FISD students than the Region 16 rate or statewide rate took the exams. One of the goals Friona High School set in its 2007–08 Campus Improvement Plan is to increase the percentage of students scoring above the criterion on the ACT. In 2007–08, Friona High School organized an ACT review session and practice session the week before the test.

FISD also increased the percentage of its students ready for college in English language arts and math from 2004–05 to 2006–07, as shown in **Exhibit 75**. In 2006–07, the percentage of FISD students ready for higher education in both subject areas was higher than Region 16 and the state.

FISD students have high post-secondary career aspirations. An ACT survey of the FISD Class of 2006 showed that 90.2 percent of the students wanted to continue their education

EXHIBIT 73

FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE PERFORMANCE ON ADVANCED/DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND EXAMINATIONS 2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

ENTITY	2004	2005	2006
PERCENTAGE COMPLETING ADVANCED/DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES			
Friona	31.4%	30.9%	32.5%
Region 16	18.2%	17.7%	17.7%
State	19.9%	20.5%	21.0%
PERCENTAGE TESTED ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES			
Friona	34.3%	25.0%	31.7%
Region 16	12.0%	10.9%	11.1%
State	17.4%	18.4%	18.9%
PERCENTAGE OF AP EXAMINEES WITH SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION			
Friona	17.4%	28.1%	15.2%
Region 16	45.7%	46.6%	43.5%
State	53.9%	51.8%	51.3%
PERCENTAGE OF ALL AP SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION			
Friona	14.0%	20.9%	11.9%
Region 16	42.1%	43.7%	42.5%
State	49.3%	47.4%	47.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 74
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING ACT/SAT EXAMS, MEETING CRITERIA
CLASS OF 2004 THROUGH 2006**

ENTITY	STUDENTS TAKING ACT EXAMS	STUDENTS MEETING ACT CRITERIA	MEAN ACT SCORE
CLASS OF 2004			
Friona	85.9%	9.0%	18.2
Region 16	59.0%	28.5%	20.4
State	61.9%	27.0%	20.1
CLASS OF 2005			
Friona	83.3%	17.8%	19.0
Region 16	60.2%	27.1%	20.4
State	65.5%	27.4%	20.0
CLASS OF 2006			
Friona	79.7%	11.8%	18.9
Region 16	64.6%	25.4%	20.2
State	65.8%	27.1%	20.1

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS Report, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 75
HIGHER EDUCATION READINESS—TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE
FISD, REGION 16, AND STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	MATH
2004–05		
Friona	41%	39%
Region 16	42%	47%
State	39%	48%
2005–06		
Friona	31%	48%
Region 16	40%	47%
State	40%	51%
2006–07		
Friona	60%	55%
Region 16	52%	52%
State	53%	54%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

beyond high school and that 84.3 percent wanted to go to a four-year college and get a bachelor's or higher degrees. These educational ambitions were shared across ethnic/racial groups (**Exhibit 76**).

About three-quarters of students in the FISD Class of 2006 also identified their post-secondary educational major, as shown in **Exhibit 77**. Health sciences and allied health was the most commonly identified major.

FISD Class of 2006 students expressed a wide range of college/university preferences at the time the ACT was taken. Students listed universities and colleges in Texas as well as in Arizona, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Washington. The most commonly listed institutions included West Texas A&M University listed by 52.9 percent of the students; Texas Tech University listed by 39.2 percent of the students; and the University of Texas in Austin, listed by 23.5 percent of the students.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

FISD provides a wide range of healthcare related services to students and their families, improving student health, employee well-being and community involvement.

