

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August 22, 2002

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

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present our performance review of the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD).

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

I have made a number of recommendations to improve DSISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations-model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers and staff. This report outlines 63 detailed recommendations that could save DSISD \$844,742 over the next 5 years, while reinvesting \$189,695 to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach \$655,047 that the district can redirect to the classroom.

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

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

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary Overview

Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation (Exhibit 5)

In January 2002, the Comptroller announced her intent to conduct a review of the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD). Onsite work began on April 2, 2002. Based upon nearly six months of work, this report identifies DSISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 63 recommendations could result in net savings of \$655,047 over the next five years.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TSPR in Dripping Springs ISD

In January 2002, Comptroller Rylander chose DSISD for a Texas School Performance Review because its fund balance was well below the optimum at 0.3 percent and because of the challenges presented by the district's mold crisis. On February 19, 2002, Comptroller Rylander officially announced the review and assumed all associated expenses.

Comptroller Rylander contracted with MGT of America, Inc. to assist with the review of Dripping Springs ISD at a cost of \$105,000. The team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held one public forum at the high school, on April 2, 2002 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted small focus group sessions with teachers, principals, parents and community members.

In an effort to ensure that all stakeholders had an opportunity to provide input, the review team sent surveys to teachers, students, central office administrators, principals, support staff and parents. A total of 559 respondents answered surveys: 108 central administrators and support staff; 9 principals and assistant principals; 102 teachers; 190 parents; and 150 students completed written surveys as part of the review. Details from the surveys and public forums appear in **Appendices A through F**.

The review team also consulted two databases of comparative educational information maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)-the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

DSISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The selected peer districts were Burnet Consolidated,

Eanes, Lake Travis, Wimberley and Marble Falls. TSPR also compared DSISD to district averages in the TEA's Regional Education Service Center XIII (Region 13), in which DSISD is located, and to the state as a whole.

During its nearly six-month review, TSPR found that the district had taken significant and positive steps to increase its dangerously low fund balance and to deal with the mold crises. The board adopted a 2001-02 budget with reductions totaling \$413,055 achieved primarily through district reorganization and letting vacant positions go unfilled. The board also made a tough, but necessary, decision when it eliminated the optional homestead exemption. To pay for mold remediation at the primary school and the administration building, the district sold \$5.2 million in tax maintenance notes.

Additionally, Moody's Investor's Services upgraded the district's bond rating from Baa2 to A3. Moody's cited the reasons for this significant jump in ratings to elimination of the optional homestead exemption, improved financial condition and the growth in property values. Moody's also applied the ratings upgrade to the district's current \$34.5 million in general obligation debt. TSPR applauds the sacrifices the district has made as it works toward regaining solid financial ground.

While many efficiencies have been achieved over the last few months, TSPR's challenge during this review was to develop sound recommendations to move the district out of crises management mode into a more effective and focused approach to planning for growth. TSPR developed 63 recommendations to improve district operations and save taxpayers \$844,742 by 2006-07. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach \$655,047 by 2006-07.

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**. Many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct fiscal impact but would improve the district's overall operations.

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller's office and MGT of America, Inc. wish to express appreciation to the DSISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent Mary Ward, district employees, students, parents and community residents who helped during the review. Special thanks goes to Superintendent Mary Ward who arranged for meeting rooms, organized the findings meeting, responded to data requests and accommodated the review team's needs.

Dripping Springs ISD

Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) is located in Hays County, 19 miles west of Austin in the City of Dripping Springs, a community with a very small commercial tax base and a population of more than 10,000. In 2001-02, the district served 3,311 students in four schools: a primary school, an intermediate school, a middle school and a high school. In addition to the schools, the district has a central administration building, which houses the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative; a maintenance/transportation facility; and a sports complex.

The district is predominantly Anglo and middle to upper-income. Eighty-eight percent of its students are Anglo, 11 are percent Hispanic and less than 1 percent are African American. Economically disadvantaged students make up 8 percent of the district's students as compared to the state average of 50 percent. The district employs more than 450 staff; 225 (50 percent) are teachers. **Exhibit 1** compares DSISD demographic characteristics to its peer districts.

Exhibit 1
Student Demographic Characteristics of DSISD, Peer Districts,
Region 13 and the State
2001-02

District	Student Enrollment	Percent Anglo	Percent Hispanic	Percent African American	Percent Other	Economically Disadvantaged
Dripping Springs	3,311	87.7%	10.6%	0.6%	1.1%	8.1
Eanes	7,260	87.9%	5.0%	0.5%	6.6%	2.1
Lake Travis	4,376	85.8%	11.2%	0.8%	2.2%	9.5
Marble Falls	3,677	68.1%	28.3%	2.1%	1.5%	41.6
Burnet Consolidated	2,948	80.6%	17.8%	1.2%	0.5%	42.1
Wimberley	1,734	88.8%	9.2%	0.8%	1.2%	16.8
Region 13	279,074	52.4%	35.0%	9.6%	3.0%	36.8
State	4,150,741	40.9%	41.7%	14.3%	3.1%	50.5

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2001-02.

The district's 2000-01 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) overall passing rate was 93.1 percent compared to the state average of 82.1 percent and the regional average of 82.9 percent. The district is rated Recognized and 73.2 percent of its students graduate under the state's recommended high school program. While the district has maintained Exemplary schools, as rated by TEA, it spends only 44.4 cents of every education dollar on instruction-significantly less than the state average of 52 cents. DSISD spends so much less than the state on instruction due to much higher than average debt service and capital expenditures (presumably for facilities).

On August 1, 2002, TEA released the TAAS results for 2001-02. DSISD received an overall Recognized rating, the same as its 2000-01 rating. According to these latest reports, all four of the district schools retained an Exemplary rating. Because this information came late in the review process, and because information regarding the cumulative test results will not be available until November 2002, the AEIS data presented throughout the rest of this report reflects 2000-01 information.

The district has experienced a student enrollment increase of 14.8 percent over the last five years (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2
DSISD Enrollment from 1997-98 through 2001-02

Year	Enrollment	Percent Change from Previous Year
1998	2,885	-
1999	3,014	4.5
2000	3,090	2.5
2001	3,197	3.5
2002	3,311	3.8
	Change from 1998	14.8

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01 and PEIMS, 2001-02.

DSISD's 2001-02 budget is more than \$23 million. The district has relied on the local property tax for as much as 72 percent of its funding in 2001-02 and as little as 51 percent in 1997-98. DSISD's assessed property value has more than doubled over the last five years. **Exhibit 3** presents the

assessed property value, tax rate, levy and tax collections for DSISD for 1997-98 through 2001-02.

Exhibit 3
DSISD Change in Property Value and Tax Rate
and the Percentage of Taxes Collected to the Total Levy
1997-98 through 2001-02

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Assessed property value	\$503,708,612	\$540,196,340	\$597,465,003	\$723,735,096	\$1,090,064,701
M&O tax rate	1.3767	1.4451	1.413	1.500	1.3482
Interest and Sinking tax rate	0.5155	0.5249	0.437	0.333	0.2617
Total tax rate	1.8922	1.97	1.85	1.833	1.6099
Tax levy	\$9,297,299	\$10,382,220	\$11,053,103	\$13,801,361	\$16,682,159
Total tax collections	\$9,179,899	\$10,509,138	\$11,831,655	\$13,820,634	N/A
Percent collected to levy	98.7%	101.2%	107.0%	100.1%	N/A

Source: External Audit Reports 1998 through 2001; Comptroller's Office, Property Tax Division; DSISD Business Office.

The district's tax rate declined from a high of \$1.97 in 1998-99 to a low of \$1.61 in 2001-02. The district eliminated the optional homestead exemption to enhance revenues and reduce the tax rate. This, in turn, moved DSISD away from the \$1.50 maintenance and operations tax cap to \$1.35.

Overall, the review found that DSISD has many exemplary programs, and did an excellent job of responding to its mold crisis. As the district works to improve its services and prepare for continued growth, it faces the following challenges:

- improving planning efforts;
- enhancing federal, state and local revenues; and
- ensuring that procedures are documented.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Improve Planning Efforts

Develop a long-range strategic plan that is directly linked to the district budget. The district lacks a strategic plan that links all of the departments' and schools' goals together and is tied to the budget. The planning process is fragmented thus impeding effective monitoring of progress toward the district's goals and objectives. By bringing the current fragmented planning efforts together and ensuring that each central office department develops goals and objectives that are clearly linked to the educational mission of the district, DSISD will be better prepared to meet the challenge of anticipated continued enrollment growth.

Develop and implement a plan to insure healthy indoor air quality in all district buildings. Poor preventive maintenance contributed to the mold problem at the primary school. Drain holes that were installed to allow moisture to escape actually were plugged or not constructed as planned; landscaping was installed in a manner that blocked weep holes; many sinks in the building had minor leaks that over the years caused moisture accumulations; some undetected minor roof leaks may have contributed to the mold issue; and new sidewalks were installed after the original construction of the school that caused water to flow towards the building. A good preventive maintenance program will prevent or provide early detection of mold and contribute to longer life for district facilities and equipment.

Develop and implement a sound energy management policy. While the board instructed a Facilities Committee to work on developing a policy for energy conservation, this work was put on hold as the district focused on the mold crisis. An energy policy will provide the district with the focus and commitment needed to realize savings in energy dollars.

Adopt and implement staffing formulas for all applicable positions. The district uses informal standards based on industry standards for staffing its custodial services, but lacks staffing formulas for food service, transportation, maintenance and other services. It also lacks staffing formulas for administrative positions. Adopting and implementing staffing formulas will guide the district's hiring and planning efforts and will become increasingly important as the district continues to grow.

Evaluate the District Long Range Plan for Technology annually to determine progress and revise as necessary. DSISD has not updated its District Long Range Plan for Technology since 1998. Consequently, the plan is not keeping pace with the needs of the district's students and staff. By evaluating the technology plan annually and revising it as necessary, the district could better ensure that the plan's goals and strategies are consistent with student and user needs, and that it is aligned with the Texas Long Range Plan for Technology.

Enhance Federal, State and Local Revenues

Maintain adequate compensating balances to avoid bank charges or invest all excess funds in TexPool to maximize interest earnings. DSISD does not maintain adequate balances in its checking accounts to avoid service charges. This lack of attention to the district's checking account balances has caused the district to incur monthly banking charges in some cases, and to lose interest earning on cash held in checking accounts rather than in higher yielding investment instruments. By constantly monitoring and maintaining minimum bank balances, the district should avoid bank fees.

Request state reimbursement for all eligible transportation. DSISD is not claiming all the miles that it could for state reimbursement in its regular education transportation program. All students riding buses are transported before and after school to the transfer point where they switch buses and continue their route. The mileage for transporting students to the middle school transfer point can be included as part of regular route mileage. In 2001-02, the district recorded 81,535 as "other" mileage and could only estimate that most of this mileage was associated with the transfer function. By properly reporting these miles to TEA, the district will receive an additional \$22,431 per year in mileage reimbursement.

Increase Formal Documentation of Procedures

Develop operating procedures manuals for key functional areas. While the district has an updated policy manual, central offices lack documented procedures manuals to ensure that staff are fully integrating those policies into their day-to-day processes. The development of necessary procedures is especially critical as the district begins to lose its institutional memory as staff retire and/or leave the district. Formally documenting these procedures not only will help the district to ensure continuity as key staff retire or leave the district, it will provide staff an opportunity to review existing processes and determine if they represent the most efficient and effective means for accomplishing desired outcomes.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

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

- **DSISD provides training to prospective board members to help them understand board roles and responsibilities.** The superintendent provides a training session, the School Board Candidate Academy, to prospective school board candidates to help clarify board member roles and responsibilities. This opportunity helps prospective candidates make a much better informed decision about whether or not they would be willing to serve in this capacity.
- **The district uses campus instructional facilitators to enhance student performance, provide staff development and teacher mentoring opportunities.** DSISD pays a stipend to one designated teacher at each school to provide half-time instructional and curricular resources to campus teachers, administrators and students and to work as a liaison between central and campus staff. By using instructional facilitators, the district saved salary funds, and increased staff development efforts and mentoring activities for both new and experienced teachers.
- **The "Subs R Us" program saves the district money in substitute teachers, while allowing teachers more planning time.** The "Subs R Us" program at the primary school trains volunteer parents to be substitute teachers and allows teachers half-day planning periods. The district saves \$60 per day or \$30 per half day for substitute teachers, and teachers have time to do monthly team planning. Additionally, the program increases parental involvement.
- **DSISD operates an on-site child care program for its employees.** In 1997, several teachers on maternity leave proposed to a campus principal that they would return to work if allowed to house a childcare center on the campus. The teachers researched other Texas school districts with similar programs and established the childcare center in 1997-98 with eight children, ages 3-6 months old, in one room at the primary school. It was originally incorporated as a non-profit corporation independent of the district, under the management of a parent advisory board, but is now

operated by the district. District administrators said that the childcare center has helped recruit and retain district staff.

- **DSISD contracts with Hays County to collect its taxes.** As part of budget reduction efforts, DSISD eliminated its tax office in 2000-01 and entered into a contract with Hays County to collect the district's taxes. This effort not only resulted in net savings of nearly \$68,000 annually to the district, but also high collection rates, which equaled more than 100 percent of the levy for the past three years.

Savings and Investment Requirements

TSPR recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that could be redirected into the classroom, an area that has been asked to conserve as the district has focused on the mold crisis and on replenishing the fund balance. The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums. Proposed investments of additional funds usually are related to increased efficiencies or savings or improved productivity and effectiveness.

TSPR recommended 63 ways to save DSISD \$844,742 in gross savings over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities will cost the district approximately \$189,695 during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of \$655,047 by 2006-07 (**Exhibit 4**).

**Exhibit 4
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Dripping Springs Independent School District**

Year	Total
2002-03 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$104,559
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$142,922
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$142,922
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$142,922
2006-07 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$142,922
One Time Net (Costs) Savings	(\$21,200)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2002-07	\$655,047

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation

highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exhibit 5 Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total 5-Yr (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1 District Organization and Management							
1	Create an index to all meeting minutes and store all board minutes and supplementary minutes in a fire-rated and secure cabinet. p. 25	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,600)
2	Purchase a portable public address system to enhance communication at board meetings. p. 26	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,000)
3	Develop operating procedure manuals for key functional areas of the district's operation. p. 29	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Reorganize the DSISD central office and update the district's organizational chart to show accurate reporting structures. p. 33	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Revise the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	superintendent's evaluation instrument, paying specific attention to the rating scale. p. 35							
6	Establish a formalized cross-training program for support personnel. p. 37	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7	Adopt a school-level administration staffing formula. p. 41	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8	Develop a long-range strategic plan and planning process that is directly tied to the district budget. p. 48	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
9	Implement a program evaluation model beginning in the 2002-03 school year. p. 49	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10	Conduct an annual evaluation of legal services and related fees and seek periodic proposals for legal services. p. 52	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$83,485	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 1	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$83,485	(\$5,600)
Chapter 2 Educational Service Delivery								
11	Realign the duties and responsibilities of the assistant superintendent for	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Human Resources and Learning. p. 64							
12	Design a central student data management system for the comprehensive evaluation of programs. p. 65	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,600)
13	Increase Career and Technology Education course offerings through Austin Community College as dual credit courses or through distance learning. p. 89	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 3 Community Involvement

14	Expand DSISD Educational Foundation fundraising efforts. p. 105	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$0
15	Develop a centralized system for tracking volunteer information. p.106	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 3	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$0

Chapter 4 Personnel Management

16	Complete the process of updating job descriptions and establish a system to regularly update job descriptions with input from employees and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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	supervisors. p. 118							
17	Integrate human resources databases into the RSCCC system. p. 119	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
18	Adopt and implement staffing formulas for all applicable positions to help the district determine whether its departments are appropriately staffed as the district continues to grow. p. 129	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
19	Develop and adopt a consistent way to set expectations for non-instructional personnel performance appraisal. p. 131	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
20	Develop and implement professional development plans for every type of position in the district. p. 133	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 5 Facilities Use and Management

21	Develop and implement a comprehensive preventive maintenance program to insure healthy indoor air quality in all	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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	Office conduct a complete energy audit of all DSISD facilities. p. 160								
	Totals-Chapter 5	\$8,980	\$8,980	\$8,980	\$8,980	\$8,980	\$44,900	\$0	
Chapter 6 Asset and Risk Management									
29	Maintain adequate compensating balances to avoid bank charges or invest all excess funds in TexPool to maximize interest earnings. p. 168	\$27,020	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$156,716	\$0	
30	Ensure full compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act. p. 170	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
31	Conduct a feasibility study on using district employees to do the annual physical inventory of assets. p. 175	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 6	\$27,020	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$156,716	\$0	
Chapter 7 Financial Management									
32	Adopt the budget at the functional level. p. 189	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 7	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Chapter 8 Purchasing and Warehousing									
33	Establish written procedures to ensure that the district complies with procurement laws and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	guidelines. p. 200							
34	Implement a purchasing module and begin processing purchase orders on-line. p. 201	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
35	Conduct an inventory of the warehouse on a quarterly basis and adjust the accounting records accordingly. p. 203	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36	Establish written procedures to ensure that all textbooks are inventoried annually. p. 206	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
37	Implement an automated textbook tracking system. p. 207	\$0	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$5,860	(\$2,590)
38	Establish contracting policies and procedures to ensure contracts are obtained and monitored. p. 210	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 8	\$0	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$5,860	(\$2,590)
Chapter 9 Computers and Technology								
39	Create a technology staff development plan to increase the technical proficiency of both district and school-level technology	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	personnel. p. 216							
40	Revise the district technology plan to include specific actions, positions responsible and timelines, as well as provisions for periodic plan evaluation and revision. p. 219	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41	Revise the current data security plan to include additional key components of a disaster recovery plan, including standard backup procedures. p. 222	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
42	Create a procedure for controlling technology equipment inventory. p. 224	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
43	Create a district training plan for instructional staff that is aligned with current teacher standards. p. 225	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 9	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Chapter 10 Transportation								
44	Request state reimbursement for shuttle mileage as part of regular route mileage. p. 238	\$44,862	\$22,431	\$22,431	\$22,431	\$22,431	\$134,586	\$0
45	Establish an incentive plan to	\$0	\$1,852	\$1,852	\$1,852	\$1,852	\$7,408	\$0

	decrease bus driver absenteeism and turnover. p. 239								
46	Develop alternative methods of funding extracurricular transportation. p. 242	\$2,000	\$12,339	\$12,339	\$12,339	\$12,339	\$51,356	\$0	
47	Use the district's e-mail system to improve the efficiency of the field trip scheduling and billing processes. p. 243	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
48	Include a "ride along" in each driver's annual evaluation. p. 245	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
49	Establish a bus replacement policy. p. 248	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
50	Improve enforcement of the district policy on bus discipline by developing a written and agreed-upon procedure for staff at all levels to follow. p. 250	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
51	Practice bus evacuation drills twice per school year. p. 252	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
52	Provide opportunities for reinforcement of driver skills. p. 253	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

53	Implement heat reduction measures on all regular route buses. p. 255	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$9,410)
Totals-Chapter 10		\$46,862	\$36,622	\$36,622	\$36,622	\$36,622	\$193,350	(\$9,410)
Chapter 11 Food Services								
54	Create employee-level goals related to goals set in the Child Nutrition Department improvement plan. p. 261	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
55	Develop strategies to increase the identification of students eligible for free and reduced-price meal benefits. p. 267	\$0	\$1,470	\$1,470	\$1,470	\$1,470	\$5,880	\$0
56	Turn off vending machines in Dripping Springs Middle School during the lunch serving periods. p. 268	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
57	Adopt food service productivity standards and staff cafeterias accordingly. p. 270	\$0	\$40,264	\$40,264	\$40,264	\$40,264	\$161,056	\$0
Totals-Chapter 11		\$0	\$41,734	\$41,734	\$41,734	\$41,734	\$166,936	\$0
Chapter 12 Safety and Security								
58	Create an energy manager and safety coordinator position. p. 276	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
59	Create district and campus-level	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	safety and security advisory committees to provide strategic direction in the area of safety and security. p. 277							
60	Create a safety and security component for new employee orientations. p. 280	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
61	Create a crisis response flipchart tailored for bus drivers. p. 281	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
62	Create a School Traffic Safety Committee to develop a plan to improve safety on US Highway 290. p. 282	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
63	Require districtwide enforcement of sign-in and visitor badge procedures. p. 284	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 12	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Total Savings	\$138,258	\$176,621	\$176,621	\$176,621	\$176,621	\$844,742	\$0
	Total Costs	(\$33,699)	(\$33,699)	(\$33,699)	(\$33,699)	(\$33,699)	(\$168,495)	(\$21,200)
	Net Savings (Costs)	\$104,559	\$142,922	\$142,922	\$142,922	\$142,922	\$676,247	(\$21,200)

Total Savings	\$844,742
Total Costs	(\$189,695)
Grand Total	\$655,047

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This section of the report reviews the organization and management of the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) in six sections:

- A. Governance
- B. Policies and Procedures
- C. District Management
- D. School Management and Site-Based Decision-Making
- E. Planning and Evaluation
- F. Legal Services

The organization and management of a school district requires cooperation among the elected board, the superintendent and district staff. To meet the needs of DSISD students, the board and superintendent must function together as a leadership team. The board sets goals and objectives for school district operations, determines the policies, approves the plans to implement those policies and provides the funding necessary to carry out the goals and plans.

BACKGROUND

Predominately located in Hays County (with 100 parcels of property in Travis County), Dripping Springs ISD is approximately 19 miles west of Austin, Texas. The district operates four campuses along with a central administrative office, a special education cooperative and separate transportation and support service facilities.

For this review, two databases maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) were used to compare educational and financial information: the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). DSISD selected five peer districts for comparison purposes: Burnet Consolidated, Eanes, Lake Travis, Marble Falls and Wimberley.

The Texas Education Agency has rated the district Exemplary in the Accountability Rating System for the years 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The district was rated Recognized in 2000-01.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. GOVERNANCE

The DSISD's policy BDB (local) states that the board consists of seven trustees serving terms of three years, with elections held annually. The terms of one-third of the trustees, or as near to one-third as possible, expire each year.

The current board membership is shown in **Exhibit 1-1**.

Exhibit 1-1
DSIsd Board of Trustees
2001-02

Name	Title	Term Expires	Board Member Since	Occupation
Mike Figer	President	2004	1996	CPA
Leonard Olson	Vice President	2005	1999	Special Assistant
Bill Brock	Member	2004	2001	Engineer
John W. Moore	Member	2005	1999	Minister
Susie Dudley	Secretary	2003	2000	Homemaker
Eddie Oliver	Member	2003	2000	Supervisor
Richard Stark	Member	2003	2000	Camp Owner, Retired Educator

Source: DSISD superintendent's office, March 2002.

The DSISD board meets on the third Thursday of each month in the Dripping Springs High School library. Board workshops begin at 5:00 p.m. and the regular board meetings generally begin at 7:00 p.m. If necessary, special and/or closed sessions are conducted after the regular meetings. A special board meeting also can be scheduled at other times depending on the nature and/or urgency of the reason for the meeting. The average number of special board meetings per month is two. Board meetings may be televised if a special issue is being presented but, generally, the meetings are not televised.

DSISD and most of its peer districts have one regular board meeting a month. Wimberley ISD did not provide information on the number of board meetings per month. Lake Travis and DSISD generally have two special board meetings per month, twice as many as the other districts (Exhibit 1-2).

Exhibit 1-2
Regular and Special Board of Trustees Meetings Per Month
DSISD vs. Peer Districts
2001-02

District	Average Number of Regular Board of Trustees Meetings Per Month	Average Number of Special Board of Trustees Meetings Per Month
Dripping Springs	1	2.0
Burnet Consolidated	1	0-1
Eanes	1	1.0
Lake Travis	1	2.5
Marble Falls	1	0.5
Wimberley	N/A	N/A

Source: MGT of America, from data provided by each school district, April 2002.

The superintendent, two board members and the board president set the agenda for the board meetings the Thursday prior to each board meeting. The board president participates in every agenda -setting meeting. So that each board member participates in the agenda-setting process, the two board positions on the agenda-setting committee rotate each month. Any board member, staff or community member may suggest agenda items.

To place a complaint item on the board agenda, an individual must first try to resolve the issue with the district employee connected to the problem for example, with a teacher, principal, guidance counselor or central office staff. If the problem remains unresolved, the complainant may take the issue to the superintendent. If no solution is reached here, the complainant may ask to be put on the board agenda.

The board meetings, which general last three hours, open with student/school/staff recognition followed by briefings from central office

staff. The superintendent requires district staff to update the board regularly on all aspects of educational programs and district operations. During the public forum, each speaker has three minutes to address the board. The remainder of the meeting is dedicated to old and new business, as well as board action items.

The five key roles and responsibilities of the DSISD board include adopting goals and evaluating outcomes; adopting and evaluating policies; hiring and evaluating the superintendent and delegating all administrative duties; approving the school district's budget and setting the tax rate; and communicating with the community. Compared to its peer districts, DSISD had the highest board-related expenditures for the 2000-01 school year totaling \$66,103. Board expenditures in peer districts for 2000-01 were Lake Travis \$51,393; Marble Falls \$11,303; Burnet \$18,835; Eanes \$47,681; and Wimberley ISD \$43,061. Legal expenses have contributed to the higher board costs at DSISD, which is discussed under section F. **Exhibit 1-3** details the category and amount of each expenditure.

**Exhibit 1-3
DSISD Board of Trustees
General Fund Expenditures
2000-01 School Year**

Category of Expenditure	Total
Paraprofessional and Support Salary	\$1,000
Payroll Expenditures	\$124
Legal Services	\$41,041
Miscellaneous Contract Services	\$3,471
Supplies	\$3,600
Travel and Subsistence	\$975
Travel School Board	\$7,913
Liability Insurance School Board	\$6,587
Election Expense	\$1,056
Miscellaneous Operating Expenses	\$333
Total	\$66,100

Source: DISD Superintendent's Office, Expenditures Report, 2002.

FINDING

The superintendent's secretary mails board packets the Friday before each board meeting. Board members unanimously agreed that the information is sufficient, appropriately organized and provides the data needed to make informed decisions. The review team examined four board packets. Each packet included an agenda; executive summary worksheet for each recommended action item with background notes, fiscal notes, recommendation and information such as motion by, seconded by and vote count; supporting information for agenda items; committee reports; budget amendments requests and check registers including check number, date paid, payee and amount.

COMMENDATION

DSISD provides board members with complete packets to help them make data-based decisions.

FINDING

DSISD has a strong board-superintendent relationship based upon mutual trust and open communication.

The healthy board-superintendent relationship stems from effective communication. The board and superintendent discuss ways to improve communication at start and end of the year and during the board self-evaluation process. The board and superintendent jointly constructed the superintendent's evaluation instrument and selected the Board Self-Evaluation Instrument. To strengthen their relationship, the superintendent and board members attend the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Summer Leadership Conference, TASB/Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) State Convention, Legislative Sessions, TASB Grassroots, Special Education Programs and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Awareness.

Occasionally, the board and superintendent plan dinners and include spouses to get to know each other better - professionally and socially.

Several comments in the individual interviews and responses to some pre-interview questionnaires confirm the strength of the board-superintendent relationship. Principal interview comments include the following statements:

This is without a doubt, the finest and most caring school board with whom I have worked. Students definitely come first with this board. They are very dedicated and know the issues. They are willing to meet as often as necessary to be well informed. They are not micro-managers and are

outstanding listeners. They participate in school activities, visit our campuses for the sake of being informed and work to build consensus on every issue. I feel like every administrator has the opportunity to build professional as well as personal relationships with the members of the board. We spend many, many hours together and the relationship that we have been able to build has made us all more effective.

The board-superintendent relationship is very solid. The board members are clear on their roles and responsibilities and there is no micromanagement on the part of the board.

The board has been highly supportive of my campus (and me) and has allowed freedom for site-based decision-making.

The entire board does a good job of resisting micromanagement. Board members do not overextend their power...

The public also has the perception that the board and superintendent have a strong relationship. Public forum comments regarding the superintendent and board include:

The board and superintendent have done a great job of managing the budget, faculty, facilities, etc.- even the mold problem! - in trying times, in both boom and recession.

The superintendent and board have taken great strides in identifying and beginning to correct problems. Keep up the good work!

The school board has done a great job in all areas. They consider the responsibility of teaching and guiding our students to be theirs, along with administration, teachers, staff and parents. This is an excellent school board. The superintendent is outstanding. She is extremely knowledgeable and is a supporter of all employees, students and parents. We are lucky to have her.

A key indicator of the strength of the board-superintendent relationship is their ability to build and maintain trust even when confronted with major issues. The board identified 15 major issues faced by the district since hiring the current superintendent in January 2000. **Exhibit 1-4** shows a list of the issues the board identified. Open lines of communication between

the superintendent and board help them keep a positive, healthy relationship.

Exhibit 1-4
Major Issues Addressed by Superintendent/Board
Since January 2000

1. Central Office Reorganization (Feb 2000)
2. Personnel Hearing to Level 3 (Board) (May 2000)
3. Cheerleader Complaints (2) to Level 3 (Board) (Feb-March 2000 and Summer 2000)
4. Policy Review Process (Summer/Fall 2001)
5. Assistant Superintendent for Business Operations hire (Nov 2000)
6. Director of Human Resources hire/organize department (Nov 2000)
7. Budget Cuts (2 years) - FYE 8/31/01 and FYE 6/30/02
8. Book Protest to Board level (Spring 2001)
9. G.T. Complaint to Board (Spring 2001)
10. Homestead Exemption Community Education/Board Appeal (Spring 2001)
11. Intermediate School Mold (Summer 2001)
12. Transportation Director hire (Nov 2001)
13. Primary School Mold (October 2001 - current)
14. Facility Advisory Task Committee (Spring 2002)
15. Texas School Performance Review (April 2002)

Source: DSISD Board of Trustees, 2002.

DSISD also has a School Board Member Code of Ethics with 16 points outlined in the code. Board members stated that the code of ethics provides a framework for them to conduct civil, productive meetings.

A school district's collaborative, healthy board-superintendent relationship is essential to improving student achievement, leading positive change and achieving overall success in public education.

COMMENDATION

DSISD has a strong superintendent-board relationship built on trust, mutual respect and open communication.

FINDING

The board conducts an annual written self-evaluation to assist in improving its performance. **Exhibit 1-5** shows one section of the most recent evaluation dated March 22, 2001. In the self-evaluation, board

members rate themselves in the areas of relationship with superintendent, policy making, goal setting, personnel, finance, board meetings, instruction, relationship with the community, personal qualities and board relationships.

**Exhibit 1-5
Sample Section of the Board Effectiveness Appraisal Form**

<p><u>Directions</u> Listed on the following pages are practices that cover the major areas of board responsibilities. These practices have been recognized as characteristics of effective school boards. For each practice you are asked to select one of five ratings: Excellent = 5, Exceeds Expectations = 4, Meets Expectations = 3, Below Expectations = 2, Unacceptable = 1. Rate the questions for each item and be prepared to support unacceptable ratings with concrete examples of specific details. Remember that you are looking for positive opportunities to improve the board. The purpose of board self-appraisal is not to determine who is right or wrong but rather to discover what trustees can do, working together, to become a more effective school board.</p> <p align="center">Rating Scale</p> <p align="center">5 = Excellent 4 = Exceeds Expectations 3 = Meets Expectations 2 = Below Expectations 1= Unacceptable</p>

**Exhibit 1-5 (continued)
Sample Section of the Board Effectiveness Appraisal Form RATING**

A	RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPERINTENDENT	5	4	3	2	1
	<i>The Board:</i>					
1	Delegates to the superintendent the authority for administration of school and avoids becoming directly involved in day-to-day operation.					
2	Provides a clear job description for the superintendent and communicates as a board the criteria that will be measured to evaluate performance.					
3	Makes decisions using pertinent information and recommendations provided by the superintendent.					
4	Promotes mutual respect and trust by offering commendations to					

	the superintendent whenever deserved and constructive criticism when necessary.					
5	Follows the appropriate policy on public complaints and requests concerning the schools.					
6	Keeps the superintendent informed of issues, needs and complaints so problems can be resolved in a professional manner.					
7	Exhibits confidence and trust in the superintendent.					
8	Encourages the superintendent to grow professionally.					
	What action can the board take to strengthen its relationship with the superintendent?					

Source: DSISD Board of Trustees, 2002.

The instrument results are used to acknowledge the board's strengths as well as to improve board performance. For example, the ratings were used in setting board workshop topics and training including considering policy revisions, confirming/revising communication plans, investigating a facility-planning process and conducting a demographic study.

The board rated itself "below expectations" in the following three areas:

- securing community support for additional funding as necessary;
- pacing the use of board meeting time, encouraging members to be concise and to the point and concluding at a reasonable time; and
- ensuring that there is an appropriate program to disseminate public information regarding schools.

The board used the ratings on the self-evaluation to address weak areas. For example, to secure community support for additional funding, the board has increased communication with the public about the mechanics of the Texas school finance system, including funding issues, homestead exemption, impact of increased property values on state funding and the need for organized efforts to increase the non-residential tax base. The board communicated with the public through community leaders' breakfasts, multiple public forums about the homestead exemption and overall budget issues, special communication with real estate developers about potential donation of school building sites and continued public discussion of the need for a greater commercial tax base.

The board has improved meeting efficiency by using board work sessions. Trustees understand the need to get background information before the meeting to keep their comments/questions concise and to the point. While

the board lacks a written plan to disseminate information to the public, it continues to use public forums and community leaders' breakfasts; has formed a facilities task force to review and recommend facilities improvement; and continues to emphasize daily communication as needed about issues such as the district's mold problem and highway construction impact on district transportation.

School boards that conduct self-assessments are introspective and can use the evaluation data to celebrate their strengths, while assessing their need for improvement in all aspects of the board's responsibilities.

COMMENDATION

The DSISD Board of Trustees conducts self-evaluations and uses the evaluation results to make positive changes.

FINDING

The DSISD educates prospective board members as well as elected board members about board members' roles and responsibilities. The district hosts a School Board Candidate Academy prior to elections to educate prospective candidates and provide them an opportunity to interact with sitting board members and ask questions about district issues.

The academy is held on an evening prior to elections. The last academy, on March 5, 2002, included a video titled "A Call to Service," a PowerPoint presentation on the legal requirements of being a board member and information about the educational structure in Texas and the role and responsibilities of the board and superintendent. The academy concludes with a current board member panel discussion and questions from the audience.

In addition, the district conducts a thorough orientation for new board members that includes a review and discussion of school finance and budget preparation; education hierarchy; board authority; board powers and duties; board training requirements; superintendent qualifications and duties; school board member code of ethics; superintendent's evaluation; board effectiveness appraisal; complaint management; Texas Association of School Boards; governing documents; board meetings; DISD organization chart, mission, goals and goal-setting process; Academic Excellence Indicator System; acronyms; and board travel.

COMMENDATION

DSISD places a strong emphasis on preparing board members to understand their roles and responsibilities.

FINDING

The board meeting minutes are not indexed or protected in the event of fire. If information from the previous meeting is needed, the secretary, superintendent or board member(s) must rely on their memory to identify when an issue was discussed or approved and someone must conduct a time-consuming search of the records.

The lack of a comprehensive index can result in future board members and other individuals overlooking important information upon which to base discussion and decisions. An index can easily be created by utilizing the edit capabilities of word processing software.

The board meeting minutes are not stored in an appropriate manner that ensures that important information is protected in the event of a fire or other disaster. Each month's board minutes are stored as a hard copy in a notebook in the superintendent's office and one copy is saved on a shared electronic drive. Previous year's minutes are stored in cardboard boxes in the superintendent's office. The office is not fire-rated and is not theft-secured. In addition, an electric foot heater is used and could pose a fire hazard. A fire-rated cabinet would protect documents in the event of fire.

Recommendation 1:

Create an index to all meeting minutes and store all board minutes and supplementary minutes in a fire-rated and secure cabinet.

The development of an index to board meeting minutes provides a method for all board members, the superintendent, staff and the public to locate issues or topics with ease and efficiency when the need arises.

Additionally, important records of board actions must be preserved in the event of future need. Storage of records is typically accomplished by developing a fire-rated room or acquiring fire-rated cabinets. A hard copy of records must be stored in such cabinets until such time as permanent records are on microfiche or computer diskettes or CDs and duplicate copies are placed in safety deposit type boxes or other protected storage. The availability of an index facilitates access of information contained in stored records.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the board secretary to develop an index system for meeting minutes and to order the appropriate storage cabinet.	September 2002
2.	The board secretary creates the index for meeting minutes	October 2002

	and orders the storage cabinet.	
3.	The board president and superintendent review the index as it is developed to ensure that the most salient issues are incorporated.	November 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The index system can be implemented with existing resources.

Secured fire-rated file cabinets can be purchased. TSPR consultants random calls to office equipment supply firms indicate that a four-drawer cabinet meeting these requirements can be purchased for approximately \$1,300. Two such cabinets will meet the district's needs at a one-time cost of \$2,600 (\$1,300 x 2 = \$2,600).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Create an index to all meeting minutes and store all board minutes and supplementary minutes in a fire-rated and secure cabinet.	(\$2,600)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The board meets regularly in the Dripping Springs High School library. Several board members said that they receive periodic complaints from attendees that it is difficult to hear what is being discussed. This becomes more of a problem when the meeting draws a large crowd ranging from 80-120 attendees. The school does not have a public address system.

Burnet ISD, a peer school district, uses a public address system at all board meetings. Each board member has a microphone, the business manager and board secretary share a microphone and one microphone is provided for the audience's use.

Recommendation 2:

Purchase a portable public address system to enhance communication at board meetings.

Ten portable, wireless microphones and nine tabletop and floor stands (one for each board member, attorney, superintendent and the public), along with a minimum of two speakers on stands will serve this purpose. Portability of this equipment is important to ensuring ease of setup as

meetings are scheduled for various sites. Provision of the public address system will ensure that all participants are able to hear proceedings and be heard when called upon to address the board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent asks the board to approve the purchase of the necessary public address system equipment.	October 2002
2.	The board approves the purchase of the equipment.	October 2002
3.	The superintendent instructs the assistant superintendent for Business Operations to make the necessary purchases.	November 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations carries out the superintendent's instructions.	November 2002
5.	The superintendent assigns responsibility for the public address system to a selected staff member who ensures that it is available at every DSISD Board of Trustees meeting.	December 2002
6.	The staff member carries out the assigned responsibilities.	December 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

An adequate public address system can be purchased from any number of sources such as Circuit City, Radio Shack, Sound City or like enterprise for approximately \$3,000, including a maintenance agreement. Maintenance agreements are typically for three years and may be renewable in 2006-07, depending upon the manufacturer.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Purchase a portable public address system to enhance communication at board meetings.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures enable organizations to communicate expectations to constituents. Adopting policy and establishing related procedures provide school districts with the tools for establishing board expectations and responsibilities; establishing an essential division between policy-making and administrative roles; creating guidelines within which people work; providing reasonable assurances of consistency and continuity in decisions; providing a legal basis for the allocation of funds, facilities and other resources; and acquainting the public with and encouraging citizen involvement within structured guidelines.

FINDING

The district's board policy manual is well organized and is available on-line. DSISD contracted with the Texas Association of School Board Services (TASB) on February 2, 2000 to assist with updating the policy manual. In interviews, board members said they learned much throughout the revision process. The policy manual is organized with LEGAL and LOCAL policy codes so users can distinguish between requirements of the law and the policy determinations of the local board.

The board approved the revised policy manual in January 2001. The manual is on-line at the following Web site address: <http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/105904/> and one hard copy is available in the superintendent's office. One board member does not have access to the Internet and said that if he needs to review a policy, he has access to the hard copy document in the superintendent's office.

There is a "Help" icon located at the Web site to assist users in locating policies. The "Help" icon lets the user navigate through the table of contents of the district's board policy manual by clicking on any of the seven sections called A-G.

The list of policies displayed on the Internet can be slightly different from the list of policies on the paper version of the table of contents; however, DSISD routinely updates the policies on the Web site to ensure it is kept current. After clicking into a section, users can choose a policy by scanning down the list of policy codes and checking the policy titles to see which code contains the subject matter that they need. Clicking on the chosen policy code will take users to the policy. Also, some central office

staff members have a guide to assist them in easily locating policies on-line.

The superintendent and board members said that there are a few policies the board plans to review in the next two months.

COMMENDATION

DSISD has a user-friendly and up-to-date policy manual that is available on the district Web site.

FINDING

Key central offices lack procedures manuals. Administrative offices lack efficient and effective methods for identifying procedural information that is either referenced or required by board policy. The Dripping Springs ISD policy BP (local) states that:

...the superintendent and administrative staff shall be responsible for developing and enforcing procedures for the operation of this district. Procedures must be consistent with board policy and law and shall be designed to promote the achievement of the district goals and objectives. These procedures shall constitute the administrative regulations of the district and shall consist of guides, handbooks and forms, as well as other documents defining standard operating procedure and designated "regulations,"...

All administrative regulations, including manuals, guides, handbooks and forms, shall be kept-up-to-date and shall be made accessible to staff and the public as required by the Public Information Chapter of the Government Code.

A few procedures manuals are available, including a Gifted and Talented Program Manual, Bilingual/ESL Program Manual, Food Services Manual, an Employee Handbook, a Dyslexia Manual and an Accounting Codes Manual. Overall, the district lacks sufficient written procedures to accompany its revised policy manual. Most staff interviewed said that the procedures are embedded in other documents. Few procedures and/or procedural manuals are posted on-line.

As the district grows, the Business Office would benefit from a standard, written set of procedures to ensure consistency in operations. For instance, in the finance area, district employees may ask that internal controls be

circumvented. A manual would be used to show employees how the process works and why set controls need to be followed.

Below is an excerpt from the *Financial Accountability Resource Guide* regarding the need for procedure manuals:

Every school district, large and small, should have a written manual describing its purchasing policies and procedures. It should be designed to assist campus level and department level personnel in the purchasing of supplies and services. Rules and guidelines for those purchases consistent with relevant statutes, regulations and board policies are a vital part of the manual.

Overall, a good purchasing manual establishes rules for making school district purchases. It provides guidance to school district employees at the campus and departmental levels in requisitioning purchases and often is used to acquaint vendors and suppliers with the school district's policies and procedures. Internally, the manual helps in training school district personnel in purchasing policy and procedures. Finally, it promotes consistency in purchasing applications throughout the school district. Such a manual can either stand alone or be made a part of a financial and accounting manual.

While the policy manual is on-line, the few existing procedures are only available in hard copy form. As school staff, central office personnel, board members and the public access the policy manual through the Intranet or Web site, they are unable to identify related procedural documents with ease and efficiency. This process of easily linking appropriate policies with corresponding procedures is often referred to as "hot links".

Austin ISD has both policies and procedures located on its Web site at <http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/227901/>. Eanes ISD, a peer district, has its policies on line and has begun placing its procedures on line at <http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/227909/>. Leon County School District in Florida has both policies and the accompanying procedures on-line allowing for easy access by employees and the general public. The Leon County Schools' policy manual can be found at <http://www.planning.leon.k12.fl.us/Policies/Index.html> and the accompanying procedures can be found at <http://www.planning.leon.k12.fl.us/Procedures/Index.html>

Recommendation 3:

Develop operating procedure manuals for key functional areas of the district's operations.

The development of necessary procedure manuals and related documents is especially critical as the number of key employee retirements increases and the district begins to lose its institutional memory of "how things should be done." Additionally, creation of these documents provides a basis for reviewing procedures that are in current use to determine if they represent the most efficient and effective means for accomplishing desired outcomes.

Placement of procedural documents on the school system's Intranet or Web site will make documents more accessible to personnel and ensure that the most up-to-date version is consistently available to all parties. Personnel responsible for various functions in the school district will have a more efficient access to documents. In addition, the parents, students and community will be able to obtain related information easily.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the assistant superintendent for Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to conduct a review of existing procedural documents and develop a list of areas that lack such governing or controlling manuals.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning compile the list from their respective areas of responsibility and meet with the superintendent to determine the documents to be developed.	October - December 2002
3.	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning meet and develop the list of documents.	January 2003
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning instruct their respective staff to develop the documents and submit them for review and approval.	February 2003 - August 2003
5.	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning meet and review, revise and approve the documents.	September - October 2003
6.	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent for	November

	Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning authorize the inclusion of hot links, the Web sit placement and the electronic distribution of the new documents.	2003
7.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning oversee document distribution.	November 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The district has the internal technological capacity to implement this recommendation. If the district chooses to have TASB assistance, there would be a fee.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

C. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

The superintendent serves as the educational leader and chief executive officer of the district. The DSISD superintendent duties include: managing the daily operations of the district as its administrative manager; preparing recommendations for board policies; overseeing the implementation of the adopted policies; and developing appropriate administrative regulations to implement board-established policies.

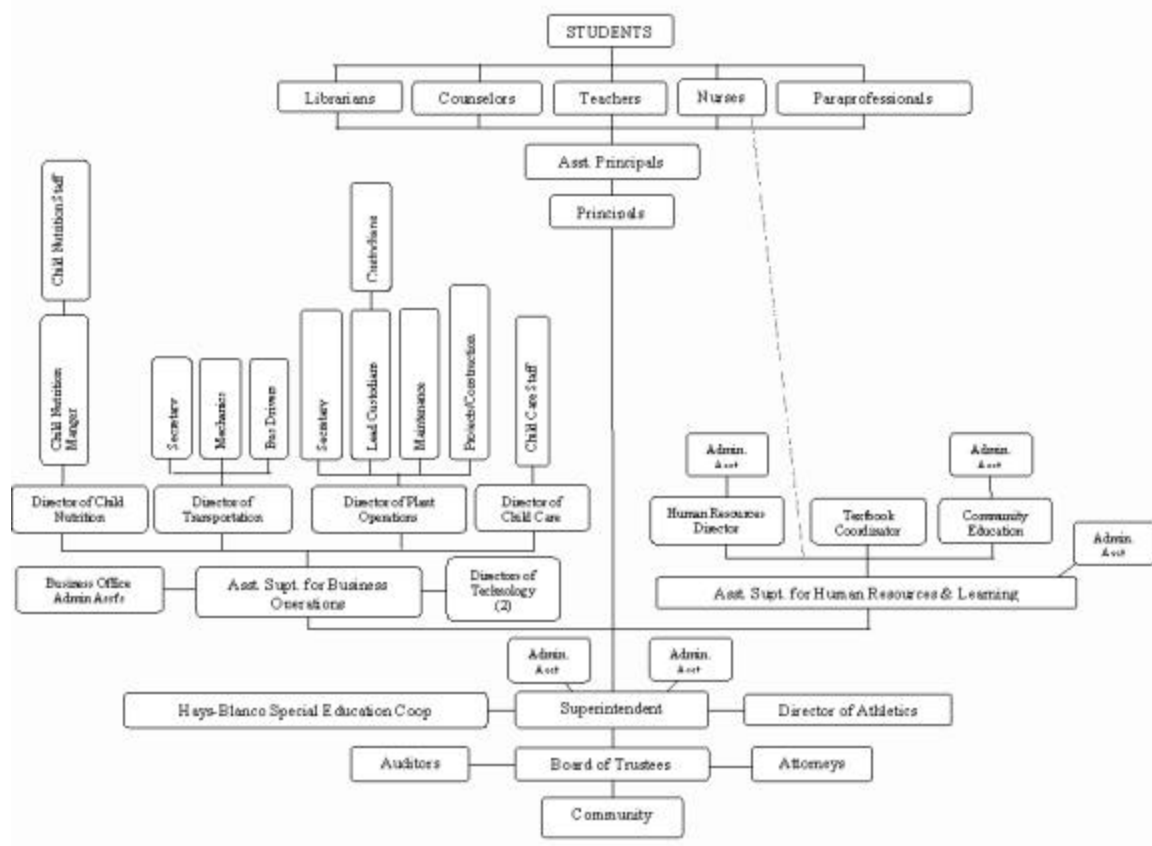
The superintendent's administrative team consists of the superintendent, two assistant superintendents, all directors, assistant principals and principals. The district leadership team, called the Cabinet, consists of the superintendent, two assistant superintendents and the four principals. The Cabinet handles instructional issues that have no impact on other departments such as transportation, maintenance or food service. The Administrative Team (AT) deals with districtwide operational issues, policy recommendations, communication and training needs. The Administrative Team (AT) meets every Tuesday before each board meeting, and the Cabinet meets after the AT meetings, as needed.

