Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District

Review of the CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Conducted by Resources for Learning, LLC for the Legislative Budget Board

December 2008

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

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December 5, 2008

Dr. Gene Buinger
Superintendent
Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District

Dear Dr. Buinger:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District's (HEB ISD) curriculum management system.

The report's recommendations will help Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD improve its overall performance as it provides services to district students and staff. The report also highlights model practices and programs being provided by HEB ISD's curriculum management system.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged Resources for Learning, LLC, to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

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

Respectfully submitted,

John O'Brien
Director
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cc: Mr. Jeff Burnett
        Mr. Jim Schooler
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HURST-EULESS-BEDFORD ISD

A. SITE HISTORY

This section provides contextual information about the district, including recent trends in student demographics and performance and a general comparison of property wealth with the state based on Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports. Historical information about curriculum use in the district and the impetus and processes for adopting the current curriculum were gathered through interviews, focus groups, and a review of relevant documents.

1. STARTING POINTS

Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District (HEB ISD) serves three suburban areas, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, and is located approximately 25 miles outside of Dallas. The district comprises 30 campuses, including 19 elementary schools, five junior high schools, two high schools, and four alternative or transitional schools. Student enrollment has increased less than five percent over the last five years. African American and Hispanic student populations are increasing, while the White student population is decreasing,

though the White student group is the largest ethnically-defined student group (51%). Forty-one percent of students are classified as economically disadvantaged. **Exhibit 1** provides HEB ISD enrollment and demographic data for the period from 2003–04 through 2007–08.

This report uses district performance indicators under the federal and state accountability systems. Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), federal 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). In terms of federal accountability standards, 28 campuses in HEB ISD *Met AYP* in 2007. The remaining two campuses were *Not Rated*.

Under the Texas Accountability Rating System, HEB ISD was rated *Academically Acceptable* for the period of 2003–04 through 2006–07. In 2006–07, of the nonalternative campuses in the district, two campuses were rated *Exemplary*, 18 campuses were

EXHIBIT 1
HEB ISD ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE
2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL STUDENTS	STUDENT GROUPS†						
		AA	H	W	NA	A/PI	ED	LEP
2007–08	20,392	15.0%	23.0%	51.0%	0.9%	9.7%	41.3%	12.3%
2006–07	20,209	14.4%	21.8%	53.1%	0.9%	9.7%	41.7%	11.6%
2005–06	19,954	13.8%	20.3%	55.4%	0.9%	9.6%	40.6%	10.8%
2004–05	19,426	12.5%	19.6%	57.5%	0.9%	9.5%	37.3%	10.2%
2003–04	19,482	11.9%	18.3%	59.5%	0.9%	9.3%	38.0%	9.9%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) District Reports, 2003–04 through 2006–07; Texas Education Agency, Student Enrollment and Standard Reports and Core Products, 2007–08.

rated *Recognized*, and seven campuses were rated *Academically Acceptable*.

The performance indicators of particular interest for this report are results on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). TAKS performance data are reported in (AEIS) by grade, by subject, and by all grades tested and are disaggregated by student groups: ethnicity, gender, special education, economically disadvantaged status, limited English proficient (LEP) status, and at-risk status.

Exhibits 2 through 5 provide data on HEB ISD student performance on TAKS from 2004–05 through 2006–07.

In mathematics, district performance has improved and consistently been above the state average from 2004–05 through 2006–07. All district student groups performed above their state peers for all three years, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students. All student groups improved their performance over the three-year period. (See **Exhibit 2**)

District performance in science was consistently above the state average from 2004–05 through 2006–07 and also improved over time. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, all student groups, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students, performed above the state average over the three-year period. (See **Exhibit 3**)

The three-year performance trend in English language arts and reading (ELA/reading) also shows the district performing above the state average and improving over time from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, all student groups were at or above the state average, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students. Student groups generally demonstrated improved performance over the three-year period. (See **Exhibit 4**)

District social studies performance was consistently above the state average from 2004–05 through 2006–07. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, all student groups, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students, performed above the state average. The percentage passing for all student groups increased across the three years. (See **Exhibit 5**)

Across the four core content areas, student group performance generally improved across time and increased to at or above state averages for the 2006–07 school year. However, Asian/Pacific Islander student performance was consistently

EXHIBIT 2
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—MATHEMATICS
STATE AND HEB ISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES												
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	77%	88%	64%	79%	71%	82%	87%	91%	79%	88%	93%	92%	69%	81%	62%	72%
2005–06	75%	85%	61%	73%	68%	78%	86%	89%	79%	88%	92%	89%	66%	78%	58%	68%
2004–05	72%	81%	57%	66%	64%	71%	84%	87%	76%	87%	90%	86%	62%	71%	54%	61%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
Source: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 3
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SCIENCE
STATE AND HEB ISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	71%	82%	56%	68%	61%	70%	85%	89%	77%	92%	88%	83%	60%	71%	39%	56%
2005–06	70%	80%	54%	63%	59%	66%	85%	88%	79%	86%	86%	77%	58%	68%	35%	42%
2004–05	66%	75%	49%	56%	53%	59%	81%	84%	73%	84%	83%	73%	51%	60%	28%	30%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 4
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/READING
STATE AND HEB ISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	89%	94%	84%	90%	84%	89%	95%	97%	91%	93%	95%	94%	83%	89%	67%	77%
2005–06	87%	93%	82%	88%	82%	88%	94%	96%	90%	95%	94%	92%	81%	88%	63%	74%
2004–05	83%	90%	76%	82%	77%	83%	91%	93%	87%	93%	92%	90%	76%	83%	58%	67%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 5
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SOCIAL STUDIES
STATE AND HEB ISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	89%	96%	84%	92%	84%	91%	95%	98%	93%	97%	96%	96%	83%	91%	53%	71%
2005–06	87%	94%	81%	91%	80%	90%	94%	97%	91%	97%	95%	93%	79%	90%	49%	71%
2004–05	88%	94%	82%	89%	82%	86%	94%	97%	92%	93%	95%	94%	80%	88%	52%	60%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

below the state average from 2004–05 through 2006–07. Students categorized as Asian/Pacific Islander represented 9.7 percent of HEB ISD's student population in 2006–07.