FISD employs two nurses; one nurse serving the primary and elementary campuses, and one nurse serving the junior high and high school campuses. The nurses have established and are providing the following services:

- Vision services: Using Migrant and Title I funds, FISD allots \$100 for each child for an eye exam and glasses. FISD works with an ophthalmologist in a nearby town who provides these services to FISD students.
- Medical services: FISD also uses Migrant and Title I funds to pay for doctor visits and medication.
- Dental healthcare: To improve the dental health of FISD students, FISD nurses work with a local church that purchases electric toothbrushes for FISD students. FISD nurses distribute the toothbrushes to students in grades 4 through 8 and to all staff. At the beginning of

EXHIBIT 76
FISD STUDENTS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS
CLASS OF 2006

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION	NUMBER (N=51)	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY		
			WHITE	HISPANIC	OTHER
Voc-Tech	***	2.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
2-year college degree	***	3.9%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%
Bachelor's degree	20	39.2%	37.5%	37.5%	66.7%
Graduate study	8	15.7%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Professional level degree	15	29.4%	18.8%	34.4%	33.3%
No response	5	9.8%	12.5%	9.4%	0.0%

*** Results masked to protect student confidentiality.

SOURCE: ACT High School Profile Report, The Graduating Class of 2006, Friona High School.

EXHIBIT 77
FISD CLASS OF 2006
PLANNED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL MAJORS

PLANNED POST-SECONDARY MAJOR	STUDENTS PLANNING	
	2 YEARS OR LESS OF COLLEGE	4 YEARS OR MORE OF COLLEGE
Agricultural Sciences & Technologies	0.0%	2.3%
Architectural & Environmental Design	0.0%	4.6%
Business & Management	0.0%	4.6%
Business & Office	0.0%	4.6%
Community & Personal Services	33.3%	4.6%
Computer & Information Sciences	0.0%	4.6%
Education	0.0%	4.6%
Teacher Education	0.0%	2.3%
Engineering	0.0%	7.0%
Engineering-related Technologies	0.0%	2.3%
Health Sciences & Allied Health Fields	0.0%	20.9%
Philosophy, Religion & Theology	0.0%	2.3%
Sciences (Biological & Physical)	0.0%	2.3%
Social Sciences	0.0%	7.0%
Visual & Performing Arts	0.0%	2.3%
Undecided	66.7%	23.2%
No Response	0.0%	0.0%

* Percentage may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: ACT High School Profile Report, The Graduating Class of 2006, Friona High School.

each school year and then in February during Dental Health Month, FISD purchases and distributes age appropriate toothbrushes for all students in the early childhood program and up to grade 5. FISD also distributed full-size toothpaste tubes to all students in February 2008. During Dental Health Month, the nurses go into classrooms and teach about dental health. As a result of this project, FISD nurses have seen a decrease in cavities.

- Hygiene program: FISD implemented a hygiene program in 1995. The nurses visit classrooms and

discuss the importance of bathing, washing hair, and taking care of oneself. The goal of the hygiene classes is to make students feel good about themselves, thereby boosting their self-esteem and in turn, their academic performance. The nurses also send letters to all churches in Friona asking their members to donate the small soaps, shampoos, and lotions received while staying in hotels. The nurses package these items in small bags and distribute them once a year to students in kindergarten through grade 5. According to FISD nurses, this program has been very successful.

- FISD started a hygiene and dental care program with migrant parents in 2007–08. In the dental program, these parents are taught the importance of tooth brushing from infancy and distribute infant toothbrushes. The nurses talked to parents about hygiene and distributed digital thermometers with the objective of keeping home students with an above normal temperature. FISD plans to provide healthcare related workshops for migrant parents on a quarterly basis.
- An FISD nurse teaches a puberty program to students in grade 5 about respecting themselves and others.
- FISD implemented a no nits policy. Students who are identified as having nits have to be free of nits before they are allowed to come back to school. FISD actively helps parents to address this problem. Parents whose children have nits have to come to the nurse's office so that the nurse can show them how to use the special shampoo and deal with infested bedding and clothing. As a result of this policy, FISD has seen a decrease in the number of students with nits.

FISD's healthcare related efforts involve community collaboration. In addition to the toothbrushes that one of the local churches donated, FISD collaborates with local churches, agencies such as the Parmer County Welfare Board, and local families on several projects:

- Before Christmas, church youth groups raise money and sponsor several families in need of help. Last year, the project sponsored six families. FISD nurses contact the chosen families, get their consent, and ask the parents what their children would like to get for Christmas.
- With help of church groups, FISD nurses established and keep stocked a clothes closet with warm-up type pants and tops, t-shirts, socks, and underwear for students who may need a change of clothing in school.
- Through contributions from a local church, the community established an emergency school nurse fund. The fund currently has \$3,000 and is used for families in need to purchase groceries, pay utilities, etc.