DSISD leadership experienced some instability from 1998-2000. After the superintendent left the school district in 1998 for a new opportunity, the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning served as the interim superintendent for four months. The superintendent subsequently hired remained in the position for just one year before leaving in September 1999. For the next six months, the two assistant superintendents shared the leadership for the district. The district hired the current superintendent in January of 2000.

The new organization chart shown in **Exhibit 1-6** has been in place since February 2000. When the superintendent was hired, she and the board revised the organizational structure eliminating the director of Facilities and Construction and a director of Safety and Compliance. The functions of these two positions have been decentralized. Plant operations, and the School Resource Officer and campus administrators share responsibility for safety and compliance issues. The district contracts facilities project management.

With the funds saved from these two positions, instructional facilitators were hired for each of the four schools. The instructional facilitators teach part-time and assist other teachers in the implementation of DSISD curriculum and instruction.

**Exhibit 1-6
DSISD Organizational Chart
2001-2002 School Year**



Source: DSISD Superintendent's Office, 2002.

FINDING

The DSISD organizational structure does not meet the district needs. The superintendent directly supervises the following positions: assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning; assistant superintendent for Business Operations; director of Athletics; and principals. The superintendent oversees all tasks related to communications, community involvement, business partnerships and public records requests. In addition, the superintendent has oversight responsibilities for the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative, which includes the participation of three other school districts, Johnston City, Wimberley and Blanco.

According to the district staff and board members, the superintendent oversees the cooperative because three other districts and their superintendents are involved in the effort. The DSISD serves as the fiscal

agent for the cooperative and the DSISD superintendent evaluates the director of the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative. While the superintendent chairs the management board and oversees the director of the cooperative's evaluation, all instructional programs, including the Coop, are under the assistant superintendent of Human Resources and Learning. The organization chart is misleading because it shows the Hays-Blanco Cooperative reporting directly to the superintendent, but does not accurately show the relationship of general education to special education. While the general and special education programs are working collaboratively in DSISD, the district organizational chart does not reflect this relationship.

The assistant superintendent for Business Operations has 12 direct reports while the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning has three direct reports plus the district nurses. The director of Athletics reports directly to the superintendent rather than to an assistant superintendent. The director of Human Resources reports to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning.

The staff said that the reason the Human Resources Office falls under the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning is because all employees/human resources should be directly attached to instruction. When asked why the director of Athletics reports to the superintendent, the respondents said because "that is the way it has always been."

Lake Travis ISD has four executive directors who report to the superintendent, Instructional Programs, Finance, Human Resources and Special Programs; Burnet CISD has the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction who oversees all Curriculum and State and Federal Programs and the assistant superintendent for Personnel and Student Services who oversees personnel, food services, maintenance, transportation and facilities and construction. There are two assistant superintendents in Marble Falls Independent School District (MFISD): an assistant superintendent for Instruction and an assistant superintendent for Business/Finance. Marble Falls and Eanes school districts have human resource departments that are overseen by assistant superintendents who report directly to the superintendent. **Exhibit 1-7** shows the number of superintendents level administrators in the peer districts.

Exhibit 1-7
Superintendent-Level Administrators
Dsisd and Peer Districts
2001-02

School District	Superintendent-Level Administrators
-----------------	-------------------------------------

Dripping Springs	2
Burnet Consolidated	2
Marble Falls	2
Eanes	4
Lake Travis	4
Wimberley	2

Sources: Data provided by each school district, April 2002.

Other districts (including peers) do not house Human Resources services within the Curriculum and Instruction Division to ensure that this division stays focused on improving student achievement and provides adequate testing, evaluation and student services to students.

Recommendation 4:

Reorganize the DSISD central office and update the district's organizational chart to show accurate reporting structures.

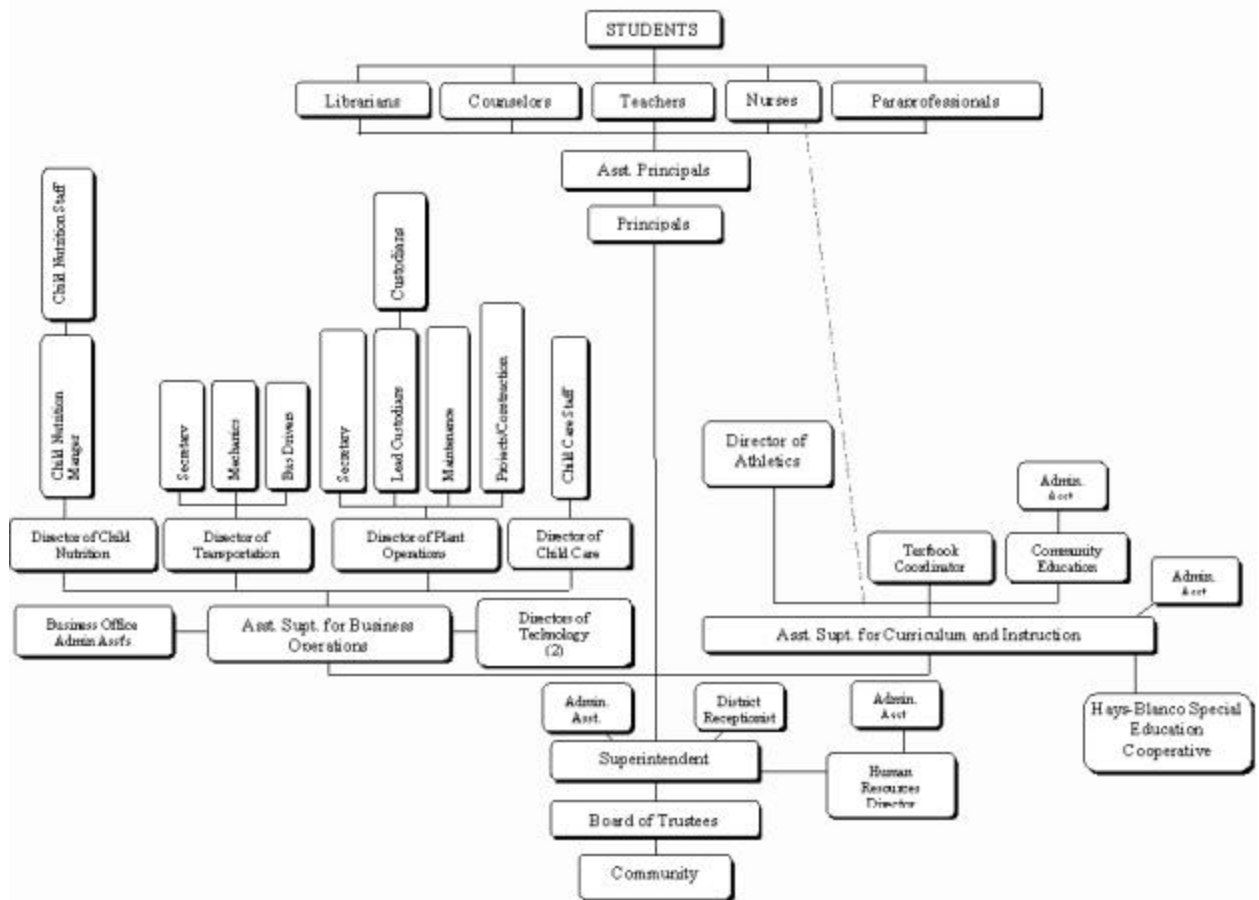
Exhibit 1-8 displays the proposed organization chart.

The proposed changes in the organizational structure at the executive level should include:

- transferring the Human Resources Office from reporting to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to report directly to the superintendent;
- renaming the Division of Human Resources and Learning to the Division of Curriculum and Instruction; and
- transferring the director of Athletics from the superintendent's direct responsibility to report to the proposed assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

This reorganization would provide the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning more time to focus on the instructional needs of students. While oversight of the Human Resource Department will consume a portion of the superintendent's time, this should not exceed the amount of time she currently spends supervising the director of Athletics.

**Exhibit 1-8
Proposed Organizational Chart**



Source: MGT of America, 2002.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent reviews the recommended organizational plan and recommends approval by the board.	September 2002
2.	The board reviews, revises and approves the organizational plan for implementation.	October 2002
3.	The superintendent instructs the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to assist with implementing the recommended organizational plan.	October 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning prepares the necessary job descriptions and implements the superintendent's instructions.	November 2002 - January 2003

5.	The superintendent oversees the final implementation of the recommended plan.	January - April 2003
6.	The superintendent reports to the board on the status of the plan's implementation.	May 2003
7.	The superintendent and her executive staff assess the plan's implementation and make needed adjustments.	June 2003 and as needed

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The superintendent's evaluation instrument lacks consistency in terminology. Texas statute requires the board use the district performance report as a primary consideration in its appraisal of the superintendent's performance (TEC w 39.054). The DSISD policy BJCD (local) states that:

The board shall prepare a written evaluation of the superintendent at annual or more frequent intervals and may at any time conduct and communicate oral evaluations to augment its written evaluations. The evaluation shall be based on the superintendent's job description and other criteria identified by the board.

The DSISD superintendent's evaluation has three parts:

- **Part I--priority performance goals.** The board and superintendent jointly determined this part based on one-year objectives toward meeting district goals and are assigned a rating on a five-point scale (5 being excellent).
- **Part II--general job performance responsibilities.** This part evaluates the superintendent's educational leadership, district management and board and community relations.
- **Part III- student performance domain.** This part uses the Commissioner's Recommended Student Performance Domain Worksheets to assess the superintendent's performance in this area.

Exhibit 1-9 shows the rating scale used to evaluate the superintendent.

Exhibit 1-9 Rating Scale for the DSISD Superintendent's Evaluation

Rating Scale:

5. **Excellent:** This function of the district is fully meeting our expectations. Invest no more time and effort than is required to maintain the present status.
4. **Exceeds Expectations:** We are well satisfied with this function of the district. It could use a bit more attention but not enough to worry about.
3. **Meets Expectations:** This district function is minimally acceptable. Devote somewhat more time and effort to improving district performance in this area.
2. **Below Expectations:** We are not happy with how the district is performing here. Devote considerable more time and effort to improving this function.
1. **Unacceptable:** The district's performance in this area is clearly not acceptable. It must be improved.

Source: DSISD Superintendent's Performance Appraisal Instrument, 2002.

The rating scale is not specific in defining expectations, as shown by the terminology "It could use a bit more attention but not enough to worry about." Also, rating number 3 has conflicting terminology. A rating of 3 is "meets expectations," yet the definition is "This district function is *minimally* acceptable. Devote somewhat more time and effort to improving district performance in this area." "Meeting expectations" does not always mean "minimally acceptable."

The four priority goals, developed by the superintendent and the board, used to evaluate the superintendent's performance are: improve long-range planning; promote school-community relations; promote active recruitment and retention of personnel; and develop, implement and monitor a budget administration process to restore the financial health of the district.

Board members interviewed said that overall they are pleased with the superintendent's performance and that the area most in need of improvement is long-range planning (which is discussed further in Section D of this chapter). They also said they would like more specificity in the rating scale to ensure they are appropriately evaluating each area. Also, the district does not have a process to collect anonymous district staff input for evaluating the superintendent.

In addition, the Texas Association of School Administrators can provide sample superintendent evaluation forms for the DSISD board to consider.

Recommendation 5:

Revise the superintendent's evaluation instrument, paying specific attention to the rating scale.

Implementing this recommendation should result in providing the superintendent with a performance assessment that relates to board-approved outcomes such as expectations for student achievement.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president and superintendent instruct the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to develop proposed instruments for the superintendent's evaluation.	March 2003
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning develops instruments for the superintendent's evaluation and submits them to the superintendent and board president for consideration.	April - May 2003
3.	The superintendent and the board meet to review, revise and approve an instrument.	June - July 2003
4.	The board adopts and implements the revised superintendent's performance assessment instrument and process.	August 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district central office lacks adequate cross-training. Although the Business Office has conducted cross-training there has been minimal cross-training in other departments. For example, the superintendent assumes her secretary's responsibilities when the secretary is absent because other staff members have not been cross-trained to assume these responsibilities. The superintendent's secretary is responsible for a variety of tasks including handling the phones, walk-in visitors, mail, and faxes; collecting enrollment data; assembling and mailing board packets; coordinating employee travel arrangements; and filing.

The lack of adequate cross-training disrupts the work flow during an employee's absence. The most effective cross-training is both vertical and

horizontal within the system: managers cross-train into jobs of other managers as well as into lower-level jobs.

Effective cross-training is carefully planned so that all district employees buy into the concept. Some districts create a yearly master plan that spells out who is going to be cross-trained and when. This plan gives employees plenty of time to prepare for this task.

Benefits to cross-training are:

- gives employees more variety in their work;
- improves team work in each department;
- increases employee awareness of co-worker responsibilities and of the effort required for smooth work flow;
- assists in eliminating unhealthy competition; and
- serves as an "alarm bell" to employees who have become complacent or lethargic in their job assignments.

Recommendation 6:

Establish a formalized cross-training program for support personnel.

An effective cross-training program for support staff should ensure that all essential job responsibilities are properly carried out in the absence of an employee who is assigned the primary responsibility. The Human Resources Office should implement and monitor this recommendation through the senior directors who supervise the respective sections within the department. The cross training of new employees should be initiated once the employees have completed their orientation program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent should assign the director of Human Resources to develop a formalized cross-training program for support personnel.	September 2002
2.	The director of Human Resources should develop a cross-training program for support staff.	October 2002
3.	The director of Human Resources should implement the cross-training program for support staff.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

D. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Activity in a school system should directly or indirectly relate to the education of students. The delivery of educational programs typically occurs at the school level through prescribed programs. The support functions for these programs are analyzed in Chapter 2, Educational Service Delivery. The school curriculum and instructional programs, safety and security requirements, student management necessities, employment of personnel and other considerations enter into school-level management decisions.

Texas state law (section 11.251 of the Texas Education Code) requires that every district and each campus adopt a planning and decision-making process that involves the professional staff of the district, parents and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives and major classroom instructional programs. This process is known as site-based decision-making (SBDM).

School improvement teams function at each DSISD campus, and the teams have worked with principals and staff to develop recommendations and campus plans which relate to goal setting, curriculum, budgeting, staffing and school organization

DSISD bases its site-based decision-making on the following beliefs:

- all decisions should be based on the district's goal of improving student performance;
- certain decisions that impact student performance can best be made at the school level;
- school level decisions, when appropriate, should involve parents, students and community members, as well as teachers and campus administrators;
- because each campus is unique and has different goals and needs, the types and degree of site-based decisions that will take place will vary from campus to campus;
- the site-based staff development plan for DSISD will contain strong staff development and evaluation components, a portion of the evaluation process will include a review of the district's progress on the goals, objectives and mission of the district; and

- the existence of the Districtwide Educational Improvement Council and campus committees shall not affect the authority of the board.

FINDING

In each of its schools, the DSISD uses site-based decision-making process for personnel hiring, goal setting, curriculum and instruction and campus-budgeting. Additionally, the process outlines how the campuses and central administration will work collaboratively to maintain consistency with the district's mission and goals in these functional areas.

Each campus site-based management committee includes a campus administrator, teachers of the various grade levels, special programs, paraprofessional staff, parents, community and business members. The superintendent appoints a central administration representative to each committee. Instructional teams elect teacher representatives for two-year terms. Teachers and other site-based committee members report that the process is very effective and that decision-making is truly campus based.

To facilitate site-based decision-making, the district provides principals with extensive training and workshops on school finance and budgeting. Principals report that they have sufficient control over the funds allotted to their campuses. Also, the principals, along with their campus school improvement teams, have sole discretion over campus-based staff development. For example, the intermediate and primary school staff decided in the fall of 2002 to use a private consultant to conduct training on conflict resolution. Each campus chooses to allocate its per student allotments according to needs and school improvement plans. For example, a primary school may choose to spend less on supplies because their campus PTO supplements their supply money. The high school may decide to spend more in supplies because their PTA does not generate enough funds for supplies. Each campus reviews its technology needs annually and allocates funds to purchase the hardware and software that best fits their needs.

The leadership team, composed of department heads, team leaders and counselors, meets monthly with the principals to discuss school wide issues and exchange information. The academic departments meet monthly to look at curriculum and department issues related directly to their content areas. The SIT School Improvement Teams, the site-based decision-making groups, meets throughout the year to make recommendations on staffing, budget, the campus improvement plan and other broad campus issues. These teams offer multiple opportunities for input and site-based decisions.

Principals report that the central office and school board have been very helpful in providing timely information and help to their campuses, while allowing them ability make site-based decisions.

A review of the composition of each of the four school improvement teams shows that each school has ensured that a wide representation of stakeholders are on the team including teachers, auxiliary personnel, paraprofessionals, administrative staff, one district central office representative, parents and business and community representatives.

Principals' comments regarding site-based decision-making include:

All decisions are made collaboratively with the inclusion of representatives from all stakeholder groups in every important decision. Since stakeholders are a part of the process, they are able to communicate information directly to those affected.

Decisions are made in a variety of ways. There is a lot of participative and collaborative effort. We have formal groups in place for input. Most decisions are made at the campus level with input from the various teams and departments. There is a lot of consensus decision-making.

COMMENDATION

The DSISD has an effective site-based decision-making process at the school level.

FINDING

The district does not have a set staffing formula for school administrative staff; it allows principals to decide on their staffing levels. During 2001-02, the primary school had one assistant principal with a student population of 917; the intermediate school had one assistant principal with a student population of 508; the middle school had two assistant principals with a student population of 814; and the high school had two assistant principals with a student population of 1,075.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredits more than 12,000 public and private educational institutions, from pre-kindergarten through university levels, in 11 states in the Southeastern United States-including Texas-and in Latin America.

SACS recommends minimum personnel requirements for elementary schools, based on enrollment, in its 2000-2001 *Policies, Principles, and*

Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools. The SACS minimum standards for elementary schools (grades 1-4) are represented in **Exhibit 1-10**.

Exhibit 1-10
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for Elementary Schools

Number of Students	Principal	Professional Administrator or Supervisor Assistants	Library or Media Specialists	Library Aide or Clerk	Secretaries or Clerks
1-263	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.5
264-439	1.0	0	1.0	0	1.0
440-659	1.0	0	1.0	0.5	1.0
660-879	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
880-1,099	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
1,100-1,319	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
1320 +	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0

Source: SACS Policies, Principles, and Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, 2000-2001 School Year.

SACS recommends minimum personnel requirements for middle schools (grades 5-8), based on enrollment, in its 2000-2001 *Policies, Principles, and Standards for Middle Schools Accredited by the Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools*. The SACS minimum standards for middle schools are represented in **Exhibit 1-11**.

Exhibit 1-11
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for Middle Schools

Number of Students	Principal	Administrative Assistants	Guidance Professionals	Library or Media Specialists	Library or Media Assistants	Secretaries or Clerks
1-249	1.0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5

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

Source: SACS Policies, Principles, and Standards for Elementary Schools Accredited by the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, 2000-2001 School Year.

(1) One FTE, wherever needed, is recommended for each additional 250 students over 1,500.

SACS further recommends minimum personnel requirements for high schools (grades 9-12), based on enrollment, in its *Standards Checklist, Accreditation Standards for Secondary and Middle Schools, 2000*. These are presented in **Exhibit 1-12**.

Exhibit 1-12
SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for High Schools

Number of Students	Principal	Administrative Assistants	Guidance Professionals	Library or Media Specialists	Library or Media Assistants	Secretaries or Clerks
1-249	1.0	0	1.0	1.0	0	1.0
250-499	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	2.0
500-749	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	3.0
750-999	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.5
1,000-1,249	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.0	4.0
1,250-1,499	1.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	1.0	4.5
1,500 +	1.0	(1)	(1)	(1)	1.0	4.5

Source: SACS Standards Checklist, Accreditation Standards for Secondary and Middle Schools, 2000.

(1) One FTE, wherever needed, is recommended for each additional 250 students over 1,500.

Exhibit 1-13 compares DSISD campus staffing in the principal and assistant principal categories to SACS standards.

**Exhibit 1-13
Comparison of DSISD Principals and Assistant Principals Staffing to SACS Standards**

	High School	Middle School	Intermediate School*	Primary School
Enrollment	1,075	814	508	917
SACS Recommended	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
Actual	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
Variance	-	1.0	-	-

Source: SACS standards and DSISD.

*Assumed that intermediate level is under same standards as middle level.

DSISD's principal and assistant principal staffing ranges meet minimum SACS standards for districts and schools with similar enrollments and grade-level structures. However, without an adopted staffing formula, there are no criteria in place to determine at what enrollment level a school will be entitled to additional administrative personnel.

Recommendation 7:

Adopt a school-level administration staffing formula.

A school-level staffing formula such as SACS discriminates between the needs of elementary and secondary schools. The formula recognizes that secondary schools typically have more complex discipline issues and a broad array of student activity programs requiring substantial administrative attention.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning develop a staffing formula.	October - November 2002
2.	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning present the proposed staffing formula to the board for approval.	December 2002
3.	The board reviews and approves the proposed staffing formula and instructs the superintendent to incorporate it into future staffing plans.	January 2003
4.	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning implement the approved formula.	January 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

E. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Essential elements of soundly developed planning include: organizing resources such as management information, personnel and communication methods; identifying the core values essential to the district's clients and community; a clear understanding of the mission; determining what needs to be done, when it is to be completed and why it is important (the vision); and prioritizing goals resulting in planned activity.

Exhibit 1-14 shows the DSISD's approved mission, three vision statements, critical strand belief statements and district goals.

Exhibit 1-14
Dripping Springs Independent School District
Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Goals
2001-02 School Year

Mission Statement

We inspire and equip students to be life-long learners and positive contributors to the world.

Shared Vision Statement for Our Students

Our students approach each day with eager anticipation of the learning opportunities to be experienced.

These opportunities provide them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to build and maintain relationships, to be contributing members of society and to accomplish their visions and aspirations.

Shared Vision of the Learning Environment

We provide a safe, student-centered environment fostered by a partnership between families, community and schools; allowing for a range of educational opportunities supported by sound instructional strategies and curriculum designed to enhance students' visions and aspirations.

Shared Vision of the Supporting Environment

A supportive and collaborative relationship exists in which the school district and community are viewed as one. This relationship provides the resources to ensure the success of all students.

Exhibit 1-14 (continued)
Dripping Springs Independent School District

**Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Goals
2001-02 School Year**

CRITICAL STRAND BELIEF STATEMENTS:

Curriculum

- We believe curriculum must maximize student potential by providing optimum learning experiences.

Personnel

- We believe effective, student-centered personnel provide successful learning opportunities.

Community

- We believe that Dripping Springs values a shared responsibility for learning.

Safety

- We believe people who feel safe perform better.

Facility

- We believe the community must commit to provide for the education of its children.

Financial Resources

- We believe that we must allocate and efficiently manage available financial resources to support student achievement.

GOALS:

Curriculum

- 100 percent of our students will graduate under a graduation plan that maximizes their abilities and interests.

Personnel

- To increase retention of effective personnel at or above the state average of 85 percent.
- To develop and attract effective, student-centered personnel.

Community

- Foster reciprocal service opportunities between the community and schools.

Safety

- Individuals feel both physically and emotionally safe while at school.

Facility

- To provide safe, energy efficient facilities that support the educational needs of all students.

Financial Resources

- For the 2002-2003 school year, the district will allocate available financial resources in a process that is equitable for all students;
- the district will efficiently manage the budget to improve the overall financial condition of the district; and
- the district will design and implement a long-range financial planning process.

Source: DSISD superintendent's office, 2002.

Exhibit 1-15 shows the planning and evaluation cycle for DSISD.

**Exhibit 1-15
Dripping Springs Isd
Planning/Evaluation Cycle
2001-02 School Year**

Month	Plan	Evaluate	Recommend/Report
July		Superintendent Formal Evaluation; Administrators Formal Education	
August			
September	School Calendar	Prior Year's CIP's and DIP's	SAT, ACT, PSAT, AP's
October	District Planning Workshop:		Evaluations of Prior Year CIP's & DIP's: Present

	Initiate Budget Cycle		AEIS
November	Board/Adm. Budget Planning Workshop		
December		Superintendent's Summative Evaluation	Adopt District Goals; Adopt School Calendar
January		Administrator's Summative Evaluations	Superintendent Contract
February			Administrator Contracts
March		Certified Personnel Evaluations Completed	Teacher Contracts
April	Next Year's CIP's and DIP's		
May	SCC, Handbooks, Constitutions		Review CIP's and DIP's
June		Program Evaluation Cycle	Adopt Budget; Set Tax Rate; Approve SCC; Review Handbooks and Constitutions

Source: DSISD Superintendent's Office, 2002.

FINDING

The DSISD lacks a strategic plan that ties all of the departments' and schools' goals together. District planning is a fragmented process and does not permit the appropriate monitoring of progress on its overall goals and objectives.

DSISD policy #105904 states that:

The board shall ensure that a district improvement plan and campus improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. The board shall approve and periodically review the district's mission

and goals to improve student performance. The mission, goals and the approved district and campus objectives shall be mutually supportive and shall support the stated goals and objectives under the Education Code, Chapter 4.

The superintendent is responsible for the DSISD planning effort. **Exhibit 1-16** provides an overview of the district's strategic planning process. As shown, there are nine key components of the process.

Exhibit 1-16
Dripping Springs ISD
Strategic Planning Process

The Dripping Springs ISD Strategic Planning Process is driven by the board-adopted Planning and Evaluation Cycle.

- In October of each year, an outside consultant conducts a systematic review and/or modification of the district's mission statement, conducts an internal/external needs-assessment process, considers evaluation data, reviews and/or revises district goals for the next school year.
- A representative group is invited to participate. Participants include board members, administrative staff, Districtwide Educational Improvement Council (DWEIC) PTA/PTO Representatives, community Members and students.
- Internal/External Needs Assessment are based on AEIS data, campus satisfaction surveys, external reviews (if available), PEIMS data and any other data deemed necessary by the consultant and/or planning committee.
- Dripping Springs ISD Board of Trustees considers adoption of mission, critical strand belief statements and district goals in December of each year.
- Adoption of the district goals initiates the budget preparation process.
- The (DWEIC) and the individual School Improvement Teams formulate improvements plans for the next year by April for presentation to the board in May based on the adoption of the district goals.
- Individual departments formulate Department Improvement Plans to contribute to the accomplishments of the district goals.
- Implementation of the plans occurs through the budget administration process, delivery of services and evaluation of programs.
- Evaluation of plans is conducted in October of each year to initiate the cycle for the next year.

Source: DSISD Strategic Planning Document, 2002.

Each October, a variety of stakeholders assemble for one day to review and modify the district's mission statement and revise the district goals for

the next school year. The district provides the results of this planning session to the various central office departments and the four schools to integrate and modify into their respective plans.

Each district-level office has an improvement plan with targets based on goals set in October. Each school has a school improvement plan that is aligned with the DWEIC plan. However, these elements are not integrated into the overall district planning process.

Board members interviewed unanimously agreed that the district lacks overall strategic planning, and some board members said the district's attention on emergency situations such as the mold problem at the primary school prevent board and district from devoting time and energies to planning.

Board members and central office staff made the following comments regarding the planning and evaluation process:

There is no districtwide strategic improvement plan that incorporates food services, transportation, curriculum and all other areas of district operations. We have goals and objectives for each department, but no overall plan.

The Districtwide Education Improvement Committee plan only focuses on instruction; it doesn't get into personnel, etc. We have not gone through a full blown strategic plan that touches all central offices. We see it as a year-long process and funds will be needed to generate the plan-we have not had the necessary time and funds to develop one.

There is no direct tie from budgeting to planning. We do not have a strategic plan---only pieces in place.

In theory, it's supposed to be the district goals that drive our decisions...in reality...it is decided upon if the issue is student-centered...

We do not have a formal process for monitoring progress on our district goals; it's really informal.

We need to use the demographic study conducted wisely in our planning for growth.

Two comments in the public forum were made regarding the district's planning process. The comments made were:

Strategic planning is debatable.

There has been some poor planning and actions regarding some areas, such as purchasing land that was unnecessary or purchasing land during a period of "high prices."

The DSISD has many components of effective planning in place including the Districtwide Education Improvement Committee Plan (DWEIC), departmental plans and goals and school improvement plans, but the plans are not integrated into one unified strategic plan that provides the district direction. In addition, an ongoing monitoring process is not set up to measure progress on a regular basis.

There are several best practices school districts use to assist their planning process. **Exhibit 1-17** summarizes the major components of a researched-based methodology for organizational strategic planning. The components of the exhibit are more fully explained below the exhibit.

**Exhibit 1-17
Methodology for Strategic Planning**

Area of Review	Component Plan	Specific Focus of the Review
<i>Where Do We Want To Be?</i>	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the school district's uniqueness when combined with the Mission and Principles • A Compelling Image of the Desired Future
	Mission and Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Comprehensive Statement of the School District's Purpose • Core Values, Actions to Achieve Mission • Employees and Management Involvement
	Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Desired Result • Specific and Measurable Targets for Accomplishment • Leads to Quality Initiative Goals and Objectives
<i>Where Are We Now?</i>	Internal/External Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation Inventory/Environmental Scan • Customer Analysis

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assessment and Benchmarking • Strategic Issues
How do we get there?	Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to Accomplish Goals and Objectives • Detailed Work Plans • Leads to Resource Allocation
<i>How Do We Measure Our Progress?</i>	Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures Accountability and Continuous Improvement-linked Performance Targets
	Monitoring and Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods to Measure Results • Systems to Monitor Progress • Compilation of Management Information • Maintains Plan on Track Toward Goals

Source: MGT of America, 2002.

A vision statement expresses, in broad terms, a view of the desired future for the district. The vision statement must be a compelling image of the future to provide direction for goals and action plans. The mission statement of the district should be designed to provide a broad perspective of the principles and beliefs of the district. The mission must be concise, relevant and memorable to the school district and its stakeholders.

Goals must be specific and measurable targets for accomplishment, output oriented and tied to an annual performance plan. Objectives must be short-range steps the school district needs to achieve to meet specific goals.

The analysis of where the organization stands begins with an assessment of the internal and external factors that challenge the school district's vision as well as the factors that make the school district effective in addressing the needs of their customers. Good internal assessment identifies the school district's strengths and weaknesses, such as staff qualifications, leadership, available resources, organizational structure and management processes.

Action plans provide the school district with strategies to achieve identified goals and objectives. Strong action plans connect the school

district's goals to both the work to be done and the school district's budget through identifying resource allocation needs. Detailed and linked work plans are the keys to achieving goals and objectives. Finally, assessing the success of the school district's strategic plan is impossible without a measurement system. Such metrics will allow the school district to describe its progress toward achieving goals and objectives accurately and be held accountable by the community. The school district's monitoring and tracking system provides information on progress towards goals and objectives. When used effectively, the system ensures that the school district continues to make progress toward achieving goals and objectives without imposing an extreme burden on management.

Recommendation 8:

Develop a long-range strategic plan and planning process that is directly tied to the district budget.

Implementing this recommendation will eliminate the current planning fragmentation and ensure that each central office department develops goals and objectives that are clearly incorporated and reflected in the overall planning document in light of anticipated continued growth. School districts that have developed such planning documents have identified from one to three important goals with annual objectives, all of which are measurable or success can be gauged by comparison to some established benchmark (student test scores, completion of projects within a predetermined timeline). Ultimately, individual positions are assigned specific responsibility for overseeing accomplishment of certain outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and executive staff, in conjunction with school principals and other stakeholders, revise the district planning process.	October 2002
2.	The superintendent and board president appoint a broad-based planning group that is assigned responsibility for carrying out the revised planning process.	October 2002
3.	The appointed planning group develops an integrated plan for the school district and submits it to the superintendent for review, revision and approval.	February 2003
4.	The superintendent reviews, revises and approves the plan and recommends it to the board for approval.	February 2003
5.	The board reviews, revises and approves the plan for implementation.	March 2003

6.	The superintendent instructs all staff to begin plan implementation.	April 2003
7.	The staff, with board and community support, implements the plan.	April 2003 and Ongoing
8.	The superintendent and planning group assess plan implementation and results.	May 2003 and Ongoing
9.	The superintendent instructs the planning group to continue plan development and appropriate modification.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district is conducting minimal program evaluation, consequently, the use of evaluation data in the annual planning session is minimal.

The superintendent, the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Special Education attended three days of training sponsored by the Texas Association of School Administrators/Texas Leadership Center. The name of the training workshop was "A Practical Model for Program Evaluation" and the purpose of the workshop was to teach participants key concepts of a process-driven program evaluation model and instructions for creating a template to use for all program evaluations.

Although district staff attended this conference in 2000 and early 2001, the district has not implemented the evaluation model. DSISD staff said that they are planning to make this model the central theme for their administrative retreat in the summer of 2002 to finalize the customization and kickoff its use for the coming school year. The superintendent's intent is to evaluate programs on a three-year cycle. The retreat will determine which programs will be evaluated the first year.

Recommendation 9:

Implement a program evaluation model beginning in the 2002-03 school year.

Effective program planning cannot take place without the availability of program effectiveness data to assist in determining what is working and what should be eliminated. The implementation of this recommendation over time will create significant data to support planning decisions. The

importance of data-driven decisions cannot be understated given the nature of the standards movement and related accountability requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assigns responsibility for program evaluation to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning establishes a program evaluation team consistent with <i>A Practical Model for Program Evaluation</i> .	October 2002
3.	The program evaluation team receives needed training.	November - December 2002
4.	The superintendent and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning assigns program evaluation priorities to the team.	January 2003
5.	The program evaluation team carries out the evaluation assignments.	February 2003 and Ongoing
6.	The superintendent provides the results of the program evaluation and related data to the planning group.	As Available

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

F. LEGAL SERVICES

School districts obtain legal services either through in-house counsel, outside counsel for situations for which additional expertise is required, or exclusively with outside firms or attorneys. In the latter situation, some school districts, particularly those in urban areas, can secure the services of a single, large, diversified firm while smaller systems must depend on more than one firm. Fees for services vary greatly, depending on the locale and the specialization required.

School legal costs have increased dramatically over the last three decades because of cases in the areas of due process activity associated with disciplinary proceedings; complicated issues related to special education students; risk management matters; and a variety of other issues. Areas of special education and student disciplinary activity are particularly troublesome and require special legal expertise. These areas are typically complicated by the complexities of federal requirements and the relationship to local and state regulations coupled with the school system's need to maintain an orderly educational environment.

FINDING

DSISD has not evaluated its legal services or conducted a cost-benefit study to ascertain the quality and the cost-effectiveness.

The Walsh, Anderson, Brown, Schultze and Aldridge firm has been the district's legal firm since 1988. All attorneys in the firm may work with Dripping Springs ISD in the general retainer capacity - fielding routine calls from the district, issuing opinion letters on relevant issues, attending board meetings and other matters. During fiscal years 1999-2000 and 2000-01, eight attorneys provided a majority of legal services to the district.

During the past eight years, DSISD has been involved in several lawsuits. Below is a list of the types of lawsuits, grievances or complaints filed with official agencies:

- construction company's performance bond surety;
- special education/Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- tennis court construction project; and
- discrimination in personnel hiring.

Exhibit 1-18 shows the DSISD billing and payment history to the Walsh, Anderson, Brown, Schultze and Aldridge Firm for 2000-01.

**Exhibit 1-18
Dripping Springs ISD Billing and Payment History
To Walsh Anderson Firm
2000-01**

Service Area	Fee
General	\$5,647
Construction	\$36,830
Special Education	\$40,302
Miscellaneous	\$860
Personnel	\$727

Source: Walsh, Anderson, Brown, Schultz, & Aldridge Law Firm, 2002.

The total legal expense for 1999-2000 was \$105,224 and decreased \$20,355 to the 2000-01 total of \$84,868.

Compared to its peer districts, DSISD had the second highest legal fees in 2000-01 and the highest in 1999-2000 (**Exhibit 1-19**).

**Exhibit 1-19
Total Legal Expenses
DSISD and Peer Districts
1996-97 through 2000-01 School Years**

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Dripping Springs	\$164,256	\$20,433	\$25,678	\$188,251	\$64,652
Burnet Consolidated	\$1,116	\$5,035	\$46,278	\$13,815	\$53,770
Eanes	\$174,998	\$100,521	\$198,872	\$152,160	\$121,250
Lake Travis	\$53,174	\$36,697	\$52,595	\$64,919	\$37,487
Marble Falls	\$13,219	\$44,318	\$3,563	\$2,511	\$7,046
Wimberley	\$80,800	\$8,045	\$13,868	\$20,407	\$23,639

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

Exhibit 1-20 shows the legal expenses per pupil for DSISD and peer districts.

Exhibit 1-20
Total Legal Expenses Per Pupil
DSISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Enrollment	Total Legal Expenses	Legal Expenses Per Pupil
Dripping Springs	3,197	\$64,652	\$20.22
Burnet Consolidated	2,820	\$53,770	\$19.06
Eanes	7,392	\$121,250	\$16.40
Lake Travis	4,147	\$37,487	\$9.04
Marble Falls	3,597	\$7,046	\$1.96
Wimberley	1,663	\$23,639	\$14.21

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

In 2000-01, DSISD had the highest legal expenditures compared to its peer districts. Many districts attempt to control legal fees by restricting all contact with attorneys to a few key administrators. Some districts purchase legal liability insurance through TASB, and others maintain reasonable legal fees by seeking periodic proposals for legal services.

Recommendation 10:

Conduct an annual evaluation of legal services and related fees, and seek periodic proposals for legal services.

A fee estimate from multiple firms could provide DSISD a clear and comprehensive description of all services to be performed. An evaluation of services should include a review of the cost per pupil as compared to comparable school districts, hourly rates for partners, associates and paralegals, retainer fee and services covered and assessment of turn-around time on requests for such matters as contract reviews and opinions. Additionally, the district's internal practices must be analyzed to ensure that district actions are not contributing to the costs. DSISD should establish a goal of decreasing legal fees to no more than \$15 per pupil.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board requests that the superintendent provide the board with a proposed legal service evaluation instrument.	September 2002
2.	The superintendent, in collaboration with legal counsel, develops and provides a recommended instrument to the board.	October - November 2002
3.	The board reviews, revises and approves the proposed legal service evaluation instrument.	December 2002
4.	The board implements the evaluation procedures with the assistance of the superintendent and staff members.	January 2003 and Each Third Year Thereafter
5.	The superintendent and the director of Human Resources prepare and issue a request for fee estimates.	February 2003 and Each Third Year Thereafter
6.	The superintendent and board review the fee estimates.	April 2003
7.	The board selects the proposal that is most advantageous to the district.	May 2003 and Each Third Year Thereafter
8.	The board reviews the effectiveness of the evaluation procedure and adjusts it as needed.	Upon Completion of the Evaluation

FISCAL IMPACT

If DSISD decreased legal fees to \$15 per student, or \$47,955 (\$15/student x 3,197 students), the district would save \$16,697 annually (\$64,652 2000-01 legal expenses minus \$47,955).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Conduct an annual evaluation of legal services and related fees, and seek periodic proposals for legal services.	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter reviews the Dripping Springs Independent School District's (DSISD) educational service delivery system and student performance in four sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Student Performance
- C. Instructional Resources
- D. Special Programs

For a school district to meet student needs, it must provide strong instructional guidance; have committed, capable teachers; and possess a thorough understanding of students' needs through the evaluation and monitoring of its educational programs and student achievement. Well-designed instructional programs are vital to meeting the needs of all students in the district. Instructional leadership from central office and school administrators is directly responsible for the district's educational effectiveness.

BACKGROUND

DSISD has four schools serving students in early childhood through grade 12: Dripping Springs Primary School (early childhood-grade 3), Dripping Springs Intermediate School (grades 4 and 5), Dripping Springs Middle School (grades 6-8) and Dripping Springs High School (grades 9-12).

In October of 2001, the primary school students were relocated to various facilities due to the closure of the primary school building for mold infestation. The early childhood and kindergarten students were moved to a local church, the first and second grade students to the central administration building and the third grade students to the intermediate school building. The students and staff remained in these locations through the end of the school year.

In 2001-02, DSISD served 3,311 students, 87.7 percent Anglo, 10.6 percent Hispanic, 0.6 percent African American, 1.1 percent identified as "other" and 8.1 percent identified as economically disadvantaged.

DSISD selected five peer districts for comparison purposes: Burnet Consolidated, Eanes, Lake Travis, Marble Falls and Wimberley. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides comparative information on state-mandated student achievement scores for the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and other demographic, staffing and financial

data through its Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). These reports are sent to each district and school. They are also available online at the TEA website, www.tea.state.tx.us.

Exhibit 2-1 compares DSISD's demographics with its selected peer districts, the districts in the Regional Education Service Center XIII (Region 13), to which DSISD belongs and to the state as a whole.

Exhibit 2-1
Demographic Characteristics of Students
DSISD, Peer Districts, Region 13 and the State
2001-02

District	Student Enrollment	Percent Anglo	Percent Hispanic	Percent African American	Percent Other
DSISD	3,311	87.7%	10.6%	0.6%	1.1%
Eanes	7,260	87.9%	5.0%	0.5%	6.6%
Lake Travis	4,376	85.8%	11.2%	0.8%	2.2%
Marble Falls	3,677	68.1%	28.3%	2.1%	1.5%
Burnet Consolidated	2,948	80.6%	17.8%	1.2%	0.5%
Wimberley	1,734	88.8%	9.2%	0.8%	1.2%
Region 13	279,074	52.4%	35.0%	9.6%	3.0%
State	4,150,741	40.9%	41.7%	14.3%	3.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2001-02.

The DSISD student population, like those of its peer districts, is predominantly Anglo. It has the third-highest percentage of Anglo students in its peer group, and has a significantly higher proportion of Anglo students than Region 13 and the state as a whole.

DSISD had the second-lowest percent of economically disadvantaged students in its peer group and has a significantly lower percent of economically disadvantaged students than Region 13 and the state as a whole. It has the second-lowest percent of bilingual/ESL students in its peer group and a significantly lower percent than Region 13 and the state as a whole. The district had a slightly higher attendance rate than Region

13 and the state in 1999-2000. Its dropout rate in 1999-2000 was lower than Region 13 and the state and was third lowest among its peer group. The district's percent of special education students was the second highest in its peer group and slightly higher than Region 13 and the state as a whole. The attendance and dropout rate data are from 1999-2000, since these data can only be reported after completion of the school year, while the remainder of the demographic data are from 2001-02 (**Exhibit 2-2**).

Exhibit 2-2
District Demographic Characteristics,
1999-2000 Attendance and Dropout Rates
DSISD, Peer Districts, Region 13 and the State
2001-02

District	Student Enrollment	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent Bilingual/ESL	Percent Special Education	Attendance Rate 1999-2000	Dropout Rate 1999-2000 Grades 7-12
DSISD	3,311	8.1%	1.7%	13.6%	96.3%	0.5%
Eanes	7,260	2.1%	1.4%	10.6%	96.5%	0.4%
Lake Travis	4,376	9.5%	3.5%	10.7%	96.3%	0.6%
Marble Falls	3,677	41.6%	7.5%	12.1%	95.5%	1.5%
Burnet Consolidated	2,948	42.1%	3.4%	16.1%	95.4%	1.2%
Wimberley	1,734	16.8%	2.3%	11.6%	96.3%	0.1%
Region 13	279,074	36.8%	9.1%	12.4%	95.2%	1.4%
State	4,150,741	50.5%	13.1%	11.7%	95.6%	1.3%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02 and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2000-01.

While the overall average years of experience of DSISD teachers are in the mid-range of its peer group, it is slightly higher than both the Region 13 and state averages. At 5.6 years, the average years of teacher experience with the district is the third lowest among the peer group and lower than the Region 13 and state averages. The percent of teacher turnover in DSISD is the third lowest in its peer group and slightly lower

than the Region 13 average, but higher than the state average (**Exhibit 2-3**).

Exhibit 2-3
Teacher Average Years of Experience and Turnover Rates
DSISD, Peer Districts, Region 13 and the State
2000-01

District	Average Years of Teaching Experience	Average Years of Teacher Experience with District	Percent Teacher Turnover
DSISD	12.0	5.6	17.2%*
Eanes	13.2	6.7	16.3%
Lake Travis	11.7	3.9	24.0%
Marble Falls	13.0	7.0	19.4%
Burnet Consolidated	13.6	7.2	7.5%
Wimberley	14.1	5.2	19.0%
Region 13	11.4	6.6	17.3%
State	11.9	7.9	16.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

**All teachers, both those in the classroom and those in the special education cooperative, are included in the calculation. If only classroom teachers are counted, the percent of teacher turnover would be 16.4 percent.*

In May 2002 the U.S. Department of Education recognized the DSISD middle school as a National Blue Ribbon school. When selecting schools, the Blue Ribbon program considers several factors, including academic performance as well as family and community support. The middle school was one of only 25 schools in Texas and 172 nationwide to receive the honor.