To provide a measure of school district property value, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (Comptroller) conducts a study each year that uniformly evaluates the property values within school district boundaries. Locally assessed values may vary from the Comptroller's study values. The values certified by the Comptroller's Property Tax Division are standardized in that they are deemed to be comparable across the state. Note that the values shown are final for tax year 2006. This is not the property value used for school funding calculations. Using the *Value per Student* measure from AEIS reports provides one definition of "wealth." This calculation refers to school district property value, or Standardized Local Tax Base, *divided by* the total number of students. At the state level, the per-pupil amount is created by dividing by the total number of students in districts with property value. Some districts do not have property value; their students are not included. For HEB ISD, the standardized local tax base, per-pupil value is $389,838 compared to the state per-pupil value of $305,208.

2.   CURRICULUM HISTORY

In 1999, HEB ISD began a process to evaluate curriculum looking at curriculum and best practices developed in other districts. In particular, the district conducted cost evaluations for purchasing a curriculum management system from Houston ISD or purchasing a program from a commercial vendor. Through this process, the district determined that because of demographic differences, the Houston ISD curriculum would not meet the needs of their students. District staff also determined that the district did not want to buy an off-the-shelf commercial product that would be "teacher proof." There was consensus that it would be important to involve teachers in the development of curriculum. The district used locally developed curriculum documents until they began the curriculum revision process in 2001.

3.   IMPETUS FOR CHANGE/DATA-DRIVEN ADOPTION

Based on the results of a Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) board effectiveness audit, HEB ISD's school board asked the district in 2001 to create a new vision, mission, and strategic plan for a quality curriculum that was focused on continuous improvement. The board wanted a system that was flexible and that could be easily updated to reflect state changes to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). There was also agreement that the TEKS required specification to ensure curricular consistency. HEB ISD then gathered promising practices from other districts with strong curriculum management systems, such as Houston, Aldine, and Katy ISDs.

Plans to improve the district's curriculum system were based on three district goals: 1) to better prepare HEB ISD students for a global economy and specifically address the needs of an influx of economically disadvantaged students and nationalities new to the district; 2) to align the curriculum system more closely with the TEKS; and 3) to ensure links between the written, taught, and assessed curriculum.

District leadership looked at a variety of issues, including changing accountability standards and demographics, and again reviewed a variety of products in choosing an approach to curriculum revision and management. District leadership concluded programs available from other districts, education service centers, or commercial vendors did not correspond well to what the district was looking for, and, therefore, were ready to commit funds to develop an internal system specific to HEB ISD.

Between 2001 and 2003, the district engaged in a TEKS alignment process for grades K–12 in all core content areas. Training was provided for curriculum coordinators on the alignment process and a district format for writing alignment documents was established.

In 2003–04, district staff attended professional development on curriculum development and engaged in a structured study of curriculum research, including studies from Just for the Kids, the Association for Effective Schools, the Texas Reading Initiative, McREL, and the Fenwick English process, as well as best practices in high performing Texas districts.

In 2004, the Deputy Superintendent for Instruction, the Deputy Superintendent for Business Operations, and the Assistant Superintendent for Technology presented a vision of a curriculum revision process to get funding and buy-in from the board. An overview of best practices in increasing instructional productivity pointed to the need for curriculum revision. The specific rationale was to:

- ensure equal access to a quality curriculum for all students;
- align the district's curriculum;
- identify district content standards;
- incorporate principles of the Core Knowledge (CK) curriculum;
- provide instructional resources (content and instructional strategies); and
- develop benchmark assessments for core academic areas.

The curriculum revision process occurred in four phases. Phase one included the curriculum alignment process with TEKS, as well as vertical alignment of content. Phase two involved developing the instructional resources and strategies for the new curriculum, adding cross-disciplinary strategies where appropriate, and developing six-week benchmark assessments aligned to the curriculum. Curriculum rollout and teacher training occurred in phase three. Phase four is annual updating of curriculum based on analysis of student performance data and stakeholder input. The process was led by curriculum coordinators in the four content areas and carried out by districtwide curriculum writing teams. The curriculum writing teams, which consisted of district master teachers, met four times per year as a group and on an individual basis as needed. Team members received initial one-day Curriculum Bootcamp training from Dr. John Crain and additional training was conducted throughout the writing process.

HEB ISD started the first phase of the curriculum development cycle for core content areas during the 2003–04 school year. Teachers began using the online curriculum the following year (2004–05) and work began on phase two, during which additional instructional resources were added. The rollout of phase two occurred during 2005–06. The next year, phase three of the curriculum was presented to teachers during August professional development sessions. After phase three, curriculum coordinators developed timelines for revising core area curricula.

At this time, district staff also determined that a curriculum management software system would assist in the district's goal to provide "a comprehensive, consistent, fully integrated platform that facilitates stakeholders at all levels in maintaining a continuous focus on improving student learning and mastery." The software would provide tools for curriculum and instruction,

data analysis and reporting, assessment, and collaboration. A committee composed of the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Operations, the Assistant Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Assistant Superintendent for Technology, technology specialists, principals, assistant principals, curriculum writers, and teachers examined proposals from four commercial vendors of automated curriculum systems. Using an evaluation rubric, the committee eliminated each of these products from consideration and determined that the Blackboard Learning System (Blackboard), an online system that the district already subscribed to for professional development activities, would effectively serve as a platform for electronic access to and sharing of the curriculum. Because Blackboard was easy to operate and provided a simple and open platform for posting and revising the curriculum, staff determined that this system offered long-term sustainability.

HEB ISD also adopted the Continuous Improvement systems framework, which was developed by Malcolm Baldrige, during the 2004–05 school year. The seven elements of the system are: leadership; strategic planning; student, stakeholder, and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results. HEB ISD uses the Baldrige Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) method as a process for continuous review and improvement. The process includes the following:

- Plan – develop curriculum according to district guidelines
- Do – implement curriculum

- Study – examine multiple data sources to determine if curriculum is effective and viable
- Act – make adjustments to curriculum as needed

Exhibit 6 summarizes the curriculum development process in HEB ISD from 2001–02 through 2007–08.

B. DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM

This section describes the curriculum and curriculum management systems implemented in the district, the implementation plan and process, and staff reactions to implementation. Costs, technical assistance, and additional resources used in the district are also described. Data was collected from district documents, review of curriculum documents, and product documentation available through websites, interviews, and focus groups.

1. DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM AND/OR CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PRODUCT

HEB ISD's curriculum combines a TEKS foundation, Core Knowledge principles and practices, and Malcolm Baldrige continuous improvement processes.