The nurses also have programs for FISD staff:

- At the beginning of each school year, the nurses implement a staff wellness clinic. A wellness clinic comes to the district and its staff performs thorough physical exams on all employees. The clinic sends a report to the district and to the employees' primary care physicians.
- FISD nurses started a big losers contest at the primary school in January 2007. Thirty out of forty-four staff participated in the program. Between January 2007 and February 2008, participants lost 471 pounds.

The nurses also implemented a weight maintenance program, dividing participants into teams. The program charges each participant a \$20 fee that is given back at the end of the year if the participant maintained his/her weight. The program not only contributes to employee wellness but also builds team spirit and trust among participants.

KEY FINDINGS AND KEY FACTORS

Friona ISD has established a culture combining caring and supporting students, high academic standards, and community involvement. FISD's culture of caring for students has many manifestations. Teachers go through training to understand children of poverty. To better understand and empathize with families where parents do hard physical labor, teachers went to visit the town's meat packing plant.

Friona's education system is built around a small school system with small classes, where teachers and administrators know all students. Instruction is individualized to a considerable extent both in the classroom and in tutorial sessions. Students are assigned to teachers who can best work with them. Teachers, according to the junior high principal and to one of the teachers, are student driven. Educators tell students explicitly or through their actions: "we believe in you."

There is strong collaboration among teachers. The staff works together through common planning periods and sharing information about students and how to help them. There is a strong camaraderie in each of the schools and the district as a whole among teachers. This camaraderie stems not only from size but also from the stake that teachers and other school employees feel in the success of the students and in the community. Friona teachers either grew up in Friona or have been residents for a long time. Friona teachers are there for a long time, longer than teachers in Region 16 or statewide.

Each student is important, and teachers and staff would do all that is possible for a student. Students are not allowed to fall behind or fail. Student needs are identified early and addressed immediately. Constant vigilance is implemented through setting high standards and ensuring that students can meet them. Teachers refuse to accept poor work from students or settle for mediocre performance. Constant vigilance is also implemented through communication with parents, tutoring, and working one-on-one with students. The district co-funded its content mastery labs to serve both special education and other students who struggle academically. Students know that teachers care about them and that teachers will stay after school or come in on Saturday to help them. Reflecting the importance of each student and

the creation of belonging to their school, Friona High School requires each student to participate in at least one extra-curricular activity.

Friona schools have implemented a positive environment. Students are constantly rewarded for good deeds, accomplishments are publicized in the school and community, student work is displayed in halls and lauded by the principal, and teachers are required to make at least two positive calls to parents. Each school has programs that reward students for caring. The primary school has a Superstar program that emphasizes a different characteristic weekly and each teacher nominates a student who exemplifies this quality. The elementary school's Caring About Others program rewards students who have helped other students. The Tribe Pride program at the junior high school rewards students for attendance, good behavior, and academics. Teachers praise students daily. The positive atmosphere is manifested on the part of the students through respect for authority, expectations of appropriate behavior, and rising to expectations. Students model behavior for new students. New students are paired with other students and are welcomed.

Teachers attribute the effectiveness of the instructional approach used to the freedom and autonomy received from their respective principals. According to teachers, "administration makes all the difference... principals stand behind their teachers." The principals give teachers instructional latitude and support them. Administration support is also seen in being responsive to teachers' requests for professional development, for instructional programs, and for technology.

FISD staff and students have a stake in their community and its welfare. Both FISD employees and students have manifested a high level of community involvement. FISD nurses provide a wide range of healthcare services, educate parents and students on health care issues, and have involved the community in multiple projects to help students and their families. Students' love for and involvement with the community have been most strikingly exemplified in the many service learning projects that FISD students have developed and implemented since 2003–04.