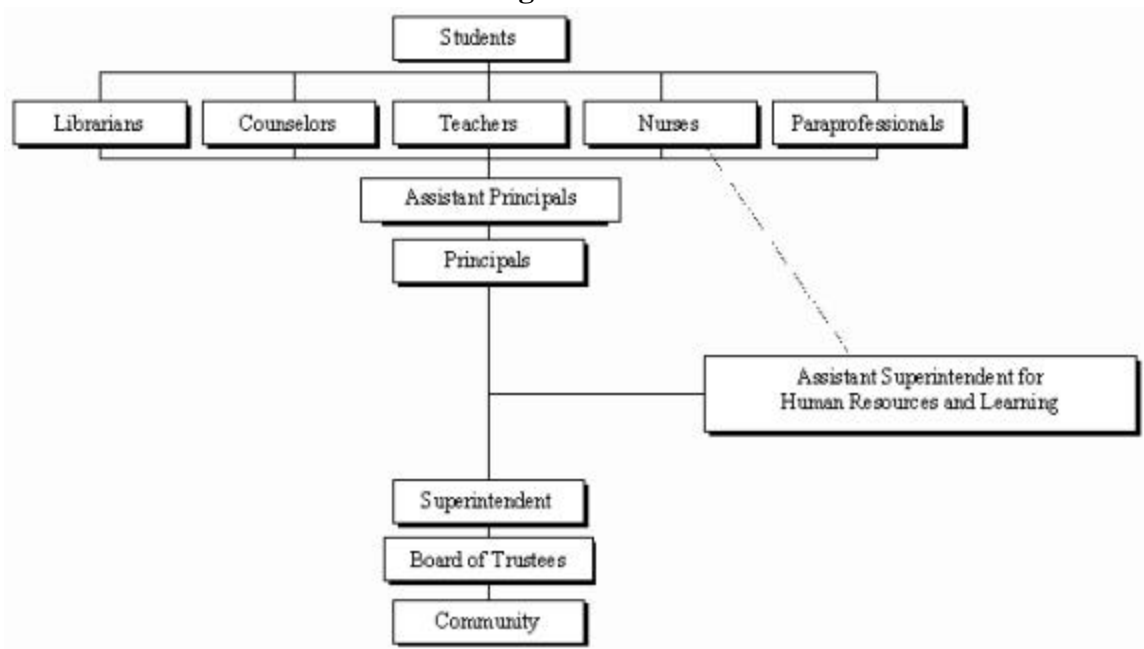
Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The DSISD central administration organizational chart shows a student-centered structure. Students appear at the very top of the organizational chart supported by teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses and paraprofessionals and followed by assistant principals and principals (Exhibit 2-4).

Exhibit 2-4
DSISD Instructional Organization 2001-02



Source: DSISD Central Administration, September 2001.

The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, who reports directly to the superintendent, has direct oversight and management responsibilities for the district's pre-K through grade 12 curriculum and instructional programs and services.

A curriculum council was developed in 2001 to achieve vertical curriculum alignment, to write curriculum and to develop scope and sequences in needed areas. It includes each school's instructional facilitator, as well as representatives from each primary and intermediate grade level and each core subject department in the middle school and high school.

The districtwide educational improvement council (DWEIC) meets monthly and consists of parents, community members and school representatives. The DWEIC is responsible for developing the district improvement plan (DIP), for ensuring its implementation and for ensuring consistency between the districtwide plan and individual campus improvement plans (CIPs).

The district's administrative team also meets monthly prior to school board meetings for instructional planning, information sharing and administrative coordination. The administrative team includes principals, assistant principals and representatives from the transportation, community education and food services areas.

Principals serve as the instructional leaders for their schools. They work closely with the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to coordinate their school plans with the district plans.

FINDING

The district has implemented a curriculum council to formally develop districtwide curriculum alignment.

DSISD is taking steps toward achieving districtwide curriculum alignment through the development of a districtwide curriculum council. In 1999-2000, the school board required the district administration to develop a *Portrait of a DSISD Graduate*, outlining the qualities and traits that every DSISD graduate should possess to be a successful member of society. Each school provided input to develop a list of the information a DSISD graduate should know and master before graduation. This collaborative process became the vehicle to drive the curriculum for early childhood through grade 12. **Exhibit 2-5** summarizes the desired qualities and traits of a DSISD graduate according to the curriculum council.

Exhibit 2-5 Portrait of a DSISD Graduate

- A lifelong learner who continuously seeks knowledge and information to use for setting and attaining lofty goals, who constantly evaluates and monitors, who is open to alternatives for investigation and who remains flexible and adaptive to change.
- Accomplished communicator who possesses and effectively uses the levels of communication skills prescribed by today's multi-faceted and rapidly changing world. Skills in listening, speaking, writing, reading, mathematics and technology presentations.
- Skillful problem solver who can identify a problem using available data to organize, analyze, interpret and predict consequences so that problems

inherent in a rapidly changing society can be solved effectively.

- Conscientious citizen, who is honest and steadfast in beliefs about our nation and its tenets of diversity, understands how our government functions, willingly contributes to the many aspects of community and responsibly manages time and other resources.
- Contributing member of society, who possesses high standards for self whether leading or contributing to the successful attainment of team goals, takes pride in his own work and is dependable and creative.

Source: DSISD Board of Trustees, May 2000.

The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning leads the curriculum council, which meets a minimum of once a month. Since its first meeting in the spring of 2001, it has developed curriculum goals and a timeline through 2003-04 for achieving those goals (**Exhibit 2-6**).

Exhibit 2-6 DSISD Curriculum Council Goals

- Each grade level and each content area will establish subject mastery goals for end of grade level/course using *Portrait of a DSISD Graduate* as the template. (2001-02)
- Each grade level and each core content area (grades pre-K-12) will develop benchmarks for their grade/core content area. (2002-03)
- Each grade level and core content area will develop suggestions to provide parents so that parents will know what they can do at home to support their child in that grade level/content area. (2003-04)

Source: DSISD Curriculum Council, May 2001.

The council also developed the following sequence for achieving its goals:

- Start with the end in mind.
- Review the qualities, skills, competencies that the district established as wanting all students to have by the time they graduate from Dripping Springs High School.
- Beginning with high school, establish competencies for each core content area using the *Portrait of a DSISD Graduate*, the End of Course (EOC) exams and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as templates.
- After the high school has developed its terminal objectives, the high school and middle school will collaborate to establish the competencies for each grade level and in each content area.

- The middle school and intermediate school then will collaborate to establish the competencies for each grade level and in each content area.
- Intermediate school and primary school will then collaborate to establish core content area competencies in each grade level in primary school.
- Ensure both vertical and horizontal alignment for each core content area.
- Once these skills/competencies have been established, develop benchmarks (standards) for each grade level/course in each content area.

In its first year, the council began to review curriculum to determine gaps and overlaps. The council has developed scope and sequences for English and language arts in grades pre-K through 12. Math, social studies and science scope and sequences are scheduled for completion in the summer of 2002. These scope and sequences detail what is to be taught in each subject and the order in which it is to be taught.

COMMENDATION

Building upon its *Portrait of a DSISD Graduate*, the district identified the need for formal districtwide curriculum alignment and has implemented a curriculum council to work toward achieving its goal.

FINDING

The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning has a span of control that is too broad and includes too many responsibilities. The position's job description includes instructional management, school and organizational climate, school and organizational improvement, personnel management, administration and fiscal management of federal programs, facilities management for community education programs, student management, school and community relations and professional development. The position's main responsibilities include the following:

- *Supervision.* The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning directly supervises the director of Human Resources, the Community Education coordinator, the Textbook coordinator and administrative support employees. Components of these responsibilities include assisting with training of school-based hiring committees and ensuring consistency with the district's mission and policies in this area; conducting classroom observations of all new teachers; and participating in the hiring process for assistant principals and other school-level administrators.

- *Testing.* The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning coordinates all testing processes, such as the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), State Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA), Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE), gifted and talented (G/T) identification, ESL testing and dyslexia testing for the district. This coordination includes responsibility for districtwide evaluation using student data and responsibility for any program evaluations that the district may conduct, such as evaluation of the new instructional facilitator (IF) program.
- *Special Programs.* The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning has oversight and responsibility for all district special programs including bilingual education/ ESL, G/T education, Chapter I, Chapter II, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, Title II ESL, dyslexia, migrant education, 504 (program to provide modifications for students who are not eligible for special education but have disabilities or conditions that still impact their ability to fully participate in regular education programs), counseling services, health services and library services.
- *School-Based Functions.* The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning performs school-based functions such as observations of all new teachers in the district in addition to those conducted by school principals and assistant principals.
- *Curriculum.* The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning works directly with the following groups: principals; assistant principals; IFs; counselors; nurses; community education personnel and G/T program coordinators.

In an interview, the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning said she considers it imperative to have direct lines of communication and ongoing dialogue with school administrators and teachers directly involved in providing instructional leadership and support to the faculty and students. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning plans to begin regular meetings with the librarians in the 2002-03 year. She meets regularly with special education cooperative staff and district special education staff. While the special education cooperative staff is its own separate entity, the assistant superintendent maintains ongoing communication with them to coordinate their work with that of the district's special education teachers.

The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning is responsible for the district's curriculum council and DWEIC. In addition,

the assistant superintendent meets regularly with the four campus IFs. While the IFs report to their principals and do not work out of the central office, they work closely with the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, providing campus level curriculum and instructional support at their respective schools.

According to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, program evaluation is a critical component of her responsibilities. She said that she does not spend as much time in this area as she would like to be able to identify the programs enhancing student success as well as those programs needing adjustments.

The Wake County Public School System in North Carolina developed an evaluation program that supports the board's goals for improved student success. The evaluation information is research-based, tailored to the specific program or service being evaluated and gives detailed analyses on student achievement.

Many districts limit the span of control of a director in the area of curriculum and instruction to provide that central administrator with ample time and resources to effectively manage the educational programs, resources and associated staff directly charged with enhancing student performance. In these districts, school administrators distribute duties and maintain communication between the district and each school. Administrators perform school-level duties, report results to and receive guidance from their central administrative supervisor. The curriculum and instruction directors in many of these districts also concentrate their efforts on program evaluation.

Recommendation 11:

Realign the duties and responsibilities of the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning.

The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning will no longer be required to assist with training of school-based hiring committees and to conduct observations of new teachers. As curriculum leader, it is important that the assistant superintendent continue to work directly with instructional personnel, including librarians. The assistant superintendent will add oversight of athletics as an area of responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent realigns the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning's duties and responsibilities.	September 2002
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2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning meets with principals, assistant principals and IFs to ensure their observations cover all areas she has been reviewing for new teachers.	September 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning discontinues conducting new teacher observations and management of human resources.	September 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning assumes responsibility for oversight of athletics.	September 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Although principals individually review student performance to adjust instruction at their campuses, the district does not have a database of information to use when evaluating the effectiveness of programs districtwide for all demographic groups.

The district's individual campuses receive exemplary accountability ratings from TEA; however, the district receives a Recognized rating because individual demographic groups of students receive lower scores than all student scores combined.

The district presently uses the South Texas Multi-Regional Processing Center (STMRPC) software package to manage student information and the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) software to manage its financial and human resources data. Region 13 supports both of these software systems. For the 2002-03 year, the district allocated \$66,883 in its budget for the Region 13 system support.

Most DSISD school administrators manually perform student data comparisons and conduct program evaluations through time-consuming self-assessments that do not consistently contain demographic, program or instructor groups' assessments. One principal uses an outside company to prepare reports analyzing students' performance at that campus specifically because the district does not have a central data information management support system. Each campus improvement plan lists objectives and implementation plans on how data are used to address students' academic needs. For example, the intermediate school's 2001-02 plan notes that students who achieve less than 70 percent on math and reading TAAS will receive tutorial intervention. However, program

evaluation and use of student data are inconsistent districtwide. Several administrators said centrally maintained and updated student performance and program evaluation data would be useful.

DSISD hired a consultant to evaluate the G/T program and conduct annual surveys of students, teachers and parents about the program quality. None of these assessments, however, analyzed the students' performance in the program to assess or evaluate its effectiveness. The Data Information Management Committee, composed of technology and other administrators, is presently evaluating whether the current software systems address district needs or if a new system is needed.

Smithville Independent School District refined its districtwide program evaluation system by rewriting a staff job description to include program evaluation specifics and purchasing a scantron machine and associated software to assist in educational data analysis. The district reports positive results due to these enhancements.

Many Texas districts design systems for program evaluation that generate reports specifically using student data and test scores based upon demographics, program areas and instructors. These reports provide the districts with specific information to adequately assess whether a program is serving students' needs and enhancing students' performance. Additionally, districts use these reports to assess program areas where students excel to capitalize on identified strengths, areas with identified shortcomings that need to be enhanced or revised and entire programs that may be academically and financially ineffective or that could be replicated elsewhere. Many districts have identified useful program evaluation software.

Recommendation 12:

Design a central student data management system for the comprehensive evaluation of programs.

The district's principals should meet with the data information management committee to identify a software system with a variety of standardized and ad hoc features that allows school leaders to match their needs through more sophisticated querying and reporting capabilities. These needs should be included in the committee's search for suitable software alternatives that meet the district's needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning contacts Smithville ISD and other districts for "best	September 2002 -
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	practice" models for program evaluation systems, giving consideration to how best practice models could be adapted for DSISD.	November 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning obtains input from principals regarding data analysis features they would like considered in a program evaluation system.	November 2002 - December 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the data information management committee evaluate software and equipment options and submit the proposed system design to the superintendent for approval.	January 2003 - February 2003
4.	The superintendent approves the system recommendation and submits it to the board for approval.	March 2003
5.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning requests purchase of the approved software and equipment.	April 2003 - May 2003
6.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning provides information on the new system at staff development for school administrators and program coordinators and implements the data management system for program evaluation.	May 2003 - July 2003
7.	Using the system, the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning identifies program delivery areas needing improvement and provides direction to school administrators on revising specific program delivery areas.	May 2003 and Ongoing
8.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning monitors the new system and makes adjustments as necessary.	August 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This fiscal impact is based upon a one-time cost of \$3,600 for the purchase of a scantron machine and software to assist the district in student data analysis. This fiscal impact also assumes that the district will use an existing computer for the software.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Design a central student data management system for the comprehensive evaluation of programs.	(\$3,600)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

B. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

TEA measures student skills through its accountability rating system based upon the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), dropout rates and data quality. There are five state accountability ratings for districts: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable and Suspended: Data Inquiry.

TAAS performance is the primary factor in determining a district's accountability rating. The state-mandated TAAS tests are administered in grades 3-8 and 10. The assessments include a reading and mathematics test in grades 3-8 and 10 and a writing assessment in grades 4, 8 and 10. Science and social studies tests are administered at grade 8. The Spanish version of TAAS is offered in grades 3-6. Also included in the student assessment system are end-of-course examinations in Algebra I in grades 7-12, Biology I in grades 8-12, English II and United States History.

To achieve an Exemplary rating, at least 90 percent of all students, as well as 90 percent of each student group (African American, Anglo, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students) must pass the TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests. To receive a Recognized rating, 80 percent of all students and student groups must pass the TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests. For an Academically Acceptable rating in 2000-01, 50 percent of each student group had to pass the TAAS tests. Also in 2000-01, the scores of the Spanish version of the grades 3-6 reading and mathematics TAAS as well as the scores of students with disabilities were considered for the accountability ratings. A district receives an Academically Unacceptable rating or a school a Low Performing rating if less than 50 percent of its students pass the TAAS.

TEA has revised the criteria used to calculate district and school accountability ratings. Starting with the 2001-02 TAAS results, 55 percent of all students must pass the reading, writing and mathematics portions of the TAAS for an Acceptable rating. The same percentage applies to all demographic subgroups of students. For an Acceptable rating, dropout rates must be no higher than 5 percent, compared to the previous 5.5 percent. Also, the results of the eighth grade social studies portion of the TAAS are included to determine accountability ratings. At least 50 percent of students must pass the social studies test for their school to receive an Acceptable rating.

In 2002-03, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) will replace the TAAS. The TAKS will be administered in grades 9, 10 and 11. Reading and mathematics tests will be added at grade 9 and a science test at grade 5. The exit-level examination will be moved to grade 11 and will include science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics.

With the exception of Eanes, DSISD earned the Exemplary rating more times than its peers. Since 1995-96, the district has had four Exemplary ratings. The district was rated Recognized in 2000-01 as result of TEA's calculation system for demographic sub-groups that take the test. When identified by school, the sub-group scores are high enough for each school to rate Exemplary when the results of all students taking its tests are added together. However, when the sub-groups are added together districtwide, the resulting scores move the district as a whole into the Recognized rating (**Exhibit 2-7**).

Exhibit 2-7
Accountability Ratings
DSISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 through 2000-01

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
DSISD	Recognized	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Recognized
Eanes	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Recognized
Lake Travis	Exemplary	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary	Academically Acceptable
Marble Falls	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable
Burnet Consolidated	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Exemplary	Recognized	Recognized
Wimberley	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Recognized

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

For the years 1995-96 through 2000-01, DSISD primary school and middle school have continuously maintained either a Recognized or Exemplary status. The intermediate school has maintained a Recognized or Exemplary status since 1996-97. The high school has made steady progress, moving from Acceptable in 1995-96 to Recognized in 1996-98, and achieving and maintaining Exemplary status from 1998-99 through 2000-01 (**Exhibit 2-8**).

Exhibit 2-8
DSISD School Accountability Ratings
1995-96 through 2000-01

Dripping Springs School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Primary	Recognized	Exemplary	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary
Intermediate	Acceptable	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary	Recognized	Exemplary
Middle	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary	Exemplary	Recognized	Exemplary
High	Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary

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

From 1995-96 through 2001-02, the primary school's TAAS reading scores have remained in the 90 percent range. The math scores and combined scores for all tests taken have increased by 10 percentage points (**Exhibit 2-9**).

Exhibit 2-9
Dripping Springs Primary School TAAS scores
1995-96 through 2001-02

Primary School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
All tests taken	77.6%	89.8%	85.2%	84.9%	85.6%	89.9%	87.0%
Reading	92.9%	94.6%	94.4%	93.0%	93.0%	95.8%	93.0%
Math	81.1%	92.8%	89.3%	88.4%	88.3%	91.2%	91.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01; DSISD Preliminary Data, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, 2001-02.

From 1995-96 through 2001-02 the intermediate school's TAAS reading and writing scores have remained in the 90 percent range and math scores have increased more than 12 percentage points. Additionally, the percent of students passing all tests increased from 79.4 percent in 1995-96 to 91.6 percent in 2000-01, and the school rating went from an Acceptable rating to an Exemplary rating (**Exhibit 2-10**).

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01, DSISD Preliminary Data, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, 2001-02.

* Denotes information not available.

** Denotes social studies scores first included in 2001-02 to determine accountability ratings.

From 1995-96 through 2001-02, the high school has remained in the 90 percent range in TAAS reading and writing scores. During this period, the school increased its math scores by 13 percent. The percentage of students passing all tests has increased almost 11 points since 1995-96 (Exhibit 2-12).

Exhibit 2-12
Dripping Springs High School TAAS Scores
1995-96 through 2001-02

High School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
All tests taken	77.9%	79.8%	88.6%	89.4%	93.5%	92.7%	89.0%
Reading	95.7%	98.1%	95.7%	94.3%	96.7%	93.9%	97.0%
Math	79.3%	85.9%	91.0%	92.3%	97.5%	97.5%	93.0%
Writing	94.2%	90.4%	97.6%	93.3%	96.3%	96.7%	95.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01 and DSISD, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, Preliminary Data, 2001-02.

The district's TAAS participation rate in 2000-01 was 98.7 percent, higher than Region 13 (96.2 percent) and the state's (96.2 percent) identical participation rates. DSISD did not test 1.3 percent of students in 2000-01. Of these students, 0.7 percent were absent, compared to 0.8 percent for Region 13 and 0.6 percent for the state; 0.2 percent were Admission, Review and Dismissal exemptions compared to 1.0 percent for Region 13 and 1.1 percent for the state; 0.1 percent were LEP exempt compared to 1.3 percent for Region 13 and 1.4 percent for the state and 0.4 percent

were exempted as "other" compared to 0.7 percent for both Region 13 and the state.

With the exception of the "other" group, the scores of other demographic groups, including African American, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged and Special Education students have generally improved (**Exhibit 2-13**).

Exhibit 2-13
DSISD TAAS Scores for All Tests Taken by Demographic Group
1995-96 through 2000-01

Demographics	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
African American	*	*	60.0%	71.4%	57.1%	75.0%
Hispanic	64.2%	82.1%	78.9%	79.4%	82.1%	89.9%
Other	*	100.0%	*	85.0%	100.0%	93.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	69.2%	75.7%	77.9%	78.4%	79.4%	82.5%
Special Education	29.4%	40.6%	40.9%	63.2%	70.0%	72.6%

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

**No data reported for fewer than 5 students due to privacy reasons.*

Exhibits 2-14, 2-15 and 2-16 show scores on the reading, writing and mathematics test respectively for DSISD students by demographic group, from 1995-96 through 2000-01. Hispanic and economically disadvantaged intermediate school students scored in the 85-90 percent range on the reading test throughout the time period. Scores for special education students increased, as did those for students statewide. Scores for African American students decreased by 25 percentage points from 1999-00 to 2000-01.

On the writing test, scores of Hispanic and special education students increased throughout the time period, while those of economically disadvantaged students remained in the 84-90 percent range.

On the mathematics test, scores of Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students increased from 1995-96 through 2000-01, and special education students scores increased almost 50 percentage points between 1995-96 and 2000-01. Scores for African American students fluctuated.

Exhibit 2-14
DSISD TAAS Scores for Reading by Demographic Group
1995-96 through 2001-02

Demographics	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
African American	*	*	60.0%	85.7%	100.0%	75.0%	*
Hispanic	86.3%	90.0%	87.0%	84.9%	86.0%	90.7%	90.6%
Other	*	100.0%	*	94.5%	100.0%	93.8%	*
Economically Disadvantaged	84.9%	85.9%	86.0%	85.2%	85.6%	88.8%	86.3%
Special Education	57.3%	59.3%	61.9%	74.8%	81.0%	80.2%	84.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01, DSISD Preliminary Data, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, 2001-02.
**No data reported for fewer than five students due to privacy reasons.*

Exhibit 2-15
DSISD TAAS Scores for Writing by Demographic Group
1995-96 through 2001-02

Demographics	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
African American	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	81.0%	93.5%	82.4%	92.5%	96.2%	97.6%	89.2%
Other	*	*	*	100.0%	*	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	83.8%	84.4%	86.1%	86.4%	90.7%	88.6%	90.3%
Special Education	39.0%	59.0%	56.6%	72.7%	78.3%	75.0%	72.4%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01, DSISD Preliminary Data, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, 2001-02.
**No data reported for fewer than five students due to privacy reasons.*

Exhibit 2-16
DSISD TAAS Scores for Math by Demographic Group
1995-96 through 2001-02

Demographics	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
African American	*	*	100.0%	80.0%	66.7%	83.3%	*
Hispanic	72.5%	86.4%	86.0%	88.9%	90.1%	95.5%	92.0%
Other	*	100.0%	*	90.0%	100.0%	93.8%	*
Economically Disadvantaged	74.5%	82.5%	88.2%	86.7%	86.1%	90.6%	86.9%
Special Education	37.4%	52.7%	51.2%	77.1%	80.3%	84.9%	81.3%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 2000-01, DSISD Preliminary Data, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, 2001-02.
**No data reported for fewer than five students due to privacy reasons.*

At each grade level, the percent passing all TAAS tests increased during the six-year period. In 2000-01, at least 88 percent of students at each grade level 3 through 10 passed all TAAS tests (**Exhibit 2-17**).

Exhibit 2-17
DSISD Percentage of Students Passing All TAAS Tests
By Grade Level
1995-96 through 2000-01

Grade Levels	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
3	77.6%	89.8%	85.2%	84.9%	85.6%	89.0%
4	75.6%	83.4%	91.7%	88.7%	85.8%	88.0%
5	82.8%	90.4%	91.7%	88.3%	92.7%	94.9%
6	89.6%	95.2%	95.0%	90.1%	94.9%	95.7%
7	91.0%	93.1%	94.8%	95.2%	93.4%	94.6%
8	78.4%	88.5%	85.3%	86.4%	85.9%	91.3%
10	77.9%	79.8%	88.6%	89.4%	93.4%	92.7%

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

Attendance rates in the district have also remained consistently high from 1995-96 through 2000-01 (**Exhibit 2-18**).

Exhibit 2-18
DSISD Attendance Rates by School
1995-96 through 2000-01

School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Primary	96.4%	96.0%	96.5%	96.2%	96.4%	96.7%
Intermediate	96.3%	96.4%	97.1%	96.9%	96.5%	96.6%
Middle	96.2%	96.3%	96.4%	96.7%	96.5%	97.1%
High	95.1%	95.0%	95.4%	95.3%	94.8%	95.1%

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

The district's annual dropout rates for grades 7 through 12 have remained consistently low throughout this six-year period. Since 1997-98, grades 7-8 have maintained a 0 percent dropout rate.

Exhibit 2-19
DSISD Annual Dropout Rates, Grades 7-12
1995-96 through 2000-01

Grades	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
7-8	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9-12	0.8%	0.8%	1.4%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%

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

FINDING

DSISD principals individually analyze student data, including TAAS and end-of-course exam performance, at the school-level to adjust student instruction.

The district's overall TAAS scores are higher than Region 13 and the state. In 2000-01, 93 percent of DSISD students passed all sections of the TAAS. This percent exceeded the 2001 state and Region 13 averages of students passing all TAAS tests by more than 11 percentage points. Student performance on the TAAS has increased incrementally since 1995-96 and consistently exceeded Region 13 and state averages (**Exhibit 2-20**).

Exhibit 2-20
Percent of all Students Passing TAAS
DSISD, Region 13 and the State
1995-96 through 2000-01

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
DSISD	82.6%	89.6%	91.2%	90.6%	91.5%	93.1%
Region 13	69.1%	75.2%	79.2%	78.7%	80.9%	82.9%
State	67.1%	73.2%	77.7%	78.3%	79.9%	82.1%

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

From 1998-99 through 2000-01 the percentage of students in DSISD passing end-of-course exams exceeded the state average in all subjects and the regional average in all exams but U.S. History in 2000-01 (**Exhibit 2-21**).

Exhibit 2-21
Percent of Students Passing End-of-Course Exams
DSISD, Region 13 and the State
1998-99 through 2000-01

	1998-99				1999-2000				2000-01			
	Algebra I	Biology	English II	U.S. History	Algebra I	Biology	English II	U.S. History	Algebra I	Biology	English II	U.S. History
DSISD	69.7%	94.8%	96.9%	86.9%	60.4%	96.3%	92.1%	92.5%	72.2%	92.3%	81.5%	75.5%
Region	48.9%	80.4%	76.7%	81.1%	45.9%	82.6%	79.2%	81.6%	52.3%	82.4%	79.1%	83.1%
State	43.4%	76.4%	72.7%	69.8%	43.9%	80.3%	77.7%	72.1%	49.2%	79.9%	75.1%	74.3%

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

The campus improvement plans show objectives and implementation plans for using student data to address instructional needs. The four principals verified that they use student data for this purpose.

The primary school uses the results of the entire third grade TAAS tests to determine areas that need strengthening. For example, if students do not score as high in one subject as in the other, or if a particular grade level is scoring lower than others, the primary school leaders will determine what instructional adaptations need to be made to overcome the grade level or school-wide deficiencies. The primary school also forwards the individual

students' third grade TAAS results to the intermediate school for analysis and planning.

The primary school began administering a TEA test, similar to the TAAS, in reading and math at the end of second grade during 2001-02. The district uses a company, Parsoft, to scan the tests at a cost of \$1.00 per student and to generate reports similar to TEA TAAS test result reports. The primary principal said the test is cost-effective in acquiring data for third grade planning purposes. Third grade teachers also use TAAS practice tests results to determine tutorials needed prior to the actual TAAS. The district hired a certified math tutor at the substitute pay rate for three days per week for 20-30 minute tutorials sessions in 2001-02 to assist students in math competencies.

The intermediate school assistant principal schedules time with each teacher prior to the school year to review each student's TAAS performance. Together, they study the composite class scores from students the teacher will receive that year to determine class weaknesses and develop instructional strategies for those areas. In 2001-02, a review of the third grade math TAAS test data from the previous year resulted in a 12-14 week math tutorial for fourth grade students beginning in January 2002. The math tutors were certified teachers and included the principal, assistant principal, campus IF and counselor. Each teacher worked with groups of four to six students. Of six students the principal tutored when the school conducted similar tutorials in 2000-01, five averaged an eight to 10 point gain on math TAAS scores; only one did not pass that portion of the TAAS test.

The middle school divides students at each grade level into two academic teams with core subject teachers on each team. This gives each team of teachers a common set of students. At the beginning of the year, the school counselors spend a lot of time and pull each student's TAAS scores, break them down by objective and present information to the grade level teams to plan their instructional delivery methods.

The high school analyzes data from incoming freshmen's eighth grade TAAS tests. High school leaders also review students' Scholastic Achievement Test, American College Test and Texas Academic Skills Program results and end-of-course test data. The high school staff use an Excel spreadsheet to list student test data. The high school conducts an annual analysis of Advanced Placement test scores to determine student performance, number of students taking tests and number of tests taken. The school shares the data with department leaders to use with their departments and with individual teachers. The high school's leadership team, composed of department leaders, counselors and administrators, also meets every other week for planning and discussion of test-related issues.

The high school principal reports that data analysis is an important part of the leadership team's meetings.

COMMENDATION

DSISD principals use student data in a variety of ways to enhance instruction at the school level.

FINDING

Campus teachers and administrators collaborate to provide students with a smooth transition between schools.

Students in the district transition in the following order: from primary school to intermediate school, from intermediate school to middle school and from middle school to high school. The transition process evolved from the monthly meetings between the counselors and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning. The group discusses ways to achieve a smooth transition and components needed for the transitions. Each year, the counselors evaluate their process and revise it as needed.

Each spring the primary and intermediate school counselors prepare the third graders for their transition to the intermediate school. The intermediate school counselor speaks with the third grade classes. Afterwards, the students visit the intermediate school for a tour and watch skits performed by the intermediate students about school rules. The intermediate school invites third grade parents to the last intermediate school Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting of the year for transitional information.

In February, the intermediate and middle school counselors begin working with the fifth graders and their parents to assist them with the transition to middle school. A meeting is held with gifted and talented program student parents to address questions about the middle school program. In March, the middle school hosts an orientation and tour for fifth grade parents. The intermediate school counselor coordinates the fifth grade classes' tour of the middle school with the Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) Program students. Afterwards, the counselors make a presentation about the class schedule and offered electives, distributing course choice sheets for collection at a later date. Additionally, special education students take a second trip to visit the learning labs and resource rooms. During the first week of May, the sixth grade middle school counselor visits each fifth grade class and to explain how to read the middle school schedule and introduce them to the middle school block scheduling system. There is

also a "band determination night" at the middle school for future band students.

The middle and high school counselors work collaboratively to ensure the smooth transition of the eighth graders to the high school. In October and November, the eighth grade middle school counselor conducts classroom visits about the transition process. During the November meeting, students conduct a career interest inventory and discuss how their high school classes can tie into their career interests. In December, the counselor meets with the high school counselors to discuss the transition timeline. In January, postcards are sent to the eighth graders' parents informing them of the timeline as well as upcoming deadlines and events.

In January, the high school conducts an orientation night for parents and incoming freshmen to discuss graduation/diploma plans, testing requirements, elective offerings, class schedules and school organizations. In late January, the middle school counselor visits with the eighth grade students to review the high school course schedule, requirements and electives and to distribute course sheets. After the student visits, the middle school counselor schedules several optional breakfast meetings for eighth grade parents to share information and answer questions. During January or February, the middle school counselor holds a career day for the eighth graders. In late February, one of the high school counselors spends two days at the middle school collecting course requirement sheets and answering student and parent questions. Students may also request individual meetings with the counselor. In August, the high school hosts a freshmen orientation during which the principal addresses the students to familiarize them with the school schedule and organizations.

COMMENDATION

The district's counselors, teachers and principals collaborate to provide smooth school transitions to ensure individual student success at the respective schools.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

School district administrators must ensure that the resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvements in student performance. Administrators must determine the amount of resources needed and must monitor and evaluate district personnel and instructional programs.

The district's mission statement, critical strand beliefs and goals as shown in **Exhibits 2-22, 2-23, and 2-24** show the district's commitment to providing adequate instructional resources.

Exhibit 2-22 **DSISD Mission Statement**

We inspire and equip students to be life-long learners and positive contributors to the world.
--

Source: DSISD Superintendent's Office, April 2002.

Exhibit 2-23 **DSISD Critical Strand Belief Statements**

Curriculum We believe curriculum must maximize student potential by providing optimum learning experiences.
Personnel We believe effective, student-centered personnel provide successful learning opportunities.
Community We believe that Dripping Springs values a shared responsibility for learning.
Safety We believe people who feel safe perform better.
Facility We believe the community must commit to provide for the education of its children.
Financial Resources We believe that we must allocate and efficiently manage available financial

resources to support adequate student achievement.

Source: DSISD Office of Superintendent, April 2002.

**Exhibit 2-24
DSISD Goals**

<p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum</p> <p>100% of our students will graduate under a plan that maximizes their abilities and interests.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Personnel</p> <p>To increase retention of effective personnel at or above the state average of 85%.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Community</p> <p>Foster reciprocal service opportunities between the community and schools.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Safety</p> <p>Individuals feel both physically and emotionally safe while at school.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Facility</p> <p>To provide safe, energy efficient facilities that support the educational needs of all students.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Financial Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the 2002-2003 school year, the district will allocate available financial resources in a process that is equitable for all students.• The district will efficiently manage the budget to improve the overall financial condition of the district.• The district will design and implement a long-range financial planning process.

Source: DSISD Superintendent's Office, April 2002.

The Texas Education Code, Subchapter F, Chapter 11, establishes requirements for district and school-level planning and site-based decision making. In accordance with the law, DSISD has an established DWEIC and school improvement teams, or leadership teams or campus improvement teams.

The DWEIC develops the DIP, which serves as the blueprint to achieve the district's mission, beliefs and goals in the area of instruction. The plan identifies a goal(s) and details the objectives necessary to meet the goals including implementation steps, resources, a timeline, staff and evaluation methods.

Each annual CIP is developed by its respective school leadership or improvement team. Members of the teams include school administrators, regular education teachers, special program teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, parents, business and community representatives and non-teaching school professionals.

The CIP's are directly tied to the DIP and are specific to the instructional needs of the students at each campus.

During 2001-02, DSISD spent 43.3 percent of its total budgeted expenditures for instruction compared to the state's 51 percent. DSISD's instructional share of its budget is the lowest among the peer districts. Peer districts budgeted between 45.2 and 48.9 percent of their operating budgets for instructional expenditures (**Exhibit 2-25**).

Exhibit 2-25
Total Instructional and Budgeted Expenditures and Percent Spent on Instruction DSISD vs. Peer Districts and the State 2001-02

District	Total Instructional Expenditures	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Percent Spent on Instruction
DSISD	\$10,218,995	\$23,602,806	43.3%
Eanes	\$30,031,490	\$66,462,722	45.3%
Lake Travis	\$17,401,068	\$38,864,907	44.2%
Marble Falls	\$13,016,931	\$27,694,368	47.3%
Burnet Consolidated	\$10,620,341	\$21,737,421	48.9%
Wimberley	\$6,537,159	\$13,818,775	47.3%
State*	\$14,631,391,287	\$28,668,118,300	51.0%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

*Preliminary figures until actual numbers are available in November 2002.

**Total Instructional Expenditures divided by Total Budgeted Expenditures.

With the exception of 1998-99, DSISD's instructional percent of the budget has decreased. While the overall dollar amount spent on instruction increased by \$3,443,330 or 50.8 percent, from \$6,775,665 to \$10,218,995, the actual percent of the budget decreased 4.64 percent. Instructional expenditures did not increase as much as total operating expenditures, which increased \$7,441,408, or 63.9 percent. Expenditures for non-instructional components, which include transportation and plant services, increased more than for instructional components (**Exhibit 2-26**).

Exhibit 2-26
DSISD Instructional Expenditures as a Percent of Budget
1996-97 through 2001-02

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Percent Change
Instruction Expenditures	\$6,775,665	\$7,384,429	\$8,420,716	\$9,688,761	\$9,923,825	\$10,218,995	50.8%
Total Operating Expenditures	\$11,648,493	\$12,985,781	\$14,714,280	\$17,133,587	\$17,940,279	\$19,089,901	63.9%
Instruction Expenditures as a Percent of Total Operating Expenditures	58.2%	56.9%	57.2%	56.6%	55.3%	53.5%	N/A

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01 and PEIMS, 2001-02.

All school improvement plans reflect staff development tied to the school goals and overall district goals.

According to the principals, school-based decision-making teams determine the school year's staff development needs using input from school staff. In addition to the five districtwide in-service days at the beginning of August, the schools provide staff development opportunities on early release days, at faculty meetings, at grade level meetings, after school and in the summer. The majority of the staff development opportunities occur outside of school hours, so substitutes are rarely needed. Teachers also are given the opportunity to attend conferences and off-school training to meet identified individual growth needs. In 2001-02, primary school teachers attended technology training; two intermediate special education teachers participated in a specific math teaching strategy

seminar for reluctant learners; and several high school teachers attended classroom management training and course-specific training.

Annually, the district sets aside two early release days for districtwide internal and external vertical-teaming staff development. This staff development complements the efforts of the district's curriculum council to achieve districtwide vertical alignment of curriculum.

FINDING

In 1999-2000, the district identified the need for an additional position to assist the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning in meeting district curriculum and instruction needs. The district initially sought to hire a curriculum director with K-12 expertise. This proved difficult to fill, since most education professionals specialize in either primary or secondary education.

The district then began to research other ways to build teacher resource programs without increasing administrative positions. The research yielded information about a program in the Douglas County (Colorado) School District, which served as the model for the district's instructional facilitators (IF) program. DSISD administrators and teachers provided input into their curriculum and instruction needs, and the program evolved based on this input. The school board approved the IF program and implemented it in 2000-01.

IF teachers serve as liaisons between the schools and central administration on curriculum and instruction matters. They teach half day and serve as IFs the rest of the day at each campus. The IF duties include:

- participating on the district's curriculum council to enhance vertical alignment among schools and nurturing curricular development in all disciplines;
- providing instructional and curricular resources to teachers (including demonstration lessons and feedback sessions to other teachers and supporting effective classroom management strategies); peer coaching experienced teachers and intensively supporting new teachers (in collaboration with their assigned mentors);
- assisting in planning and implementing school-level staff development to increase school professional knowledge and expertise;
- serving as advocates for students and teachers;

IFs fulfill the role of two full-time curriculum and instruction assistants to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning. They

meet as a group with the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning on a monthly basis.

As part of their responsibilities, IFs work an extra 10 days per year writing and revising curriculum, preparing new teacher handbooks, preparing and conducting new teacher orientation and in-service activities and helping new teachers organize their rooms. IFs remain on the teacher pay scale and receive an annual \$1,000 stipend.

IFs are not quasi-administrators, disciplinarians or teacher appraisers, and they do not serve as substitute teachers or represent the principal or assistant principals when they are out of the building. The district believes that it is essential to preserve the status of IFs as teachers to retain credibility with their peers.

Each IF was selected from the staff of the respective school, ensuring the district that each IF had the expertise in either primary or secondary education to provide the curriculum and instructional support at the appropriate level. The IFs have an average of 22-years teaching experience, giving them the background and expertise needed to serve as instructional leaders for new teachers and a support to their peers. By hiring established employees familiar with the district's policies and practices, the district avoided the startup costs it would have incurred to train one or more persons new to the district. According to teacher interviews, IFs exclusively assigned to each school provides ongoing, direct support not previously available.

The program costs half the teaching salary of each IF plus the \$1,000 stipend. The total implementation cost in 2000-01 was \$100,656. According to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, the district had planned to offer one full-time curriculum director a \$62,000 salary. The cost for staffing two full-time administrative positions would be \$124,000.

COMMENDATION

The district's use of campus instructional facilitators in each school has provided teachers with school-level staff development including model teaching and peer coaching at a savings to the district.

FINDING

To enhance instructional delivery, DSISD school administrators provide formal and informal teacher observations and teacher support opportunities.

First time teachers and those new to the district are provided a mentor teacher to assist them in their first year. Additionally, the school IFs provide extensive support for new teachers. In the fall of each year, the IF at each school conducts a new teacher "peer" observation. Although an IF observation is not considered an official appraisal, it provides teachers feedback, suggestions and strategies to improve student instruction and prepares them for upcoming formal observations. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning formally observes and meets with teachers later in the school year to discuss and evaluate their instructional strategies and provide additional feedback.

Teachers are formally evaluated each year by either their principal or assistant principal. The school administrator conducting the evaluation also meets with the teacher following the evaluation to provide feedback.

In addition to the school administrator informal classroom visits and the IF-assisted visits, two school-level observations of new teachers occur each year. The teachers also are observed on an informal basis by either their principals or assistant principals to enhance the amount of feedback provided to teachers and to enhance student performance.

New teachers receive a handbook of information, tools and strategies to assist them in their first year. All assistant principals or principals also conduct regular reviews of teachers' lesson plans.

COMMENDATION

DSISD provides a variety of professional support opportunities to teachers to increase the effectiveness of instructional delivery to students.

FINDING

In 2001-02, the district implemented an online substitute teacher placement system, Automated Educational Substitute Operator (AESOP), to manage its substitute teacher needs. Prior to 2001-02, one central administration employee managed all school substitute teacher needs in addition to her other job responsibilities. To keep up with the workload, the employee began work at 6 a.m. and took work home every evening. During this time, the superintendent determined that it was extremely difficult for school administrators to monitor staff absences manually.

The Personnel director researched ways the district could better manage substitute procurement and proposed the use of AESOP because the subscription service had no up-front costs and did not require equipment purchase. The principals reviewed the system and voted on its adoption.

The \$7,500 annual system fee, inclusive of automatic upgrades to the program, was more cost effective than adding a position. Use of AESOP also eliminated the need for overtime pay for a coordinator. The data on the system are secure and the service is available 24 hours a day, year round.

A teacher logs on any time and enters a request for a substitute. Substitutes with specific skills "rise" to the top of the "call list." District substitutes can access the system and select an assignment. Principals report the system has improved getting substitutes in a timely manner. In addition, the system provides principals with daily absence management to track absences.

COMMENDATION

The district effectively provides substitute teachers through an on-line system matching personnel skills to classroom requirements.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

D. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School districts offer educational programs and services other than the regular education curriculum to meet the needs of students. Those programs include special education, G/T, career and technology education (CATE), counseling and guidance services, library services and health services.

Special Education

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires districts to provide a free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This education must be provided in the least restrictive environment. The act also requires that students with disabilities be included in state and district assessment programs. Based on these findings, IDEA directs districts to develop an individual educational plan (IEP) for each child receiving special education services. The IEP must include input from regular education teachers and parallel educational plans for children with disabilities in regular education classrooms.

To comply with IDEA requirements and to serve the diverse needs of all students with disabilities, a special education program should feature the following:

- *Pre-referral intervention in regular education.* When a student experiences an academic problem in the regular education program, the regular education teacher should intervene to resolve the problem. If these steps do not yield satisfactory results, the problem should be referred to special education staff.
- *Referral to special education for evaluation.* Referrals to special education require an official written request supported by documentation. The referral must include an explanation of steps that have been taken in regular education to solve the student's problems prior to the referral.
- *Nondiscriminatory full individual evaluation.* After a student has been referred to special education, the district must provide a comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation or assessment within a prescribed amount of time.
- *Initial placement through an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee.* After the evaluation or assessment is complete, an ARD committee meets to discuss the results and determine

whether the student qualifies for special educational services in one of 13 categories. If the student qualifies, members of the ARD committee write a plan for the student's education.

- *Provision of educational services and supports according to a written IEP.* The ARD committee must develop an IEP specifying the classes, subject areas, development areas and life skills courses in which the student will be instructed. The IEP also should include information on the amount of time the student will spend in regular educational settings as well as related services needs such as counseling, physical therapy or occupational therapy.
- *Annual program review.* Each year after a student's initial qualification and placement, the ARD committee should conduct a review to ensure that the student's IEP is appropriate.
- *Three-year re-evaluation.* Every three years, the student should be considered for a full individual evaluation. An ARD committee should meet to discuss the results of the re-evaluation, which should determine whether the student still qualifies for special education services in the same category.
- *Dismissal from the special education program.* If and when a student no longer meets the criteria for eligibility, the student is dismissed from special education. The ARD committee must make this decision.

DSISD has been part of the Hays-Blanco Special Education cooperative since 1975. The present membership of the cooperative includes Blanco ISD, Johnson City ISD and Wimberley ISD. Since 1999-2000, DSISD has served as the fiscal agent and housed the cooperative's administrative offices. Funding for the cooperative comes from federal, state and local funds. Annual federal funds received are based on a formula using the official student count according to TEA PEIMS data submissions from the previous October. Participating districts receive their federal funds through the cooperative. State funds are allocated to the district based on a formula using instructional arrangements and attendance. The districts support the balance of funding needed after federal funds are allocated. Each district's share of funds is based on the number of students served. Funds flow back to the districts according to their needs.

DSISD complies with the federal regulations regarding IDEA. DSISD uses a pre-referral process to determine alternatives or prevention strategies such as behavior modification or remedial academic programs before referring students to special education. If a student is referred for special education, the referral is initiated at the student's school. Once the referring paperwork is completed, it is forwarded to the cooperative. A cooperative staff member tests the child within 60 calendar days. The ARD meeting is conducted within 30 days of the evaluation report to review the information and determine eligibility for special education. The

ARD committees are located at each school and include a representative of the cooperative. If a child is eligible for special education, the ARD committee develops the child's IEP, including the instructional modifications that are appropriate for the child and identification of the least restrictive environment for instruction. As required by law, IEPs are reviewed a minimum of once a year. Each child placed in special education is assigned to a cooperative staff member for case management. The case management model allows the cooperative to monitor the child, coordinate with district special education staff as necessary and prevent children from "slipping through the cracks."

DSISD ranks second highest among its peer districts in the percent of students enrolled in special education. It has roughly one percent more students enrolled in special education than Region 13 and almost two percent more than the state as a whole (**Exhibit 2-27**).

Exhibit 2-27
Special Education Students by Number and Percent Enrolled
DSISD, Peer Districts, Region 13 and the State
2001-02

District	Number Enrolled	Percent Enrolled
DSISD	452	13.6%
Eanes	770	10.6%
Lake Travis	468	10.7%
Marble Falls	445	12.1%
Burnet Consolidated	475	16.1%
Wimberley	201	11.6%
Region 13	34,649	12.4%
State	486,725	11.7%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

DSISD had the second-highest percentage of total budgeted expenditure spent on special education and the third-highest percent per pupil expenditure. As in the case of all its peer districts, DSISD spent less as a percentage of its total budgeted expenditure and less per pupil than the state as a whole (**Exhibit 2-28**).

Exhibit 2-28
Number of Special Education Students Enrolled, Budgeted
Expenditures,
Percent Spent on Special Education and Amount Spent Per Pupil
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2001-02

District	Number of Students Enrolled in Special Education	Budgeted Special Education Expenditures	Percent of Total Budgeted Expenditure	Expenditure Per Special Education Student
DSISD	452	\$1,708,121	7.3%	\$3,779
Eanes	770	\$4,573,054	6.8%	\$5,939
Lake Travis	468	\$1,472,470	3.7%	\$3,146
Marble Falls	445	\$1,647,516	5.9%	\$3,702
Burnet Consolidated	475	\$1,604,679	7.3%	\$3,378
Wimberley	201	\$988,593	7.2%	\$4,918
State	486,725	\$2,753,628,704	9.6%	\$5,657

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

FINDING

DSISD delivers special education services through a cost-effective cooperative to provide quality services to students.