The TEKS serve as the foundation of the existing HEB ISD curriculum. All HEB ISD curricula are TEKS/TAKS vertically aligned. Additionally, board policy on curriculum development mandates TEKS-specific assessments. Grade-level student learning profiles, which are aligned with the TEKS and TAKS, provide detailed student expectations and content standards.

This TEKS foundation is integrated with Core Knowledge (CK) standards and continuous improvement principles that guide the development and instruction of the curricula and, ultimately,

EXHIBIT 6
HEB ISD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE
2001–02 THROUGH 2007–08

2001–03	• TEKS alignment K–12, core content areas • Development of format for written alignment documents
2003–04	• Curriculum Bootcamp for curriculum administrators • Curriculum-related professional study • Selection of curriculum elements and template • Development of curriculum revision proposal for board • Selection of curriculum writing teams • Development of Letter of Agreement and compensation schedule for curriculum writers • Training for curriculum writers • Development of curriculum development timeline (Phase I) • Phase I curriculum writing • Selection of online curriculum delivery system • Deployment of online curriculum • Curriculum overview sessions for principals • Development of district and campus performance objectives
2004–05	• Roll out of Phase I curriculum • Modification of board policy and district improvement plan to reflect commitment to curriculum development • Integration of Core Knowledge principles • Development of curriculum development timeline (Phase II) • Phase II curriculum writing • Development of professional development matrix aligned with new curriculum plan • District adoption of Continuous Improvement framework
2005–06	• Roll out of Phase II • Roll out of district professional development matrix • Development of curriculum development timeline (Phase III) • Phase III curriculum revisions • Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) curriculum walkthrough training for principals and elementary assistant principals
2006–07	• Roll out of Phase III • Development of curriculum development timeline (Phase IV) • Integration of Continuous Improvement resources and training • Written procedures for analyzing state and local assessments • Development of curriculum checklists • Revisions to administrator evaluations
2007–08	• Roll out of Phase IV • Development of ongoing curriculum development timeline • Development of districtwide plan to increase student performance on AP exams • Completion of curriculum checklists • Development of assessment schedule • District staff attends professional development on building a balanced assessment system • Training in Continuous Improvement for all teachers • TASA curriculum walkthrough training for secondary assistant principals • Stakeholder input on graduate profiles to guide revision to the district's five-year strategic plan • Curriculum development for gifted/talented, Pre-AP/IB, and AP/IB courses • Curriculum development for other academic areas • Integration of technology applications into content area curriculum

SOURCE: HEB ISD Curriculum Department, Curriculum Alignment Process, 2001–02 through 2007–08.

student assessment. Core Knowledge is K–8 curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch designed to offer a shared core curriculum to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge, grade by grade. All grade levels subscribe to the same curriculum practices and system, including the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs. While only two HEB ISD elementary schools are formally certified as CK schools, the CK approach is integrated throughout all curricula for HEB ISD elementary schools.

Exhibit 7 provides a summary of key elements of the Core Knowledge approach, which was incorporated into the locally developed HEB ISD curriculum in 2004.

Currently, all curriculum guides are developed locally and include a student learning profile for each grade level and subject area. Each guide outlines what content will be mastered and assessed for each subject area and grade level at six-week intervals. The district has aligned each subject with the TEKS and TAKS by student performance objective. Initially, consultants assisted district coordinators and curriculum writing teams to

develop the appropriate level of specificity for each locally defined content standard, to assess the vertical and horizontal alignment, assist with integration of CK, and identify instructional resources, content resources, and best practices. Curriculum is stored in the Blackboard Learning System, a subscription-based, online tool that allows district staff to store and manage content.

Components in HEB ISD's curriculum include:

- scope and sequence documents;
- curriculum guides;
- vertical alignment documents;
- horizontal alignment documents;
- exemplar lessons; and
- benchmark tests.

Exhibit 8 summarizes HEB ISD curriculum components as of April 2008. For the purpose of this review, only specific elements of curriculum support in the four core content areas for grades 2, 4, 7, and 11 were analyzed. Analyses indicated that a curriculum system, scope and sequence documents, and curriculum guides are available

EXHIBIT 7
KEY ELEMENTS OF CORE KNOWLEDGE

Solid:	A body of lasting knowledge should form the core of a PreK–8 curriculum. Such solid knowledge includes, for example, the basic principles of constitutional government, important events of world history, essential elements of mathematics and of oral and written expression, widely acknowledged masterpieces of art and music, and stories and poems passed down from generation to generation.
Sequenced:	The Core Knowledge Sequence provides a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade. This sequential building of knowledge not only helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn, but also helps prevent repetition and gaps.
Specific:	The Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by its specificity. By clearly specifying important knowledge in language arts, history and geography, mathematics, science, and the fine arts, the Core Knowledge Sequence presents a practical answer to the question, "What do our children need to know?"
Shared:	One goal of the Core Knowledge Foundation is to provide all children, regardless of background, with the shared knowledge they need to be included in our national literate culture.

SOURCE: Core Knowledge, http://coreknowledge.org/CK/about/index.html, May 2008.

EXHIBIT 8
STATUS OF HEB ISD CURRICULUM COMPONENTS
APRIL 2008

CURRICULUM SUPPORTS	IN PLACE	TEKS ALIGNED	TAKS ALIGNED	GRADE LEVELS	SUBJECT AREA*	UPDATE
Curriculum System	✓ Yes No {Blackboard}	✓ Yes No	✓ Yes No	✓ 2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓ Yes No
				✓ 4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	✓ M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ HS	✓ M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
Scope and Sequence	✓ Yes No {Local}	✓ Yes No	✓ Yes No	✓ 2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓ Yes No
				✓ 4	✓ M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	✓ M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ HS	✓ M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
Curriculum Guide	✓ Yes No {Local}	✓ Yes No	✓ Yes No	✓ 2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓ Yes No
				✓ 4	✓ M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	✓ M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ HS	✓ M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
Lesson Plans	✓ Yes No {Exemplars**}	Yes No	Yes No	✓ 2	M ✓R ✓S SS	Yes No
				✓ 4	M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ 7	M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	
				✓ HS	M ✓E ✓S ✓SS	

*M=Mathematics, R=Reading, E=English Language Arts, S=Science, SS=Social Studies
**Based on review of the district's detailed subject-area curriculum development schedules. Requirement to use exemplar lessons is campus-based.
SOURCE: HEB ISD Curriculum Documents, 2007–08.

through HEB ISD's curriculum management system, are TEKS and TAKS aligned, and are regularly updated.

2. DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Board policy addressing curriculum development was revised to include the requirement that all teachers teach the district curriculum beginning with its implementation in 2004–05. The district's strategic plan also reflects this requirement. Teachers access their curriculum guides by grade level and subject area, which are divided into six-week intervals. Curriculum checklists serve as supplemental guides to online Blackboard curriculum material and contain both TEKS and CK items.

Within Blackboard, teachers select a six-week period to view a list of required course content. Each list includes a student learning profile, a scope and sequence, reference materials, supplemental resources, and links to general websites. This uniformity ensures that course content is taught consistently districtwide. Teachers said that the curriculum system provided good continuity for students transferring between schools in the district. It also ensures that vertical alignment is in place so students are prepared for the next grade level. According to the district's subject-area curriculum development schedules, exemplar lessons were to be developed in most subject areas/grade levels. However, due to the uniformity of the curriculum, lesson plans are not required by the

district; instead, lesson plan use is determined at the campus level.

Staff describes Blackboard as a flexible and fluid tool. It allows curriculum writers and curriculum coordinators to make ongoing revisions and new updates to the curriculum in response to student performance on benchmark assessments and the TAKS test or to new state requirements on the TEKS and programmatic adjustments. These updates to Blackboard can be made at any time during the school year and allow teachers to modify their instruction based on student outcomes. Teachers said that while the requirement was to meet the TEKS, the curriculum on Blackboard was very flexible and provided multiple resources and strategies for meeting student needs.

For many teachers and principals, HEB ISD's curriculum is considered a "living" document which teachers use daily. Teachers are given great latitude in *how* they teach the curriculum. The district believes that for the curriculum to be effective in affecting student performance, it should be continually modified in response to ongoing student learning assessment, including benchmark tests such as previously released TAKS tests, TAKS results, district performance objectives, and other instructional needs.

Curriculum coordinators in core areas, instructional facilitators in identified schools (based on test scores and population), and teachers direct the ongoing curriculum revision process. Major curriculum changes are distributed to teachers each August, before the start of school.

Student success and performance are crucial to the writing and review process. For example, if test scores reflect an area of needed improvement, revisions to the curriculum can be made quickly and posted to Blackboard before the next six-week

assessment is conducted. All changes made to the curriculum go through a systematic process of analysis and validation before they are made and posted to Blackboard. Teachers are then notified of changes through staff development.

Teachers stated that the educational environment in HEB ISD is very data driven. Some teachers indicated the disaggregation of data was helpful in assessing how students are learning. Other teachers reported that instructional days were lost to too much testing, and time was insufficient for review of objectives which are difficult for students to master.

The district regularly surveys parents, teachers, principals, and students to gain a fuller appreciation of the expectations, needs, and challenges identified by stakeholders. Being responsive to the needs of its constituents is a key component of the continuous improvement process that is built into the HEB ISD curriculum process. If the district determines a need for additional funding to support curriculum development, it brings a proposal to the board in the form of a decision tree. The district must demonstrate that the request for funds is tied to specific student accomplishments and achievement of goals. If it is not, the board will not approve funds.

Maintaining teacher support for the curriculum is a district focus. Ongoing and embedded professional development is one approach used by the district. Staff reported that professional development is readily available and strong. Teachers attend curriculum-related professional development before the start of each school year. Significant changes to the curriculum are announced at this time. Teachers also attend professional development throughout the year and must complete general and subject-specific curriculum-related training

according to a district five-year professional development matrix.

Teachers indicated support for the curriculum process in HEB ISD. Staff described ongoing collaboration and communication among teachers who teach the same content area, curriculum coordinators, instructional facilitators, and principals. Teachers stated that this process was facilitated by continuity provided through the curriculum system.

Additionally, the district provides informal and formal avenues for staff input. For example, the district has a formal complaint process in place for teachers to voice their concerns over the curriculum and benchmark assessments. The Professional Consulting Committee (PCC) addresses complaints and concerns and channels those to the deputy superintendents and the assistant superintendents who respond to the teacher directly. In addition, there is frequent informal communication between campus-level and district office staff.

3. CONTRACTED SERVICES FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/DELIVERY

HEB ISD curriculum coordinators and curriculum writing teams participated in Dr. John Crain's Curriculum Bootcamp training. This training addressed processes for using TEKS guidelines in the creation of district-specific curriculum as well as curricular alignment. In addition, external consultants are used as necessary in the curriculum writing process, for example, to check curriculum alignment.

HEB ISD utilizes Regional Education Service Center Region XI (Region 11) for special education and administrative services but not for instructional needs.

4. COSTS INCURRED IN OBTAINING CURRICULUM GUIDES/SERVICES

In selecting a product for managing the curriculum, the district looked at multiple programs and decided in 2005–06 to adapt an existing product used in the district, Blackboard, for use as the district curriculum management system. This decision was based on the long-term stability of the vendor in addition to price considerations.

Costs for the Blackboard management tool, combined with the resources to develop and revise curriculum, represent a $700,000 investment over three years. The district views the curriculum management and development system as an important ongoing activity of the district. From this perspective, the cost of the original initiative has been amortized across a ten-year period, which results in a cost of just over $8.00 per pupil per year from 2006–07 through 2015–16. Additionally, the district had a one-time expenditure of approximately $400,000 on curriculum materials. This expenditure is not included in the amortization.

Exhibit 9 provides information on the development costs of the district's curriculum management system from 2003–04 through 2005–06.

The district does have recurring costs associated with annual updates to and maintenance of the system, as well as staff development. The annual budget for curriculum is set at $100,000 in the Educational Operations Base Budget. This amount represents approximately 1.05 percent of the educational operations budget and 1.26 percent of instructional and instructional-related expenditures for 2006–07, as reported to TEA.