The Hays-Blanco cooperative is staffed by 30.5 positions: a director, an instructional supervisor, four secretaries, two behavior specialists, one vocational adjustment coordinator, one half-time physical therapist, one occupational therapist, one certified occupational therapy assistant, one teacher of the visually impaired, three special education counselors, six speech pathologists and nine appraisal staff, diagnosticians and licensed specialists in school psychology. The cooperative contracts for neurological, psychological, audiological and medical examinations. These contractors are paid on a per test basis.

The Hays-Blanco cooperative also participates in the cooperative Regional Day School Program for the Deaf, which was created by the Texas Legislature in 1973 and supervised by TEA Division of Services for the Deaf. The cooperative coordinates with a variety of social service

programs, some informally and some by Memorandum of Understanding, to supplement its services. These programs include the local Community Resource Coordinating Group (CRCG), the Austin Resource Center for Independent Living (ARCIL), the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR), the Hays-Caldwell Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Hays County Family Support Network, the ARC of Texas, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and the Hays County Juvenile Probation department.

The services provided by the cooperative staff and its contractors support the district's special education teachers and instructional assistants. They also support the regular education teachers who have special education students in their classes as part of the inclusion model to provide the least restrictive environment possible for the child. The cooperative staff and its contractors provide evaluation services, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, music therapy, psychological services, special education counseling, orientation and mobility services, audiological services and assistive technology for the students as components of the classroom instruction.

Through faculty meetings and all-day trainings, the cooperative conducts staff development for DSISD on modifications and on specific disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, childhood depression and anxiety disorders. Training sessions have also included presentations on federal and state special education laws/requirements, how special education funds are budgeted and channeled back into programs and the costs generated by "high needs" special education students.

The cooperative also offers two-day certification training in nonviolent crisis intervention and special summer training for administrators, including school board members. In addition, the cooperative offers training for non-teaching staff in contact with special education students, such as food service staff and bus drivers, to help them understand and manage the students and their needs. Customized training also is available.

Membership in the Hays-Blanco cooperative affords the district access to a wide array of special education services and resources for its special education teachers and students it could not otherwise afford due to size and funding limitations. Teachers and administrators in the cooperative and the district said the special education program reputation has drawn families with special needs children to the district. One parent of a special needs student said that her daughter would not have gone on to college had it not been for the district's special education program.

COMMENDATION

The district uses a cooperative to provide cost effective and quality services to students with special needs.

Gifted And Talented Education

Since 1987, state law has required all Texas school districts to offer educational programs to serve the needs of gifted and talented (G/T) students. Gifted and talented students are individuals who show the potential to excel in one or both of the following areas: intellectual ability and subject matter proficiency. The State Board of Education (SBOE) has adopted a state plan, the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students. The state plan serves as a guide for meeting the law's requirements and includes acceptable, recognized and exemplary criteria in the areas of student assessment, program design, curriculum and instruction, professional development and community involvement.

Districts are required to have a systematic process for identifying gifted and talented students. TEA issues guidelines for the identification of gifted and talented students in an effort to ensure all of these students receive a quality education.

In 1998, DSISD hired a consultant to evaluate its G/T program. The consultant's final report outlined recommendations for the program in five areas: assessment, program design, curriculum and instruction, staff development and family/community involvement. To address the recommendations, the district developed a five-year plan for the G/T program. The school G/T coordinators, along with the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, are continuing to address the recommendations for improvement.

Exhibit 2-29 lists the district's gifted and talented program management objectives and **Exhibit 2-30** lists the district's program objectives for gifted and talented students.

Exhibit 2-29 DSISD Gifted and Talented Program Management Objectives

- To identify students in grades Kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) to be served by the programs.
- To understand the abilities and needs of each gifted and talented student.
- To provide teachers at each school with knowledge and skills necessary to implement programs for the gifted and talented.
- To develop appropriate curricula and identify instructional materials to support program goals.
- To involve parents and community members in the implementation of the G/T programs.

- To implement evaluation procedures for effective programming and for program continuation, refinement and possible expansion.

Source: DSISD Gifted and Talented Program Handbook Revision, September 2001.

Exhibit 2-30
DSISD Gifted and Talented Program Objectives for Students

- Gifted and talented students will develop their abilities in higher level, more complex thinking skills (including critical, creative and productive thinking) in activities that are extensions of the regular curriculum.
- Gifted and talented students will study advanced-level content and master the major concepts, skills and processes of specific disciplines in which they demonstrate ability (subject matter knowledge and skills).
- Gifted and talented students will develop the skills necessary for self-directed learning and will conduct independent studies and research projects that extend the regular curriculum and result in advanced-level products.
- Gifted and talented students will gain an understanding and respect for each person's abilities, recognize the similarities and differences between themselves and others, increase interpersonal relationships and will develop their own unique abilities for the betterment of both themselves and society.

Source: DSISD Gifted and Talented Program Handbook Revision, September 2001.

Students can be referred to the district's gifted and talented program beginning in the second semester of kindergarten. Referrals in grades 1 through 12 can be made in early spring of each year. To refer a student for a school's gifted and talented programs principal(s), teacher(s), parent(s) or guardian, student(s), self or peers, psychologists, counselors, librarians, administrators or community members must complete and submit a form to the appropriate school office. A parent survey/checklist also must be completed before the student is tested. After the appropriate testing and evaluation is completed, a school assessment committee consisting of the school principal or assistant principal, the G/T coordinator, counselor(s), classroom teacher(s) and/or G/T teachers who have had training in the nature and needs of gifted students, meets to determine if the child is eligible for placement.

The school notifies parents in May whether or not their child qualifies for participation. If an individual is not satisfied with the decision of the school assessment committee, he/she may make a request for reconsideration under certain appeals criteria. The individual must first meet with the school G/T coordinator to review the student's file prior to beginning the appeals process and then file a formal reconsideration with the school principal. The school assessment committee will review the request within 10 days of its filing. Decisions regarding the appeal will be made within 20 working days of the initial appeal. If dissatisfied with the decision of the school assessment committee on appeal, an individual may appeal to the superintendent. The last line of appeal is the school board.

Once a student qualifies as gifted and talented, the child does not need to be re-assessed for continuation in the program. Students can be exited or furloughed from the program at any time during the year. The school assessment committee is responsible for the furlough and exit procedures. Students may be placed on furloughs if they are not maintaining satisfactory performance in the program. The purpose of a furlough is to give the student an opportunity to reach performance goals set by the school assessment committee. The furlough may last up to one calendar year. At the end of the furlough, the student either re-enters or is exited from the program. At the high school level, failure to participate in an identified G/T program offering constitutes a furlough.

The district exits students from the program based on performance if the school assessment committee determines it is in the student's best interest. Parents can request a removal in writing. At the high school level, a student may also request, in writing, to be exited from the program (TEC, Section Subchapter A).

DSISD ranked third highest among its peer districts in the number of students and fourth highest in the percentage of students enrolled in G/T education. The district enrolled a slightly lower percentage of students in the G/T program than the state as a whole (**Exhibit 2-31**).

Exhibit 2-31
Gifted and Talented Education Students
By Number and Percent Enrolled
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2001-02

District	Number Enrolled	Percent Enrolled
DSISD	249	7.5%
Eanes	837	11.0%

Lake Travis	423	9.6%
Marble Falls	189	5.1%
Burnet	213	7.2%
Wimberley	157	9.0%
State	339,270	8.1%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

The state plan for gifted education specifies that districts "assure an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with the abilities of gifted/talented students, and that emphasize content in the four (4) core academic areas." DSISD gifted and talented students receive services in the four core academic areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

A G/T resource teacher serves students in grades 2-5 in both language arts and math in their classrooms. The G/T resource teacher serves both kindergarten students who come to the district previously identified as G/T and students in grade 1 in a non-subject specific program. In addition to developing basic skills and concepts in social studies and science, teachers enhance and enrich the curriculum to nurture further development in these content areas and ensure adequate time for students to work with other children of advanced abilities.

At the middle school, students are self-contained in G/T classes for math and English/language arts. There are clusters grouped within the regular classroom for science and social studies. Teachers enhance and enrich the curriculum to nurture further development in these areas and to meet the students' diverse needs. Extra opportunities are provided to gifted students through academic competitions and University Interscholastic League (UIL) academic competitions. At the high school, gifted/talented students have an option for additional courses through Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and AP classes. All teachers of G/T programs are certified or endorsed in gifted education.

FINDING

DSISD students in Pre-AP and AP classes score significantly higher on AP tests than Region 13 students and the state as a whole.

All Pre-AP and AP classes are designated G/T courses and serve as the G/T program at the high school. The pre-AP and AP classes also have open enrollment for any student who wishes to register. All pre-AP and AP teachers are certified as gifted and talented teachers. In addition, G/T

students are encouraged to enroll in G/T electives such as debate, humanities and/or the G/T independent study course. G/T students also have the opportunity to enroll in dual credit courses at Austin Community College (ACC), correspondence courses or the G/T summer academy. The summer academy is designed to provide experiences that will qualify for college credit (**Exhibit 2-32**).

The percent of DSISD students participating in AP tests was seven points higher than Region 13 and 13 points higher than the state as a whole-- almost double the percent of students taking AP tests throughout the state. In addition, a significantly higher percentage of DSISD students scored at or above criterion than students in the region or state (**Exhibit 2-32**).

Exhibit 2-32
Percent of Students Taking AP Tests
And Percent Scoring At or Above Criterion
DSISD, Region 13 and the State
2000-01

	Percent Taking Test	Percent Scoring At or Above Criterion
DSISD	27.9%	82.9%
Region	20.2%	56.9%
State	14.3%	50.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

In 2000, a *Newsweek* magazine article titled "The 100 Best High Schools" ranked DSISD 116th in the nation for students taking AP exams. For this ranking, public schools are evaluated according to a ratio determined by dividing the number of all students taking advanced placement or International Baccalaureate (IB) tests by the number of graduating seniors. Advanced placement and IB tests are the only two international high school programs that consistently demand wide reading and thought. The *Newsweek* ranking indicates that the district is among those inspiring first-rate academic work by its students.

COMMENDATION

DISD combines counseling and course offerings identified to encourage critical thinking and independent study to enhance student performance on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests.

Career And Technology Education

Section 29.181 of the TEC requires school districts to provide a curriculum that affords each student the opportunity to "master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for managing the dual roles of family members and wage earner, and gaining entry-level employment in high-skill, high-wage jobs or continuing the student's education at the post-secondary level."

SBOE rules [Texas Administrative Code, Section 74.3(b)(2)(I)] require school districts to offer school-to-career education courses selected from at least three of eight career and technology educational areas: agricultural science and technology, business education, career orientation, health science technology, home economics, industrial technology, marketing and trade and industrial. CATE gives students an opportunity to make informed occupational choices and develop marketable skills.

CATE is a curriculum designed to prepare students to live and work in the future by providing training in areas such as health sciences and technology, marketing, industrial technology and trade and industrial occupations. The CATE curriculum is designed primarily for students who do not intend to enroll in college.

The high school principal manages the CATE program in DSISD as part of his overall responsibilities.

FINDING

DISD does not offer any courses through distance learning and only offers nine of 35 CATE courses as dual-credit courses through ACC. According to the high school principal, DSISD has the capability to offer courses through distance learning, but the district presently does not offer any CATE courses this way. The district does offer dual credit courses through agreements with ACC. The district sets minimum enrollments of 15 students for its high school CATE courses. The principal reports that, for financial reasons, the district adopted the 15 student enrollment option.

Each year, the high school principal conducts a survey to determine which CATE courses students desire. However, the high school principal said that often the CATE courses do not achieve the minimum number of registrants. The principal attributes this to the fact that the overwhelming majority of DSISD high school students are college bound and either do not have elective opportunities or seek electives that will complement their graduation and college preparation plans. Distance learning allows students to take a course through a televised class broadcast through a telecommunications network.

DSISD offers CATE courses in family and consumer science, agricultural science and technology, automotive technology, industrial technology and business education. The 2002-03 course catalog includes offerings in each of the CATE areas, but the principal expects that many of the offerings will not have sufficient registrations for the courses to actually become offered classes.

Many Texas districts with low CATE enrollment offer dual credit courses through articulation agreements with local community colleges or through distance learning. A minimum of two students and a facilitator are required for a course to be offered through distance learning. There is no minimum number of students from the high school required to register for a dual credit course at ACC.

Recommendation 13:

Increase Career and Technology Education course offerings through Austin Community College as dual credit courses or through distance learning.

The high school principal should consider student survey results when making decisions to offer additional courses through ACC as dual credit courses or through distance learning.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The high school principal surveys high school students to determine areas of greatest interest.	September - October 2002
2.	The high school principal researches whether courses of interest are offered through ACC or distance learning opportunities.	October 2002
3.	The high school principal arranges to offer the courses for the 2003-04 year as dual credit through ACC or through distance learning.	November 2002
4.	The high school principal presents proposed course offerings to the superintendent and school board for approval.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Counseling and Guidance

TEC Subchapter A, Chapter 33, establishes requirements for school district counseling and guidance services. Major provisions include that:

- A district shall employ at least one certified counselor for every 500 students.
- The school board shall adopt guidelines to ensure written consent is obtained from the parent, legal guardian, or person entitled to enroll the student for the student to participate in those activities for which the district requires parental consent.
- Each school shall conduct a preview of material used in the program annually; counselors shall work with faculty, staff, students, parents and community to plan, implement and evaluate the program, which includes:
 1. a guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential;
 2. an intervention services component needed for students' personal concerns or problems that put educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
 3. individual planning systems for education, career, personal and social development; and
 4. support for teacher, staff, parents and other members of the community to promote the educational, career, personal and social development of students.

TEC Section 33.006 describes the responsibility of the school counselor as "... to fully develop each student's academic, career, personal and social abilities." The statute gives specific direction to districts' guidance and counseling programs. Districts have flexibility with regard to the assignment, training and funding of counseling personnel, but must ensure that students are provided effective academic, career, personal and social development counseling services.

FINDING

The district's guidance and counseling program offers a full menu of services for students.

Students can access the counseling and guidance services in a variety of ways: self-referral, teacher referral, parent referral, administrative referral, special services referral or referral by a friend. Services provided are age appropriate and thus vary by school.

Exhibit 2-33 summarizes the counseling and guidance services provided by DSISD at each school.

Exhibit 2-33
DSISD Counseling and Guidance Services
2001-02

School	Services
Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and Small Group Counseling • Classroom Guidance Lessons • Consultations with Teachers, Parents, Principals and Staff Members • New Student and Parent Orientation • Parenting Groups • Individual Problem Solving • Coordination of Referrals • Scheduling and Attending Student Support Team (SST) and 504 meetings
Intermediate School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and Small Group Counseling • Classroom Guidance Lessons • Coordination of Transition Activities for Grades 3 and 5 • Special Education, Reading and ESL Referrals • Participation in Crisis Response Counseling District Team • Individual Problem Solving • Provision of Outside Referrals • Coordination of SST and 504 Meetings • Sponsorship of Texas Red Ribbon Week, Anti-Drug Education and Career Day
Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and Group Counseling • Group Guidance Self Concept Classroom Activities • Coordination of Transition Activities for Grades 6 and 8 • Sponsorship of School Wide Projects • Utilization of Community Referral Resources • TAAS Test Coordination
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and Small Group Counseling • Special Education Referrals • Parent Consultations, Information and Referral Services • Academic Guidance • Career Guidance • College Guidance • College, Scholarship, Financial Aid and College Entrance Exam Applications, Information and Assistance

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordination of Standardized Testing Programs |
|--|---|

Source: DSISD Primary School Counseling Brochure, DSISD Intermediate School Counseling Brochure, DSISD Middle School Counseling Brochure, DSISD High School Counseling Brochure, 2001-02.

The primary school's program offers individual and small group counseling for issues such as divorce, grief, school work, anger control and difficulty getting along with others; classroom guidance lessons on topics such as self esteem, conflict resolution, decision making, drug resistance and peer pressure, stress management and taking responsibility; consultations with teachers, parents, principals and other staff members concerning children who are having difficulties; orientation for new students and parents; parenting groups; individual problem solving for immediate concerns that interfere with learning; coordination of referrals with other school specialists and outside agencies and scheduling and attending student support team (SST) and 504 meetings.

In addition, the primary school has a full-time behavior specialist who supports the counselors, administrators and teachers with disciplinary matters. Students from regular education classrooms who are identified as at risk for behavior problems attend small group sessions with the specialist for discipline adjustment and social skills development.

The specialist communicates with the classroom teachers regarding students' progress while they are attending the sessions. The principal reports that both reactive discipline management and office referrals to him and to the assistant principal for discipline problems decreased after the program was established. This has allowed them to devote more time to administrative matters and instructional leadership. Both primary school counselors report that having the position at the school has freed them from receiving behavior referrals, allowing them to do more work in needed areas such as grief, divorce and self-esteem counseling.

The intermediate school offers individual and small group counseling for issues such as divorce, grief, anger control, social skills, study skills and goal setting; guidance classes in all classrooms on citizenship and social skills; individual problem solving for immediate concerns that interfere with learning; provision of referrals to outside agencies; coordination of the SST and 504 meetings, special education and reading programs and ESL referrals; coordination of transition activities for third and fifth grade students; participation in a district team trained to provide crisis response

counseling; sponsorship of Texas Red Ribbon Week, anti-drug education and career day.

The middle school offers individual and group counseling, sponsorship of school-wide projects, classroom activities in self-concept through group guidance, coordination of transition activities for sixth and eighth graders, TAAS testing coordination and utilization of community referral resources.

The high school offers individual and small group counseling; special education referral services; academic guidance through four year plans, scheduling and transcript analysis; career guidance through occupational exploration, career pathways choice; assessments, such as interest inventories; college guidance through information on post-secondary training and universities; application information and assistance, scholarship applications and assistance, financial aid information, applications and referral and college entrance exams applications (SAT, ACT, TASP); coordination of standardized testing programs, such as TAAS, Preliminary SAT (PSAT), AP, Credit By Exam and parent consultation, information and referral services.

The primary and middle schools are each staffed with two full-time counselors. The intermediate school has one full-time counselor and the high school has three. All schools are at or within the state-mandated counselor to student ratio of 1:500.

All counselors said that the district places priority on their services and does not re-assign them to fulfill other administrative duties that would interfere with primary responsibilities.

COMMENDATION

The district provides a strong continuum of counseling and guidance services from primary through high school supporting the educational, career, personal and social development of its students.

Library Services

TEC Subchapter B, Chapter 33, establishes that the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (The State Library), in consultation with the SBOE, shall adopt standards for school library services. A school district shall consider the standards in developing, implementing or expanding library services.

The State Library's mission for school library programs is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information, enabling

them to be literate life-long learners. This mission is to be accomplished, with sufficient funding and resources, by the school library staff, in collaboration with the school community by:

- providing instruction to foster competence in acquiring and using information and ideas and in evaluating information resources;
- stimulating interest in reading and appreciation of literature through group instruction and individual guidance;
- providing intellectual and physical access to materials in multiple formats; and
- working with other educators to design and carry out learning experiences to meet the needs of individual students.

The State Library has established guidelines for three levels of school library programs that meet or exceed standards: Exemplary, Recognized and Acceptable. A fourth set of guidelines describes a library program that would be considered Below Standard.

A model school library program has five major components: library learning environment, curriculum integration, resources, library program management and facilities.

FINDING

Recognizing a need in the area of library services, DSISD dedicated additional funds and used state guidelines as a basis for future improvements. The district dedicated \$618,049 in 2001-02 to library and resource services, a 162 percent increase in expenditures from the \$236,075 budgeted expenditures in 1997-98. **Exhibit 2-34** shows DSISD's budgeted expenditures from 1997-98 through 2001-02 and the percent increase of funds.

Exhibit 2-34
DSISD Library and Educational Resources Budgeted Expenditures
1997-98 through 2001-02

Descriptor	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Libraries and Educational Resources*	\$236,075	\$374,310	\$418,288	\$433,360	\$618,049
Percent Change from Prior Year	N/A	59%	12%	4%	43%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

*Function 12 is used for expenditures/expenses that are directly and exclusively used for resource centers, establishing and maintaining libraries and other major facilities dealing with educational resources and media.

In 2000-01, the district conducted a self-assessment of its libraries using the state's library guidelines. **Exhibit 2-35** shows the results of the assessment presented to DSISD's board.

Exhibit 2-35
DSISD School Library Ratings by Component
State Library Guidelines

Component	Primary School*	Intermediate School	Middle School	High School
Learning Environment	Recognized	Below Standard	Recognized	Recognized
Curriculum Integration	Acceptable-Recognized	Below Standard	Acceptable-Recognized	Acceptable
Resources	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable	Below Standard
Program Management	Acceptable	Below Standard	Acceptable	Acceptable
Facilities	Recognized	Exemplary	Exemplary	Exemplary

Source: DSISD Librarians, May 2001.

*Assessment conducted on primary school library prior to mold infestation and closure of the school.

The district rated Exemplary, Recognized or Acceptable in 16 of 20 ratings. The district rated Exemplary in three of the 20 ratings and all three were for facilities. There were five Recognized ratings, three of these for learning environment. There were two ratings showing a transition from Acceptable to Recognized, both of these in curriculum integration. There were six Acceptable ratings, five of these in the resources and program management components. Resources are the items acquired for the

library's collection that instruct or support learning and the curriculum, including print, electronic and non-print materials, such as audio-visual materials, games, models, posters and kits. Program management includes staffing allocation and budget. There were four Below Standard ratings, one each in resources, program management, curriculum integration and learning environment.

In the category "resources," the primary school had a Recognized rating. The primary librarian said that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has made significant contributions to increase their collection. The primary book fair provided profits to purchase collection additions. The primary librarian also said that books at the primary level are not as expensive as the reference and non-fiction materials needed at the high school level.

Due to Acceptable ratings, the intermediate and middle school librarians have focused attention on building their collections since being hired by the district three and four years ago. The high school's collection received a Below Standard rating. The librarian said that the average age of the high school collection is the late 1970s to early 1980s. Because of the dated material, a collection's age is important, particularly in the areas of science, technology, world geography and general reference. The librarian reported that the high school students regularly use the library for research, to prepare reports and for writing exercises that include narrative, personal essay, fiction and UIL essays.

The staffing allocations of one full-time equivalent librarian and one full-time equivalent library aide for the size of the student population in the primary, middle and high schools were responsible for its Acceptable ratings in the program management component. The staffing allocation of one full-time equivalent librarian and one part-time equivalent library aide for the size of the student population in the intermediate school was responsible for its Below Standard program management rating. The librarians all use parent and student volunteers to supplement staffing levels. DSISD plans to continually assess itself using state guidelines to measure improvements in this area.

COMMENDATION

DSISD combines self-assessments with staff and volunteer efforts and increased funds to identify deficiencies and provide improved library services to students and staff.

Health Services

Through two registered nurses (RNs) and two nurse assistants, DSISD's Health Services program provides services designed to support the medical needs of its students.

The services provided by the program are: vision and hearing screening in pre-K, first, third and fifth grades; AN screenings in third, fifth and seventh grades; spinal screenings at sixth and ninth grades; first aid; maintenance of all students' medical and immunization records; dispensation of daily medications and distribution of health problem information to teachers on a "need to know" basis.

FINDING

The district has an effective system for ensuring students maintain current immunizations to comply with state regulations for school attendance.

In collaboration with the Hays County Emergency Medical Services and Health Departments, the district sponsors two or three immunization clinics a year. Coordination of the clinics by the district health services personnel at timely intervals, based upon their monitoring of students' computerized immunization records, assists parents in having their children immunized on time.

EMS visits designated schools and provides the opportunity for parents to have their children immunized. Parents pay for the immunizations, but the district provides the service in a convenient location.

COMMENDATION

The district facilitates the maintenance of current immunizations for students through school immunization clinics.

FINDING

Although the district's staffing level of nurses to students does not meet nationally recommended ratios, the district recognized the importance of student health services and uses nurse assistants to narrow the disparity.

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommends a student to nurse ratio of no more than 750:1. The district's student to nurse ratio in 2001-02, including nurse assistants in the calculations, was 830:1. Without the nurse assistants, the ratio increases to 1,660:1.

The assistants are trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation and are certified to conduct vision, hearing, spinal and acanthosis-nigricans screenings as appropriate for their respective grade levels. One

nurse serves as the lead nurse for the district and also is responsible for the middle school and high school. The nurse assistant who works with her is assigned to the middle school. The second RN and nurse assistant are assigned to the primary and intermediate schools. All four staff members are district employees. The RN spends her day at the primary school until 2 p.m., when she switches schools with her assigned nurse assistant and goes to the intermediate school until 3:30 p.m., the end of the school day. The nurses report to their respective school principals.

The district recognizes that if it continues to grow as its demographic studies project, the student population will grow within the next eight years to an enrollment between 5,100 and 7,432. Administrators are aware that enrollment growth affects other areas such as health services.

COMMENDATION

DSISD uses nurses and nurse assistants to provide a variety of health services to students.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter reviews the Dripping Springs Independent School District's (DSISD) community involvement function in three sections:

- A. Communications and Public Relations
- B. Community and Business Involvement
- C. Parental Involvement

An effective community involvement program creates an atmosphere that enables students, parents, business leaders and other community members to become involved in the district. The quality of education increases when the public becomes a partner in the educational process.

The district's community involvement function should incorporate strategies that inform, educate, involve and engage community representatives. A two-way communication process disseminates and gathers information, achieving community support and confidence. Other essential program components include recruiting volunteers and soliciting business support to encourage community participation in the district's activities.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

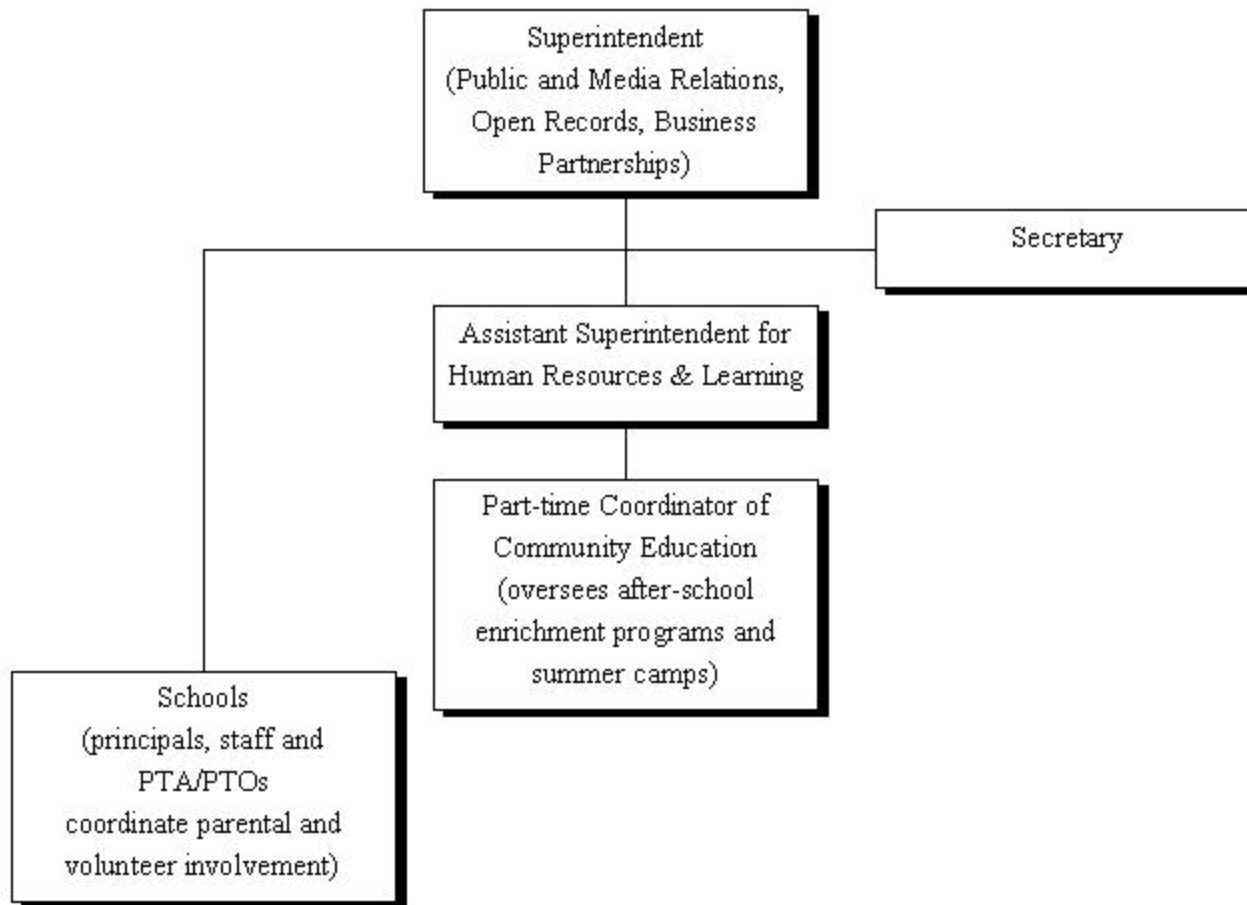
The way a district organizes and manages community involvement and public relations either enhances or decreases community involvement. If district communications are organized effectively, the district encourages community involvement and communication flows freely.

The DSISD district communication goal seeks to have all students and staff demonstrate positive involvement in community activities, at all school levels, by fostering a philosophy of service and citizenship and communication with parents and the community.

The superintendent, a part-time coordinator of Community Education and staff and volunteers at individual schools organize DSISD's community involvement and public relations. The liaison with the Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization (PTA/PTO) at each school assumes primary responsibility for community and parental involvement. The PTA/PTO's provide most of the management and recruitment of volunteers at their respective campuses.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the district's organization of community involvement and the distribution of duties.

Exhibit 3-1
Organization of DSISD Community Involvement Functions



Source: Interview with superintendent, April 2002.

FINDING

DSISD's Web site serves as an up-to-date educational, informational and communication resource for the entire community. Parents can obtain information on topics ranging from kindergarten registration to special programs such as summer camp and download forms. Community members can view the district's mission and goals, the school board's agenda and minutes, district calendar and phone directory as well as communicate directly with administrators and teachers through e-mail links.

Students can access individual teacher Web pages that include information about the class and teacher, lesson plans, homework assignments, current projects and provide direct communicate with the teacher through e-mail. Students can also use the DSISD Web site to link to other school Web sites and to take virtual field trips to such places as Texas' Natural Bridge Caverns or Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Web site development team maintains the Web site and encourages the community to e-mail comments, suggestions and complaints about the site. Under the direction of a teacher, high school students work on the high school Web page.

COMMENDATION

The district's Web site serves as an educational, informational and community resource for the community and includes innovative features such as virtual field trips and individual teacher Web pages.

FINDING

The district uses a variety of techniques to communicate with and seek input from students, parents and the public.

This past year, the district had to advise the community about two potentially controversial and divisive issues: the discovery of mold at the elementary school and the revocation of the homestead exemption. The district communicated these issues in a way that not only informed the community, but also increased public support of district's decisions.

The district established a clear process for communicating the homestead exemption issue. The superintendent and assistant superintendent for Business Operations visited each campus to explain the issue to employees directly and made board presentations. The district assembled a group of community leaders that included ministers, retired board members, business owners and "old" and "new" residents to explain the homestead exemption issue and receive feedback on a district PowerPoint presentation. The superintendent incorporated the community leader feedback into the district's presentation and then conducted three open public forums on the homestead exemption. The district sent more than 7,000 invitations to district property owners on the public forum; 285 people attended the forums.

The district scheduled a fourth and final public forum, attended by 100 residents, to obtain community input. The district sent written invitations to the previous attendees and publicized the public forum in the local newspaper and on radio. Attendees of the district homestead exemption public forums subsequently have been invited to participate in the Facility Taskforce and other district advisory boards.

From the time the district discovered mold in the elementary school, it aggressively communicated the situation to parents and the community. When the district detected mold first in the elementary school lab and then the library, DSISD immediately quarantined the rooms and issued letters

to parents advising them of the mold. When the district decided to close the campus, they sent a third letter to parents inviting them to a meeting to discuss the situation; nearly 100 people attended.

The district briefed all employees on the mold situation. Teachers at the primary school campus made personal calls to the parents of each student in their class, explaining the issue and answering questions. The district issued press releases to Austin and Dripping Springs-area television stations, newspapers and radio stations and posted updates on its Web site.

District techniques to communicate with constituents include everything from informal superintendent visits with areas residents at local coffee shops to the "Sup's On" column published in the *Dripping Springs Century News* biweekly newspaper. All of the community leaders interviewed for this review said the local newspaper serves as the primary news source for the community. The "Sup's On," a personal letter from the superintendent, informs the community about current district news. Past columns have provided updates on the mold issue, congratulatory messages to student groups, college acceptances of high school students, school board information and after-school programs.

During interviews, staff and community representatives said that they generally feel informed on DSISD issues. Because the community's level of awareness of district issues is so high, the public is able to respond and help the district as needed. For example, once the religious community learned that the mold situation would displace elementary students, it offered space in churches for classrooms. This enabled the district to place the first grade at the Baptist Church from December 3, 2001 to January 18, 2002 until the students could be relocated to the administration building. The Baptist Church charged the district \$50 per day for the space. On November 15, 2001, Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten students were relocated to the Dripping Springs Methodist Church. The students still attend classes there at a district cost of \$300 per month. The churches have limited the district's rentals to cover additional overhead expenses.

Comments from interviews and focus groups validated a high level of community confidence in the communication from the district superintendent's office. In a survey, principals (77 percent), teachers (95.9 percent) and parents (82.6 percent) either strongly agreed or agreed that the district regularly communicates with parents (**Exhibit 3-2**).

Exhibit 3-2
TSPR Survey Results Regarding Regular District Communications
With Parents

Group	No	Strongly	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly
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	Response	Agree		Opinion		Disagree
Principals	0.0%	67.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Teachers	1.9%	41.1%	52.9%	2.9%	1.0%	0.0%
Parents	1.0%	26.3%	55.3%	3.7%	10.0%	3.7%

Source: TSPR survey, 2002.

COMMENDATION

The district uses a variety of communication techniques to keep staff, parents, the media and the community up to date on district issues.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

B. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

To enhance the educational process, DSISD promotes community and business involvement in district issues by capitalizing on long-standing personal relationships in the community and developing new relationships.

The district offers a wide array of enrichment classes for the community through the DSISD Community Education Program. Community Education offers Tiger Kidz Kollege, a tuition-based after-school enrichment program. The program offers three sessions per day, Monday through Friday, beginning immediately after school until 6:00 p.m. at the primary school and until 6:10 p.m. at the intermediate school. A student may register for one class, one day a week, or participate in three classes, five days a week.

The program offers a variety of subjects including three levels of orchestra, Spanish, art, choir, basketball, soccer, karate, theatre, homework hour/tutorials, mad science, dance and cooking. Community Education also offers a variety of athletic camps during the summer, drivers' education, SAT preparatory classes and ESL and GED classes for adults. In the 2001-02 school year, 791 students participated in the 76 classes offered.

FINDING

District planning committees include community representation. Currently, the DSISD has 16 types of committees responsible for advising the district on a variety of subject matters. Committees that have included community representation are the Districtwide Educational Improvement Council (DWEIC); School Improvement Teams (SIT) at each school; Districtwide Budget Committee; Curriculum Council; Special Focus AdHoc Committees; Facility Advisory Taskforce; Middle School Soccer Study Group; and Interview Teams. The committees vary on how members are selected, meeting time and location and committee function. Some committees are regular district standing committees, while other committees are formed to handle a specific task for a limited time period. For instance, the Middle School Soccer Study Group, formed in response to middle school parents and students requesting a school soccer team, was composed of three community soccer board representatives, two DSISD school board members and three district administrators. The group met periodically until an agreement was reached.

During a focus group, parents and community leaders, everyone said that the district's planning process was open to community input and that community members felt included in district planning and management decisions.

COMMENDATION

Through an open committee system, the district obtains community input in the planning and management of district initiatives.

FINDING

The district has developed business partnerships with companies and organizations that have benefited the district through major in-kind donations. One such partnership with Internet service provider Zeecon and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) has resulted in replacing the district's slow Internet access dial-up system with a more efficient and faster microwave connection.

LCRA agreed to lease fiber on its fiber optics network and radio tower space to Zeecon, which offers broadband Internet services in the Dripping Springs area. LCRA offered free radio tower space to Zeecon in return for Zeecon providing free Internet access to the entire district. To increase the community impact of the partnership, the district recommended that Dripping Springs Community Library and the Hill Country Senior Citizen Activity Center be included in the service. As a result, this ongoing partnership enables the district and two community entities to have access to broadband, high speed Internet services indefinitely.

COMMENDATION

The district expanded a business partnership with LCRA and Zeecon for Internet services to benefit two Dripping Springs community service organizations.

FINDING

Dripping Springs High School's "Pride in Portfolio" involves the use of community volunteers to help prepare students for their future careers.

Each DSISD student is required to build a portfolio that summarizes his/her high school achievements specifically targeted toward a career goal. At the end of the senior year, the high school student presents the portfolio using a 50-minute PowerPoint presentation to a panel of three community volunteers. Panel volunteers typically include a parent, a district employee and a volunteer who is in the vocation in which the

presenting high school student is interested. Panel members and student are encouraged to have a dialogue and question-answer session on career-related issues. After the presentation, the panel members complete an evaluation of the student's portfolio.

The instructional facilitator at the high school campus coordinates volunteer participation in the panels using an extensive list of community volunteers developed over the years. The district also recruits panel volunteers by placing ads in the local newspaper, working with the local Chamber of Commerce, adding a check-off line in PTA applications, providing flyers at school main offices where parents volunteer and using various informal networks.

The teacher contacts potential volunteers and assigns three to a 50-minute student presentation. Each student presents his/her portfolio to the panel using a PowerPoint presentation that follows a particular format. The panel is encouraged to ask the student questions and the students are encouraged to ask the panel questions, especially the panel member who is in the career that interests the high school student. After the presentation, the panel members complete an evaluation of the student's portfolio.

With 231 high school graduates this school year, the program recruited volunteers for 693 panel positions. This extraordinary community project involves parents and community members in the transition of graduating high school seniors into their selected educational or vocational track.

COMMENDATION

Dripping Springs High School's "Pride in Portfolio" involves an extraordinary number of volunteers who help graduating seniors prepare for their future careers.

FINDING

DSISD has an Educational Foundation that uses only a few fundraising techniques to acquire funds for classroom projects and student scholarships. In 1992, community volunteers formed the DSISD Educational Foundation, a registered 501(c) 3 private foundation, to provide scholarships to college-bound seniors and mini-grants to teachers for educational enhancements to their classroom.

The organization has a principal balance of \$22,000. Annually, community volunteers raise money through the sale of school directory advertising; last year's directory sales raised \$19,844. The foundation has plans to conduct additional fundraisers.

Each year, the foundation offers college-bound seniors approximately \$13,000 in scholarships that range in amount from \$500 to \$4,000. The foundation also provides teachers with \$1,295 to \$2,000 in mini-grants for classroom enhancements.

The Grape Creek Education Foundation was formed in August 1999 when it became a recognized 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization with the Internal Revenue Service. The purpose of the Grape Creek Education Foundation is to seek and secure grants, endowments and donations for the enhancement of educational opportunities for persons of all ages in the Grape Creek ISD (GCISD). Funds can be dispersed to meet physical or professional development needs, extracurricular programs or special project sponsorships. This can include, but is not limited to, the purchase of equipment, technology, books, curriculum, furniture and facilities as well as support for programs by supplying stipends, money for instructional substitutes/aides, and expenses for field trips and training. GCISD has raised thousands of dollars through its foundation.

The foundation entered into a memorandum of understanding with GCISD whereby the district will support the endeavors of the foundation by sharing office space, a telephone line and support materials.

To expand the foundation's grant resources, the board became a charter member of the Grant Center of the Concho Valley. Through this resource, the foundation has access to foundation catalogs and online grant search services, as well as access to a grant consultant.

The use of third-party fundraising techniques has proved successful in several districts. Some examples of third-party fundraising involve the selling of script, having people remember the district in their wills, and having businesses donate a small percent of their sales that are purchased with designated credit cards.

Recommendation 14:

Expand DSISD Educational Foundation fundraising efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the chairman of the Education Foundation visits with community/business leaders about the need for additional funding for education programs that are either unfunded or under-funded and asks for their support.	September 2002
2.	Community and business leaders respond favorably and form a task force to recruit additional support and locate additional	October-November

	funding sources.	2002
3.	The superintendent recruits volunteer teachers and parents to join the task force to help determine expanded fundraising goals of the foundation.	November 2003
4.	The chairman of the task force use personal letters and the media to publicize and solicit support.	January 2003
5.	The executive committee of the foundation publicizes the availability of grants to the district, accepted applications and awards grant monies to projects/programs that enhance learning opportunities within the district.	February 2003
6.	Additional grants are awarded from the fund.	July 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

By expanding the nature and scope of the Education Foundation's fund raising efforts, the district should be able to increase available funds for awards.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Expand DSISD Educational Foundation fundraising efforts.	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

FINDING

The district does not have a system for sharing volunteer information, such as names, home and e-mail addresses, areas of interest/specialty and hours volunteered in schools.

DSISD PTA/PTOs do an excellent job of recruiting, tracking and training volunteers at each campus. Depending on the school's needs, the organizations use a variety of techniques to track this information during the year. However, as students move to different schools volunteer information on their parents is not necessarily transferred to the new school. As a result, the PTA/PTOs must continuously rebuild and update the database of information, deleting parents of children who move to the next school and adding information about parents of new students.

El Paso ISD has developed a comprehensive computerized volunteer information management system. The database system tracks monthly volunteer hours, monetary donations and in-kind services and produces a

summary report at the end of the school year that is used to recognize individual volunteers and schools with the highest participation levels.

Recommendation 15:

Develop a centralized system for tracking volunteer information.

By tracking information, DSISD schools would be able to share volunteer information with each other as parents and community members move through the district. Little disconnect would occur when parent volunteers make the transition to other schools.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent charges a staff representative from each school, PTA/PTO representatives from each school and the director of Technology to form a committee to develop the specifications for a volunteer information management system.	March 2003
2.	The committee develops specific requirements for the system.	April 2003
3.	The committee contacts other school districts or institutions to obtain information on model programs and locates a non-copyrighted program the district can copy.	May 2003
4.	The committee searches for a business partner, parent volunteers, university students, Dripping Springs students and/or existing district staff to alter the database to meet district needs.	June 2003
5.	The committee evaluates and selects the person or entity that can best alter the database to meet the district's needs.	July 2003
6.	The director of Technology coordinates the installation of the system and related training for volunteers and staff.	August 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

C. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Research studies confirm that parent involvement improves student achievement. DSISD parents volunteer primarily through the PTA/PTOs at each campus. Each PTA/PTO has at least one designated volunteer who directs and coordinates all parent activities on campus. Each campus has volunteers sign-in at the front desk of the campus. The sign-in sheets provide a way to monitor the volunteers at each school and the number of hours each volunteer works. Parents participate in district planning, support booster clubs, serve as teacher assistants and volunteer on committees that organize fundraisers (such as the butterfly garden, fall fair and talent show) or support school or PTA/PTO programs (such as membership, newsletter, science enrichment and TAAS test).

PTA/PTO and boosters clubs provide extra money and support to schools and teachers. When the primary school had to be evacuated because of the mold problem, teachers had to leave behind educational materials to prevent further mold contamination. Parents and community members conducted a benefit fundraiser for the school and raised \$20,000 to replace the educational materials that had to be destroyed.

Project Graduation provides an all-night, adult-supervised evening of drug and alcohol free fun for Dripping Springs graduates. The district also uses the event to honor the graduating class. Community volunteers spend more than a year promoting for all students in the district, promoting seniors as positive leaders, assisting them in their transition from high school and raising funds for the project. The year ends with a celebratory senior trip, honoring the graduating seniors and their accomplishments. Project Graduation hosts fundraisers, such as fun runs, to raise money for the trip. This year's fun run raised \$3,000.

Other community fundraisers include the Dripping Springs Band Boosters Run For Your Heritage 5K race, magazine sales and the intermediate school's PTA Spring Fling Country Fair that raised \$18,600 to fund extra educational materials for teachers. District PTA/PTOs groups have also raised funds to resurface and curb district walking tracks; purchase new computers and software; install playgrounds; provide vending machines for teachers' workrooms; and buy school supplies, including books, equipment, art materials, cooking supplies and outfitting science laboratories.

For spring 2002, the PTA at the intermediate campus raised \$23,000 to pay for items such as Microsoft Office software, Ethernet cards and rolling carts for 30 donated laptop personal computers. Money was also used to provide seed money to start an art appreciation program, supply Web design software, institute student diversity training, purchase books for the library and fill requests from teachers to pay for in-class teaching tools such as novel sets, math manipulatives, resource math programs, ESL materials, magazine subscriptions and testing preparation materials.

The fundraising efforts of the district PTA/PTO groups have resulted in significant financial support of district projects and the purchase of items not included in the district's budget.

FINDING

The "Subs R Us" program at the primary school campus trains volunteer parents to be substitute teachers for the primary school, allowing half-day planning time for teachers.

After determining that teachers needed planning time but realizing budget limitations, the primary school campus developed the "Subs R Us" program. Through this program, the school and the PTA/PTO encourages parent volunteers to attend the district's substitute teacher training. The parent volunteers then make themselves available for substitute teaching without charging the district. This supplies the school with a group of free parent substitute teachers that relieve teachers to do monthly horizontal team planning during which teachers of the same grade-level take time to develop lesson plans together.

A substitute teacher is paid \$60 per day or \$30 for a half day. As a result of the successful introduction of the "Subs R Us" program, teachers have more planning time together, while not costing the district extra money for substitute teachers. In addition, this program opens another opportunity for parent volunteers to be meaningfully engaged in the district.

COMMENDATION

The "Subs R Us" program saves the district money for substitute teachers, while allowing more planning time for teachers and increasing parental involvement.

FINDING

PTA/PTOs at each school write, fund and distribute the school's monthly newsletters. A PTA/PTO-appointed editor accepts articles and calendar events from parents, staff and community leaders and then creates the

newsletter using personal or PTA/PTO-provided software. Generally, the school principal receives the newsletter to proof and approve before it is mailed. A printing service contracted by the PTA/PTO prints the newsletter, which volunteers then prepare for mailing and distribution. Each teacher, student and staff member at the campus receives a copy of the monthly newsletter. The superintendent, principals and PTA/PTO presidents receive copies of every school newsletter. Some newsletters are mailed, and all are available at each school's front office.

As a result, parents, staff and students are kept informed of a variety of current activities and information at each school.