The district also spends an average of $28,065 from technology funds annually for the Blackboard curriculum support functions. This amount

EXHIBIT 9
CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS
2003–04 THROUGH 2005–06

COST CATEGORIES	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	TOTAL
Curriculum Writers:				
Year 1 92 teachers at $2,500 per teacher plus benefits	$233,999	$0	$0	**$233,999**
Year 2 63 teachers at $1,500 per teacher plus benefits	$0	$96,052	$0	**$96,052**
Year 3 130 teachers at $1,500 per teacher plus benefits	$0	$0	$197,888	**$197,888**
Consultant Fees	$4,500	$7,783	$7,560	**$19,843**
Proofing and Editing	$5,235	$57	$0	**$5,292**
Benchmark Assessment Writers:				
Year 1 1 teacher at $600 plus benefits	$611	$0	$0	**$611**
Year 2 39 teachers at $1,500 plus benefits	$0	$60,880	$0	**$60,880**
Resources and Materials	$12,882	$1,130	$0	**$14,012**
Technology	$0	$0	$9,292	**$9,292**
Curriculum Management System: Blackboard				
Subscription Price				
Blackboard Learning System	$0	$0	$16,875	**$16,875**
Blackboard Community System	$0	$0	$0	**$0**
System Check-One time requirement	$0	$0	$0	**$0**
Training for Reporting, Curriculum, and Assessment	$0	$0	$2,500	**$2,500**
Total	**$257,227**	**$165,902**	**$234,115**	**$657,244**

SOURCE: HEB ISD Contracts and District Records, 2003–04 through 2005–06.

represents approximately 1.0 percent of data processing services expenditures for 2006–07, as reported to TEA.

5. OTHER CURRICULAR RESOURCES USED IN THE DISTRICT

HEB ISD uses multiple pedagogical approaches to support its curriculum. These programs do not specify content but provide strategies for curriculum delivery. Training is required or recommended, as described in the district's professional development matrix. Examples of required training include the following:

- Read Write Connection is a 48-hour institute required for all K–6 language arts teachers. Taught by HEB ISD master teachers, participants explore and develop process writing skills, reading/writing connections, and strategies to teach grammar through writing.

- Larson's Math Software provides individualized skills practice and problem-solving practice. This training is for all K–8 mathematics teachers. Training

includes learning how to adjust content and curriculum to match district timelines.

- Social Studies Alive (K–4) and History Alive (5–11) programs teach a pedagogical approach using spiral learning, multiple intelligences, and cooperative interaction for all social studies teachers.

- The 5-E Model is incorporated into K–6 science professional development. This method is based on interactive exploration. During the introduction of new material, students use their prior knowledge as a framework for further learning. The 5 E's of the model include: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate.

C.   STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes the structures to support implementation based on a review of board policy documents, district organizational charts and job descriptions, and interview and focus group data.

1.   SUPPORTING DISTRICT AND BOARD POLICIES

The district contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for its policy development and updates. TASB categorizes all policies according to seven major areas of school operations: basic district operations, local governance, business and support services, personnel, instruction, students, and community government relations. TASB developed policies designated as (LEGAL) or as (EXHIBIT) to comply with legal entities that define district governance. Policies in addition to these may be created to reflect local school board decisions. TASB designates such policies as (LOCAL) or (REGULATION).

HEB ISD has adopted nine board policies that reference curriculum for the grade levels and core areas considered in this management review. Three policies are local.

AE (EXHIBIT) Educational Philosophy
Objective 4 of this policy states a "well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students."

AE (LOCAL) Mission Statement
This policy states that "HEB ISD will maintain the quality of personnel and rigorous curriculum and instructional design necessary to meet the challenge of successfully educating our increasingly diverse population in an atmosphere that fosters strong character, encourages academic, physical, and creative achievement, and ensures student safety.."

BQ (LEGAL) Planning and Decision-Making Process
This policy states that the board will clearly define the roles and duties of district and campus staff in the area of curriculum.

EHAA (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (All Levels)
This policy states the district shall provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills at appropriate grade levels in the foundation (four core areas) and enrichment curriculum according to Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.002(c).

It also states that all children in the district participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs through TEC §28.002(g).

EHAB (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Elementary) and EHAC (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary) provide similar provisions to EHAA (LEGAL).

EFA (LOCAL) Instructional Resources: Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption

This policy states that "although trained professional staff members are afforded the freedom to select instructional resources for their use in accordance with this policy and the state-mandated curriculum, the ultimate authority for determining and approving the curriculum and instructional program of the district lies with the board."

BBD (EXHIBIT) Board Members Training and Orientation

This policy describes school board development. Primary areas of responsibility are creating a shared vision, providing guidance and direction, requiring accountability for measuring progress toward the vision, and promoting the district's vision for education. Specifically, BBD states "the board adopts goals, approves student performance objectives, and establishes policies that provide a well-balanced curriculum resulting in improved student learning."

EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development

This policy specifically addresses curriculum development and management for HEB ISD by: 1) describing the curriculum philosophy; 2) requiring vertical alignment for scope and sequence; 3) affirming the need for a systematic, ongoing review and development of curriculum; and 4) requiring the design and implementation of a curriculum management plan.

This policy contains outlines of the roles and responsibilities of board members, the superintendent, deputy superintendent, principals, and teachers. Board members set curricular expectations, approve scope and sequence plans, and provide adequate funding for staff development related to curriculum design and delivery. The

superintendent reports annually to the board about implementation of the curriculum. The deputy superintendent is responsible for a master long-range plan, including curriculum development, revisions, program evaluation, and student assessment. Principals monitor implementation of the curriculum by observing classes, holding curriculum planning meetings, and periodic review of curriculum documents. Teachers are required to use the district curriculum. Teachers also develop and revise the curriculum.

According to district policy, curriculum guides are developed locally for all grade levels, courses, and subjects. These include academic standards, instructional resources, and assessments.

Other policies may reference curriculum but are not related to grade levels or the four core areas of interest to this report.

Additionally, HEB ISD's curriculum management plan articulates how board policies will guide the curriculum development process. The purpose of a curriculum management plan is to ensure a high quality, systematic, ongoing cycle of curriculum development and review. The plan consists of the following components: 1) curriculum philosophy; 2) list and duties of the curriculum management team; 3) definitions of written, taught, and assessed curriculum; 4) components of grade-level curriculum guides; 5) procedures for TAKS and benchmark data analysis; and 6) a four-phase curriculum development cycle.

HEB ISD's curriculum management plan states that the district's curriculum management team has the responsibility for an ongoing process of design, evaluation, and review. This team is comprised of the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Operations, Assistant Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Education, assistant

superintendent for technology, directors of special education, visual and performing arts and career and technology, curriculum coordinators, coordinator for professional development, principals, and teacher advisors.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EFFECTIVENESS AS RELATED TO CURRICULUM

HEB ISD has a well-coordinated organizational structure which facilitates the development and delivery of curriculum. The instructional leadership team comprises the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Operations and Assistant Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Education. Also reporting to the deputy superintendent are eight content area curriculum coordinators.