COMMENDATION

The PTA/PTOs produce free monthly newsletters that keep the community informed about individual school activities and events.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the operations of the Human Resources Office of the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) in five sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Salaries and Benefits
- C. Hiring and Recruitment
- D. Performance Appraisal
- E. Professional Development

On average, personnel accounts for 80 percent of a district's total expenditures. As a result, efficient and effective management of human resources is critical to the overall effectiveness of a district. A district must ensure that it identifies, recruits and hires qualified personnel to fill positions; processes all personnel-related actions promptly and accurately; administers the compensation system effectively and efficiently; and complies with all state and federal personnel laws.

BACKGROUND

A district's human resources office is usually responsible for a variety of tasks related to employees. Typical tasks include:

- developing and administering the district's salary systems, including periodic review and adjustment of the systems to ensure that they are competitive with those of other employers;
- administering and maintaining the district's employee benefits program;
- developing, classifying and adjusting job descriptions for all positions;
- recruiting personnel to fill vacant positions;
- maintaining employee records as required by state and federal law;
- issuing contracts for appropriate personnel;
- administering the certification and permit process; and
- submitting reports to address local board and state reporting requirements.

DSISD created its Human Resources Office in 2000. Before the office was created, the human resource duties were divided: the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning managed district human resource functions; the Business Office administered compensation, salary determination and benefits; and a Human Resources officer performed record-keeping matters for certification, applications

and personnel records. As the district grew, the superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning determined that the district needed to have a director to manage human resource functions and advise the district on legal matters relating to personnel. In November 2000, the district hired the director of Human Resources to centralize human resource functions in the Human Resources Office.

Since the creation of the Human Resources Office, there has been a gradual transfer of human resource operations from the Business Office to the Human Resources Office (**Exhibit 4-1**).

**Exhibit 4-1
DSISD Personnel and Related Responsibilities**

Function	Primary Responsibility	Conditions
Hiring and Termination	Human Resources Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit data on employees kept at schools
Substitutes	Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitute Procurement done in Business Office Substitute database maintained in Personnel Personnel handles applications and orientation
Benefits	Human Resources Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits communication and orientation in Personnel Business Office still handles financial administration of benefits
Employee Records	Human Resources Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certifications, transcripts, W-4, INS forms, criminal background checks, other personnel records
Leave Tracking	Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains timesheets, tracks leave accrual
Wage and Salary Determination	Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Office makes determination on salaries Personnel conducts salary surveys and analysis as well as maintaining

		compensation structure
Position Tracking	Human Resources Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains and updates job descriptions, conducts staff turnover analysis and administers contract renewal
Employee Relations	Human Resources Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles grievances and hearings, administers personnel appraisal system and communication with employees on human resources-related matters
HR Policies and Procedures	Human Resources Office	
Safety	Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management and prevention, loss control, training, injury reports
Recruiting	Human Resources Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing & recruiting plan, Web posting maintenance, job fairs

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office.

The Human Resources Office also ensures that DSISD complies with all federal and state laws governing human resource administration, including the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Opportunity Employment Act, as well as legal issues relating to employee grievances, due process, termination and contract renewal.

Salary and benefits make up 88.5 percent of the Human Resources Office total budget (**Exhibit 4-2**).

**Exhibit 4-2
Human Resources Office Budget|
2001-02**

Item	Amount
Salary & Benefits	\$87,500
Professional Service	\$5,000

(TASB Personnel Services Subscription, DPS Criminal History Checks, Records Management Consultants)	
Contracted Maintenance & Repair (Copier Maintenance)	\$1,117
Job Fair Expenses (Travel & Registration)	\$1,500
General Supplies (Office Supplies, Forms, Copier Paper & Related Supplies, PDAS Forms)	\$715
Rentals & Operating Leases (Storage Rental Space for District Documents)	\$300
Miscellaneous Operating Expenses (Membership Dues, Teacher Permits, Service Awards, Newspaper Advertising, Personnel Badges)	\$2,700
Total Budget	\$98,832

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, March 2002.

Over the past five school years, staff growth in DSISD has grown at close to the same rate as student enrollment at approximately 14.4 percent.

Exhibit 4-3 shows DSISD staffing patterns and student enrollment from 1997-98 to 2001-02.

Exhibit 4-3
DSISD Student Enrollment vs. Staffing
1997-98 through 2001-02

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2001-02
Student Enrollment	2,885	3,014	3,090	3,197	3,311	14.8
Staff	374.2	388.7	414.3	416.4	426.8	14.1
Student/Staff Ratio	7.7	7.8	7.5	7.7	7.8	1.3
Teachers	26.5	26.0	24.4	24.3	23.0	13.2
Student/Teacher Ratio	10.5	11.1	12.2	11.2	11.5	9.5

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01 and PEIMS 2001-02.

In 1999-2000 the district added 29 staff members to staff the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative. In 2000-01, the district hired 12 instructional aides when it took over the management of the district's child development center.

Although DSISD has not had a chronic employee turnover problem, in 2000-01 a significant number of teachers from the high school left the district. The Human Resources Office conducts an analysis of turnover to provide the district insight on why teachers leave the district. **Exhibit 4-4** summarizes a turnover analysis by the Human Resources Office in 2000-01. The 16.4 percent turnover rate the Human Resources Office cites for the district only includes analysis for teachers at the four campuses; it does not include an analysis of turnover among the 23 teachers at the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative.

Exhibit 4-4
DSISD Teacher Turnover for 2000-01 School Year

School	Number of Teachers	Teacher Turnover	Turnover Rate
High	70	21	30.0%
Middle	57	7	12.3%
Intermediate	35	3	8.5%
Primary	64	6	9.3%
Total	226	37	16.4%

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, February 2002.

As the **Exhibit 4-5** shows, of 226 teachers in the district, 37 departed in 2000-01, either for retirement, resignation, or other reasons. Of the 37 teachers leaving in 2000-01, 21 were employed at Dripping Springs High School. Overall, the turnover rate in 2000-01 was 16.4 percent.

Exhibit 4-5
Analysis of DSISD Teacher Turnover
2000-01

Reason for Leaving	High School		Middle		Intermediate		Primary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Position Elsewhere/Salary	8	38.1%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	1	16.7%	11	29.7%

Relocation/Moving	4	19.0%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	8	21.6%
Leaving Profession	4	19.0%	1	14.3%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	6	16.2%
Retirement	4	19.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	5	13.5%
Family Issues	1	4.8%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	5	13.5%
Non-renewal	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	1	2.7%
Unknown	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.7%
Total	21	100%	7	100%	3	100%	6	100%	37	100%

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, February 2002.

Of the 21 teachers leaving the high school, eight (38 percent) took teaching positions in another district. Of those eight, three were coaches, two vocational/technical teachers, one math teacher, one special education teacher and one social studies teacher. Of the remaining 13 teachers leaving DSISD, four retired, four moved outside the district and four left the teaching profession. The other teacher leaving Dripping Springs High School left because of family issues. While the teacher departures caused concern at the time, there does not appear to be a pattern of such departures on an annual basis.

Compared to its six peer districts, DSISD has the third lowest teacher turnover. (Note that the teacher turnover figure for DSISD in this Exhibit differs from the exhibits accompanying the Human Resources Office's turnover analysis because the 17.2 percent turnover figure includes teachers at the four campuses and at the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative.) **Exhibit 4-6** compares DSISD teacher turnover rates with the peer districts, Region 13 and the state.

Exhibit 4-6
Teacher Turnover Rates
DSISD vs. Peer Districts, Region 13 and State

District	Teachers Employed 2001-02	Teacher Turnover Rate
Lake Travis	337	24.0%
Marble Falls	261	19.4%
Wimberley	124	19.0%
Dripping Springs	226	17.2%*
Eanes	560	16.3%

Burnet Consolidated	216	7.5%
Region 13	19,161	17.3%
State	274,817	16.0%

Source: TEA and AEIS 2001, PEIMS, 2002.

**All teachers, both those in the classroom and those in the special education cooperative, are included in the calculation. If only classroom teachers are counted, the percent teacher turnover would be 16.4%.*

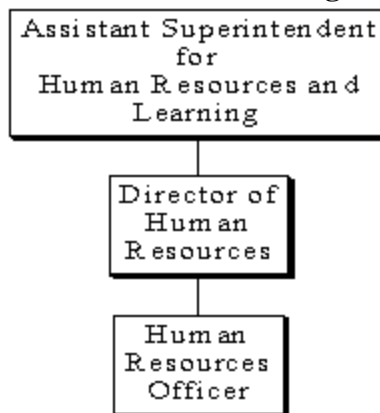
Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning oversees human resource issues in DSISD. The director of Human Resources is responsible for day-to-day operations of the Human Resources Office; a Human Resources officer assists him. **Exhibit 4-7** shows the organization of the personnel function in DSISD.

Exhibit 4-7
Human Resources Office Organization



Source: DSISD Administrative Office, April 2002.

The human resources responsibilities of the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning include:

- special reporting projects on human resources matters as required by administrative regulation, district policy, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and other governing agencies;
- overseeing the selection, evaluation and provision of in-service opportunities that enhance the professional abilities of instructional-related employees;
- directing the improvement of staff performance through a planned professional development process;
- assisting other staff as appropriate in setting goals, planning activities and evaluating results; and
- providing technical assistance to principals, teachers and staff concerning the broad instructional process, and encouraging improved overall employee performance.

The duties of the director of Human Resources include:

- coordinating the district's human resource activities to ensure that human resource practices are legally sound and effective;
- developing and implementing human resource programs, including wage and salary administration, employee benefits, employee training, recruitment, and staffing and employee communications;
- interpreting and recommending personnel policies and regulations for the district;
- working with principals and other district staff to recruit and select qualified personnel for instructional assignments;
- coordinating the district's application and recruitment program and ensuring that the district is represented in a positive and professional manner;
- assisting in development and implementation of orientation for new employees;
- supporting the district's employee appraisal program and ensuring that it is implemented effectively and uniformly;
- ensuring that employment contracts are completed and/or renewed for those employees requiring them;
- planning, evaluating and administering equal employment opportunity provisions and working cooperatively with others to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations;
- recommending and implementing procedures for administering salary, benefits and other forms of compensation programs;
- directing preparation and revision of job descriptions and the classification of positions in the district compensation plan;
- assisting in development and implementation of the teacher salary schedule and ensuring compliance with the state minimum salary schedule requirements;
- implementing the exempt and nonexempt compensation programs and ensuring compliance with federal wage and overtime laws;
- providing cost analysis of salary and wage adjustments for the budgeting process; and
- developing and implementing employee relations programs that ensure effective communications with employees, employee recognition, fair and effective employee complaints and grievances and effective distribution and updating of the employee handbook.

The Human Resources officer's duties include:

- ensuring district compliance with state certification and licensing requirements;
- verifying and monitoring certification status of applicants and employees;
- coordinating employee benefits enrollment;
- maintaining records and providing assistance to employees regarding human resource issues;

- receiving, processing and maintaining files and records for applicants and all district employees; and
- monitoring and controlling access to personnel records and maintaining proper security and confidentiality.

Since his arrival in November 2000, the director of Human Resources has taken significant steps in developing an effective human resources structure for the district and documenting and standardizing human resources practices. The director has documented and standardized several HR functions that in the past had been conducted more informally, such as the hiring process and application of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The director also has begun the process of updating job descriptions and using information from descriptions to better define how the district will evaluate employees annually.

FINDING

The district does not have updated job descriptions for all personnel. Job descriptions have been maintained in a decentralized fashion by individual departments and schools and updated sporadically. Some staff members have inaccurate descriptions that do not reflect their actual duties. The director of Human Resources intends to have the new job descriptions and evaluation instruments distributed to employees when they return at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year.

The process to update job descriptions started in March 2001 when the director of Human Resources began to classify of all employees (exempt/nonexempt) to ensure district compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and to prepare for changes to the compensation system. The project to update job descriptions is part of a much larger process started in March 2001. The first phase of the process, which focused on administrator positions, was completed in October 2001.

Step two of the process was to update the classification and salary plan by conducting a compensation study. The study included a verification of actual position titles and consolidation of the number of positions in the plan. The study found that special education aides were identified by 13 different titles through three pay grades, and that there were actually more titles used for aides on campuses than were verified by questionnaires received during the study. The study recommended two titles in two pay grades for aides. This process step was necessary before actual work on updating job descriptions could begin. The compensation study was completed in mid-March 2002, when the final proposals regarding titles and pay grades were presented to the board and school/department administrators.

Now that actual position titles have been established, the director of Human Resources is updating all job descriptions by position. For example, all schools have special education aides; the Human Resources Office is developing job descriptions for special education aides and passing them to the schools for final review and implementation. All schools and departments still have some job descriptions that need to be updated. At the time of the review, the director of Human Resources needed to finish updating 25 of 60 job descriptions. The Human Resources Office is maintaining a central file of the job descriptions as they are updated.

It is critical that the district complete the update and distribution of job descriptions, so that employees and employers have clear expectations of job responsibilities as well as the basis of employee performance appraisals.

Spring ISD maintains current and accurate job descriptions and provides all employees with a guide for understanding their roles and responsibilities. The department uses focus group sessions with employees in each type of position to create a job analysis that is critical in creating and updating job descriptions.

United ISD has developed a consistent format for maintaining job descriptions and reviews its descriptions regularly to ensure they are current. United ISD divides positions into three categories: administrative and professional, clerical and technical and manual trades. All positions have job descriptions that are consistent in format and organization, and cover information pertinent to each position's job.

Recommendation 16:

Complete the process of updating job descriptions and establish a system to regularly update job descriptions with input from employees and supervisors.

The director of Human Resources intends to have the new job descriptions and evaluation instruments distributed to employees when they return at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year. DSISD needs to ensure that all employees and their supervisors are aware of the job requirements for positions. Both employees and supervisors need to review job descriptions so that both parties are aware of the expectations on which employees will be evaluated in the future. Regular job description updates are also important to capture any changes that might occur in employee job duties over time.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Human Resources works with district personnel to complete updates of all district job descriptions.	September 2002
2.	The director of Human Resources communicates with district employees through memos, meetings and other communication methods regarding the updated job descriptions.	October 2002
3.	The director of Human Resources and other Human Resources Office staff review job descriptions in all schools and departments and determine if they need to be updated.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Human Resources Office has developed several independent File Maker Pro software databases to manage and maintain data on human resource functions that are not linked to the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) system, the Region 13 software that handles DSISD financial and human resource functions. According to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations, the Filemaker database information could be integrated in the RSCCC system to prevent multiple entries of employee information in the various database files.

Districts across the state have found benefits in integrating financial, payroll, human resources and other data to avoid multiple entries and allow sharing data efficiently. Districts such as Waco ISD and Wichita Falls ISD have fully-integrated financial systems such as Pentamation and SIMS that allow the integration of human resources, payroll and other financial information. DSISD does not need to obtain systems as expensive as these, but there are ways to integrate its current systems that would provide the same benefit.

Recommendation 17:

Integrate human resources databases into the RSCCC system.

Integrating the human resources databases into RSCCC will prevent district personnel from having to re-key personnel information into the computer system multiple times and allow information to be shared more effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and the director of Human Resources consult with technology staff at Region 13 to determine the best way to integrate the human resources databases in the RSCCC computer system.	October 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and the director of Human Resources integrate the human resources databases into RSCCC.	October - November 2002
3.	Human Resources Office staff begins entering personnel data into the RSCCC system.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

B. SALARIES AND BENEFITS

Since the Human Resources Office was created in November 2000 there has been a gradual shift of human resource duties from the Business Office to the Human Resources Office. One function that remains in the Business Office is compensation administration.

With input from the director of Human Resources and using board-adopted pay scales, the assistant superintendent for Business Operations sets salaries for new employees. The Business Office then calculates the monthly pay, determines the amount of leave to credit to the employee, enters the appropriate deductions and approves the employee for pay.

DSISD has a comprehensive compensation system that organizes employee positions by pay grades and pay structures. The compensation system includes pay structures for teachers, librarians, counselors and nurses; for professional and administrative staff such as assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals and directors; for clerical and technical staff; and for manual trades such as custodians, bus drivers and food service workers.

Annual salaries for district teachers, librarians, counselors and nurses are based on full-time contracts for 10 months' employment based on 187 days. Teachers with master's degrees receive a \$500 supplement above the regular teacher salary for the number of years experience. Counselors, librarians and nurses receive a \$3,000 supplement above the regular teacher salary for the number of years experience (**Exhibit 4-8**).

Exhibit 4-8
DSISD Salary Schedule
for Teachers, Librarians, Counselors and Nurses
2001-02

Year Experience	Salary
0	\$30,000
1	\$30,100
2	\$30,200
3	\$30,300

4	\$30,514
5	\$31,292
6	\$31,392
7	\$31,982
8	\$33,192
9	\$33,472
10	\$34,492
11	\$35,562
12	\$36,562
13	\$37,492
14	\$38,452
15	\$39,742
16	\$41,222
17	\$42,222
18	\$42,322
19	\$42,422
20	\$43,102
21	\$43,742
22	\$44,342
23	\$44,912
24	\$45,452
25	\$45,562
26+	\$45,662
Range Maximum:	\$47,700

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, April 2002.

Principals, assistant principals, assistant superintendents, directors and coordinators are covered under an administrative and professional pay schedule (**Exhibit 4-9**).

Exhibit 4-9
DSISD Administrative and Professional

**Job Classification Salary Schedule
2001-02**

Position	Minimum Annual Salary	Midpoint Annual Salary	Maximum Annual Salary
Instructional Support Staff, Special Ed Co-op	\$33,497	\$40,850	\$48,203
Coordinators	\$41,000	\$50,000	\$59,000
Elementary Assistant Principal	\$40,180	\$49,000	\$57,820
Middle School Assistant Principal	\$43,120	\$52,590	\$62,056
High School Assistant Principal	\$46,970	\$57,280	\$67,590
Directors	\$47,560	\$58,000	\$68,440
Elementary Principal	\$49,200	\$60,000	\$70,800
Middle School Principal	\$50,840	\$62,000	\$73,160
High School Principal	\$54,120	\$66,000	\$77,880
Assistant Superintendent	\$59,040	\$72,000	\$84,960

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, April 2002.

Clerical and technical positions fall under a compensation plan divided into seven pay grades. **Exhibit 4-10** summarizes the classification system and hourly pay ranges for each grade for clerical and technical positions in DSISD.

**Exhibit 4-10
DSISD Job Classifications and Pay Ranges
for Clerical and Technical Positions
2001-02**

Pay Grade	Positions in Grade	Minimum Hourly Rate	Mid-Point Hourly Rate	Maximum Hourly Rate
1	Content Mastery Aide Instructional Aide PE/Art Aide Special Education Resource Aide Monitor, Lunch/Office/SAC Aide	\$8	\$10	\$12
2	Instructional Aide for	\$9	\$11	\$13

	Handicapped Library Aide Vocational Life Skills Aide Middle School Special Ed Aide			
3	Nurse Aide/Administrative Assistant Nurse Aide/Monitor Adaptive Behavior Educational Aide Asst. Teacher, Behavior Management	\$10	\$12	\$14
4	Special Ed. Clerk/PEIMS (Elem., HS) SAC Coordinator (Elem., MS, HS) Campus Receptionist (Elem., MS) Secretary Counselor (Elem.) Secretary/Aide, Nurse Coord., HS ISS	\$10	\$12	\$14
5	Clerk, HS Registrar/PEIMS District Textbook Coordinator Registrar/Attendance Secy. (Elem.) Attendance Secy. (MS, HS) Secretary Counselor (MS, HS)	\$11	\$13	\$16
6	Secretary to Assistant Superintendent Secretary to Transportation/Maintenance Secretary to Principal	\$12	\$14	\$17
7	AP/AR Clerk Payroll Clerk	\$13	\$16	\$18
8	Superintendent/School Board Secy. Human Resources officer PEIMS Coordinator/Bookkeeper	\$14	\$17	\$20

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, April 2002.

The compensation plan for manual trades job classifications is divided into six pay grades
(**Exhibit 4-11**).

Exhibit 4-11
DSISD Job Classifications and Pay Ranges

**for Manual Trades Positions
2001-02**

Pay Grade	Positions in Grade	Minimum Hourly Rate	Mid-Point Hourly Rate	Maximum Hourly Rate
1	Lunch Room Monitor Child Care Worker	\$7	\$8	\$10
2	Special Education Bus Aide Custodian Child Nutrition Worker	\$8	\$10	\$12
3	Lead Custodian Grounds Maintenance Worker Child Nutrition Manager Trainee	\$9	\$11	\$13
4	Bus Driver General Laborer Maintenance Worker	\$11	\$13	\$15
5	Skilled Trades Maintenance Worker Child Care Director	\$12	\$15	\$18
6	Child Nutrition Manager Route Supervisor Skilled Vehicle Mechanic HVAC Technician	\$14	\$17	\$20

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, April 2002.

The district also has a pay schedule for substitute teachers, aides, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers (**Exhibit 4-12**).

**Exhibit 4-12
DSISD Substitute Salary Schedule
2001-02**

Position	Salary
Teachers	Non-Degreed: \$60.00 a day for first 10 days; \$75.00 a day after 10 days substituting for the same teacher Degreed: \$70.00 a day for first 10 days:

	\$85.00 a day after 10 days substituting for the same teacher
Aides	\$55.00 a day for the first 10 days; \$65.00 a day after 10 days for the same position
Bus Drivers	\$11.00 an hour; \$9.75 an hour for co-curricular trips
Custodians	\$8.00 an hour
Cafeteria	\$8.00 an hour

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, April 2002.

Some positions are also paid supplemental pay for performing extra duties related to their jobs (**Exhibit 4-13**).

Exhibit 4-13
DSISD Pay Schedule for Supplemental Work
2001-02

Workers	Pay Rates
Game Workers	\$7.50 an hour
Bus Drivers	\$8.70 an hour for driver training
Teachers	\$80.00 a day for Saturday School; \$20.00 a day for After School Detention \$20.00 an hour for Summer School; \$20.00 an hour for Extra Duty Instruction
Aides	\$8.00 an hour for Summer School; \$8.00 an hour for Extra Duty Instruction

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, April 2000.

In addition to basic pay, the district offers stipends to district staff for performing a variety of duties. Some stipends the district pays include:

- \$1,000 to instructional facilitators;
- \$2,000 to gifted and talented program coordinators;
- \$1,000 to technology coordinators;
- from \$2,000 (varsity) to \$900 (middle school) to cheerleading coordinators;
- from \$150 to \$300 to class sponsors at the high school;
- \$1,000 to department chairs at the high and middle schools; and
- from \$1,200 at the high school to \$500 at the primary school to UIL coordinators at all four schools.

The Human Resources Office regularly conducts salary surveys to determine how competitive DSISD salaries are for teachers, other professional and administrative staff, paraprofessional staff, clerical and technical staff and manual trades staff. The Human Resources Office also regularly reviews the Consumer Price Index trends for the area to determine how well DSISD salaries compare to cost of living expenses.

DSISD also offers several benefits to its employees, including a:

- health insurance plan offering the option of an HMO or PPO coverage;
- dental plan;
- district contribution of 7.65 percent to the Teacher Retirement System;
- tax-sheltered annuity plan that allows employees to contribute to a 403 (b) account for retirement purposes up to a current annual maximum of \$10,500, which reduces the participant's compensation for purposes of federal income tax sheltering; and
- Section 125 cafeteria plan that allows an employee to spend pre-tax dollars on insurance premiums, medical expenses and child care expenses.

The district also offers:

- employee child care, subject to class size limitations, with tuition based on the child's age;
- five days of personal (discretionary) leave a year, with accrual beginning on the first day of employment;
- five days of sick leave a year, with accrual beginning on the first day of employment, that can be used for illness of the employee, illness or death of a family member or for family emergencies;
- medical leave of up to 12 weeks unpaid leave with job guarantee, which is available for birth or adoption of a child or serious health conditions of the employee or member of their immediate family; and
- other leaves to meet requirements of military service, jury duty or to serve as sabbaticals for professional development.

The average DSISD salary for beginning teachers falls in the middle of the peer districts and toward the bottom of the list in salaries for teachers with more experience. However, with the exception of average salary for 6-10 years experience when it is almost \$2,000 lower, the district compares favorably to region and state averages (**Exhibit 4-14**).

Exhibit 4-14
Comparison of Average Teacher Salaries in DSISD, Peer Districts,

**Region 13 and State for Different Levels of Experience
2001-02**

District	Average Salary for Beginning Teachers	Average Salary for 1-5 Years' Experience	Average Salary for 6-10 Years' Experience	Average Salary for 11-20 Years' Experience	Average Salary for Over 20 Years' Experience
Eanes	\$33,687	\$33,829	\$37,056	\$42,676	\$49,115
Lake Travis	\$30,689	\$32,679	\$36,377	\$41,267	\$49,107
Dripping Springs	\$29,838	\$30,620	\$32,885	\$40,815	\$46,162
Wimberley	\$28,890	\$28,998	\$33,587	\$39,143	\$46,198
Marble Falls	\$26,771	\$28,573	\$34,140	\$40,821	\$44,966
Burnet Consolidated	\$26,684	\$28,749	\$33,655	\$39,557	\$43,231
Region 13	\$29,798	\$31,270	\$34,587	\$40,875	\$46,654
State	\$29,824	\$31,987	\$35,304	\$41,755	\$48,183

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

FINDING

The Human Resources Office conducts annual salary surveys to determine the relative competitiveness of its salaries with other school districts in its market. DSISD is located in an area where there is a great deal of competition for teachers, professional and administrative staff, paraprofessionals and other staff. DSISD conducts salary surveys in its "competitive market," which includes Austin ISD, Eanes ISD, Hays ISD, Lake Travis ISD, San Marcos ISD and Wimberley ISD. DSISD also surveys the districts with whom it is matched in University Interscholastic League (UIL) competition and activities: Bastrop, Comal, Del Valle, Lockhart and New Braunfels.

In this annual survey, the Human Resources Office obtains data on average salary paid for a position, the number of days the position works, the average years of experience of people in the surveyed position and average salaries for teachers depending on their level of experience.

Once the surveys are collected, the director of Human Resources calculates the average salary, the average number of days worked and

average years of experience for comparable positions in its market districts and the UIL districts. The director runs comparisons with similar positions in DSISD and produces reports showing the comparisons. These reports are provided to the superintendent, other directors and the board, as appropriate.

The office conducts surveys for teachers, administrators, aides, counselors, librarians, nurses and the superintendent. By conducting salary surveys and keeping decision makers in the district informed regarding salaries, the district has the information necessary to take action to adjust salaries if necessary.

COMMENDATION

The Human Resources Office works to remain competitive in the salaries it offers by conducting annual salary surveys of other districts.

FINDING

DSISD operates a child care facility, The Dripping Springs Educational Child Development Center, exclusively for its employees.

In 1997, several primary school teachers on maternity leave proposed to the principal that the school create a childcare center. Using other Texas school districts with similar programs as a model, DSISD established the childcare center in 1997-98 with eight children ages 3-6 months in one room at the primary school. The center was originally incorporated as a non-profit corporation, independent of the district, under the management of a parent advisory board. At its inception, the founding teachers requested that the district assume responsibility of the child care center if it proved to be successful.

The child care center has grown from an initial 1997-98 enrollment of eight infants in one room to 30 children, in four age groups, housed in two portable buildings in 2001-02. In 2002-03, the center will move to five remodeled classrooms behind the central administration building and increase its capacity to 46.

One full-time director and 11 part-time child care workers, who work 24 hours per week, staff the center. The director reports that due to the nature of the work, employee retention is higher with part-time workers. Since the director was hired in January 1998, there has been no turnover in personnel. The center's worker-to-child ratios are lower than state-mandated ratios. The center, which was the fourth child care facility licensed by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services

(TDPRS) in Dripping Springs, has had no reports of violations upon inspection. It presently holds a level III license, the highest level of license TDPRS issues.

In 1999-2000, the district assumed operation of the center but retained the parent advisory board. Parents pay monthly fees that are comparable or higher to those of the other three licensed facilities in Dripping Springs. The monthly fees cover the costs for all childcare employees' salaries and benefits, all supplies for the child care center and its licensing fees. The district provides the space, utilities, telephone and required liability insurance of \$100,000 per child as part of its overall budget. The center has proven to be a recruitment and retention tool for the district.

COMMENDATION

DSISD has responded to the child care needs of its employees by making available an on-site child care program with the highest level of licensure compliance.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

C. HIRING AND RECRUITMENT

The Human Resources Office administers DSISD's hiring process and recruitment efforts. The director of Human Resources provides advice to those in the district responsible for hiring personnel to ensure that they comply with legal requirements. Since being hired in November 2000, the director of Human Resources has provided structure to the interview, selection and hiring processes and implemented safeguards to prevent the district from possible litigation.

The Human Resources Office's recruitment efforts focus on job fairs at the University of Texas and at Region 13. The director of Human Resources said that staff used to attend job fairs at other colleges and universities such as Texas A&M and Baylor University. However, those efforts required more expense and time (including overnight stays and travel) and did not result in obtaining many resumes or applications. Job fairs at the University of Texas and Region 13 each generate more than 120 resumes or applications submitted to the district annually. The director of Human Resources estimates that department spends a maximum of 12 hours annually attending job fairs at the University of Texas and Region 13.

In addition to participation in UT and Region 13 job fairs, the Human Resources Office has also expanded the applicant base through use of internet posting sites such as Monster.com and sites of the Texas Workforce Commission, the U.S. Department of Education, DSISD's Web site and other Web sites. The department is developing other initiatives for recruitment including promotion of DSISD's benefits package and district's exemplary schools.

On an annual basis, the department analyzes its recruitment efforts by evaluating the number of resumes and applications received, the sources of applications and the quality of applicants. The department also analyzes the student teacher program to determine how effective it is in transitioning program participants into teachers. Based on its analysis, the department adjusts recruitment efforts as necessary.

FINDING

The director of Human Resources has helped to document and standardize the DSISD hiring process and served as an advisor on the legal requirements related to the hiring process, such as appropriate questioning of applicants. The hiring process is a very inclusive one, which involves a

committee of stakeholders to interact with the applicant. While the process is designed to meet all legal requirements, it is still innovative using different methods to determine not only whether an applicant meets the legal qualifications, but also whether the applicant has the creative and personal skills necessary for the job. The district's employment process follows these steps.

Job posting. A position is either created or a vacancy occurs. The school or department where the position is located informs the Human Resources Office and provides it with information on the position that needs to be filled and the criteria for selecting qualified candidates. The selection criteria must be based on an up-to-date job description. The Human Resources Office posts and advertises the vacancy and develops an applicant pool.

Selection committee. With input from the Human Resources Office, the hiring official forms a selection committee. The Human Resources Office trains selection committee members in the interview process, reminding staff on equal opportunity policies and procedures to follow during the interview and selection process. The selection committee:

- uses the position's job description to develop a profile of the successful candidate;
- develops job-related questions to be asked of each applicant being interviewed;
- reviews and screens applications and selects applicants;
- arranges interviews with the selected applicants; and
- conducts interviews asking each applicant identical questions and documenting answers.

The interview process also often includes a special exercise such as an 'in basket' exercise, in which the applicant is given a hypothetical situation he or she might face in the course of performing the position's duties and asked to tell the committee how he or she would respond and why. This exercise offers the selection committee insight into how the applicants use reasoning, interpersonal and other skills necessary to perform the position's duties. Once interviews are complete, the committee rates each candidate based on the profile developed at the beginning of the process. The committee conducts a check of each applicant's references. The committee makes a final recommendation and forwards it to the hiring official.

Hiring steps. The hiring official makes a final selection and reports it to the Human Resources Office so it can conduct the criminal background check, certification check and permitting check as appropriate. The hiring official notifies the approved candidate and an offer of employment is

extended pending board approval and the results of the criminal background check. If required, the board approves the contract recommendation. If required, the new employee signs a contract and completes other required paperwork.

Official notices. The hiring official notifies candidates not selected for employment as appropriate. The district submits a new-hire report to the state.

The employment process helps DSISD fill positions with personnel who not only meet the legal requirements of a position but who also have the proven skills, creativity and other characteristics to do the job and work well with the organization.

COMMENDATION

The Human Resources Office has thoroughly documented and standardized the hiring process, which provides an innovative method to help ensure that DSISD hires people best suited for the jobs they fill within the organization.

FINDING

There are no formal staffing formulas in use in DSISD. While the district has made numerous cuts through attrition and reorganization as part of an effort to increase its fund balance, it lacks a method of ensuring that positions are distributed equitably. **Exhibit 4-15** compares staff growth to student enrollment in the district for the past five years.

**Exhibit 4-15
DSISD Comparison of Staff FTEs and Student Enrollment
1997-98 through 2001-02**

Staff	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02*	Percent Change
Teachers	203.3	211.3	217.6	217.3	217.5	7.0
Professional Support	16.4	22.2	28.7	31.1	31.8	93.9
Campus Administration	9.9	10.9	10.0	10.8	12.0	21.2
Central Administration	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	0.0
Educational Aides	26.7	25.2	28.9	27.6	26.1	(2.2)

Auxiliary Staff	113.9	115.1	126.1	127.6	135.4	18.9
Total FTEs	374.2	388.7	414.3	416.4	426.8	14.1
Total Students	2,885	3,014	3,090	3,197	3,311	14.8

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

In 2001-02, the district cut staff in technology, construction operations and maintenance as part of a larger effort that saved the district \$413,055.

Custodial services uses the generally accepted general standard of one custodian per 18,000 square feet. However, there is no evidence that there is a clearly established staffing formula that would help custodial services determine the appropriate staffing leveling of custodians should there be additions to square footage due to the building of a new school or the expansion of an existing school.

Nor are there staffing formulas in place to cover staffing in areas such as food service, transportation, maintenance and other services. The district also lacks staffing formulas for assistant principals and other campus administrative positions.

Staffing formulas can help ensure that positions are distributed equitably and are an important method of determining when enrollment, square footage or other factors have grown enough to warrant additional staff to handle the workload.

Recommendation 18:

Adopt and implement staffing formulas for all applicable positions to help the district determine whether its departments are appropriately staffed as the district continues to grow.

As the district regains sound financial footing and continues to grow it will need staffing standards to ensure that the district provides efficient and high quality services in all areas. Appropriate staffing formulas set ratios of one employee per some measure such as square footage, enrollment growth, meals served or student passengers. In some cases, there are agreed upon standards that can be applied universally across a discipline or field. Staffing formulas will help the district realistically appraise future staffing needs and ensure the district is appropriately staffed.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent works with assistant superintendents and	October-
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	department directors to identify appropriate indicators that can be used to develop staffing formulas for areas under their supervision.	November 2002
2.	Directors identify appropriate indicators that can be used to develop staffing formulas.	November 2002
3.	The director of Human Resources works with department directors to develop proposed staffing formulas for applicable areas.	November-December 2002
4.	The director of Human Resources and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning present proposed staffing formulas to the board for approval.	January 2003
5.	The board reviews and approves the proposed staffing formulas and instructs the superintendent to incorporate them into future staffing plans.	January 2003
6.	The superintendent implements the approved formulas.	February 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

D. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Employee performance appraisals help to identify employee strengths and training opportunities for improving employee performance.

FINDING

DSISD does not have performance measures to guide the evaluation of DSISD non-instructional personnel. While supervisors appraise non-instructional personnel performance, there are no adopted measures to ensure that expectations are uniformly stated.

DSISD board policy requires that all employees "be periodically appraised in the performance of their duties," and that "the employee's performance of assigned duties and other job-related criteria shall provide the basis for the employee's evaluation and appraisal." The policy requires that employees be informed in advance of the criteria on which they will be evaluated.

Effective performance appraisal systems require that both employer and employee have clear expectations about employee performance. Job descriptions are the main vehicle for setting those expectations, because descriptions list the tasks an employee must perform and the skills and knowledge required to perform the job.

In the past, DSISD job descriptions have not been a reliable source of information on employee expectations. Descriptions were not updated regularly and were not centrally coordinated and maintained. However, the director of Human Resources has been working on updating job descriptions for the past year. Once the updates are complete, job descriptions can provide reliable information on job requirements and employee expectations, therefore a basis for performance appraisals.

As part of developing an effective performance appraisal system, the director of Human Resources has been working to revise the performance appraisal instrument in use in DSISD. The director has changed the instrument and process by defining the numerical ratings used and giving employees more of a role in the evaluation process by submitting items they think should be used in their evaluations.

Recommendation 19:

Develop and adopt a consistent way to set expectations for non-instructional personnel performance appraisal.

The implementation of this recommendation will provide the district a means for assembling appropriate employee performance documentation should the need arise to defend adverse employment recommendations. In addition, having performance measures should result in providing documentation to support valuable commendations for employees with superior job performance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Human Resources to develop performance measures for non-instructional employees.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and director of Human Resources work with selected district and school level supervisors to develop recommended performance measures for non-instructional employees.	October to November 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, the director of Human Resources and selected district and school-level supervisory personnel present recommendations to the superintendent for review, revision and approval.	December 2002
4.	The superintendent reviews, revises and approves the performance measures and instructs the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to implement the use of the measures.	January 2003
5.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Human Resources implement the non-instructional performance measures including providing appropriate training to all affected personnel.	February 2003 and Ongoing
6.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, the director of Human Resources and selected district and school-level supervisory personnel evaluate the effectiveness of the measures and recommend needed adjustments.	June 2004 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

E. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Texas law requires school districts offer their staff professional and in-service training. School districts are allowed to reduce the number of school days offered to students to allow more time for staff training.

Staff development also is integral to the effectiveness of Human Resources Office staff. The director of Human Resources and the Human Resources officer attend State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) updates on certification and permitting issues, insurance and retirement seminars and Teacher Retirement System seminars on health care benefits. The director of Human Resources attends annual legal seminars regarding employment law and personnel issues to keep abreast of legal developments in the human resource field. The Human Resources officer attends Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) training on personnel administrator functions as well as training on FileMakerPro, the office's database software.

Because of shared personnel-related duties, the Human Resources Office cross-trains on functions performed in the Business Office. The payroll and PEIMS software, the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) system, has been installed in Personnel, and training is provided on these systems. Compensation information through the Personnel FileMakerPro database has also been shared with the Business Office (PEIMS administrator). Employees in the two offices have also cross-trained on leave entitlements, FLSA compliance issues, substitute teacher system operations and telephone coverage.

Other district personnel receive training appropriate to their areas. For example, food service workers receive training in knowledge and skills related to food preparation, food safety, nutrition and other relevant subjects. Other district personnel are also offered training for skills relating to their areas.

FINDING

Professional development at DSISD is decentralized. Each campus and department is responsible for coordinating professional development for staff at that location. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning is responsible for "overseeing the selection, evaluation and provision of in-service opportunities that enhance the professional abilities of instructional-related employees." The assistant superintendent and

secretary maintain training records for all professional staff and aides. However, they do not develop, schedule, or coordinate the overall district professional development effort, except for the districtwide convocation at the start of the school year.

The Human Resources staff does not coordinate training for individual campuses or departments. All district personnel are encouraged to seek training opportunities but whether such opportunities are pursued is left to the individual employee, the employee's supervisor and the department or school in which the employee works.

Several examples of the problems created by the district's decentralized professional development program include:

- In the Transportation Department, there is no ongoing training for bus drivers beyond initial and refresher training required by the state. Bus drivers have no annual training program to test and improve their skills and help them perform their jobs more safely;
- There is no formal, comprehensive training program for custodians or maintenance staff beyond a one-day training session during the summer and an informal on-the-job process where new custodians "shadow" the lead custodian and new maintenance employees are assigned to work with an experienced maintenance worker; and
- Technology Department staff does not always have adequate training to handle problems with computer hardware or software. Though several department employees have a great deal of education and experience in the technology field, there are still concerns among some district staff that neither department employees nor campus technology coordinators have the training to handle all types of computer issues.

Effective training is critical to the effective performance of all district personnel. While a decentralized training program is not necessarily ineffective, it is much harder to ensure that every employee is taking full advantage of professional development opportunities. For the decentralized professional development program to work, there must be some type of planning effort that ensures that employees are given adequate opportunity to develop their skills regardless of where they work in the district.

Recommendation 20:

Develop and implement professional development plans for every type of position in the district.

Development and implementation of professional development plans will help ensure that district staff are not only aware of, but also take advantage of, available training opportunities. The Human Resources Office should assist each school or department in the district in developing training plans for their personnel. The plans should include record-keeping requirements for professional and non-professional staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Human Resources develop a schedule for assisting schools and departments in formulating professional development plans.	November 2002
2.	The director of Human Resources begins contacting principals and department directors to discuss with them the professional development plans and makes arrangements to begin the work.	November 2002
3.	The director of Human Resources works with schools and departments to put together professional development plans that focus on all non-professional positions within the school or department.	December 2002-February 2003
4.	Schools and departments begin to implement their professional development plans.	March 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD's) facilities and energy management functions in four sections:

- A. Facilities Management
- B. Maintenance
- C. Custodial Services
- D. Energy Management

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive facilities, maintenance, custodial and energy management program should coordinate and integrate all of the physical resources of the district with efficient and effective school management. Facility personnel are not only involved in the design and construction of the district's facilities, but they are also involved in the operations and maintenance of these facilities. Facility departments should operate under defined policies, procedures and activities that are flexible enough to accommodate changes in the district's resources or needs. The director of Plant Operations coordinates the district's design, construction, operation and maintenance activities with input from district and community leaders.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

A. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

DSISD, is a fast growing district. It has had annual growth rate of more than eight percent for six of the past ten years. It has built two of its four schools since 1996. All the schools are in close proximity to one another to support a transportation plan that brings all students to a central drop off and transfer point. The district built the schools to handle the anticipated population growth in the district. **Exhibit 5-1** gives some demographics of the school buildings in DSISD.

Exhibit 5-1
DSISD School Site Information
2001-02

	Grade Level	Building Size	Site Size	Year Built	Students as of April 2002
Primary School	Pre-K - 3rd	100,686 sq. ft.	20 acres	1988	908
Intermediate School	4th - 5th	87,794 sq. ft.	22.73 acres	1999	522
Middle School	6th - 8th	137,613 sq. ft.	40 acres	1996	811
High School	9th - 12th	220,302 sq. ft.	38.88 acres	1986	1,036

Source: DSISD Plant Operations Department.

Until just a few years ago, all students attended school at the site that is now the central administrative complex. Since 1995, the voters in the district passed several bond issues to build and equip new and modern school buildings. District projections anticipate that enrollment may double within the next 10 years.

FINDING

DSISD took a proactive approach in addressing mold discovered in the primary school on October 17, 2001. In response to a routine request to repair sheet vinyl that had peeled away from the wall in the computer lab,

the director of Plant Operations discovered mold growing between the vinyl and the sheetrock wall. The district immediately closed the computer lab, sent a letter to parents regarding the problem and hired a testing laboratory to inspect the building.

Upon visual inspections of two other classrooms and the library the following day, the laboratory consultant discovered more mold. Initial air quality testing indicated that no health hazard existed, but the consultant recommended closing the affected rooms. The school's staff personally contacted the parents of students in those classrooms regarding the mold and the closure of the affected rooms. The district retained an indoor air quality consultant to oversee the air sampling and subsequent remediation. The following week, the consultant took testing samples throughout the building. The certified indoor air consultant presented a remediation plan to the board that included:

- removal of all fixed book shelves and cabinets for inspection;
- inspection of all sinks and removal of those found to be contaminated;
- cleaning of all rooms and contents of rooms;
- cleaning of all ceiling surfaces and removal of contaminated tile;
- inspection and cleaning of all heating and ventilating equipment and ducts;
- cleaning of all wall cavities and removal of contaminated wall board;
- removal of all vinyl wallpaper;
- removal of all baseboards.

The consultant required the school to be unoccupied during this work. Test results indicated the presence of mold at a high-risk level in 22 classrooms. The district deemed this level of contamination a potential health hazard for students and staff, although no mold-related illnesses were ever reported. On November 14, 2001, the board declared an emergency at the primary school. To protect the health and safety of students and staff and to allow time for the administration to adequately investigate and address the mold issue, the district ordered the school closed until November 23, 2001. The district sent letters home to all parents, held a staff meeting that afternoon, distributed a press release and hosted a public meeting for parents.

The following Monday morning, the school leadership team met with a group of parents to discuss the possible relocation of primary school students during the remediation process. The group formulated a recommendation for the superintendent and the board: the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students move to the United Methodist Church; the first grade students to the First Baptist Church; the second

graders to the central administration building; and the third grade students to the intermediate school. The district held another parent meeting on the night of November 26, 2001 to discuss this plan. Classes resumed on December 3, 2001 under the new configuration. During this time, the students missed a total of nine days of instruction.

The remediation consultant directed the cleaning and removal of all contents from the rooms. Once specifications for the remediation process were in place, the school district solicited bids from seven different contractors to perform this work. The board declared the situation at the primary school an Urgent Public Necessity, allowing the board to act outside of the normal established district guidelines in an expedient manner. The district negotiated satisfactory pricing with two qualified remediation contractors to divide the work. The work started on the following Monday. Specific building areas were assigned to each contractor to avoid conflict and duplication of work. All teacher supplies and materials were cleaned and removed to the temporary classrooms, so that instruction could start in the new locations. The district replaced and painted wallboard, installed new floor covering and re-installed or replaced cabinets, shelving and sinks. By early December, all of the work outlined in the district's remediation plan was complete.

On December 15, 2001, the district discovered that the mold level in the building was still not at a safe level. Mold was discovered on the exterior drywall sheeting, installed during the building's original construction, between the outside of the metal stud wall and the masonry veneer. This presented a difficult challenge, because it was not clear if the exterior stone veneer of the building would have to be removed to reach the contaminated exterior sheeting. The consultant indicated that the reasons for the mold growth were:

- the vinyl wallpaper locked in moisture and acted like a vapor barrier;
- drain (weep) holes that normally drain the moisture from the interior of the masonry walls were often either blocked or below grade, making the drain process difficult or impossible;
- exterior grading and drainage around the outside of the building did not allow water to drain away from the walls;
- flashing that would have allowed water to drain from the cavity between the stone and the sheathing was absent;
- mortar from the stone veneer was in direct contact with the exterior sheathing causing moisture to be in direct contact with the compromised sheathing;
- sinks had mold growth from minor leaks in the base cabinet in several rooms;
- the roof was found to have minor leaks;

- downspout deflectors were missing in several locations, causing water to enter the building at the base of the wall system;
- the heating and ventilating system drew moist air into the building because it appeared to be operating under negative air pressure.

The district's focus turned from the completion of the remediation project to the prospect of further demolition and extensive remodeling. Local building officials indicated that the building would also need to comply with current building codes.

It became clear to the district that primary school students would need to be housed off-site until at least the start of the 2002-03 school year. On December 20, 2001, the board approved a remodeling project of two wings at the central administration building to house the students who had been initially moved to the First Baptist Church. The project was completed on January 18, 2002. In addition, students attending classes in the gymnasium of the central administrative building moved into remodeled classrooms in that same building. With the Pre-K through grade 3 students completely housed in off-site locations, the district turned its attention to the remaining work at the primary school.

The remediation consultant recommended that the district hire a qualified engineer to help plan, engineer and design the rest of its remediation project at the primary school. On January 28, 2002, the district developed a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design services for the final remediation and renovation project. The district distributed the RFQ through normal channels and received four proposals by the deadline of February 28, 2002. On March 21, 2002, after several rounds of interviews, the board's Facility Committee recommended the engineering firm of Reynolds, Schlattner, Chetter and Roll from San Antonio to lead this final effort. The district selected this firm because, in part, it had dealt with similar mold problems in other districts.

After extensive review and study, the design team recommended the following measures to solve the mold problem at the primary school:

- remove the contaminated black drywall sheathing throughout the building;
- coat the inside of the exterior rock with a bituminous product;
- fill the wall cavity with iconylene, which is a green product that will not release gas;
- remove and replace the sheet rock on the inside of the building;
- modify the heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system to handle interior humidity;
- increase the fresh air exchange;
- remove and replace all ceiling tile;

- remove and replace all exterior rain gutters;
- seal all exterior rock with a water retardant;
- caulk around all windows, doors and expansion joints;
- regrade the exterior site to move water away from the building;
- upgrade conduit and wiring for improved phone, cable and technology service;
- upgrade the fire alarm system.

To complete this work quickly, the district used an expedited procedure to select a general contractor. It formulated a set of specifications and sent them out to eight general contractors. Three companies responded with bids for the final remediation. The board selected Joerius General Contractors from San Antonio to perform this work, with a completion date of August 1, 2002. The contractor had 2.5 months to complete an extensive remediation project.

DSISD faced a major challenge in financing the remediation project, which totaled \$5.2 million. This price tag included all the initial testing and demolition, relocation costs, asbestos removal and final reconstruction of the school. The district's low cash reserves could not handle the expense of major remediation. The board appointed a Finance Committee to look into possible funding sources. The committee met with the district's financial advisor to discuss possible funding options. Four options were identified: pay for the work out of existing budgets; pay out of the fund balance; pay through maintenance tax notes; pay for the project with a bond issue through voter referendum. Early in the process, the board approved a reimbursement resolution that would allow recapturing any mold-related expense to date, in case they choose to finance through maintenance tax notes. On April 18, 2002, the board authorized Maintenance and Operations Tax Notes to cover these expenses. Voters will repay these tax notes through the maintenance and operations part of the tax rate.

The DSISD board and administration effectively communicated the facts and events that surrounded the discovery of the mold to the children, parents and staff. They used an efficient and deliberate process to remediate the problem, while keeping the health and well being of staff and students as their primary focus.

COMMENDATION

DSISD used a sound process to remediate the mold problem at their primary school.

FINDING

DSISD has conducted extensive research to estimate the district's future enrollment and growth patterns. A July 2001 demographic study by DeskMap Systems in Austin, Texas, it served as the first step in the district's facility planning process.

DSISD has doubled its enrollment from 1990-91. The district's growth has ranged from a low of 2.7 percent during 1999-2000 to a high of 10.6 percent for 1993-1994. **Exhibit 5-2** shows the rate of growth in the district over the last 10 years.

Exhibit 5-2
DSISD Historical Enrollment Figures

School Year	Total Enrollment	Change from Year Before
1990-91	1,601	NA
1991-92	1,764	10.2%
1992-93	1,924	9.1%
1993-94	2,127	10.6%
1994-95	2,236	5.1%
1995-96	2,436	8.9%
1996-97	2,668	9.5%
1997-98	2,889	8.3%
1998-99	3,018	4.5%
1999-00	3,100	2.7%
2000-01	3,209	3.5%

Source: DSISD, DeskMap Systems, Inc. July 2001.

County statistics support the theory that the district will continue to grow. Hays County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Texas, with a growth rate nearly double the state rate. Within Hays County, the city of Dripping Springs has grown at a faster rate than the county itself. The number of residential units in DSISD grew by 139 from January 2000 through January 2001, an increase of 3.4 percent.

DeskMap Systems studied the subdivisions in DSISD to estimate potential growth. The study revealed that 20 housing developments are either currently under construction or planned for the near future. The consultant studied the size of each development, total lots, home prices and utility

sources and determined active construction occurring in about half of the developments in the district, with new homes either under construction or in the planning stage. If all planned lots are developed and built, it would equal 4,084 new housing units. Of the 20 developments studied, nearly all have homes valued at \$200,000 to \$300,000.

Rather than using only a mathematical model of the Cohort-Survival Method, a tool used by many school districts to project student enrollment, the consultant expanded the method to include the results of localized data, including building and economic trends. As a result, the consultant presented three different scenarios:

- an historical model based on past trends;
- a moderate projection based on the most likely enrollment patterns;
- a scenario based on a high development rate.

The historical model shows that in five years, the student enrollment could increase 24 percent or by 779 students. In a 10-year period, the total enrollment could reach 5,100 under the historical scenario or 7,432 under the high-development scenario. Under any of the scenarios, a long-range facility plan must be developed to address these needs. **Exhibit 5-3** shows the projected growth for DSISD in the next 10 years.

Exhibit 5-3
DSISD Enrollment Projections
July 2001

School Year	Historical Scenario	Moderate Scenario	High Scenario
2001-02	3,410	3,336	3,336
2002-03	3,555	3,476	3,511
2003-04	3,669	3,762	3,864
2004-05	3,819	4,061	4,241
2005-06	3,988	4,384	4,656
2006-07	4,184	4,719	5,114
2007-08	4,378	5,066	5,621
2008-09	4,599	5,431	6,171
2009-10	4,850	5,816	6,766
2010-11	5,100	6,220	7,432

Source: DSISD, DeskMap Systems, Inc. July 2001.

The second component in facility planning is a facilities assessment. DSISD started the assessment by assembling a 50-member Facility Advisory Task Force composed of representatives from local business, civic and community organizations, parents, community members, school district staff and technical advisors. The superintendent charged the task force, which had a good cross section of geographical and ethnic representation, with the following goals:

- function as an ad hoc committee to advise the DSISD Board of Trustees regarding immediate, short term and long-term facility issues to meet the needs of a dynamic and growing student population;
- develop an existing facility assessment;
- develop a prioritized list of facility needs;
- recommend a realistic facility addition and/or improvement program that will accommodate projected district needs for the immediate future, for the next 2-3 years and for the next 5-7 years; and
- complete their assessments and recommendations by June 30, 2002.

The superintendent used the *School Bond Election Planning* documents developed by the Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 4) to guide the process. The district hired Dr. Bill Moore of Texas A&M University to help facilitate the project. To show widespread involvement and gain community support for future construction and renovation of schools, the district will use the task force's plan, along with the growth projections, in marketing campaigns for future bond issues.

COMMENDATION

DSISD is using a comprehensive process to develop a long-range facility plan.

FINDING

A better preventive maintenance program would have minimized the mold problem in the district's schools. Consultants cited several maintenance factors that contributed to the growth of mold, including:

Construction-related issues:

- drainage (weep) holes in the masonry veneer, installed to allow moisture to escape, were plugged or not constructed as originally planned;
- some of the drainage (weep) holes installed at the base of the rock veneer wall were found to be below grade and were actually allowing water to move from the outside soil back into the building;
- string placed at the bottom of the masonry wall in the original construction to allow moisture to be transferred out of the masonry wall through the wicking ability of the string, was often found in wet or below grade areas, allowing the wicking effect to work in an opposite direction than intended;
- rainwater drainage problems were discovered around the exterior of the school; allowing water to move towards the building instead of away from it and into catch basins;
- downspouts allowed water to run onto the ground against the building; often splash blocks intended to deflect rain away from the base of the wall were missing.

Routine preventive maintenance-related:

- many sinks in the building had minor leaks that as a result of not being repaired caused delamination of the plywood in the base units;
- minor roof leaks were undetected.

Landscape-related:

- sidewalks installed after the original construction caused water to flow towards the building;
- landscape installed by volunteer community groups placed soil and humus material against the outside of the building, blocking off some weep holes.

The district does not have a checklist or a schedule to inspect its facilities for mold. Employees of the district have not been trained regarding issues of indoor air quality and no one in the district has been given the responsibility for this issue.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is actively involved with the air quality in our nation's schools. They have produced an indoor air quality kit for schools entitled *Tools for Schools*, which specifically addresses the asthma epidemic, animal allergens, cockroach and pest allergens, mold and moisture control, dust mites and secondhand smoke. The program outlines a plan to achieve total air quality in the schools. The EPA has outlined the following steps to get a clean air program started:

- review the contents of the program and watch the videos that are provided;
- appoint a coordinator for the program;
- get buy-in from the school leadership;
- form an indoor air quality team and review current practices;
- consider parent involvement;
- use the checklist log to list school staff members and the checklists they receive;
- copy and distribute the indoor air quality backgrounder and needed checklist;
- collect staff checklists and record the information on the checklist log;
- watch the Walkthrough Video and use the Walk Through Inspection Checklist;
- identify and prioritize indoor air quality problems;
- consider developing district policies for animals, food and pesticides;
- fix any small problems;
- develop a plan to proactively improve indoor air quality for the long-term; and
- communicate findings.

A good preventive maintenance program would allow not only the maintenance personnel but also the custodians and teachers to look for signs of mold and air quality problems. An educational process allows all staff members to be educated and committed to the program. All the EPA checklists, forms, sample letters and guides in their free *Tools for Schools* material can be found at www.epa.gov/iaq/schools.

Recommendation 21:

Develop and implement a comprehensive preventive maintenance program to insure healthy indoor air quality in all district buildings.

After its experience with mold, the district should pay particular attention to indoor air quality.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations develops a comprehensive preventive air quality maintenance plan for the district.	September 2002
2.	The director of Plant Operations meets with the assistant superintendent for Business Operations to review and approve the plan.	September 2002
3.	The director of Plant Operations assumes responsibility for	October

implementing the preventive maintenance plan.	2002
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

DSISD does not have sufficient oversight of its capital construction records. Since 1998, the district building program has been aggressive, constructing two new schools, adding on to the existing high school and improving additional facilities. **Exhibit 5-4** shows the capital construction projects in the district since 1998.

Exhibit 5-4
DSISD Capital Construction Costs

Project	Date	Budgeted	Actual	Balance
High School Addition	9/99	\$13,530,000	\$13,352,806	\$177,194
Intermediate School	9/99	\$8,728,732	\$8,360,813	\$367,919
Athletic Complex	8/98	\$363,000	\$270,239	\$92,762
Middle School Field	4/98	\$470,000	\$454,840	\$15,005
Support Service Bldg.	9/99	\$700,000	\$753,898	(\$53,898)
TOTALS		\$23,791,732	\$23,192,596	\$598,982

Source: DSISD Business Operations Department.

The district has managed its construction costs well, with only one project exceeding budget. Overall project costs came in 2.5 percent lower than budgeted.

Until 2000-01, the district had a budgeted position responsible for the management of capital projects and construction. In 2000-01, when the last funded projects were completed, the district eliminated the position and transferred the responsibilities to the director of Plant Operations. The action was part of the district's overall reorganization effort.

Construction and maintenance projects generated volumes of project records. When the original director left the position, the district moved the records. The district put some of the records in the archives and moved some documents to the service center. When the need arose for additional classrooms to house students because of the mold problem, the district

moved its archival storage. As a result, today the records are not organized in one place nor are they easily accessible.

In addition, because the district has assigned construction-related projects to various staff members, no single person has been responsible for organizing the volumes of reports generated with each project. For example, when the mold problem surfaced, the superintendent and the assistant superintendent for Business Operations took responsibility for the mold remediation. As the district received records, documents, invoices and other remediation plans, someone needed to process, record, file and account for the information.

The lack of organization for documents from past projects necessitates that the district assign someone to take responsibility for these records for the sake of good record management. This responsibility has been given to the director of Plant Operations.

However, when the district assigned responsibility for capital construction to the director of Plant Operations, the necessary records, resources and support were not forwarded to him. District administrators said there was insufficient storage space due to the need for extra classrooms to house students displaced because of the mold problem. These records are very important for long-term facility needs. District personnel or their designees will need access to project as-built drawings, architectural specification documents, survey reports and various documents from consultants if questions ever come up in the future. The contract documents and daily records need to be stored in a safe place, be organized and be available as needed. As time goes on and administrators who are knowledgeable about various project and site issues leave the district, these records will become even more important. They need to be identified, cataloged, organized and made available for study.

Dallas ISD, a district with 22 million square feet of space, has a full-time employee keeping track of its facilities documents. The same needs, on a smaller scale, apply to DSISD. A district with an effective management system for its capital project records maintains complete records of both large and small projects in an organized manner, so that the records are always available for consultation and use.

Recommendation 22:

Organize all capital project records and documents in one department with assigned responsibility.

These records are important. The person assigned this responsibility should organize and manage these documents.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations identifies the location of all project documents.	March 2003
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations develops a plan to organize and store all project documents.	March 2003
3.	The director of Plant Operations arranges for the movement, organization, management and storage of these records.	April 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5

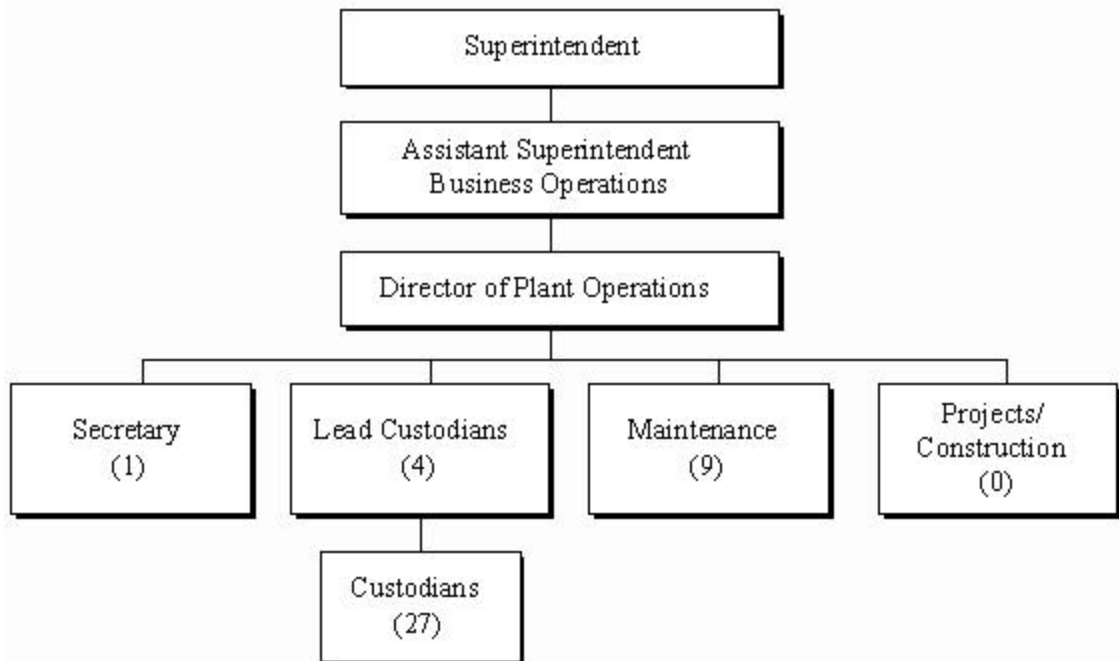
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

B. MAINTENANCE

Maintenance Services is responsible for routine repairs and improvements and for maintaining the district's buildings and grounds in a safe and secure manner. DSISD has 9 maintenance employees, who are supervised by the Director of Plant Operations.

The director of Plant Operations, a secretary and a staff of 31 custodians and nine maintenance positions handle the facilities management for the DSISD. **Exhibit 5-5** shows the organization of Plant Operations.

Exhibit 5-5
Organization of Plant Operations
2001-02



Source: DSISD Organizational Chart.

Exhibit 5-6 compares the expenditures of DSISD's maintenance and operations with the maintenance and operations expenditures of its peer districts. When the average per pupil costs is calculated, the average expenditure of all the peer districts is \$787 per pupil. Compared to its peer

districts, DSISD spends \$63 less than the average and almost \$150 less than the highest amount spent by Eanes ISD per pupil.

Exhibit 5-6
Maintenance and Operations Expenditures
DSISD and Peer Districts
2001-2002

District	Maintenance/ Operations Expenditure	Total District Expenditure	Percent of Total	Cost per Pupil
Eanes	\$6,326,822	\$66,462,722	9.5%	\$872
Lake Travis	\$3,144,683	\$38,864,907	8.1%	\$723
Marble Falls	\$2,744,065	\$27,694,368	9.9%	\$752
Burnet Consolidated	\$2,422,515	\$21,737,421	11.1%	\$825
Dripping Springs	\$2,396,129	\$23,138,767	10.4%	\$724
Wimberley	\$1,435,834	\$13,818,775	10.4%	\$829

Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2001-02.

When asked if maintenance makes repairs in a timely manner, the majority of teachers, parents and administrators said that they did. Seventy-two percent of the teachers responded that repairs were made in a timely manner, and over 88 percent of the administrators surveyed felt the same way. **Exhibit 5-7** shows these results.

Exhibit 5-7
DSISD Survey Results Regarding Repairs
2001-02

Repairs are made in a timely manner	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers	14.7%	57.8%	3.9%	18.6%	3.9%
Administrators and Principals	33.3%	55.5%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Parents	15.8%	42.1%	21.1%	16.3%	3.7%

Source: TSPR Surveys, March 2002.

FINDING

The director of Plant Operations, who has a wide variety of responsibilities and duties, does not have the time or support needed to accomplish all assigned tasks. The district's rapid growth and recent challenges have added many tasks to the job description. Currently, the job description includes, but is not limited to:

- maintaining a program of preventive maintenance;
- compiling, maintaining, filing and presenting all physical and computerized reports, records and other documents;
- recommending disposal of obsolete equipment and machinery;
- recommending purchase of new equipment and machinery;
- implementing federal and state laws, regulations and policies and enforcement of safety issues;
- developing training options;
- recruiting, training and supervising all department personnel;
- preparing, reviewing and revising Plant Operation Department job descriptions;
- assisting in the development and monitoring of school construction bond material;
- overseeing overall building and facility construction projects, including repair issues;
- performing assigned disaster duties;
- coordinating maintenance and custodial needs for extracurricular activities;
- maintaining a clean and safe environment of all buildings and facilities;
- ensuring compliance with local laws and procedures for the storage and disposal of trash and/or hazardous waste;
- establishing procedures for locking, checking and safeguarding facilities;
- developing and maintaining an effective energy management program;
- ensuring quality control of all contractor work;
- initiating purchases and bids;
- maintaining good inventory control;
- compiling budget and bid cost estimates based on documented program needs;
- managing funds wisely;
- being familiar with and enforcing provisions of the district's facility use policy; and
- supervising secretary, custodial, maintenance and grounds staff.

The above list is the official job description assigned to the director of Plant Operations. While not contained in the official job description, the district also expects the director to:

- manage the work order system;
- supervise the district warehouse;
- prepare payroll time sheets;
- respond to night time alarms;
- supervise swing shift custodial crew;
- provide pest control for the district;
- serve as the district's asbestos management official; and
- provide locksmith services.

In discussions with the director of Plant Operations, it was obvious that safety and security issues came first, followed by the many daily challenges of assigning staff to respond to service requests. Maintenance employees report to work at 7:00 a.m. and need supervision and direction; the swing shift custodians work until 11:00 p.m. The extended hours of operation significantly increase the district efficiency and decrease their overall expenditures, but is challenging for the supervisor.

As a result of the numerous tasks assigned to the director of Plant Operations many important tasks such as managing the work order system, dealing with environmental issues, training, disaster duties, energy management and evening supervision are not handled efficiently. While each of these tasks is important, energy management tasks including energy conservation are of particular concern because a lack of attention in this area could be costing the district money. Although the responsibility for energy management falls under the director of Plant Operations, DSISD does not have a well-coordinated energy conservation program administered by an officially appointed energy manager. Instead the district has assigned these responsibilities to staff members, one HVAC repair technician and the Plant Operations secretary, who already have significant responsibilities associated with other areas.

As a result of the many duties already assigned to the individuals responsible for energy management have been unable to complete things like:

- checking and recording monthly utility meter readings;
- checking utility bills for accuracy and trending;
- working with the utility providers to ensure the best rates;
- working with the utility providers to use available conservation programs;
- promoting efficient energy usage;
- training of building users.

The director of Plant Operations had an administrative assistant until June 2001, when the person in that position left the district. The district did not replace the administrative assistant when the position was vacated. A

portion of the funds saved from not filling that vacancy allowed the district to hire a director of Transportation. This reorganization was intended to reduce some of the responsibilities of the director of Plant Operations. The district changed the title from director of Support Services to director of Plant Operations. No additional staff was assigned to help do these jobs. In fact, additional responsibilities were added to the job description of director of Plant Operations.

Burnet ISD, which is a peer district and approximately the same size as DSISD, has two directors for their support services department. Burnet has a director of Facilities and one for Maintenance and Operations. Wimberley ISD, a peer district, has both a director of Maintenance and a supervisor of Custodial Services. These compare to one position in DSISD.

Recommendation 23:

Hire one additional staff person in Plant Operations to ensure all assigned tasks are accomplished.

DSISD should develop a position whose primary responsibilities include energy management and safety and security. A comprehensive job description for the position should be developed which addresses both energy management and safety and security needs. With more resources, the district could reorganize the responsibilities of the director of Plant Operations and staff the department with additional resources to accomplish the various responsibilities. This position will help Plant Operations adequately cover all responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations completes a prioritized list of all assigned tasks and rates them on their current level of completion and forwards the list to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations consults with State Energy Conservation Office to identify essential energy management duties.	September 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations consults with district officials as well as the director of Plant Operations to identify essential safety and security duties.	September 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations develops a job description which adequately covers both energy management and safety and security needs and alleviates some	October 2002

	the responsibilities of the director of Plant Operations.	
5.	The superintendent shares the plan with the board for comment and approval.	November 2002
6.	Following board approval, the assistant superintendent for Business Operations fills the job.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact for an additional position in Plant Operations equals the sum of the salary and benefits for the position. At the mid-point of pay grade 6, the salary for a 240-day contract would be \$27,900 plus 16.5 percent benefits. The total would be \$32,503 for this position.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Hire one additional staff person in Plant Operations to ensure all assigned tasks are accomplished.	(\$32,504)	(\$32,504)	(\$32,504)	(\$32,504)	(\$32,504)

FINDING

DSISD does not have an adequate system in place to track the work of the maintenance requests. Plant Operations uses a manual work-order system. Principals, custodians, secretaries and the central office staff submit work-order requests on handwritten forms. The handwritten requests are faxed to the maintenance office or placed in the department mailbox at central administration. Work-orders sent in on e-mail are followed up with the required paper form. The director of Plant Operations reviews each work-order, gives it a priority and assigns the work-order to one of the department's employees.

When the work is completed, the employee who finished the work returns one copy of the signed work-order to the originator and sends the final copy to the director or the secretary. If the maintenance employee needs parts, the work-order goes back to the Plant Operations office so the part can be ordered. When the replacement parts come in, the work-order and the parts are reassigned to the maintenance employee for completion of the work.

The current system does not track the type of repair, the site, the cost or employee responsible for the repair. The completed work-orders go into a file and are not referenced again.

The district purchased a software program called the ACT 1000 about two years ago, capable of tracking the work and providing other record keeping for the maintenance department. However, the district does not use the program as it was intended nor to its full capacity. The personnel in the maintenance department said that with their current workload prevents them from having time to complete such record keeping.

There is not an automated system to help prioritize work. Only two categories appear on the maintenance work request: urgent and routine. The schools list most work as urgent.

The ACT 1000 Work-order System allows five designations to be used in handling work-order priorities:

- urgent - needs to be completed today;
- high - completed in one week;
- medium - completed in two to three weeks;
- low - completed in four weeks or more; and
- hold - put in a deferred file.

Representatives from ACT report that many school districts around the state use high school students to help input the daily records. The district currently uses high school students in several other administrative departments. Once the system is installed, tracking work-orders is a simple matter of daily input. The system is set up to provide different levels of security. The students would be limited to input only. Given the current situation, two hours a day seems sufficient time to input and track all work-orders into the system. The high school principal said in an interview that students could be scheduled to work two hours a day inputting work-orders into the ACT 1000 System in the Plant Operations office when adult supervision is available.

Recommendation 24:

Implement a work-order management system to track and prioritize the maintenance requests of the district.

The district needs to start tracking their work-orders. This can be a very time-consuming activity, but one that pays dividends in efficiency.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations contacts the suppliers of the ACT 1000 System and schedules proper installation and training.	September 2002
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2.	Trained student personnel load the necessary background and location information into the system.	October 2002
3.	The director of Plant Operations defines priority designations and time lines and communicates this information to the student assigned to input the work-orders.	October 2002 Ongoing
4.	The director distributes and provides necessary information to all principals, building secretaries, custodians and central office staff on the new work-order system.	November 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The planning and initial training can be implemented with existing resources. The day-to-day input of work-orders into the system and the tracking of time and material requires additional labor. The district pays \$5.25 per hour for student help, and it currently employs several students at the central administrative office. Based on a 2-students, a 5-hour work week each and 38-week work year, the cost of student labor for this position would be \$1,995 per year.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement a work-order management system to prioritize and track the maintenance requests of the district.	(\$1,995)	(\$1,995)	(\$1,995)	(\$1,995)	(\$1,995)

Chapter 5

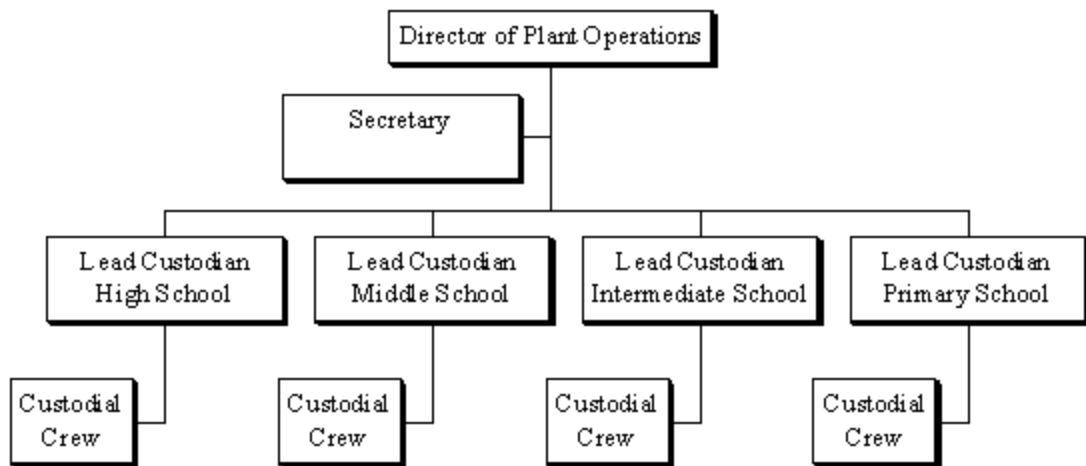
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

C. CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Custodial services are necessary to keep the district's schools clean, safe, healthy and well-maintained, while being responsive to the needs of the staff, students and the community.

Currently, custodial services are the sole responsibility of the director of Plant Operations. The director has the duties of hiring, training, supervising, scheduling and evaluating custodians as well as ordering supplies for the custodial staff. There are 31 school custodial positions in DSISD. Each school has a lead custodian, who works a day shift from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The rest of the custodial crew works from 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. One custodian is assigned exclusively to the central administration building. **Exhibit 5-8** shows this organization.

Exhibit 5-8
Organization of
Custodial Services
2001-02



Source: DSISD Plant Operations, 2002.

The district has four schools and two central administrative buildings. **Exhibit 5-9** shows the size of each facility with the assigned custodial staff.

Exhibit 5-9
School Custodial Staffing
2001-02

School	Size	Custodial Staff
Primary School	100,686 sq.ft.	6
Intermediate School	87,794 sq.ft.	4
Middle School	137,613 sq.ft.	7
High School	220,302 sq.ft.	13
Administration Center	26,716 sq.ft.	1
Plant Operations	21,000 sq.ft.	2 hr./day
Total	578,361 sq.ft.	31

Source: Plant Operations Department, 2002.

While the district has more square feet in its inventory, **Exhibit 5-9** lists the space that is cleaned on a regular basis. The Plant Operations building is cleaned two hours per day and is calculated in the exhibit at 25 percent, or 5,250 square feet.

The district has a difficult time filling custodial positions. The employees perceive that the rate of pay is low by comparison to other districts. A comparison with Austin, Hays, Eanes and Wimberley shows that only Eanes has a higher rate of pay for custodial help. **Exhibit 5-10** shows the rates of pay for custodial positions in DSISD and other districts.

Exhibit 5-10
Custodial Hourly Pay Rates
for DSISD, Peer Districts and Region
2002-03

	Austin	DSISD	Eanes	Hayes	Wimberley	Region
Custodian	\$8.00-8.78	\$8.00-9.76	\$9.10-11.19	\$8.03-9.92	\$6.75-8.55	\$8.16
Lead Custodian	\$9.56-12.60	\$9.20-11.22	\$10.66-11.50	\$9.00-10.48	N/A	\$10.14

Source: DSISD Human Resources Office, 2002.

Other factors that account for the lack of qualified applicants could be that the cost of housing in the district is extremely high. Currently, most custodians live outside the district. If the custodians are commuting from other local areas the cost and time to commute may help explain the lack of custodial applicants. Existing staff do the work of absent custodians,

and the department moves personnel to cover the workload on an as-needed basis.

FINDING

DSISD's facilities are cleaned and maintained efficiently. The department schedules the custodians so the majority of the cleaning occurs when students are not present. This arrangement works well, since custodians can perform their tasks more easily, effectively and safely when students are not in school. Regularly performed tasks include:

- unlocking doors, turning on lights and opening windows;
- cleaning classrooms, hallways, offices and general areas of the building;
- cleaning student and teacher restrooms, with a focus on health and safety concerns and ensuring that all dispensers are full and working properly;
- monitoring and regulating heating and air conditioning equipment;
- setting up rooms for special events;
- moving furniture;
- performing special requests;
- locking up and securing the buildings;
- washing and waxing floors and vacuuming carpeted areas;
- washing windows and cleaning blinds;
- cleaning chalk trays and dusting; and
- disposing of trash and picking up litter.

Those attending the review team's public forum made positive comments about the cleanliness of the schools. During interviews, principals expressed appreciation for the hard work of their building custodians. An inspection team visited all buildings in the district; all facilities, including classrooms, were found to be clean and orderly. There was no litter in the hallways, and the tile floors were clean and buffed. Restrooms in use were clean and sanitary, with dispensers filled and working. Grounds were free from litter and the landscaping maintained in a professional manner. **Exhibit 5-11** shows principals, teachers and parents opinions on the cleanliness of DSISD schools.

Exhibit 5-11

Survey Results Regarding the Cleanliness of DSISD Schools

2001-02

Schools are clean	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Teachers	44.1%	51.9%	0.0%	2.9%	0.9%
Administrators and Principals	33.0%	56.0%	11.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Parents	32.6%	61.1%	2.6%	1.6%	1.0%

Source: TSPR Surveys, March 2002.

Out of 101 teachers who responded, 96 percent either strongly agreed or agreed that the schools were clean. Only 2.9 percent disagreed.

The district cleans 573,111 square feet of school building space on a regular basis. In addition, 26,716 square feet in the administration complex were normally cleaned on a regular basis before the mold problem. The Plant Operations building has been adjusted because it only gets two hours per day of cleaning or 25 percent of a custodian's time. The 31 full-time custodians clean a total of 578,361 square feet on a regular basis, which means that each employee cleans an average of 18,656 square feet. This ratio falls within the best-practice levels found in several previous TSPR reviews, which estimates a workload of one custodian per 18,000 to 20,000 square feet of space.

COMMENDATION

DSISD's custodial allocation formula meets industry standards.

FINDING

DSISD does not have a formal training program for custodians and maintenance employees. Training new custodians is limited to shadowing lead custodians for a few days. New maintenance employees are assigned to work with experienced maintenance workers. The district does not have a manual for custodians or maintenance workers, and does not provide formal training to newly hired custodial or maintenance staff during the school year. The district puts new hires in service immediately because the need for additional help is so great. The district sponsors a one-day training session during the summer months for all maintenance and custodial employees. This training, presented by the director of Plant Operations, fulfills state and federal training obligations. The one-day training topics include:

- rules and regulations for pest control;
- procedures for bloodborne pathogens;
- handling hazardous chemicals;
- procedures for handling asbestos; and
- safety in the work place.

New maintenance employees come to DSISD with a variety of skills. Some may be very experienced while others may need a great deal of training. The one-day summer program uses training films and lectures but does not include any follow-up or testing to ensure content comprehension or mastery. The training does not hold custodial and maintenance employees accountable for specific skill sets.

Spring ISD (SISD) provides a comprehensive training program to custodial staff. A 30-hour training program for new staff includes asbestos and chemical training, equipment care and basic and advanced cleaning techniques. SISD evaluates employees during this classroom instruction, ensuring that the district's custodial staff is well trained; this in turn improves services to students and staff. SISD custodial training subjects include:

- medical emergencies;
- cleaning methods;
- asbestos training;
- hazardous chemical handling;
- cleaning chemicals;
- floor care products;
- district policy review;
- safety procedures;
- lifting procedures;
- pest control;
- bloodborne pathogens;
- communication technique;
- sexual harassment training;
- kitchen cleaning methods;
- restroom cleaning methods;
- paper work requirements;
- energy conservation;
- team work and team cleaning techniques;
- human relations;
- performance and good work habits; and
- time management.

Recommendation 25:

Develop a comprehensive training program for all custodians and maintenance employees.

The director of Plant Operations should develop an appropriate custodial training class of two to three training days per year. The director can be responsible for the instruction and these sessions can be scheduled during non school days or in the summer as has been done in the past. Training

cannot be scheduled during the school day, because the district employs no substitute custodians or maintenance employees. Often custodial product suppliers are willing to sponsor free training sessions that deal with cleaning techniques or the appropriate use of their products. Training films are available from a variety of sources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations develops an appropriate training program for custodians and maintenance employees complete with a course curriculum.	September 2002
2.	The board reviews and approves the training program.	November 2002
3.	The director schedules and institutes the program.	December 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

DSISD does not have a custodial manual as part of their established procedures. When issues arise, there is no place for custodians to turn for answers. This can be a serious problem in the case of an emergency, especially when the district could be liable for an injury. New custodians need a policy and procedural manual to serve as a reference guide to help direct their responses to both ordinary and emergency situations.

Northshore School District (NSD) in Washington State provides a comprehensive manual to all its custodians. It contains material that is vital to the success of their jobs. It is a quick reference for both everyday cleaning duties and emergencies. Sections from NSD's manual for custodians include:

- emergency information and procedures;
- fire alarm information;
- utility shut off information;
- emergency contact phone numbers;
- school district contact telephone numbers;
- inventory lists;
- inspection reports;
- job descriptions
- cleaning procedures and standards; and
- cleaning schedule and assignments.

Recommendation 26:

Develop a custodial manual for use at each site.

The district should develop a custodial manual for its employees to provide guidance and direction when needed. It should contain general information concerning both districtwide and site-specific custodial duties.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations works with the lead custodians to develop the topics and format for this manual.	November 2002
2.	The director of Plant Operations buys appropriate notebooks and tabs and assembles the material for the custodial manual.	December 2002
3.	The manual is assembled by the director of Plant Operations or his secretary and delivered to the custodial staff.	January 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

D. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Good energy management results in the efficient and effective use of all types of energy and utility dollars. In the article entitled *Energy Efficient Education*, the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) suggests districts follow 10 easy strategies to conserve energy and save money (**Exhibit 5-12**).

Exhibit 5-12
State Energy Conservation Office
Ten Ways to Cut Energy Costs

1. Establish energy policy and energy conservation plans for the district and individual campuses.
2. Turn it off or turn it down when not in use.
3. Use energy managers, management firms and committees.
4. Conduct energy audits of your buildings.
5. Purchase energy-efficient lighting, appliances and equipment.
6. Use performance contracts and other financing options.
7. Get everyone into the act.
8. Use renewable energy sources when cost effective.
9. Build with energy conservation in mind.
10. Identify discounts.

Source: State Energy Conservation Office, September 2001.

A successful energy management program starts at the top, necessitating both knowledge and a commitment from the board, superintendent and district administrators to reduce energy and utility costs. When districts spend money to build and remodel schools, they must understand the importance of installing equipment that will conserve resources. The installation of energy efficient lighting fixtures and high efficiency air conditioning units, along with vigilant monitoring of their operations, can eventually result in energy savings.

Energy rates have become an important factor to school districts since deregulation. The establishment of policies that govern hours of usage and thermostat settings will become more important as districts negotiate new utility rates. Effective communication with power officials will be an essential component of the job of the new breed of energy managers. Determining hours of school use, building functions and knowledge of heating and ventilating (HVAC) equipment will also be important.

Energy costs for DSISD have nearly doubled over the past five years. In part, this increase can be explained by the addition of new school buildings, the increase in student population and the rising costs of energy. The big jump in 1999, in particular, resulted from the opening of the new intermediate school. **Exhibit 5-13** shows this steady increase.

Exhibit 5-13
DSISD Actual and Budgeted Utility Costs
1997-98 through 2001-02

Year	1997-98 Actual	1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Budgeted
Total Costs	\$443,191	\$560,532	\$720,944	\$840,813	\$817,275

Source: DSISD Business Operations Department.

FINDING

DSISD does not have an energy policy in place. When the issues surrounding the mold problem challenged the board, energy policy efforts were put on hold until the mold problem was resolved. To date, the board has neither approved nor adopted a written statement regarding energy use. The board formed a Facilities Committee in August 2001 to work on energy conservation. The committee has studied PEC reports, looked at the Loan Star Program and heard from Energy Education Inc. Discussions have been held to determine an appropriate role and training for an energy manager however energy savings start with good energy management policies. Without a formal set of energy policies in place, the district lacks the focus and commitment needed to save energy dollars. In addition, the person responsible for the district's energy usage, conservation efforts and any savings associated with those efforts has no set energy policy to guide him.

Without an ongoing energy conservation program, DSISD cannot accurately monitor its energy use, making the district vulnerable to excessive costs and premature equipment maintenance or replacement.

The district can save in energy costs by disconnecting the lights for the vending machines. The average soft drink machine uses two fluorescent bulbs, which total 80 watts. Add to this the energy required to operate the ballast, a component required to alter the electricity when using fluorescent bulbs. Using a very conservative estimate of only 2 kWh per day usage, a soda machine uses an annual 730 kWh just for lights. At an average rate of \$0.10 per kWh, this amounts to \$73 per year for just one machine. DSISD has 25 vending machines operating districtwide.

According to the district the lights in the vending machines have been left on for safety reasons. Many of the vending machines are located in areas that have poor or little lighting and the lighting from the vending machines is being used to supplement the existing lighting.

Comal ISD has a good energy program, which has decreased the district's energy usage rate to \$0.54 cents per square foot. In Killeen ISD, a formal energy conservation program has helped keep their costs within industry guidelines, and in Spring ISD a rebate program offered to the schools has helped save the district 7 to 14 percent in energy costs per year. By having formal energy management policies, these districts have focused their efforts and resources on energy issues important to these districts. Residents in these districts see that their school boards and superintendents are committed to a sound energy management policy.

Recommendation 27:

Complete and implement a sound energy management program.

Even by establishing a basic conservation program, DSISD can save thousands of dollars a year. With the current electricity costs of \$.08 per kilowatt-hour, raising building temperatures by two degrees and shutting off lights when possible, will quickly translate into utilities savings. Additional annual savings will depend upon the conservation measures established in the program and how well the district participates in the program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations consults with the State Energy Conservation Office and Texas Education Agency to develop an energy policy.	September 2002
2.	The director of Plant Operations presents the policy to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations.	September 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations presents the policy to the board for approval.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

DSISD should develop a sound energy management policy for approval by the board as a starting point to realize significant energy savings. Energy savings from districtwide conservation measures could result in significant savings to the district, but are conservatively limited here to the savings that could be achieved through disconnecting vending machines

shown above. By disconnecting the lights in vending machines alone, the district could save an estimated \$1,815 (25 x \$73.00) annually.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Complete and implement a sound energy management program.	\$1,815	\$1,815	\$1,815	\$1,815	\$1,815

FINDING

DSISD does not have an energy savings strategy. In July 1999, Ventura Energy Services, Inc. conducted a study under the Local Government Energy Management Program as administered by the SECO. The study was conducted to identify energy-saving retrofit projects, suggest low or no cost energy saving measures and provide financing and follow-ups. In their report, Ventura conducted an analysis of the Energy Cost Index for the district. The Energy Cost Index is calculated by taking the annual gas and electricity costs of a facility and dividing by the area (square feet) of the facility. The results ranged from a high at the high school of \$1.03 per square foot to a low of \$0.69 per square foot at the middle school. The average energy costs in surrounding districts range from \$0.70 to \$0.85 per square foot.

The district installed new energy-saving equipment during construction of new facilities. However, the district has not been consistent in their maintenance and operation methods. According to the Ventura report, thermostat settings were not uniform. The Ventura Report recommended that summer thermostat settings range from 70 to 74 degrees; the report noted that in July, observed thermostats were set as low as 62 degrees. In addition, Ventura recommended turning off lights when facilities are not in use, changing air filters on a regular basis, keeping thermostat covers secure and in place, replacing of an old cooling tower and turning off equipment when not in use.

The district's energy supplier, Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC), visited the high school campus in June 2001 to review energy use and recommend improvements. Its report made several suggestions about the use, control and maintenance function of heating and lighting equipment at the school. PEC also tabulated the districts utility bills from 1996 through 2001 to give the district a historical perspective of their energy usage. None of the district efforts to date has provided a comprehensive audit of energy consumption and concrete steps to reduce consumption and save money.

SECO offers a comprehensive energy audit that has helped over 400 Texas school districts identify \$11 million in potential savings through participation in the Comptroller of Public Account's Energy Efficient Partnership Program. Annual savings range from \$325,000 for a large west Texas district to \$900 for a small east Texas district with less than 300 students. SECO suggests that these savings can result from installing:

- energy efficient lamps and ballasts;
- high efficiency air conditioners;
- computerized energy management systems;
- energy efficient equipment; and
- efficient maintenance and operation methods.

SECO estimates that school districts can save between 5 and 10 percent of the money they are spending on energy by implementing a comprehensive energy management program.

Recommendation 28:

Have the State Energy Conservation Office conduct a complete energy audit of all DSISD facilities.

The DSISD should complete an up to date energy audit on all of its facilities and implement the findings of the audit. School districts across the state have saved significant dollars with this process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Plant Operations contacts the State Energy Conservation Office to schedule an audit.	September 2002
2.	The director of Plant Operations discusses with the assistant superintendent for Business Services the results of the audit. Implementation strategies and guidelines are written.	October 2002
3.	The director of Plant Operations discusses the guidelines with the superintendent and shares them with the administrative team and principals for implementation at each site.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The district can save 5 percent of its energy costs per year. In 2002, the district budgeted \$817,275 for all utilities. A five percent saving would save \$40,864 annually.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
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Have the State Energy Conservation Office conduct a complete energy audit of all DSISD facilities.	\$40,864	\$40,864	\$40,864	\$40,864	\$40,864
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Chapter 6

Asset and Risk Management

This chapter reviews the asset and risk management functions of Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) in four sections:

- A. Cash Management
- B. Risk Management
- C. Fixed Asset Management
- D. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness

An effective asset and risk management program provides the district with investments that earn the maximum interest rate available while safeguarding funds and ensuring liquidity to meet the district's fluctuating cash flow needs. Asset and risk management also controls costs by ensuring that the district protects itself against significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums while providing sound and cost-effective health insurance for district employees. Fixed asset management accounts for district property accurately and safeguards it against theft and obsolescence. Effective bond management ensures the district complies with bond covenants and that outstanding bonds pay the lowest interest rate possible.

Chapter 6

Asset and Risk Management

A. CASH MANAGEMENT

Effective cash management ensures collection of district funds in a timely manner and investment of those funds in instruments with maximum earning potential. By holding cash in accounts guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and for amounts more than FDIC coverage, the district safeguards cash and investments against the risk of loss. The investment institution should provide a depository bond or pledge securities to the district in an amount equal to or greater than the amount of FDIC coverage. The district should hold the underlying securities for funds not invested in the depository bank, or in safekeeping for the district, by a third party. The maturity of the investments should match the fluctuating cash flow demands of the district. Effective cash management provides the district with additional revenue to fund essential programs and operations by providing market rates of return on cash not needed to fund immediate needs.

Texas school districts must comply with Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 45, Subchapter G in the selection of the district's depository bank. This subchapter defines the type of institution that can serve as a depository bank; the process a district must use to select a depository bank and the term of the contract with the bank. A district may extend a contract for one two-year period.

DSISD extended its 1999-2001 depository contract for the 2001-03 biennium with Wells Fargo Bank Texas, N.A. The district bid the contract in 1999, but did not bid the depository contract for this biennium. The depository bank provided a depository bond in the amount of \$3 million to secure balances greater than the FDIC coverage. The highest balance in the depository bank was \$2,994,874 during 2000-01 and on March 31, 2002, the balance was \$647,994. DSISD maintains five bank accounts for the district's daily operations based on separate accounting functions and funds. **Exhibit 6-1** describes these accounts and their balances as of March 31, 2002.

Exhibit 6-1
DSISD Bank Accounts and Related Balance
March 31, 2002

Account Description	Interest Bearing?	Account Balance
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Accounts Payable Account	Yes	\$136,640
Cafeteria Account	Yes	\$216,642
Interest and Sinking Account	Yes	\$2,116
Maintenance and Operations Account	Yes	\$129,244
Payroll Account	Yes	\$163,351

Source: DSISD Business Office, April 2002.

In addition, DSISD maintains an activity fund account for each of the four schools in the district at the depository bank. Each school maintains an account for the student activity funds generated by the students at each of the campuses. The student activity funds are used solely for the benefit of the students. The campus activity fund accounts include campus staff funds, such as a flower fund derived from staff donations and used for the benefit of other staff members, and funds generated for the purpose of benefiting the entire school. For these accounts, the individual school deposits funds into the maintenance and operations account and provides the deposit slips to the Business Office for record-keeping purposes. The school obtains purchase orders for purchases made from the campus activity fund, and the Business Office writes all checks for the campus activity funds. The district centralized the accounting for the campus activity funds in September 2001. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations said that individual schools do not maintain a petty cash fund; they deposit funds daily into the maintenance and operations account bank account. As of March 31, 2002, the balance in the district's campus activity funds was \$45,816.

FINDING

DSISD does not maintain adequate balances in its checking accounts to avoid service charges. Before July 1, 2001, the depository bank waived the service charges allowed by the depository agreement regardless of the account balances. The depository agreement with Wells Fargo Bank provides that if the district maintains adequate balances in its checking accounts, the district will incur no service charges. All accounts are part of a compensating balance agreement. This agreement provides an earnings credit on the balance in the accounts. This credit is calculated using an earnings credit rate or the percentage at which the bank pays the district to maintain funds in its accounts to offset any bank fees. If the balance in the accounts is sufficient to generate enough credit, the district does not pay the bank charges for maintaining the accounts described in the depository agreement. If the credit generated from the balances is greater than the bank charges, the district does not receive the excess.