Major curriculum-related responsibilities and duties for the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Operations include:

- direct instructional and curriculum services to meet students' needs;
- plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;
- apply research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process;
- work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum documents based on systematic review and analysis;
- involve instructional staff in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs;
- ensure the use of technology in the teaching-learning process;

- participate in the district-level decision-making process to establish and review the district's goals and objectives and major classroom instructional programs of the district;
- obtain and use evaluative findings (including student achievement data) to examine curriculum and instruction program effectiveness; and
- secure consultants, specialists, and other community resources to assist principals and instructional staff in attaining objectives.

Major curriculum-related responsibilities and duties for the Assistant Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Education include:

- direct instructional and curriculum services to meet students' needs;
- plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs with teachers, principals, and instructional support personnel, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;
- apply research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process;
- involve instructional staff in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs;
- ensure the use of technology in the teaching-learning process;
- plan the necessary time, resources, and materials to support accomplishment of education goals;
- obtain and use evaluative findings (including student achievement data) to examine curriculum and instruction program effectiveness;

- secure consultants, specialists, and other community resources to assist principals and instructional staff in attaining objectives;

- interpret and implement the policies established by federal and state law, State Board of Education rule, and local board policy in curricular and instructional areas; and

- articulate the district's mission, instructional philosophy, and curriculum implementation strategies to the community and solicit its support in realizing district's mission.

Administrators and teachers describe curriculum coordinators, who report directly to the deputy superintendent, as crucial personnel. By regularly meeting with both teachers and principals, they become conduits of information between the two groups. Curriculum coordinators meet together twice monthly to examine student performance data across the district. This helps ensure alignment of curricular efforts.

The coordinators in each core area (science, social studies, mathematics, and language arts), instructional facilitators employed by some schools (based on test scores and population), and teachers on the curriculum writing team direct the curriculum development process. The coordinators are responsible for analyzing data, identifying districtwide concerns, developing action plans, and working with the curriculum writing team. The curriculum writers are selected based on their expertise in a subject area, track record of student high performance on TAKS, support of district initiatives and philosophy, and skill in working collaboratively. Teachers can also volunteer to be considered for participation in curriculum writing teams.
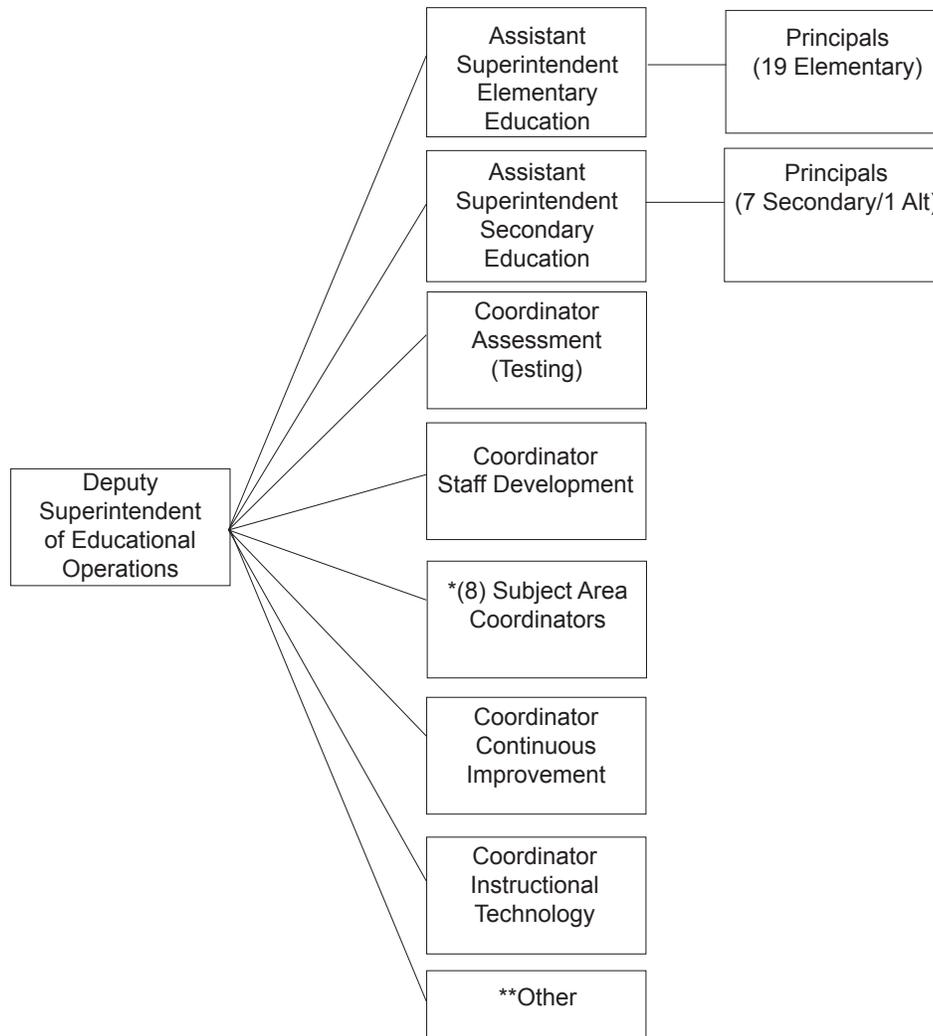
Major curriculum-related responsibilities and duties for the content area coordinators include:

- plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;

- apply current research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching/learning process;

- secure consultants, specialists, and other community resources to assist principals and instructional staff in attaining objectives;

- work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum documents based on systematic review;

- provide leadership and expertise in addressing specific strategies for teacher/student preparation for state-mandated tests;

- involve instructional staff in evaluating and selecting instructional materials and textbooks to meet student-learning needs;

- articulate the district's mission, instructional philosophy, and curriculum implementation strategies to the community; and

- ensure the inclusion of technology in curriculum and professional development (mathematics and science).

Some HEB ISD schools have instructional facilitators assigned to assist the campus administrators in coaching teachers and directing the curriculum on their campus. Master teachers who have been pulled out of the classroom to work on the campuses designated as "academically at-risk" hold these positions.

Exhibit 10 illustrates HEB ISD's district organization as it relates to curriculum.