The district earns interest on all the balances in the checking accounts. The account balances necessary to generate enough credit to cover the bank charges are considered compensating balances. **Exhibit 6-2** presents the average collected balances in the checking accounts and the necessary compensating balance to avoid bank fees.

Exhibit 6-2
DSISD Bank Balances and Compensating Balances
September 30, 2001 through February 28, 2002

Month	Checking Balances	Compensating Balance	Difference	Earnings Credit Rate	Bank Fee
September 2001	\$581,934	\$1,459,522	\$877,588	2.9%	\$1,870
October 2001	684,469	2,233,683	1,549,214	2.2%	2,592
November 2001	690,361	2,523,363	1,833,002	1.9%	2,583
December 2001	865,739	3,192,679	2,326,940	1.7%	3,047
January 2002	758,647	3,078,610	2,319,963	1.6%	2,911
February 2002	937,030	3,620,556	2,683,526	1.7%	3,207
Six Month Average	\$753,030	\$2,684,736	\$1,931,706	2.0%	\$2,702

Source: DSISD Business Office, Wells Fargo Client Analysis Statements, September 2001 through February 2002.

The compensating balance agreement reduces the average collected balances by 10 percent before applying the earnings credit rate. The bank does pay interest on all the deposits in the accounts. Based on the bank account statements, the average interest rate paid by the bank on all balances for this six-month period was 4.8 percent. By comparison, DSISD earned an average interest rate of 2.5 percent for the district's investments in TexPool, a public funds investment pool, during the same period.

The assistant superintendent for Business Operations has discussed the bank charges, compensating balances and interest rates on account balances with the depository bank to ensure these reflected the terms of the depository agreement. The bank changed the service charges and interest rate to agree to the depository contract. Effective June 14, 2002, the district will no longer receive the 4.8 percent interest rate on account

balances. Based on the depository contract, the district will now receive interest on the accounts at the 90-Day T-Bill rate less 2 percent or 200 basis points. As of August 7, 2002, this equates to zero percent interest on the bank accounts, as the 91-Day T-Bill rate is 1.6 percent.

Many districts with compensating balance agreements monitor their daily balances to ensure sufficient funds are kept in those accounts to meet any compensating balance requirements, eliminating any bank charges for those district accounts. These districts also monitor the interest rates available from investments. When the earnings credit rate and interest earned on accounts at the depository bank is below the interest rate earned in other investments, these districts invest all excess funds in the investment instrument with the highest rate of return.

San Angelo ISD (SAISD) has developed a process to ensure that excess funds are deposited in interest bearing accounts. Each morning, the Cash and Investment manager in SAISD reviews the district bank balances online and the checks that are scheduled to transact that banking day. If there are insufficient funds to meet the anticipated obligations, money can be transferred to cover needs while online. By ensuring that all idle cash is invested daily, this district maximizes its interest income.

Recommendation 29:

Maintain adequate compensating balances to avoid bank charges or invest all excess funds in TexPool to maximize interest earnings.

Implementing this recommendation will provide savings to the district by eliminating the bank fees DSISD is paying or increasing the investment earnings by investing all excess funds in TexPool.

The district should monitor the earnings credit rate and interest rate paid by the bank on the checking accounts, as changes in interest rates occur frequently. When the 90-Day T-Bill rate increases above 2 percent, the combined earnings credit rate and interest on the accounts may exceed the interest rate paid by TexPool, and the district should leave sufficient funds to cover the compensating balance in the checking accounts. When the earnings credit rate and the interest rate do not exceed the TexPool interest rate, the district should maximize the amount of funds in TexPool by leaving only funds necessary to cover outstanding checks in the bank accounts. The district will continue to pay bank charges, but the net effect will be an increase in earnings for the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations	September
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	monitors the earnings credit rate and interest rate paid by the depository bank.	2002 and Daily
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations monitors the interest rate for investments in TexPool.	September 2002 and Daily
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations compares the rates and moves funds to the account that has the greatest total return for the district.	October 2002 and Daily

FISCAL IMPACT

This fiscal impact conservatively assumes that the district will realize \$32,424 annual savings on the monthly bank fees (12 months x \$2,702 average monthly fee = \$32,424). The first year's savings are prorated for ten months (10 months x \$2,702 = \$27,020).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Maintain adequate compensating balances to avoid bank charges or invest all excess funds in TexPool to maximize interest earnings.	\$27,020	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$32,424	\$32,424

FINDING

DSISD does not comply with all provisions of the Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA). The PFIA, Chapter 2256 of the Texas Government Code (TGC), governs the investment of governmental funds. Although DSISD investment policies mirror the PFIA, the district does not obtain a written confirmation from each investment company stating that the company has received and reviewed the district's investment policy and that the investment company has instituted controls to preclude unauthorized transactions.

DSISD presents monthly investment reports to the board, designates investment officers, provides training to investment officers, reviews the investment policy and related investment strategies annually and has investment activities and compliance audits as part of the annual external audit.

DSISD has tax collections deposited directly into its investment accounts. DSISD receives 72 percent of its revenue from tax collections and deposits these revenues directly into its investment accounts upon receipt of the funds from the tax assessor-collector, eliminating time delays. The

district is in the process of determining if state revenues could also be deposited directly into the investment accounts. Direct deposit reduces the amount of effort required to ensure the district's balance in the depository bank does not exceed the FDIC and depository bond coverage.

DSISD investment policies allow district funds to be invested in the following:

- obligations of, or guaranteed by, governmental entities, as permitted TGC 2256.009;
- certificates of deposit and share certificates, as permitted by TGC 2256.010;
- fully collateralized repurchase agreements, as permitted by TGC 2256.011;
- banker's acceptances, as permitted by TGC 2256.012;
- commercial paper, as permitted by TGC 2256.013;
- money market mutual funds and no-load mutual funds, as permitted by TGC 2256.014;
- guaranteed investment contract for bond proceeds, as permitted by TGC 2256.015; and
- public funds investment pools, as permitted by TGC 2256.016.

DSISD invests all excess funds with TexPool, a public funds investment pool. **Exhibit 6-3** presents the investment accounts maintained at TexPool.

Exhibit 6-3
DSISD Investment Accounts and Related Balances
March 31, 2002

Account Description	Account Balance
Interest and Sinking	\$3,029,107
Maintenance and Operations	\$8,998,445

Source: DSISD Business Office, April 2002.

In addition to these investment accounts, DSISD maintains an account with TexPool for the superintendent's annuity account, which is used to maintain the funds deposited for the benefit of the superintendent in accordance with the contractual compensation agreement. These funds become the property of the superintendent and are held in trust by the district. The district is a member of the Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) LoneStar fund, but does not use this investment pool. DSISD does not use any other investment instruments.

Most districts view compliance with all requirements of the PFIA as an added measure to ensure that their investments meet stated goals for investments. Districts that comply with the PFIA receive and retain written documents from each of their investment companies to ensure internal and external reviews of all transactions are complete.

Recommendation 30:

Ensure full compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations sends the PFIA investment policy to all investment companies for their review.	September 2002 and Annually
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations requests written documentation from the investment companies confirming that they have received and reviewed the PFIA investment policy and have instituted controls to ensure unauthorized transactions do not occur.	September 2002 and Annually
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations receives the written confirmation statement from the investment company and maintains a copy in the investment company's file.	October 2002 and Annually
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations provides documentation to the superintendent that the district is complying with the PFIA.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

Asset and Risk Management

B. RISK MANAGEMENT

An effective risk management program controls costs by ensuring that the district is adequately protected against significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums and provides sound and cost effective health insurance for district employees. In order to ensure the district is protected against significant losses, the district, through annual appraisals of property values and inventories of fixed assets, must have accurate insurable values for district property and be able to document all property owned by the district. Districts also assess hazards and implement programs to reduce those hazards in order to minimize claims and reduce premiums for Workers' Compensation.

DSISD insures itself against loss for real and personal property, liability, school professional legal liability, vehicle loss or damage and crime through TASB. **Exhibit 6-4** presents a summary of these coverages.

Exhibit 6-4
Insurance Coverages - Effective September 1, 2001 through August 31, 2002

Coverage Type	Coverage Limit	Deductible	Cost
Property - Blanket Replacement Cost	\$52,802,845	\$1,000	\$62,941
Property - Wind, Hurricane and Hail	\$52,802,845	\$50,000	Included Above
Equipment Breakdown	\$52,802,845	\$1,000	\$3,063
EDP Equipment	\$1,500,000	\$250	\$3,750
Musical Instruments	\$200,000	\$250	\$440
Liability	\$1,000,000	\$1,000	\$2,323
School Professional Legal Liability	\$2,000,000	\$5,000	\$8,604
Vehicle Coverage - Fleet Liability - Per Person/Per Occurrence/Bodily Injury	\$100,000/ \$300,000/ \$100,000	\$500	\$15,260
Fleet Physical Damage	Actual Cash Value	\$500	\$3,561

Crime	\$25,000	\$1,000	\$258
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Source: TASB Contribution and Coverage Summary, September 2002.

TASB provides an annual appraisal of the replacement cost of the buildings and equipment as part of its service to the district. The district also insures itself against loss for Workers' Compensation claims with TASB at a cost of \$165,320 and unemployment claims at a cost of \$4,015. The district makes accident insurance available to all students, but does not contribute to the cost for any student.

The district is in the process of enrolling employees in the new state health insurance plan effective September 1, 2002. The Human Resources Office has provided information sessions to all employees about the plan. The insurance carrier provided information booklets to the district containing the choices available under the plan to all employees. The insurance carrier also maintains a Web site to further assist employees in this decision-making process. During the information meetings, the district urged employees to sign up for the new plan by May 17, 2002. Those who signed up by this date were guaranteed to receive their insurance cards by September 1, 2002, the beginning date of the plan. The district has separated its health insurance enrollment from the rest of its benefit plan enrollments, which has an October 1, 2002 starting date, to avoid confusion.

DSISD makes available to its employees the additional insurances and benefits presented in

Exhibit 6-5.

**Exhibit 6-5
DSISD Employee Benefits**

Plan Type	District Contribution for Employee Only	Employee Contribution	Additional Coverage for Dependents
Core Plan	\$79.76	\$0	Available
Dental Plan	\$0	\$24.76	Available
HMO Plan	\$150	\$132.01	Available
PPO Plan	\$150	\$103.14	Available
Cancer	\$0	Varies	Available
Disability	\$0	Varies	Available

Accidental Death	\$0	Varies	Available
Life Insurance	\$0	Varies	Available

Source: DSISD, Human Resources Office, March 2002.

The core plan is a basic health plan with set benefits for hospitalization, doctor visits, lab/x-ray visits and emergency room visits. The core plan also includes \$10,000 life insurance per employee and \$10,000 accidental death and dismemberment insurance per employee. The employee may add one dependent for \$44 and two or more dependents for \$113. The dental insurance plan provides for dental insurance for preventive care at 100 percent, basic care at 100 percent and major care at 50 percent. Employees' total contribution for employee/spouse is \$56.11, employee/children is \$52.11 and employee/family is \$81.55.

The employee can buy coverage for dependents on the HMO plan for employee/spouse for a total contribution of \$370.26, employee/children for a total contribution of \$328.55 and for employee/family for a total contribution of \$565.37. The employee can buy coverage for dependents on the PPO plan for employee/spouse for a total contribution of \$326.84, employee/children for a total contribution of \$288.63 and for employee/family for a total contribution of \$505.67. DSISD provides summaries of all coverages and benefits available to employees on its Web site (www.dripping-springs.k12.tx.us/HR/healthcare.html).

FINDING

DSISD received a \$2,000 loss prevention grant from TASB in 2000-01. The director of Human Resources prepared the grant and the assistant superintendent for Business Operations submitted it to TASB with the superintendent's approval.

The grant application specified DSISD's safety concerns related to its Workers' Compensation claims and the items the district would purchase with the grant funds to reduce those claims. The grant application also addressed concerns related to unemployment claims and detailed how the district would spend grant funds to reduce those claims.

The TASB letter notifying DSISD of the grant award commended the district for its "efforts toward saving valuable resources through a dedicated loss prevention process." The letter also stated, "We are extremely proud of your loss prevention efforts and look forward to working together to reduce losses in your district."

To reduce the risk of injuries in the food service and maintenance departments, the district purchased back supports and dollies with part of the grant funds. To reduce claims for unemployment, the district also used grant funds to produce a new employee handbook. The grant funds had to be expended by September 14, 2001 in order to benefit the district in the 2001-02 year. The district plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant by reviewing Workers' Compensation and unemployment claims incurred in 2001-02. The district is in the process of applying for a 2002-03 grant.

COMMENDATION

DSISD actively seeks and obtains grants and reviews funded programs to improve worker safety in the district.

FINDING

DSISD holds all campuses accountable for the district's safety training program in an effort to reduce Workers' Compensation claims. In 1997-98, the district had 62 Workers' Compensation claims. During the last four years, the district reduced the number of claims by two-thirds to only 21 in 2000-01. **Exhibit 6-6** shows the Workers' Compensation claims for the district from 1997-98 through 2000-01 as well as the percentage of claims by each worker classification.

**Exhibit 6-6
DSISD Workers' Compensation Claims
1997-98 through 2000-01**

Description	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Number of Claims	62	41	31	21
Reduction in Claims as an Annual Percent change	N/A	34%	24%	32%
Bus Driver Percent of Claims	1.6%	7.3%	9.7%	0%
Professional/Administration Percent of Claims	41.9%	26.8%	25.8%	66.7%
All Others Percent of Claims	56.5%	65.9%	64.5%	33.3%
Premium Amount Paid By District	\$51,434	\$87,813	\$9,655	\$3,814
Actual Expenses Incurred By District	\$51,434	\$105,918	\$9,655	\$16,402

Source: TASB, Risk Management Fund Accident Analysis, January 2002.

As a member of the TASB risk management fund, DSISD receives a loss control manual, safety training videos and workplace safety materials to assist the district in controlling Workers' Compensation costs. The district provides the safety training videos and safety materials to individual schools, and the schools determine which materials to use for employee training. The individual schools conduct the employee training sessions and maintain their own employee training records. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations said that the district coordinates safety training for employees on the handling of body fluids and hazardous materials on a districtwide level.

The Texas Workers' Compensation Commission (TWCC) develops plans for entities to reduce their Workers' Compensation claims and to keep claims at reasonable levels. Two major components of the TWCC plans are management support and coordinated efforts for employee training. Management support is demonstrated by involvement in employee safety programs, a commitment to employee safety and the designation of a management employee to be responsible for employee safety. TWCC suggests this employee coordinate safety training, ensure employee training on appropriate topics and maintain employee safety training records. These two components help to ensure that Workers' Compensation claims remain at reasonable levels.

DSISD furthers these recommendations by ensuring the accountability for the district's safety training program reaches the campus level.

COMMENDATION:

DSISD assigns campus accountability for safety training and records retention to reduce and prevent Workers' Compensation claims.

Chapter 6

Asset and Risk Management

C. FIXED ASSET MANAGEMENT

An effective fixed asset management system accounts for district property accurately and safeguards it against theft and obsolescence. Fixed assets are equipment with a unit cost of greater than \$5,000 and a useful life of more than one year. Planning and control of fixed asset transactions is crucial to the long-range financial plan of the district. The implementation of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 34 requires districts to account for their fixed assets like a business.

Replacement schedules for fixed assets based on their estimated useful lives provides the district with information necessary to budget for fixed asset replacement avoiding obsolescence. This planning avoids sudden spikes in the budget related to the emergency replacement of fixed assets. Fixed asset management also includes safeguards that protect the district from theft of its assets.

DSISD has a comprehensive fixed asset listing of its property based on a physical inventory of all district assets in 1999. The district uses the \$5,000 capitalization limit when determining which fixed assets to add to the general fixed assets account group in financial statements. Assets with a value less than \$5,000 in the fixed asset account group were removed from this account group last year in preparation for the implementation of GASB 34. Disposed assets are removed from the general fixed asset account group at either their historical cost or the recorded value. **Exhibit 6-7** presents the activity in the fixed assets account group for the year ending August 31, 2001.

Exhibit 6-7
DSISD General Fixed Assets Account Group
August 31, 2001

Asset Type	Balance September 1, 2000	Additions	Deletions	Balance August 31, 2001
Land	\$1,018,946	\$6,581	\$0	\$1,025,527
Buildings	\$24,021,284	\$25,274,978	\$0	\$49,296,262
Construction in Progress	\$24,336,239	\$0	\$24,336,239	\$0
Furniture and	\$9,971,607	\$151,349	\$5,971,608	\$4,151,348

Equipment				
Total	\$59,348,076	\$25,432,908	\$30,307,847	\$54,473,137

Source: DSISD External Audit, August 2001.

The assets recorded in the general fixed asset account group consist mainly of buildings, vehicles and large equipment such as copiers. The nature and size of this type of asset generally prevents it from misappropriation or theft. The district maintains an inventory of valuable property that is susceptible to misappropriation or theft.

FINDING

DSISD has not updated its physical inventory of assets since Record Consultants Incorporated (RCI) inventoried them in 1999. The RCI inventory included not only fixed assets but also assets subject to misappropriation or theft such as computers, printers, audio-visual equipment, furniture and fixtures. RCI tagged all inventory assets with bar codes to provide identification and to reduce the time necessary to complete the inventory.

The district said it planned to have RCI inventory assets with a value of \$5,000 or more during the summer before the students returned in August 2002 and the remainder of the assets during the fall of 2002. This will give the district time to relocate assets to the primary school from current locations where they are housed since students were moved due to the mold infestation. The asset inventory will cost approximately \$10,000 and has been included in the budget for the 2002-03 school year.

Many districts maintain and update a detailed inventory of assets themselves to use for filing insurance claims in case of a natural disaster or fire. They frequently include items not considered fixed assets in an effort to provide a control over these items and discourage theft or misappropriation. Many of these districts also conduct annual physical inventories of assets to determine if potential problem areas exist and determine if additional procedures are necessary to protect those assets. For example, Hunt ISD prepares a list of the items in each classroom at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. The classroom teachers prepare the inventory and are accountable for the items in their classrooms. District employees complete an annual physical inventory during summer months when students are not in district buildings.

Recommendation 31:

Conduct a feasibility study on using district employees to do the annual physical inventory of assets.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations obtains quotes for the equipment and software necessary to conduct a physical inventory of assets.	March 2003
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations estimates the number of hours required and the associated cost of labor to conduct the physical inventory.	March 2003
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations compares the cost of conducting the inventory using district employees with hiring a firm to conduct the inventory.	March 2003
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations recommends the most cost-effective option to the superintendent.	April 2003
5.	The superintendent approves the recommendation.	April 2003
6.	The district or a contractor conducts an annual physical inventory of assets.	June 2003 and Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 6

Asset and Risk Management

D. BOND ISSUANCE AND INDEBTEDNESS

Bonds are contractual representations that a debt is owed by one party, the issuer, to one or more other parties, the investors. Bonds may be secured by lien on personal or real property or may be unsecured. The contract between the issuer and the investors is the bond indenture. The bond indenture specifies the maturity date, interest payments, denominations of principal, call and/or conversion provisions, security, the trustee, repayment plans such as a bond sinking fund and special provisions. An effective bond management program ensures the district complies with bond covenants, the restrictions on the use of the bond funds, the repayment of bonds and assurance that outstanding bonds pay the lowest interest rate possible.

DSISD has issued bonded debt to construct facilities and acquire furnishings for those facilities. DSISD has also refunded several of its outstanding bond issues to reduce the associated interest cost on those issues. Refunding is a process where the district is able to pay off the old bonds with new bonds that have a lower interest rate. The next refunding opportunity for the district occurs in 2004-05 for the 1994 series of bonds. The district has several outstanding bond issues and **Exhibit 6-8** presents general information on those bonds.

Exhibit 6-8
DISD Bonded Indebtedness
As of August 31, 2001

Description	Interest Rate	Original Issue Amount	Bonds Payable August 31, 2001
Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds, Series 1992	3.00% - 5.70%	\$7,474,979	\$2,721,885
School Building Unlimited Tax Bonds, Series 1994	4.75% - 7.75%	\$10,000,000	\$9,150,000
School Building Unlimited Tax Bonds, Series 1996	5.50% - 7.50%	\$14,100,000	\$1,620,000

School Building Unlimited Tax Bonds, Series 1997	4.75% - 6.50%	\$8,505,000	\$8,090,000
Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds, Series 1998	4.05% - 5.00%	\$11,834,995	\$12,415,020
School Building Unlimited Tax Bonds, Series 1999	3.60% - 5.00%	\$2,090,000	\$2,015,000
Total		\$54,004,974	\$36,011,905

Source: DSISD External Audit, August 2001.

The district uses a financial advisor to ensure compliance with federal arbitrage regulations. The financial advisor also assists the district when it issues new debt and provides assistance in determining the appropriate instruments to fund financing needs.

The district acquired personal property in the amount of \$500,000 by using a capital lease. A capital lease is a lease-purchase agreement to acquire personal property and pay for the property over a period of time. The capital lease was used to purchase computer and technology equipment in 1998-99. The principal outstanding on the capital lease was \$213,472 as of August 31, 2001. The capital lease will be paid off at the end of 2002-03.

FINDING

DSISD passed a reimbursement resolution in January 2002 and sold \$5.2 million in tax maintenance notes on May 14, 2002 to cover the cost of repairing the mold damage at the primary school. Tax maintenance notes are a financing tool available to school districts for repairs and maintenance of district facilities. The notes require the district to dedicate a portion of their maintenance and operations tax collections to repay the notes. Tax maintenance notes, by law, can be approved by the board and do not require the passage of a bond referendum. Using this instrument allows DSISD to pay for the costs associated with the repair over time and without a significant impact on its fund balance.

This resolution also allows the district to capture any costs incurred 60 days before the resolution was passed in the total amount financed to repair the primary school. The prompt passage of this resolution allows the district to pay for all costs associated with the repair using the issued tax maintenance notes. Because the district passed the reimbursement

resolution, it did not have to pay for the repairs out of its fund balance or call an election to pass a bond issue to raise the necessary funds.

The interest rate of the tax maintenance notes sold on May 14, 2002 is 4.8 percent and is favorably compared to market conditions. The notes are due over a 20-year period with an average life of 11.9 years. Moody's Investors Service upgraded the bond rating from Baa2 to A3. Moody's cited the availability of tax effort due to eliminating the optional homestead exemption, improved financial condition and the growth in property valuation as reasons for the change in the district's bond rating. This upgrade is also applicable to the \$34.5 million in general obligation debt the district has outstanding.

COMMENDATION

DSISD recognized the need for obtaining financing to repair the primary school and took timely and appropriate action to obtain the financing.

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the financial management functions of Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) in three sections:

- A. Planning and Budgeting
- B. Financial Operations and Fund Balance
- C. Tax Collection

School districts must practice sound financial management, to maximize limited resources and plan for future needs. Effective financial management ensures that internal controls are in place and operating as intended, technology is maximized to increase productivity and that the reports are prepared timely and accurately.

The planning and budgeting process must support the strategies in place to achieve the district goals. The accounting process must provide safeguards to reduce the risk of losing assets and to ensure appropriate use of assets. These built-in safeguards should be appropriate to the district's size and organizational structure. A key to effective financial management is that the board and administration must receive timely, accurate and useful reports concerning the financial condition of the district.

BACKGROUND

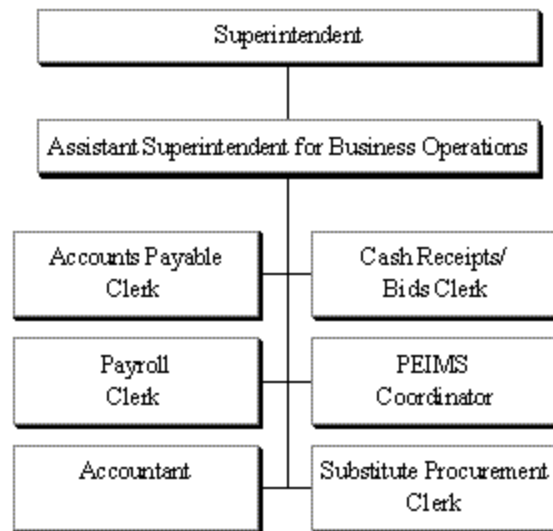
School districts' financial operations must comply with federal, state and local laws and regulations. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires districts' financial operations to comply with the requirements of the *Financial Accountability System Resources Guide* (FASRG). The FASRG combines the requirements for financial management from a variety of sources into one guide for Texas school districts.

DSISD uses Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) software to maintain its financial records. This software provides the information necessary to manage the district's finances, including the general ledger, subsidiary ledgers and comparative financial reports for both the current period and year-to-date. The RSCCC software produces the information to fulfill the requirements for reporting financial information to the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), which is required by the Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 42.006. The system also accounts for revenues and expenditures based on the fund, function, object, cost center and program intent codes described in the FASRG.

Effective financial management provides strong systems of internal controls by aligning the business service functions to provide a system of checks and balances on all transactions. Proper staffing is also necessary to achieve the best results.

The DSISD Business Office includes the assistant superintendent for Business Operations and six employees. The Business Office manages accounting, accounts payable, budgeting, cash receipts, financial reporting, fixed assets, investments, PEIMS, payroll, purchasing and substitute procurement. **Exhibit 7-1** presents the organization of the Business Office.

Exhibit 7-1
Organization of DSISD Business Office
April 2002



Source: DSISD, Assistant Superintendent for Business Operations.

Each Business Office employee performs multiple functions. For example, the accounts payable clerk prepares the Medicaid Administrative Claims reports for the district. The cash receipts/bids clerk processes food service applications and prepares athletic reports. The payroll clerk prepares the federal tax returns and accounts for employee leave in the district. The PEIMS coordinator assists with budget development, prepares preliminary salary calculations, monitors the cash in the bank and investment accounts and reconciles the payroll ledger. The accountant prepares all bank reconciliations; enters all purchase orders; balances due to and due from accounts; prepares adjusting entries; works with the campus activity funds; prepares budget transfers; and prepares tax reports for the board packets. The substitute procurement clerk implements the new Web-based substitute system.

One way to ascertain the effectiveness of financial management is to compare the district with peer districts. DSISD selected Burnet Consolidated, Eanes, Lake Travis, Marble Falls and Wimberley ISDs as peer districts for comparison purposes. **Exhibit 7-2** presents student enrollment, percentage of students economically disadvantaged and property value per student for DSISD and its peer districts.

Exhibit 7-2
Number of Enrolled Students,
Percentage Economically Disadvantaged and Property Value per
Student
DSISD and Peer Districts
2001-02

District	Student Enrollment	Percentage Economically Disadvantaged	Property Value per Student
Eanes	7,260	2.6%	832,331
Lake Travis	4,376	7.8%	633,055
Marble Falls	3,677	40.2%	328,458
Dripping Springs	3,311	8.2%	337,911
Burnet Consolidated	2,948	37.4%	252,702
Wimberley	1,734	14.9%	416,995

Source: TEA, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2001-02; and State Comptroller's Office, Preliminary Property Values, 2002.

Eanes and Lake Travis ISDs have the largest number of students, the lowest percentage of economically disadvantage students and the highest property value per student. DSISD compares closest to Marble Falls, Burnet and Wimberley ISDs in student enrollment and property value per student. Dripping Springs, Eanes and Lake Travis ISDs, however, all share a lower percentage of economically disadvantage students than other peer districts.

DSISD receives revenue from local, state and federal sources. In 2001-02, DSISD received 75.5 percent of its revenues from local property taxes, 23.9 percent from the state and 0.6 percent from federal sources. **Exhibit**

7-3 presents the sources of budgeted revenue for all DSISD funds and the peer districts for 2001-02.

Exhibit 7-3
Budgeted Revenue Sources for All Funds
DSISD and Peer Districts
2001-02

District	Local and Intermediate	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total	Federal	Percent of Total	Total
Eanes	\$103,802,581	95.9%	\$4,489,932	4.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$108,292,513
Lake Travis	\$47,629,946	94.5%	\$2,481,000	4.9%	\$266,000	0.5%	\$50,376,946
Marble Falls	\$20,952,077	75.3%	\$6,171,101	22.2%	\$707,717	2.5%	\$27,830,895
Dripping Springs	\$18,114,451	75.5%	\$5,740,748	23.9%	\$139,913	0.6%	\$23,995,112
Burnet Consolidated	\$12,646,493	58.2%	\$8,535,474	39.3%	\$540,000	2.5%	\$21,721,967
Wimberley	\$12,527,001	89.2%	\$1,419,436	10.1%	\$91,382	0.7%	\$14,037,819

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

Like Eanes, Lake Travis and Marble Falls ISDs, DSISD generates most of its funds from local and intermediate sources. DSISD and Marble Falls ISD receive 75.5 percent and 75.3 percent, respectively, of their total revenue from local sources; Eanes and Lake Travis ISDs receive 95.9 percent and 94.5 percent, respectively, while Wimberley ISD receives 89.2 percent. Burnet ISD receives the lowest percentage (58.2) of total revenues from local sources.

Burnet receives almost 40 percent of its total from the state; DSISD and Marble Falls ISD are the next highest at 23.9 and 22.2 percent, respectively. The two districts with the highest percentage of federal funds are Burnet and Wimberley-both at 2.5 percent.

Since 1997-98, revenues from local DSISD sources have increased by 94.7 percent; revenues from state sources have decreased 20.1 percent; and total revenue for DSISD has increased 41.9 percent. Increased property values and tax rates account for the increase in local revenue. The decrease in state revenue reflects the inverse relationship between property wealth and state funding. The decrease in state funding was not equivalent

to the increase in local funding because of the growing number of students in DSISD and the increased tax effort by DSISD (**Exhibit 7-4**).

Exhibit 7-4
DSISD General Fund Revenue by Source
1997-98 through 2001-02

Revenue Source	1997-98 Actual	1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Budget	Percent Change From 1998
Local and Intermediate	\$7,202,938	\$8,322,296	\$9,603,176	\$11,951,590	\$14,021,799	94.7%
Percent of Total	53.9%	55.9%	56.1%	65.2%	73.9%	
State	\$6,159,776	\$6,576,973	\$7,487,797	\$6,365,390	\$4,922,766	(20.1%)
Percent of Total	46.1%	44.1%	43.8%	34.7%	26%	
Federal	\$0	\$0	\$17,301	\$27,688	\$20,000	
Percent of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	
Total Revenue	\$13,362,714	\$14,899,269	\$17,108,274	\$18,344,668	\$18,964,565	41.9%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

Compared to its peer districts, DSISD budgets the highest percentage of its expenditures for payroll (80.5 percent) and other operating costs (4.5 percent). In the areas of supplies and debt service, the district is comparable with its peer districts (**Exhibit 7-5**).

Exhibit 7-5
Budgeted Expenditures for the General
Fund by Object Code Description
DSISD and Peer Districts
2001-02

District	Payroll	Contracted Services	Supplies	Other Operating	Debt Service	Capital Outlay	Total
Dripping Springs	80.5%	8.7%	4.8%	4.5%	0.3%	1.2%	100%

Burnet Consolidated	79.7%	7.7%	5.2%	1.9%	0.4%	5.1%	100%
Marble Falls	79.1%	8.4%	5%	2%	0.8%	4.6%	100%
Wimberley	74.1%	11.7%	7.3%	4.1%	0.7%	2.1%	100%
Lake Travis	58.3%	35.5%	3.2%	1.3%	0.0%	1.7%	100%
Eanes	46.5%	50.5%	2%	1%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

Chapter 1 of the FASRG, *Financial Accounting and Reporting Guide*, mandates school districts' use of functional codes to track expenditures for different school district operations. **Exhibit 7-6** presents the percentage of funds budgeted by function for DSISD and peer districts.

Exhibit 7-6
DSISD and Peer Districts
Percentage of Funds Budgeted by Function
2001-02

Function	Burnet Consolidated	Dripping Springs	Eanes	Lake Travis	Marble Falls	Wimberley
Instruction	51.3%	43.3%	28.1%	33.7%	47.4%	46.8%
Instructional Resources	1.2%	2.6%	0.9%	1.0%	1.5%	1.6%
Curriculum and Staff Development	1.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%
Instructional Leadership	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%	1.7%	0.7%
School Leadership	5.0%	5.2%	2.7%	2.7%	4.6%	5.6%
Guidance and Counseling	3.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	3.2%	1.8%
Social Work Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
Health Services	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	0.9%
Student Transportation	5.1%	4.5%	1.2%	3.6%	4.5%	3.2%
Food Services	4.6%	5.3%	2.5%	2.2%	4.8%	3.8%
Co-/Extracurricular Activities	3.7%	3.0%	1.3%	1.7%	3.1%	4.3%
General Administration	4.4%	3.5%	2.0%	3.0%	4.4%	4.8%

Plant Maintenance/Operations	11.3%	10.4%	5.9%	6.2%	10.5%	10.3%
Security and Monitoring Services	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Data Processing Services	0.5%	0.3%	0.7%	0.6%	1.4%	1.7%
Community Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.3%	0.0%
Debt Service	6.7%	16.2%	13.1%	16.0%	9.4%	11.2%
Facilities Acquisition	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	1.0%
Contracted Instructional Services	0.0%	0.0%	37.8%	24.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Incremental Chapter 41 Costs	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Payments to Fiscal Agent	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	1.6%
Payments JJAEP	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2001-02.

It is important to note that the percentage of funds by function is different from what is shown in Chapter 2; in particular, Exhibit 2-25 shows the percentage DSISD and its peers spend on instruction. The reason for this difference is that the calculation of percentage spent on instruction in Chapter 2 includes *only* the operating budget and *does not* include any funds budgeted for debt service or capital outlay. This difference in calculation results in the different percentages of funds spent on instruction and other functions.

The contracted instructional services budgets represent payments for Chapter 41 of the FASRG, *Wealth Equalization*. DSISD budgets a greater percentage of its total expenditures for instructional resources, food services, debt services and payments to a fiscal agent than any of the peer districts.

Exhibit 7-7 presents functional expenditures for the general fund on a per-pupil basis for 1997-98 through 2001-02. These functional expenditures do not include facility acquisition and construction expenditures.

Exhibit 7-7
DSISD General Fund Functional Expenditures
1997-98 through 2001-02

Description	1997-98 (Actual)	1998-99 (Actual)	1999- 2000 (Actual)	2000-01 (Actual)	2001-02 (Budget)	Percent ChangeFrom 1997-98
Number of Students	2,889	3,018	3,100	3,197	3,320	14.9%
Instruction	\$2,664	\$2,882	\$3,283	\$3,071	\$3,078	15.5%
Instructional Resources	\$100	\$140	\$155	\$176	\$186	86.2%
Curriculum and Staff Development	\$27	\$30	\$27	\$34	\$38	39.7%
Instructional Leadership	\$18	\$17	\$19	\$19	\$20	13.5%
School Leadership	\$302	\$298	\$332	\$344	\$367	21.5%
Guidance and Counseling	\$130	\$123	\$141	\$140	\$152	16.6%
Health Services	\$39	\$36	\$44	\$50	\$50	28.3%
Student Transportation	\$246	\$220	\$260	\$292	\$318	29.1%
Co-/Extracurricular Activities	\$175	\$195	\$211	\$209	\$214	22.4%
General Administration	\$222	\$235	\$314	\$246	\$252	13.3%
Plant Maintenance/Operations	\$489	\$549	\$613	\$689	\$740	51.4%
Security and Monitoring Services	\$11	\$10	\$2	\$1	\$4	(64.4%)
Data Processing Services	\$36	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18	(49.9%)
Community Services					\$0	0%
Debt Service	\$47	\$63	\$69	\$16	\$16	(65.1%)
Payments to Fiscal Agent	\$107	\$109	\$128	\$133	\$140	30.6%
Total	\$4,613	\$4,907	\$5,598	\$5,421	\$5,593	21.2%

Source: DSISD Audit Report; TEA, AEIS and PEIMS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

DSISD's 2001-02 student enrollment has increased by 14.8 percent since 1997-98. During this same time, total expenditures per student have increased 21.2 percent, with a 15.5 percent increase in funds budgeted for instruction. The greatest increase in functions occurred in the instructional resources function with an 86.2 percent increase over 1997-98. Instructional leadership and general administration have both increased by lower percentages than instruction.

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. PLANNING AND BUDGETING

A school district's annual budget represents planned expenditures for the year and provides the basis for determining the tax rate. The budget process should be methodical and include phases for development, presentation and adoption.

First, the district must estimate its revenues to determine the amount of funds available for the budget year. School districts receive revenues from the federal government, state government and local taxpayers. Federal revenues can fluctuate significantly based on changes in the federal budget, and districts must take great care to ensure the availability of necessary funds.

State revenues are based on a variety of factors that must be estimated annually. The most critical of these factors is student attendance. A district must not only estimate the number of students, but also the type of student due to the special weighting factors in the state funding formula. This formula provides different amounts of funding for students who have special needs. To estimate the funding it will receive from the local taxpayers, the district also requires an estimate of the appraised property in the district.

Next, the district must estimate the expenditures for the budget year. Although the TEC states that the superintendent is responsible for preparing the budget, the development phase should include opportunities for staff and the community to express their opinions. If a district uses a per-pupil allocation process for staffing, supplies and other budgeted expenditures for the schools, it must involve the Site-Based Decision-Making Committee (SBDMC) at each school to determine how those allocations are used at the school. If a district uses a request-for-funds process, then it must involve each SBDMC to formulate and prioritize requests.

Because of limited resources, districts sometimes can only fund the highest priorities. During the development process, a district also must account for the priorities established in the campus improvement plans and the district improvement plan. All other departments must establish their needs based on the services they plan to provide. Once all the necessary information is compiled, the preliminary budget is ready for the presentation phase.

The presentation phase should include opportunities for the administration and board to review and discuss the revenue and expenditure estimates and the underlying assumptions and needs on which these are based. If estimated revenues are not sufficient to pay for the estimated expenditures, the presentation phase should include options for increasing revenue, reducing expenses or using a portion of the undesignated fund balance to arrive at a balanced budget. The fund balance should only be used for one-time expenditures, such as capital improvements, and not to fund continuing expenditures, such as raises for employees. The presentation phase also should include opportunities for district employees to provide input.

The final part of the presentation phase should specifically allow for public input. The board can only adopt the budget after the TEC-required public hearing. Once adopted, the budget becomes the legal authority for the district to make expenditures. The budget should help the district control expenditures. If an expenditure exceeds the budget, the administration must prepare, present and have a budget amendment adopted by the board before the expenditure occurs.

FINDING

DSISD has a comprehensive and inclusive budget process. The superintendent said the budget process begins in October with the planning and evaluation cycle. The planning process reviews the district mission and produces goals to support this mission statement. The board, which meets regularly on the budget starting in October, adopts the goals in December, and the district and school improvement plans are submitted to the board for approval in April. This planning process is designed to go hand-in-hand with the budget process.

The board has held four budget workshops as of the first of April 2002. Budget adoption will occur in June to coincide with the district's new fiscal year; and tax rates will be adopted in September.

DSISD has a districtwide budget review committee composed of two teachers from each school, teachers from each specialty area and the administrative team. This year there were 13 teachers on the committee. The administrative team includes all principals, assistant principals, directors, assistant superintendents and the superintendent. This committee sets the budget priorities for the year and reviews the budget to make sure it reflects the priorities set in the planning process. Also, the committee reviews above-allocation requests and the related justification for those requests. After the budget is compiled and before the board adopts the budget, the committee reviews the budget to finalize its recommendations.

DSISD presents the budget to community leaders at a breakfast. A slide presentation reviews state funding; provides information on tax revenues; provides information on state revenues; provides information on budget reductions from the prior year; provides information on budget increases for the current year; and summarizes the budget-supported mission, beliefs and goals of the district. The presentation also includes a calendar of events related to the budget adoption process. The district uses community leader input to refine the budget presentation. After the presentation to community leaders, the district conducts a public forum on the budget. DSISD presents the proposed budget at the forum and invites the public for comment

The budget process includes comparative information from peer districts to benchmark DSISD expenditures. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations uses the Financial Excellence Indicator System of Texas-Information about Educational Resources (FEISTIER) database from the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) to make these comparisons. TASBO and TEA joined forces to produce a database that allows school districts to compare their financial operations with other districts. This initiative was designed to establish a financial excellence indicator system for the business operations of school districts, similar to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), which school districts use to compare their educational performance to other districts.

Based on the recommendations from the budget review committee, the community leaders and the public, district administrators prepare the proposed budget for presentation to the board for adoption. DSISD then holds the required public hearing and the board adopts the budget.

COMMENDATION

DSISD has a comprehensive budget process that enables community, staff and board involvement during the budget process.

FINDING

DSISD's board does not adopt the expenditure budget at the function level, but adopts it based on summary information for the general fund, food service fund and debt service fund. The presented, proposed budget includes revenues by source but does not contain the proposed expenditure budget by function. For the general fund, the document has a line item for salaries and benefits for all functions, a line item for non-salary expenditures for instruction and related services and non-salary expenditures by function description for the remainder of the budget. During the budget development process, the board is presented with

detailed information on the proposed budgets at the fund, function and line item level. The board, however, does not adopt the budget based on the detailed information, but on the summary information.

Section 2 of the FASRG requires school districts to adopt budgets for the general fund, food service fund and debt service fund. The FASRG states, "These budgets must be prepared and approved at least at the fund and function levels to comply with the state's legal level of control mandates." Since the district does not adopt the budget by function, the district is not in compliance with the TEA requirements for budget adoption.

Many school districts provide detailed information to the board at the department and school level during the budget process. Wichita Falls ISD (WFISD) provides information to the board during the course of the budget process based on the organizational structure of the district. These board budget presentations and discussions include budget information at the fund, organization and object level. WFISD converts the budget information discussed with the board to the fund and function level for board approval. This ensures that WFISD complies with TEA requirements for budget adoption.

Recommendation 32:

Adopt the budget at the functional level.

The district should convert the proposed budget from the presentation format to the function level format so the board can adopt the budget at the functional level to comply with TEA requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations prepares a schedule in the proposed budget based on functional expenditures.	Annually
2.	The superintendent presents and recommends adoption of the budget at the function level.	Annually
3.	The board approves the budget at the function level.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS AND FUND BALANCE

A district's financial operations function is critical for it to maintain a solid financial foundation. A district's fund balance is a key indicator of the financial condition of the district. Accurate, timely financial reports are crucial to the administration and board for decision-making. Payroll must be accurate since it represents the largest expenditure of the district's budget. Internal controls must be present to safeguard the district's assets from misappropriation.

The DSISD Business Office prepares monthly board financial reports. The assistant superintendent presented several different financial statement formats to the board for consideration and the board selected the existing format. The financial statements provide information on the adopted budget, amended budget, encumbrances, current month expenditures, year-to-date expenditures, budget remaining and percent of amended budget expended. The financial statements are presented for the general fund, athletic fund, food service fund, childcare fund, debt service fund and community education fund.

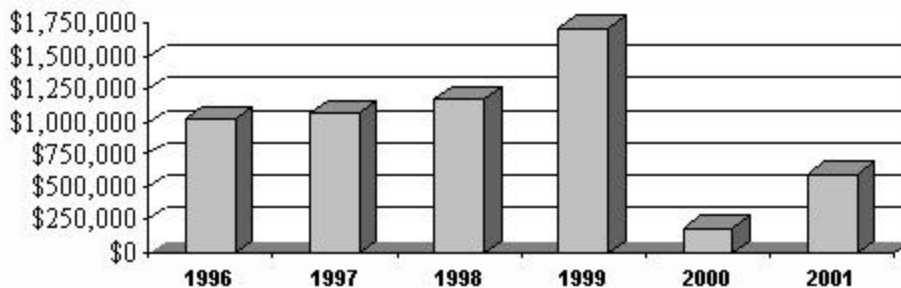
In 2002, the district changed its fiscal year end to June 30. This change is allowed effective September 1, 2001, by Section 44.0011 that states, "The fiscal year of a school district begins on July 1 or September 1 of each year, as determined by the board of trustees of the district." This change will allow the district to have an accounting year that more closely reflects the natural operating cycle of the school district.

The district is preparing for the implementation of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 34 regarding the financial reporting of governmental entities. TEA requires all school districts to implement GASB 34 for the year ending in 2002. The superintendent is concerned about the implementation of GASB 34, because of the anticipated time required to implement the new standard and the limited number of Business Office personnel. The district has taken several steps to prepare for the implementation. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations attended GASB 34 training sessions; researched the impact of the statement on the district; discussed the issue with the external auditor; removed fixed assets less than \$5,000 from inventories during 2000-01; and planned a fixed asset inventory for GASB 34 to be conducted in May 2003.

The assistant superintendent for Business Operations has changed Business Office staff responsibilities to improve internal controls. For example, two employees were responsible for requisitions through accounts payable for a portion of the alphabet. These functions were divided so that one employee was responsible for the purchasing portion and the other was responsible for the accounts payable function. This provided segregation of duties so that no one employee was both purchasing and paying for goods and services. The district now has centralized the accounting for school activity funds in order to provide a stronger control environment over these funds. The external auditor has not reported any material weaknesses in internal control during the past three years.

The general fund balance of DSISD declined sharply in the fiscal year that ended August 31, 2000. The beginning general fund balance was \$1.71 million and declined to \$186,030 at the end of the year. The unreserved, undesignated general fund balance fell from \$1.24 million to \$47,607 on August 31, 2000. The unreserved, undesignated fund balance represents that portion of fund equity that is not held for a specific purpose. DSISD reserved a portion of fund balance for capital acquisitions and inventory at August 31, 1999, and for inventory at August 31, 2001. **Exhibit 7-8** charts the general fund balance of the district at August 31, 1996 through August 31, 2001.

**Exhibit 7-8
General Fund Balance**



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

There were several reasons for the decline in general fund balance. First, the district adopted a deficit budget of \$755,001 for the 2000-01 year. A deficit budget indicates that the district planned to use some of the unreserved, undesignated fund balance for operations in 2000-01. The deficit budget was based on revenues from the district-planning estimate of the TEA preliminary summary of finances (SOF) for the year. This estimate was not based on the 2000-01 estimate of average daily

attendance (ADA), but on the ADA estimates the district gave to the state in the prior biennium. As a result, state revenues were over-budgeted by \$496,617.

Second, the annual audit for the year that ended August 31, 2000, determined that the beginning fund balance was overstated by \$367,675. This was due to a \$215,208 overstatement of revenues in the prior year, when the district used an incorrect number of student days to accrue revenue; and due to the \$152,467 understatement of expenditures for the prior year when the district incorrectly recorded some expenditures as inventory. Other audit adjustments increased expenditures in 2000-01 by \$111,733 for items the district classified as inventory that should have been classified as expenditures. Third, the impact of the deficit budget and audit adjustments were compounded by the actual deficit being \$405,205 more than anticipated. The impact of all these factors reduced the general fund balance from \$1,713,911 to \$186,030.

The assistant superintendent for Business Operations came to the district in November 2000 after the 2000-01 budget was adopted and during the 1999-2000 audit process. During 2000-01, the district was able to add \$405,941 to the fund balance because tax revenues were higher and expenditures less than budgeted.