EXHIBIT 10
HEB ISD CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION, 2007–08

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                                                ┌─────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐
                                                │   Assistant     │        │   Principals     │
                                                │ Superintendent  ├────────┤ (19 Elementary)  │
                                                │  Elementary     │        │                  │
                                                │  Education      │        └──────────────────┘
                                                └─────────────────┘
                                                ┌─────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐
                                                │   Assistant     │        │   Principals     │
                                                │ Superintendent  ├────────┤(7 Secondary/1 Alt)│
                                                │   Secondary     │        │                  │
                                                │   Education     │        └──────────────────┘
                                                └─────────────────┘
                                                ┌─────────────────┐
                                                │  Coordinator    │
                                                │  Assessment     │
                                                │   (Testing)     │
                                                └─────────────────┘
                                                ┌─────────────────┐
                                                │  Coordinator    │
        ┌─────────────────┐                     │Staff Development│
        │    Deputy       │                     └─────────────────┘
        │ Superintendent  │                     ┌─────────────────┐
        │ of Educational  ├─────────────────────│*(8) Subject Area│
        │  Operations     │                     │  Coordinators   │
        └─────────────────┘                     └─────────────────┘
                                                ┌─────────────────┐
                                                │  Coordinator    │
                                                │  Continuous     │
                                                │  Improvement    │
                                                └─────────────────┘
                                                ┌─────────────────┐
                                                │  Coordinator    │
                                                │  Instructional  │
                                                │   Technology    │
                                                └─────────────────┘
                                                ┌─────────────────┐
                                                │    **Other      │
                                                └─────────────────┘
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*Science, Social Studies, Math, Title I, Special Education, Language Arts K–5, Language Arts 6–12, PreK and Core Knowledge
**Director Special Education, PEIMS Director, Coordinator Guidance Counselors, Coordinator Advanced Placement, Coordinator Health Services, Director Visual & Performance Art, Career & Technology, Coordinator Student Services, Coordinator Bilingual/ESL, Director Information Services, Coordinator Media Services
SOURCE: HEB ISD Organizational Chart, 2007–08.

HEB ISD's organizational structure provides adequate support for curriculum development and review. Administrators and teachers reported ready access and ease of coordinating communications, planning, and resources. Effective coordination of HEB ISD staff facilitates a focus on student performance and enables efficient processes for adapting curriculum and instructional strategies as necessary.

3. SCHOOL AND DISTRICTWIDE MONITORING TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION

HEB ISD conducts systematic curriculum monitoring through electronic tools, observations, and data analysis.

By accessing courses through Blackboard and comparing the information to the curriculum checklist, campus administrators can see how often teachers are accessing the curriculum and what is being taught on any given day. However, curriculum checklists are still under development in some subject areas/grade levels.

Classroom walkthroughs are another form of monitoring conducted by administrators.

Principals, assistant principals, and content area coordinators have been trained in the Dr. Carolyn Downey three-minute walkthrough method. Principals and assistant principals provide feedback about the taught curriculum to teachers in the form of informal or formal notes and emails. Teachers are supposed to receive a minimum of three walkthroughs per year, although teachers reported this was not consistent across the district. Some teachers thought the frequency of visits was "about right," while others said their principal never or rarely conducts walkthroughs.

Finally, the results of student performance on the benchmark tests and TAKS assessments are analyzed to measure the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. The district's instructional leadership team is comprised of the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Operations, the Assistant Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Assistant Superintendent for Technology. This team analyzes district data, identifies districtwide concerns, and notifies the superintendent, curriculum coordinators, and principals as appropriate for the development of action plans. Campus principals also identify campuswide, grade-level, and individual teacher concerns. Student performance is tied to performance evaluations, including those for the superintendent, deputy superintendent,

assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals.

Some teachers reported that the multiple assessments used in the district decrease instructional time. Constant monitoring of the curriculum was mentioned as a specific problem. For example, the Science Department uses frequent benchmark testing. Staff indicated that there was insufficient time to review material on the benchmark tests due to the impact it would have on maintaining the pace promoted by sequenced curriculum in Blackboard.

D.   DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a summary and description of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations based on document review, site visit data, and the cost analysis. District practices are compared to professional standards.

The standards guiding the identification of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations provided in this review come from the combined efforts of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). These standards, the AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems, are tightly aligned with the research on factors that impact student performance and were developed with broad input from practitioners and education experts. (See **Exhibit 11**)

EXHIBIT 11
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

STANDARDS	QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEM INDICATORS	
Standard 1: Vision and Purpose The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.	**Vision and Purpose**	
	1.1	Establishes a vision for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders
	1.2	Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support
	1.3	Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision
	1.4	Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community
	1.5	Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services
	1.6	Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate
Standard 2: Governance and Leadership The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.	**Governance**	
	2.1	Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system
	2.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system
	2.2	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations
	2.3	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board
	2.4	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources
	2.5	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations
	2.6	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations
	Leadership	
	2.7	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness
	2.8	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs
	2.9	Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals
	2.10	Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership
	2.11	Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction
	2.12	Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel
Standard 3: Teaching and Learning The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.	**Teaching and Learning**	
	3.1	Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills
	3.2	Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher-order thinking skills to investigate new approaches to applying their learning
	3.3	Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels
	3.4	Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice
	3.5	Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity
	3.6	Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning
	3.7	Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment

EXHIBIT 11 (CON'T.)
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

STANDARDS	QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEM INDICATORS
Standard 3: Teaching and Learning (Con't.)	3.8 Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning
	3.9 Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning
	3.10 Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals
	3.11 Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction
Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.	**Documenting and Using Results**
	4.1 Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and free of bias
	4.2 Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning
	4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance
	4.4 Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders
	4.5 Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness
	4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence
	4.7 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations
Standard 5: Resources and Support Systems The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose, and to ensure achievement for all students.	**Human Resources**
	5.1 Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities
	5.2 Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)
	5.3 Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff
	5.4 Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable
	Financial Resources
	5.5 Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement
	5.6 Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures
Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.	**Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**
	6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning
	6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen and communicate with stakeholders
	6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system
	6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders
	6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders

EXHIBIT 11 (CON'T.)
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

STANDARDS	QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEM INDICATORS
Standard 7: **Commitment to Continuous Improvement** The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.	**Commitment to Continuous Improvement** 7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results) 7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement 7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning 7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels 7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals 7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders 7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement 7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide 7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts

SOURCE: AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems, March 2008.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

> **HEB ISD's board policies provide the vision and foundation for the district's curricular plan.**

HEB ISD's locally developed board policy provides a solid framework for curriculum development and implementation. Policy *EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development* describes the district's curriculum philosophy, outlines the curriculum development/adoption process and staff responsibilities, requires implementation of scope and sequence and vertical alignment documents, affirms the need for a systematic, ongoing review and development of curriculum, and requires the design and implementation of a curriculum management plan. Teacher use of the district's automated curriculum system also is required by this policy,

and this requirement also is incorporated into the district's strategic plan. Thus, board policy provides a clear mandate for district decision-making related to curriculum. This has enabled HEB ISD to complete a long-term curriculum development and implementation process culminating in districtwide use of an internally developed, high-quality product.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (1.2) communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support; (1.5) ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services; (1.6) reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate; (2.1) establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system; (2.5) builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as steward of the

system's resources; (2.9) creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs; (2.11) provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership; (3.10) ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals; and (7.9) provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts.

> **HEB ISD creates clear and consistent expectations for student learning through its automated curriculum.**

HEB ISD has been involved with internal curriculum development since the late 1990s. The district's internally created curriculum management framework has evolved with input and feedback from teachers and administrators to yield a quality, automated curriculum that HEB ISD staff uses exclusively to develop lesson plans and delivery strategies. The automated structure enables timely revision of the curriculum as necessary based on student performance data. Administrators have a quick and concise overview of teacher lesson plans and monitoring tools ensuring consistent curriculum delivery.

Administration and staff consistently reported that the district's expectation for curriculum implementation is nonnegotiable. Although it is a living document that is continuously revised and updated during the school year, teachers are expected to implement the curriculum in real time. Teachers may choose how to implement the curriculum, but the curriculum is clearly prescribed

by the district. Consequently, staff reported having confidence that students across the district received coherent and consistent instruction because of the system.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (1.2) communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support; (1.3) identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision; (1.5) ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services; (3.1) develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills; and (3.11) coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction.

> **HEB ISD engages in systematic collaborative research and data analysis to inform curriculum development and instructional decisions.**

HEB ISD is committed to data-driven decision-making as part of its continuous improvement process. Modification of the curriculum flows from review of student performance data, is ongoing, and occurs as needed. Analysis occurs at the district and campus levels, including identifying patterns within particular grade levels and by individual teachers. The automated system allows for administrators, curriculum coordinators, and teachers to analyze data and respond to student instructional needs quickly with efficiently disseminated curricular changes.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (2.8) provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance data; (4.2) ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning; (4.3) conducts systematic analyses of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance; and (4.6) demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> **HEB ISD's process for monitoring curriculum implementation lacks consistency and a formative focus.**

HEB ISD provides several avenues for formative and systematic monitoring of curriculum implementation and effectiveness, including lesson plan review, review of the electronic curriculum checklist, walkthroughs, and analysis of student performance data. Additionally, the district supports these monitoring strategies through board policy, a detailed curriculum management plan, and a district organizational structure to support curriculum monitoring. Despite the strong foundation the district has built for monitoring the implementation of its curriculum, the process for conducting classroom observations is inconsistent and lacks a formative focus.

The district began training staff members to conduct three-minute walkthroughs based on the Downey model in 2005–06. Currently, guidelines requiring the number of observations

exist but are implemented inconsistently across the district. Additionally, campus-level staff reported varying numbers of observations occurring and varying levels of feedback from observations. An inconsistent implementation of the walkthrough guidelines results in less accurate and inconsistent measures of curriculum implementation and effectiveness.

The district should adopt an administrative regulation which clarifies board policy regarding the expectations of administrators for monitoring curriculum implementation. The regulation should formalize the number of walkthroughs required of administrators and provide guidelines as to the type and quality of feedback that should be given to teachers. With adoption of this regulation, the walkthrough process will be modified to better fulfill its intent to provide consistent and formative curriculum monitoring. Central office should collect information about the number of visits made each semester. Additionally, the district should consider providing those that conduct classroom walkthroughs additional training on the importance of providing formal and informal feedback, which promotes professional growth opportunities for teachers.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standard: (7.6) monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders.

> **HEB ISD's reliance on benchmark assessments allows little flexibility for teachers to fully address student learning needs.**

In HEB ISD, results of student performance on benchmark tests and TAKS assessments are analyzed to measure the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. Currently benchmark assessments are administered once per six weeks for each subject area tested on the TAKS. Student performance is tied to staff performance evaluations, including those for the superintendent and the deputy superintendent.

During interviews, HEB ISD staff reported that while the district's focus on analysis of student performance data to drive curricular revision is helpful, it is also problematic. Some teachers reported that the multiple assessments used in the district decrease instructional time. These staff members indicated that data from benchmark tests was informative but that it also took time to conduct assessments and that time for applying student data results, such as reteaching, was limited due to the requirement to keep pace with scope and sequence documents. For example, the Science Department uses frequent benchmark testing. Staff indicated insufficient time to review material on the benchmark tests due to the impact it would have on maintaining the pace promoted by sequenced curriculum in Blackboard. Teachers reported struggling to find a balance between following the curriculum guides and meeting the learning needs of students.

The district should consider reducing the number of benchmark tests to be administered during a semester. Moving from a six-week to a nine-week benchmark assessment schedule would reduce the number of instructional days required for conducting assessments, assist teachers in maintaining the pace of the district's scope and sequence, and would allow more time for reteaching.

The fiscal impact of reducing the number of benchmark exams from one every six-week period to one each nine-week period is based on the $68,637 in stipends and benefits the district originally invested in developing benchmark assessments beginning in 2003–04. The district would not need to develop new assessments but could realign existing assessments to correspond to the nine-week intervals. This would also require realignment of the assessments with the curriculum guides and checklists, which are divided into six-week intervals. The cost to realign six-week assessments to a nine-week schedule is estimated at a one-time cost of $21,000, which allows for 30 persons at $700 each. Including benefits of 12 percent or $2,520, the total one-time cost to the district would be $23,520 ($21,000 + $2,520). This alignment revision could begin in spring/summer 2009 for implementation in fall 2009.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standard: (7.4) ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Adopt an administrative regulation which clarifies board policy regarding the expectations of administrators for monitoring curriculum implementation.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Consider reducing the number of benchmark tests to be administered during a semester.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($23,520)
TOTAL	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($23,520)**