FINDING

DSISD has taken positive steps to increase the fund balance. During 2000-01, several positions were left vacant to reduce expenditures for the year. DSISD made reductions of \$413,055 in the 2001-02 budget in order to help provide funds for a surplus budget. **Exhibit 7-9** presents the reductions for 2001-02.

**Exhibit 7-9
DSISD Budget Reductions
2001-02**

Reduction	Fiscal Impact
Reading Recovery Training	\$8,000
1/2 PK Teacher	\$18,344
Technology Coordinator	\$36,689
Eliminated Director of Construction Operations	\$66,000
Absorbed Business Office Assistant	\$28,422
Salary reduction in replacement for Superintendent's secretary	\$16,000

Elimination of student reporting system	\$100,000
Removing repair of water tower - nonrecurring cost	\$60,000
Elimination of two maintenance positions - were never filled	\$50,000
Reduction in stipends across the district	\$29,600
Total	\$413,055

Source: DSISD Public Forum Budget Presentation.

In 2001-02, the board adopted a budget with a defined surplus of \$500,000. The budget also provided a 3 percent raise for staff, funding for increased utility costs, increased insurance costs, increased instructional materials costs and two additional teaching positions due to growth.

The district's goals for 2001-02 include one that states, "The district will allocate funds and resources in a process that is equitable for all students and improves the overall financial condition of the district." The 2002-03 goals for the district include one that states, "For the 2002-03 school year, the district will allocate available financial resources in a process that is equitable for all students, the district will efficiently manage the budget to improve the overall financial condition of the district, the district will design and implement a long range financial planning process." The district has committed to rebuilding the fund balance while continuing to focus on student education.

COMMENDATION

DSISD has budgeted for a surplus to increase fund balance.

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

C. TAX COLLECTION

Local school districts levy property taxes as a source of funds. The tax generally is composed of a maintenance and operations (M&O) component and a debt service component. The M&O tax component cannot exceed \$1.50 per hundred dollars of assessed property value. The voters authorize the debt service component of the tax when they pass a bond issue.

The county appraisal district appraises all school districts' property. All school districts adopt a tax rate that is applied to the assessed value, minus tax exemptions, to determine the amount of levied taxes. Some school districts collect their own taxes and others contract with another entity. A tax attorney usually collects delinquent taxes.

Due to the inverse relationship between property wealth and state funding earned, poorer districts rely more heavily on state revenues and wealthy districts rely almost completely on local revenues. **Exhibit 7-10** presents the amount and percentage of local taxes (including penalty and interest), other local revenue and state revenue for the general fund that DSISD received for the years of 1997-98 through 2001-02.

Exhibit 7-10
DSISD Comparison of Tax Collections, Other Local Revenue
and State Revenue to Total Local and State Revenue
1997-98 through 2001-02

	1997-98 (Actual)	1998-99 (Actual)	1999-2000 (Actual)	2000-01 (Actual)	2001-02 (Budget)
Tax collections	\$6,812,797	\$7,894,526	\$9,108,882	\$11,357,147	\$13,647,444
Percent of total local and state revenue	51.0%	53.0%	53.3%	62.0%	72.0%
Other local revenue	\$390,141	\$427,770	\$494,294	\$594,443	\$374,355
Percent of total local	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	3.2%	2.0%

and state revenue					
State revenue and pass-through	\$6,159,776	\$6,576,973	\$7,487,797	\$6,365,390	\$4,922,766
Percent of total local and state revenue	46.1%	44.1%	43.8%	34.8%	26.0%
Total local and state revenue	\$13,362,714	\$14,899,269	\$17,090,973	\$18,316,980	\$18,944,565

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

DSISD has relied on the local property tax for as much as 72 percent of its funding in 2001-02 and as little as 51 percent in 1997-98. The district receives the majority of its revenue from property taxes, so it must maximize collections each year.

DSISD's assessed property value has more than doubled over the last five years. **Exhibit 7-11** presents the assessed property value, tax rate, levy and tax collections for DSISD for the period of 1998 through 2002.

Exhibit 7-11
DSISD Change in Property Value and Tax Rate
and the Percentage of Taxes Collected to the Total Levy
1997-98 through 2001-02

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Assessed property value	\$503,708,612	\$540,196,340	\$597,465,003	\$723,735,096	\$1,070,163,480
M&O tax rate	1.3767	1.4451	1.413	1.500	1.3482
Interest and Sinking tax rate	0.5155	0.5249	0.437	0.333	0.2617
Total tax	1.8922	1.97	1.85	1.833	1.6099

rate					
Tax levy	\$9,297,299	\$10,382,220	\$11,053,103	\$13,801,361	\$16,682,159
Total tax collections	\$9,179,899	\$10,509,138	\$11,831,655	\$13,820,634	N/A
Percent collected to levy	98.7%	101.2%	107.0%	100.1%	N/A

Source: External Audit Reports 1998 through 2001; Comptroller's Office, Property Tax Division; DSISD Business Office.

The district's tax rate declined from a high of \$1.97 in 1999 to a low of \$1.61 in 2001-02. The district eliminated the optional homestead exemption to enhance revenues and reduce the tax rate. This, in turn, moved DSISD away from the \$1.50 cap to \$1.35 in the M&O component of the tax rate. Taxes receivable on August 31, 2001, represented 3.3 percent of the 2001 tax levy.

FINDING

The district contracts with Hays County to collect its taxes after eliminating its tax collection office in 2000-01. As a cost-saving measure, the district eliminated the tax collector position as part of the 2000-01 budget reductions. Eliminating the tax office resulted in an annual net savings to the district of \$67,990. This savings is the difference in the salary of the tax collector and the office operating cost of \$70,000, and the \$2,010 cost of having Hays County collect the district's taxes.

The district has maintained a high percentage of tax collections to the current year levy, and for the past three years has collected more than 100 percent of the levy. The district has saved money and maintained the high collection rate by contracting with Hays County. DSISD has the second highest tax collection rate of the peer districts (**Exhibit 7-12**).

Exhibit 7-12
DSISD and Peer Districts
Tax Rate, Levy, Tax Collections and Tax Collections as a Percent of
the Levy
August 31, 2001

District	Total Tax Rate	Tax Levy	Total Tax Collections	Percent Collected
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				to Levy
Marble Falls	1.6800	\$16,452,079	\$16,516,160	100.4%
Dripping Springs	1.8330	\$13,801,361	\$13,820,634	100.1%
Burnet Consolidated	1.5817	\$9,303,502	\$9,268,769	99.6%
Lake Travis	1.7795	\$36,623,351	\$36,048,873	98.4%
Eanes	1.6964	\$83,068,192	\$81,401,298	98.0%

Source: DSISD and Peer Districts, External Audit Reports 2001.

COMMENDATION

DSISD contracts with Hays County to collect its taxes as a cost saving measure.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

This chapter reviews the purchasing and warehousing functions of Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) in four sections:

- A. Purchasing
- B. Warehousing
- C. Textbook Operations
- D. Contracting Process

An effective purchasing and warehousing program provides the district with quality materials, supplies, services and equipment in a timely manner at the lowest price. Purchasing includes the acquisition of supplies, materials, services and equipment. Warehousing includes the storage and delivery of the goods schools and departments need. Textbook operations include the acquisition, delivery and inventory of textbooks to the schools. The contracting process includes the procurement and evaluation of services from external entities.

BACKGROUND

DSISD does not have employees dedicated solely to purchasing or warehousing. Individuals with additional duties in the district perform these functions. Purchasing responsibilities are distributed among the schools and departments. Warehousing responsibilities are distributed between the maintenance and transportation departments. The district does not budget separate funds for purchasing or warehousing.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

A. PURCHASING

Section 3 of the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG) describes purchasing as a major management process with links to overall accountability initiatives. The FASRG describes these links as:

Strategic Link. The overall mission of purchasing is to use available fiscal resources to obtain the maximum product or service for the resources expended.

Operational Link. Purchasing supports instructional delivery, administration and other services. Performance and goal achievement throughout the school district depend on its effectiveness.

Tactical Link. The purchasing process influences day-to-day financial functions including budget management, accounting and accurate financial reporting."

This description underscores the importance of an effective purchasing program. The FASRG also enumerates several factors that present challenges to the purchasing function in public schools, including the numerous compliance requirements.

Texas school districts must comply with the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 44, Subchapter B, in the procurement of goods and services.

Exhibit 8-1 presents a summary of the purchasing requirements in TEC Chapter 44.

Exhibit 8-1
TEC Chapter 44 Purchasing Requirements

	Purchases of or More Than \$25,000	Purchases of Personal Property Between \$10,000 and \$25,000
TEC Section	44.031	44.033
Procurement methods	Competitive bidding; Competitive sealed	Those for purchases at or more than \$25,000.

	proposals; Request for proposals; Catalog purchases; Interlocal contracts.	OR Obtain quotes from the vendor list established by the district.
Exceptions	Produce and vehicle fuel; Sole source; Professional services; Emergency repairs.	Produce and vehicle fuel must be purchased using the purchasing methods above.
Factors to consider	Purchase price; Vendor reputation; Quality of goods or services; District's needs; Vendor's past performance; Historically underutilized businesses; Long-term cost; Other relevant factors.	Lowest responsible bidder.

Source: Texas Education Code, Sections 44.031 and 44.033.

DSISD board policy CH (Legal) includes the legal requirements of TEC, in addition to other methods of purchasing allowed by the Texas Government Code. DSISD board policy CH (Local) provides additional governance to purchasing; it clarifies the board's authority to delegate to the superintendent or designee the purchasing method to make budgeted purchases. The district's purchasing procedures manual requires the approval of the superintendent, or appropriate assistant superintendent, for all purchases. The procedures manual also requires the use of purchase orders for all district purchases.

FINDING

DSISD does not comply with the competitive procurement requirements of TEC or board policy on all purchases. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations said that when he came to the district in November 2000 the district was using competitive procurement procedures for major purchases. Since November 2000, the district has used competitive procurement practices for insurance, most athletic supplies and custodial supplies. The district purchases computer equipment through the vendors approved by the Texas Building and Procurement Commission. The food service department is a member of the Region 13 purchasing cooperative and buys food and supplies through those vendors. The district does

advertise for vendors interested in providing quotes for goods or services expected to cost from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

The superintendent said the district is not in compliance with the competitive procurement requirements, but stated the district is moving toward compliance. The management letter from the external audit firm for the year ended August 31, 2001 stated, "We noted that the District has made significant improvements in its bidding practices and in its documentation of bids. District staff should continue to closely monitor bidding practices in order to continue their improvement in this area." Based on a review of purchases from 2001-02 through April 2002, a number of purchases were made that exceeded the threshold for competitive purchases, or will exceed the threshold if the purchasing pattern continues. **Exhibit 8-2** presents a summary of the purchases for goods and services not procured through competitive procurement procedures. Although the district disagreed with some of the items presented in the exhibit, they failed to provide support to the review team to show the items were procured competitively.

Exhibit 8-2
Items Purchased Without Competitive Procurement
September 1, 2001 through April 15, 2002

Vendor	Item Category	Purchases	Last Payment Date
Brook Mays Music	Music and instruments	\$10,387.37	3/28/02
Garnett's Propane	Propane Gas	\$30,539.29	4/8/02
Gulf Coast Paper	Janitorial Supplies	\$13,075.18	4/5/02
Office Depot	Office and Instructional Supplies	\$18,188.81	4/12/02
School Specialty Supply	Instructional Supplies	\$7,020.95	4/8/02
Sellman's Plumbing & Septic	Septic Services	\$10,070.00	2/28/02
South Austin Auto Supply	Vehicle Parts and Supplies	\$7,476.46	4/11/02
Superior Sanitary Supply	Cleaning Supplies	\$13,506.84	4/5/02
Texas Multi Chem	Chemicals	\$8,819.70	3/7/02
Trendsetters	Instructional Supplies	\$10,423.23	4/12/02

Val Smith Petroleum	Fuel	\$29,884.14	3/22/02
Worth Hydrochem	Water Treatment	\$11,326.45	4/11/02

Source: DSISD vendor listing and review of competitive procurement files.

Competitive procurement is designed to provide the district with the best goods and services at the lowest price by stimulating competition. The *Handbook on Purchasing for Texas Public Schools, Junior Colleges and Community Colleges* states, "If a district advertises purchasing needs relating to large expenditures, then economies of scale - purchasing in large quantities - will probably result in lower costs either per unit item or in the aggregate." Competitive procurement maximizes the limited resources available to districts to provide instructional programs and support services.

Many school districts have processes to ensure compliance with the competitive procurement requirements. The process reviews vendor purchases from the prior year to determine if any vendors received more than threshold for competitive procurement from the district. If these purchases require a bid, then the district obtains bids for the goods or services purchased from the vendor. This process helps these districts to ensure compliance with the competitive procurement requirements. For example, Clear Creek ISD's Purchasing Department generates a monthly report, called a non-contract blanket purchase-order report, that identifies items not purchased using the pre-approved contract for certain items. Using this report, the Purchasing Department staff analyzes expenditures to determine when a group of items is getting close to thresholds that require bidding.

Recommendation 33:

Establish written procedures to ensure that the district complies with procurement laws and guidelines.

Using competitive procurement ensures compliance with the law and enables the district to receive lower prices on goods and services purchased.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to comply with competitive procurement laws.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations evaluates 2001-02 expenditures to determine which categories of items	September 2002

	purchased approached or exceeded the threshold for competitive procurement.	
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations works with appropriate staff to determine the specifications for goods or services subject to competitive procurement.	October 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations prepares appropriate competitive procurement documents for goods and services expected to meet or exceed \$25,000 in volume and advertises the opportunity to vendors.	November 2002
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and appropriate staff review the responses to the competitive procurement process and recommend vendors to the superintendent.	January 2003
6.	The superintendent presents the recommended vendors to the board for approval.	January 2003
7.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations ensures that written quotes are obtained from vendors responding to the advertisement for quotes for goods or services expected to cost from \$10,000 to \$25,000.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The purchasing process is a paper-intensive process. According to DSISD purchasing procedures, the following steps outline the purchasing process in the district:

1. The DSISD employee requiring goods or services fills out a purchase order.
2. The immediate supervisor reviews the purchase order and determines if sufficient funds are budgeted and available for the purchase.
3. The immediate supervisor approves the purchase order and forwards it to the Business Office.
4. The Business Office verifies that sufficient funds exist to fill the purchase order and encumbers the funds.
5. The appropriate assistant superintendent approves the purchase order.
6. Copies of the purchase order are distributed to the vendor, the school administration and the Business Office.

A clerk in the Business Office is responsible for verifying, encumbering and distributing purchase orders. Encumbering the purchase reduces the available budget by the amount of the purchase order. This process ensures other purchases are not initiated unless sufficient funds are available. The clerk follows actual purchasing procedures outlined in the purchasing manual. The clerk distributes copies of the purchase order to the vendor, the school administration and the Business Office. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations approves all purchase orders, even those approved by the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning.

DSISD uses Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) software to maintain its financial records. Although the RSCCC software has a purchasing module that supports online purchasing, the software system, as used by the district, does not provide any support to expedite the purchasing process. The schools and departments cannot look at financial information online to determine account balances and current expenditures, but must rely on the monthly financial information provided to them by the Business Office.

Many school districts use automated purchasing systems to expedite the purchasing process. Manual purchasing systems, in contrast, are more labor-intensive and may require from three to five days to accomplish the issuance of a purchase order. For example, by using an online purchase order system, Spring Independent School District (SISD) reduces processing time and provides more efficient service. SISD schools and departments enter all types of purchase orders directly from their location. This process has eliminated the need for the Purchasing Department to input extraneous purchase order information.

Recommendation 34:

Implement a purchasing module and begin processing purchase orders on-line.

According to the executive director of Region 13, the fee DSISD is paying includes the cost of the purchasing module.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Business Operations to use an automated purchasing system.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations contacts the Education Service Center, Region XIII (Region 13) for information concerning the purchasing module.	October 2002

3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and the director of Technology review the information from Region 13 to determine if the district's technology system will support the purchasing module.	November 2002
4.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations obtains the purchasing module.	December 2002
5.	The director of Technology installs the purchasing module.	January 2003
6.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations directs the director of Technology to prepare materials to train staff to use the purchasing module.	February 2003
7.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations and the director of Technology train staff to use the purchasing module.	March 2003
8.	The district operates the new purchasing module concurrently with the current purchasing system.	April and May 2003
9.	The district implements the new purchasing module.	June 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

B. WAREHOUSING

Effective warehousing provides for the storage, delivery and safekeeping of the goods used frequently by the district's schools and departments.

DSISD currently does not warehouse at a single location. DSISD maintains an inventory of custodial supplies and small parts for vehicle repairs at a small warehouse located in the Transportation and Plant Operations complex. The district does not have any staff assigned to this warehouse. The district also maintains inventories of food and supplies at each school. The technology department maintains an inventory of computer parts and supplies in the technology office. Except for copy paper, DSISD does not maintain an inventory of instructional or office supplies. The value of the total inventory in the district as of August 31, 2001 was \$143,884. That is approximately 1.8 percent of the district's annual non-payroll related expenditures. The individual campuses and departments, by means of the defined purchasing procedures, order and receive the supplies and materials necessary for their day-to-day operations.

FINDING

DSISD does not inventory goods stored in the warehouse on a recurring basis and adjust the accounting records to reflect the physical inventory during the year. The district inventories the warehouse once a year and adjusts the accounting records to reflect the results of the physical inventory. The work order system used by the district does not track supplies and materials used in the completion of each work order. With no mechanism in place to track where the supplies or materials are used, the district cannot track the true costs of repairs and maintenance at each school or other location.

The amount of paper shipped to each school and department from the warehouse is reported to the Business Office, and the accountant charges the paper to the proper cost center. At the end of the year, the accountant reconciles the inventory in the accounting records with the physical inventory taken by district personnel.

The assistant superintendent for Business Operations said the district maintains a perpetual inventory system for the warehouse inventory. A perpetual inventory system is updated throughout the year for purchases and uses of inventory items. At any time during the year, the quantities

shown in the perpetual records should be equal to the quantities actually on hand. The district makes periodic counts of the inventories, but does not update the accounting records to reflect those inventories. Except for the paper inventory, the district adjusts the accounting records for the inventory only at the end of the year.

Conducting more frequent periodic physical inventories and reconciling the accounting records with the results of the inventories to establish accountability is a good business practice. The FASRG states that this control over the warehouse inventory reduces the district's vulnerability to pilferage and misappropriation of materials and supplies kept in the warehouse. It also increases administrative control over the inventory.

Recommendation 35:

Conduct an inventory of the warehouse on a quarterly basis and adjust the accounting records accordingly.

Taking an inventory of the warehouse on a quarterly basis and adjusting the accounting records to the inventory will provide the district with greater control over assets stored in the warehouse.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations directs the Plant Operations and Transportation departments to record the issuance of supplies and materials from the warehouse.	October 2002 and Monthly
2.	The accountant adjusts the accounting records to reflect the usage of supplies and materials and charges their use to the appropriate school or department.	October 2002 and Monthly
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations directs the Plant Operations and Transportation departments to conduct quarterly inventories.	October 2002 and Quarterly
4.	The accountant reconciles the accounting records to the inventory taken by the Plant Operations and Transportation departments and reports any discrepancies to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations.	November 2002 and Quarterly
5.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations investigates any reported discrepancies.	November 2002 and Quarterly
6.	The Plant Operations and Transportation departments take the annual inventory of warehoused items for the district with the	June 2003 and Annually

external audit firm observing and performing test counts.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

C. TEXTBOOK OPERATIONS

An effective textbook operation includes the acquisition of appropriate textbooks, delivery of the textbooks to the schools and inventory of textbooks issued to the schools and held centrally by the district.

The textbook administration division of TEA oversees the selection and distribution of textbooks for all public schools in Texas. According to the textbook administration division, "Texas is one of 22 states with a process for approval or adoption of instructional materials. The Texas Constitution, Article VII, Section 3, requires that the State Board of Education (SBOE) set aside sufficient money to provide free textbooks for children attending the public schools in the state." Textbooks that are free from factual errors and that contain material covering each element of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are available for selection by local school districts. These textbooks are considered conforming and are provided to the districts at no cost. The textbooks are the property of the state as long as they remain in adoption by the state. The districts are responsible to the state for lost textbooks. Once the textbooks go out of adoption, the district may return the textbooks to the state or dispose of them in a manner approved by the state.

School districts must comply with Chapter 31 of TEC in adoption, use and disposition of textbooks. TEC Section 31.104(a) states, "The board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school may delegate to an employee the authority to requisition, distribute and manage the inventory of textbooks in a manner consistent with this chapter and rules adopted under this chapter." DSISD has designated a textbook custodian to perform these duties. The textbook custodian is also an aide at the district's middle school. The district does not maintain a central inventory of textbooks. The textbooks are distributed to the individual schools. The textbook custodian is responsible for the receipt, marking and delivery of the textbooks to the schools. The textbook custodian is also responsible for the annual inventory of all textbooks in the district.

DSISD policies on textbooks comply with the state laws and regulations about textbooks. The student handbooks for each school contain information about textbooks. The student handbooks require students cover textbooks at all times, that students place their name in the textbook and that students pay for lost or damaged textbooks. Although the policy

requires students to pay for lost and damaged books, the district has no real leverage with the students except to withhold their grades.

DSISD adopts textbooks from the conforming list provided by TEA. The district selects and adopts a single textbook for each subject and grade level. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning is responsible for the textbook selection process. Each student in DSISD is issued a textbook for each subject. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning said that the only classroom sets used in the district were for textbooks purchased by the district.

FINDING

DSISD uses an open process to select textbooks. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning selects a committee to review the textbooks being considered for adoption. The committee is comprised of teachers from the applicable grade levels and subject areas for the textbooks being considered. Although the committee does not have any parents as members, the adoption process is made public. Each school newsletter has information concerning the textbooks under consideration. The district also places advertisements in the local newspapers to inform the public of the subjects up for adoption and the adoption process.

The district displays the textbooks being considered for adoption at the district's central office, and these same textbooks are also available for inspection by the public at Region 13 in Austin. This open process for textbook selection allows teachers to have input in the selection of the textbooks and provides parents with an opportunity to review the textbooks before they are to be adopted. Many districts include parents in the textbook selection process, but DSISD gives all parents the opportunity to review and comment on the textbooks that will be used to teach their children. The comments received from parents concerning the proposed textbooks are given to the board before it approves the textbooks for adoption. The textbook committee then recommends a textbook for adoption at each grade level for each subject and in the upper grades for each subject area.

COMMENDATION

DSISD uses an open process for adopting textbooks.

FINDING

DSISD did not inventory textbooks at the high school during the 2000-01 school year. The textbook custodian, who is responsible for the annual inventory of all textbooks in the district, said that all schools except the

high school were inventoried in 2000-01 and that the high school would be inventoried in 2001-02. The textbook losses have been minimal at the primary, intermediate and middle schools. The district remitted \$7,154 and \$3,887 to TEA for lost textbooks in 1999-2000 and 2000-01, respectively.

Section 66.107 (a) of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) states, "Each school district or open-enrollment charter school shall conduct an annual physical inventory of all currently adopted instructional materials that have been requisitioned by, and delivered to, the district. The results of the inventory shall be recorded in the district's files. Reimbursement and/or replacement shall be made for all instructional materials determined to be lost."

Exhibit 8-3 presents the textbook purchases for the DSISD and peer districts for the period from 1998 through 2001. Textbook purchases often reflect the number of textbooks lost and demonstrates the need for inventory control of the textbooks.

**Exhibit 8-3
DSISD and Peer Districts
Textbook Purchases
1997-98 through 2000-01**

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Four Year Average
Marble Falls	\$22,282	\$1,924	\$2,235	\$2,595	\$7,259
Dripping Springs	14,778	12,502	7,154	11,768	11,551
Burnet Consolidated	24,117	48,220	31,153	49,160	38,163
Eanes	31,871	52,723	28,297	24,820	34,428
Wimberley	6,306	4,552	7,145	2,589	5,148

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 2000-01. Other peer districts did not record any textbook purchases during this period.

The district must either pay the state for lost textbooks or purchase replacements. The most effective districts inventory all textbooks annually to minimize the financial impact of an accumulated textbook loss and to provide accountability for the district's textbooks.

Annual textbook inventory is an effective practice used by many school districts. For example, as a part of their textbook management process, Lyford Consolidated ISD inventories all textbooks annually.

Recommendation 36:

Establish written procedures to ensure that all textbooks are inventoried annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The textbook custodian and the school administrator with responsibility for textbooks inventory the textbooks each year.	June 2003
2.	The textbook custodian reconciles the school inventories with the TEA inventory of textbooks issued to DSISD.	June 2003
3.	The textbook custodian reports discrepancies in the inventories to the school principals and assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning.	June 2003
4.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning investigates inventory discrepancies with the responsible principals.	June 2003
5.	The schools pay for any lost textbooks.	July 2003
6.	The district purchases additional textbooks with funds paid by the schools.	July 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have an automated system for tracking textbooks. The schools provide the textbook custodian with information about the number of textbooks at each school. The textbook custodian maintains the inventories of each school in a manual system. The textbook custodian compares the summary of these inventories to the TEA inventory. TEA maintains the district's textbook inventory online. Textbook coordinators in each school district have access to Educational Materials and Textbooks Online (EMAT). This system is used for ordering textbooks from the state.

Exhibit 8-4 presents the textbook purchases for the district's secondary schools for the past four years. The highest amounts of textbook purchases occur at the high school, which was not inventoried last year. Textbook losses may be higher at the high school when the inventory is conducted.

Exhibit 8-4
DSISD Textbook Purchases by Secondary School
1997-98 through 2000-01

School	1997-98	2000-1999	1999-2000	2000-01	Total
High School	\$1,000	\$526	\$4,894	\$10,001	\$16,421
Middle School	\$389	\$644	\$2,260	\$1,601	\$4,894
Total	\$1,389	\$1,190	\$7,154	\$11,602	\$21,315

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

An automated textbook system would reduce the time to take textbook inventories and provide greater control over the district's textbooks. Robstown ISD (RISD) used a book-tracking system to reduce its lost or damaged book charges by \$3,794 (37 percent) between 1999 and 2000. RISD uses Hayes Software Systems to maintain and track textbook inventories. The automated inventory system is constantly updated with current TEA textbook information and also contains the textbook name, edition and current costs. As part of the annual fee, software updates are received any time TEA adds or deletes textbooks from its list, or when textbook prices change. The district annotates in the software how many of each textbook it has and what school has how many of each textbook assigned to it.

Recommendation 37:

Implement an automated textbook tracking system.

The automated textbook system should be purchased for the district as a whole to assist in textbook inventories and control. The high school is generally the school with the greatest textbook losses and would benefit most from an automated inventory system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations directs the textbook custodian to work with the Technology Department to research automated textbook systems.	October 2002
2.	The textbook custodian recommends a system to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations.	November 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations authorizes the purchase of the recommended system using the appropriate	November 2002

	procurement method.	
4.	The director of Technology installs the system and prepares training for all appropriate district employees	February 2003
5.	The textbook custodian trains appropriate school personnel and implements the system.	March 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on savings of 35 percent in the four-year average of textbook expenditures of \$5,329 ($\$21,315 / 4 = \$5,329$). The initial \$2,590 cost of the system is based on installing it at both the high school and districtwide ($\$1,295 \times 2 = \$2,590$). The savings for future years are reduced by the annual maintenance fee of \$400 a year ($\$200 \times 2 = \400). ($\$5,329 \times .35$) - $\$400 = \$1,465$. No savings are shown for 2002-03.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
One time cost of software	(\$2,590)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Reduction in textbook costs	\$0	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465
Net (Cost)/Savings	(\$2,590)	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465	\$1,465

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

D. CONTRACTING PROCESS

An effective contracting process monitors and evaluates services received from external entities. The contracting process analyzes the operations of various areas of the district and performs cost/benefit analyses to evaluate whether there are goods or services that can be obtained from the private sector at a lower cost, higher quality or both.

The contracting process includes activities involved in the procurement and evaluation of services from external entities. School districts must perform a myriad of activities which support the primary function of schools, educating students. Many school districts contract for services they do not have the expertise, manpower or equipment to perform. Examples of these types of services are transportation, food service, exterminating services and landscaping services. Other services, such as audit services, are contracted because of state laws or rules. Districts evaluate external services using criteria included in the contract for services.

The Comptroller's "Yellow Pages" test states that government should do no job if there is a business in the Yellow Pages that can do that job better *and* at a lower cost. Whether a district has decided to contract out the operation of some function in its entirety, contract for management services, or conduct all phases of the operation in-house, regular evaluation is necessary to ensure that the highest quality services are delivered at the lowest price. Simply put, when analyzing the operations of the various functional areas, regular cost/benefit analyses are needed to evaluate whether there are goods or services that can be obtained from the private sector at a lower cost, higher quality or both.

DSISD contracts for audit, tax collection, financial advisor, bond counsel, environmental, architectural and legal services. The district also has contracts with Region 13 and with the Hays-Blanco Special Education Cooperative for various instructional services. The district also contracts for various other services on an as-needed basis. The district's employees provide most of the day-to-day functions required to operate the district. The superintendent said the administration had presented the idea of contracting certain services to private companies during the budget process and that the board was not interested in pursuing the idea.

The district has contracted with numerous companies since October 2001 to address the mold contamination at the primary school. At the November

19, 2001 board meeting, the board declared an urgent public necessity in order to take action to protect the health and safety of students and staff at the primary school.

An urgent public necessity is one of the exceptions to the requirements for competitive procurement and is described in the TEC. Sec. 44.031 (h) of TEC states, " If school equipment or a part of a school facility or personal property is destroyed or severely damaged or, as a result of an unforeseen catastrophe or emergency, undergoes major operational or structural failure, and the board of trustees determines that the delay posed by the methods provided for in this section would prevent or substantially impair the conduct of classes or other essential school activities, then contracts for the replacement or repair of the equipment or the part of the school facility may be made by methods other than those required by this section." The board authorized the administration to select contractors to proceed immediately with the remediation of mold at the primary school. **Exhibit 8-5** presents the contracts entered into by the district under the urgent public necessity declaration.

Exhibit 8-5
Urgent Public Necessity Contracts
Mold Remediation at the Primary School

Vendor	Project	Amount
Basic Industries	Primary: Mold Remediation	\$240,307
Quality Indoor Air	Primary: Mold Remediation	\$566,683
Basic Industries	Administrative Buildings: Mold and Asbestos Remediation	\$136,672
Western Floors	Administrative Buildings: Floor Tile	\$7,035
Air Craft Inc	Administrative Buildings: Air Duct Work	\$14,415

Source: DSISD assistant superintendent for Business Operations.

FINDING

The district does not have an effective contract management process. The district contracted services from professional service firms, financial advisors, bond counsel, architects, lawyers and environmental consultants. The assistant superintendent for Business Operations told the review team that they do not have contracts with all the professional service firms.

A professional service agreement is generally documented with a letter of agreement or contract that states the service to be performed and the price for the service. Without contracts, the district puts itself at risk of not receiving appropriate services from the vendors. Contracts contain language to ensure the district receives contracted services from the vendors at the contracted price.

Many school districts and other governmental entities have contract management processes that ensure the procedures used to procure contracted services are appropriate. The management process ensures that measurable performance standards are included in the contracts and that procedures exist to evaluate those standards. For example, the State Comptroller's Office obtains contracts for all professional services that include payment terms, deliverables to be received and the due dates of the deliverables.

Recommendation 38:

Establish contracting policies and procedures to ensure contracts are obtained and monitored.

Establishing a contracting policy will help ensure the district receives value equal to the cost incurred. The district should obtain contracts or letter of agreements with all professional service firms that specify the hourly rates to be paid by the district and the deliverables to be received by the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to establish contracting policies and procedures to ensure contracts are obtained and monitored.	October 2002
2.	The superintendent, assistant superintendents and appropriate staff members meet to develop a contracting policy, including contract negotiation and monitoring procedures.	October 2002
3.	The superintendent, assistant superintendents and appropriate staff members meet to develop measurable performance criteria to include in contracts.	November 2002
4.	The superintendent seeks and receives input from the district's legal counsel and TASB on the contracting policy.	December 2002
5.	The superintendent presents the policy to the board for consideration and possible revision.	January 2003
6.	The superintendent presents the policy to the board for approval.	February

		2003
7.	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Business Operations to ensure the contracting policy is implemented.	March 2003
8.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations reviews purchases of services to determine that contracts with measurable performance criteria are obtained.	Ongoing
9.	The superintendent reviews all contracts submitted for approval to evaluate policy compliance.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter reviews the Dripping Springs Independent School District's (DSISD's) computers and technology functions in three sections:

- A. Organization, Staffing and Budgeting
- B. Policies, Procedures and Planning
- C. Infrastructure, Software, Hardware and Operations

An effective technology department follows a well-defined plan and procedures based on district goals; assigns specific responsibilities to maintain and protect the system structure; develops new applications while maintaining older applications; encourages user training and use; and anticipates user needs and is customer-service orientated and tries to anticipate user needs. Some district technology services operations support administrative workers only, while others like DSISD's, support administration and instruction.

BACKGROUND

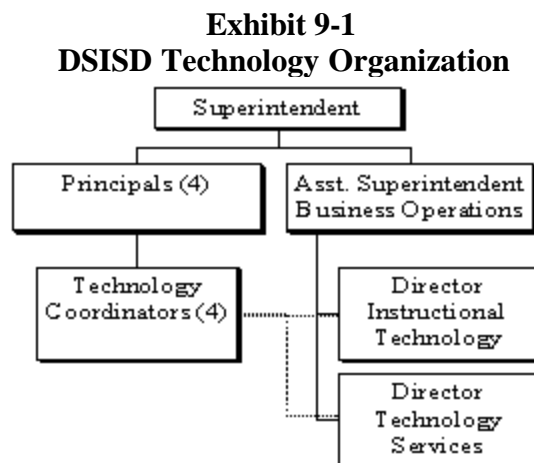
The Long Range Plan for Technology (TLRPT), 1996-2010, guides Texas schools in implementing technology. This plan provides technology goals in four key areas: teaching and learning; educator preparation and development; administration support and services; and infrastructure for technology. The TLRPT recommends that a school district devote 30 percent of its technology budget to staff development and training and have a long-range goal of providing a student-to-computer workstation ratio of one-to-one. The TLRPT also recommends that schools develop the infrastructure to integrate technology into every facet of student learning. State certification requirements for teachers and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum requirements support the TLRPT goals by setting standards for teacher technology knowledge and student technology skills development.

Chapter 9

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

A. ORGANIZATION, STAFFING AND BUDGETING

The DSISD Technology Department, which includes a director of Instructional Technology and a director of Technology Services, report directly to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations. The director of Instructional Technology is responsible for instructional technology planning, technology budget coordination, managing communications systems [intercoms, bells and telephones] and the district's distance-learning program. The director of Technology Services oversees networking issues, e-mail, virus protection and Internet servers and provides general technical support to each of the district's four schools. The district's technology directors provide primary technical support for district administrative offices and secondary technical support for the four schools (**Exhibit 9-1**).



Source: Dripping Springs ISD Administrative Office.

The Technology Department's improvement plan sets goals and objectives for the department.

With the exception of the high school, each DSISD school has a full-time technology coordinator to provide technical support, assist teachers with integrating technology into their lessons and maintain hardware and software. At the high school, the technology coordinator, who also teaches two courses, provides technical support to the school and maintains hardware and software, while the high school instructional facilitator assists teachers with integrating technology into their lessons. The district

classifies and pays technology coordinators, who report directly to their principals, as instructional staff.

Technology coordinators are responsible for internally supporting all computer systems, both instructional and administrative, at the school level. Issues beyond the technical knowledge of the technology coordinators are directed to the director of Technology Services. If the problem is also beyond the director's scope of technical knowledge, the director contracts with an external provider.

The technology coordinators split their duties between instructional technology support and technical support for their school. DSISD compares favorable to its peer districts in the number of technology administrators. Eanes, Lake Travis and Marble Falls, however, have a higher number of instructional technology employees (**Exhibit 9-2**).

**Exhibit 9-2
Technology Staffing
DSISD and Peer Districts**

District	Technology Administrators	Network Support	Technical Support	Instructional Technology	Total FTEs*
Eanes	2	2	3	11	18
Lake Travis	0.33	1	3	6	10.33
Marble Falls	1	0	4	3	8
Dripping Springs **	2	0	2	1.5	5.5
Burnet Consolidated	1	1	0.5	0.5	3

Source: Peer District Survey and DSISD interviews with technology staff.

**FTE equals full-time equivalent employees.*

***Three technology coordinators are allocated 0.5 FTE to Technical Support, 0.5 FTE to Instructional Technology. The high school technology coordinator is allocated 0.5 FTE to Technical Support only.*

Note: Wimberly ISD did not provide data.

The technology directors manage a departmental budget, while school-based technology coordinators, in cooperation with school administration and the campus technology committees, manage individual school technology budgets. The district technology budget includes state funds, supplemented by special revenue funds. The state pays each district a technology allotment of \$30 per student based upon student average daily attendance. The district uses the state technology allotment to purchase equipment and train staff.

For 2000-01, DSISD allocated almost 70 percent of its technology allotment on debt service to repay a \$500,000 loan for DSISD's 1998 purchase of computers and printers. The district pays this loan with both technology allotment and general fund money. Given the current debt service schedule, DSISD anticipates that it will pay off the loan by 2003. After subtracting the debt service from the technology allotment, the district provides each school with \$10 per student for technology purposes. The district uses additional general fund money for technology supplies, repairs and contracted services set by each school (**Exhibit 9-3**).

Exhibit 9-3
DSISD State Technology Allotment Funding

Purpose	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Budgeted
Instruction	\$28,882	\$33,180
Debt Service	\$62,909	\$59,005
Total	\$91,791	\$92,185

Source: DSISD Technology Department and TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01 and 2001-02.

DSISD supplements its technology budget with grant awards. DSISD received Technology Infrastructure Fund grants totaling nearly \$400,000 in 2000 and 2001. These funds were used for additional technology resources and staff development. DSISD also participates in grant projects awarded to the Regional Education Service Center XIII (Region 13), which provides technology staff development resources and technical assistance to the district.

The district also received an E-Rate discount on telephone expenses totaling \$10,000 for the first five months of 2001, with additional discounts to be received for the rest of 2001-02.

FINDING

DSISD does not provide its Technology Department staff sufficient training to support the district's computer hardware and software. The technology directors and coordinators provide primary technical assistance to district administrative and instructional staff. The technology coordinators help staff perform maintenance and troubleshooting on computer equipment and install hardware and software onto existing systems. If a particular issue or task is beyond the technical expertise of a technology coordinator, they typically refer the issue to the director of Technology Services. The director performs more sophisticated tasks such as administering the district Web site, installing cable lines to connect computers to the district network and maintaining computer servers.

The director of Instructional Technology and the director of Technology Services were former teachers in DSISD and served as technology coordinators at the school level. The director of Instructional Technology received a master's degree in Education Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in instructional technology and a minor in computer science. The director of Technology Services has a certification in computer science and a master's degree in Education. Each of the technology coordinators is a former DSISD teacher. (The high school coordinator still teaches two classes). Although the district and school technology employees have participated in technical training, a majority of the technology coordinators' technical training has been obtained through practical experience working with district's computer systems and interactions with contracted technical service providers and district staff.

District staff said that district technology personnel have not provided technical support on several occasions. DSISD librarians said that they have had to obtain technical assistance from outside vendors for their PC-based systems for issues that district technology personnel typically support. District invoices showed that DSISD contracted with vendors for computer setup, software installation and server backup services that technology staff said they typically provide and that are listed in the technology coordinator job description.

To ensure such tasks are performed correctly and efficiently, Technology Department staff members require a significant amount of technical expertise. The TEA Long Range Plan for Technology, 1996-2010, states that the "human infrastructure" of technology, the capabilities or proficiencies of those who use technical components is just as important as the hardware that comprises the system infrastructure. The Texas School Technology and Readiness Chart (STAR Chart), a tool provided by TEA to help school districts assess their progress with technology, recommends that each district strive to have one technical staff member

for each 350 computers. The STAR chart also recommends that each district have campus-based technical support in addition to district-level technical staff. While the technology coordinators share technical support duties with the director of Technology Services, none of the technology coordinators provide full-time technical support to its campus.

DSISD's technology staff has taken advantage of training opportunities such as computer troubleshooting classes and classes on how to build and configure a PC. However, this training is not included in a staff development plan to address specific technical deficiencies.

Recommendation 39:

Create a technology staff development plan to increase the technical proficiency of district and school-level technology personnel.

DSISD technology staff must not only provide instructional support, but also must have the expertise necessary to serve as capable technical support. In coordination with technology coordinators, the district technology directors should establish development goals for technology personnel using the regional service center and other available resources. The technology staff development plan should provide technology staff development opportunities that address specific deficiencies in technical expertise, such as knowledge of PC-based systems, networks and software. The plan should be developed with input from district leadership as well as district computer users. Ultimately, the staff development plan goals should match the technology staff job descriptions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Instructional Technology surveys district leadership and employees to evaluate technology staff support levels and user needs.	October 2002
2.	The Technology directors evaluate technology staff for individual computer limitations and training needs.	November 2002
3.	The Technology directors present a summary of their findings to the Technology Vertical Committee, which includes the district technology directors and the school technology coordinators.	January 2003
4.	The Technology Vertical Committee determines overall staff development goals and needs.	February 2003
5.	The director of Instructional Technology drafts a technology staff development plan based upon identified needs.	March 2003
6.	The Technology Vertical Committee reviews and approves the	April 2003

	plan.	
7.	The Technology Vertical Committee presents the plan to the superintendent for review.	May 2003
8.	The superintendent approves the plan.	April 2003
9.	The Technology Vertical Committee evaluates the plan and revises it as necessary.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

B. POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PLANNING

The key to successful district technology use is planning. Schools need to develop a technology plan that is closely aligned with their curriculum and that includes the following five factors.

- **Training.** Staff development is critical for all staff. It is especially important for teachers, however, since it is essential to creating an effective learning environment for students. Unless serious attention is given to what training will be provided, how it will be delivered, when and how frequently it can be made available and to whom is it directed, effective training will not occur. The price of inadequate training is a considerable loss in the "payoff" on the investment in educational technology resources.
- **Equity.** The level of technological resources available to each school in a district can vary unacceptably. Unfortunately, poorly planned introductions of new technology can widen the gap between the "haves" and "have nots". Careful planning at the district level can ensure that all schools receive adequate support.
- **Rapid Change.** The pace of technological change continues to accelerate. If planning the implementation of new technology does not cover an adequate span of time (three to five years), the district risks failing to take full advantage of this rapid change.
- **Funding.** Funding can be the greatest barrier to the effective use of technology in the classroom. Unless planning addresses how projects will be funded, limited funding can have a greater impact than it should.
- **Credibility.** The public is eager to see its tax dollars spent effectively. Thorough planning makes it possible to demonstrate that proposed strategies have been well thought out, acquisitions of technological resources have been carefully considered and that every aspect of the implementation is cost-effective.

To implement information technology effectively in administrative offices or schools, a district must have an extensive computer network connecting computers; comprehensive administrative and instructional software and up-to-date operating systems; effective, ongoing training; adequate technical support; a professional staff capable of implementing and administering a technology-rich environment; and a means to provide the community access to school information through technology.

The District Technology Committee coordinates district technology planning and is responsible for the District Long Range Plan for Technology (DLRPT). The DLRPT, which was created in 1997 and covered the years 1998 to 2003, was recently updated and approved. The updated plan sets technology goals for the years 2002 to 2005.

The primary vehicles for technology coordination and planning are district technology committees, which include the District Technology Committee, four school-level technology committees and the Technology Vertical Committee. The District Technology Committee consists of district and school-level technology staff; administrative and instructional staff representatives from each school; and a parent representative. The District Technology Committee coordinates and plans district technology efforts, and implements DSISD's Long Term Plan for Technology.

School technology committees, which are chaired by each school technology coordinator, include administrative and instructional staff as well as a parent representative. The committees determine the technology needs and priorities for the schools. The Technology Vertical Committee, consisting of the district technology directors and the school technology coordinators, provides a way for district and school-level staff to coordinate technology goals and address district computer issues. All the committees meet as needed, with the exception of the Vertical Committee, which meets monthly.

The Technology Department has established policies and procedures for Internet use and data security. Because of the small size of the district and the close working relationships of the technology staff, planning and documentation has been rather informal. As the district continues to grow, planning and documented procedures will be essential for DSISD to keep pace with its technology goals and needs.

FINDING

The District Long Range Plan for Technology goals do not have specific actions and timelines, nor is the plan evaluated on a regular basis. The current DLRPT outlines broad goals such as the following:

- develop curriculum and courses available with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills;
- provide on-site and cross-school staff development, coordinated with TCEA conference dates;
- provide sufficient equipment and other resources to staff and support personnel; and
- investigate and coordinate alternative educational opportunities for students with community.

Attached to the DLRPT was a one-year action plan for 1998-99 with added action steps for each school to meet the plan's goals and objectives. The district, however, did not assign a specific person the responsibility to ensure completion of each action step or a specific deadline. The district also did not develop similar action plans for subsequent years of the DLRPT. Schools and the district maintain improvement plans, but these plans do not include technology goals and objectives linked to the DLRPT.

The DLRPT is not evaluated and revised on a periodic basis. In 1997, in coordination with each school technology committee, the District Technology Committee developed the existing DLRPT. The plan states that it should be updated annually based upon user feedback and review by the school and district technology committees. According to both district and school technology staff, the only annual update of this plan occurred in 1998. By not revising the DLRPT regularly, DSISD risks the plan becoming outdated and out of touch with the needs of its growing student and staff clientele.

In May 2002, DSISD approved a new district technology plan to cover the years 2002-05. Several action steps included in the plan are actually objectives. For example, one action step suggests DSISD maintain a three-to-one ratio of students to computers, but there is no recommendation on how to achieve it. Several action steps included in the plan have multiple positions and committees assigned responsibility for completion. The timeline assigned to action steps in the new plan is similar to that in the DLRPT in that there is no specific action step to ensure the plan's periodic evaluation, revision and update.

Each principal conducts an annual survey of the instructional staff to gain feedback and determine needs. Although these surveys are not used to directly determine technology needs, teachers provide feedback on staff development needs, including technology. The district technology staff, through the Vertical Committee, is currently developing and implementing a technology survey to administer to district technology users. This survey will request feedback on issues such as the performance of technology staff, technology support of curriculum, safety and security and staff development. The Technology Department plans to report these findings to the board in June 2002.

The most effective technology plans contain clear goals, objectives and action plans for technology projects. They assign individual responsibility for implementation steps and set clear deadlines. In addition, best practices dictate that districts identify budgets to determine the financial impact of the plan and commit direct funding to each goal of the plan.

A well-developed technology plan also requires regular evaluation to determine if goals and strategies are consistent with student and user needs, as well as to ensure alignment with the Texas Long Range Plan for Technology and other applicable technology guidelines. Peer districts of DSISD each have a district technology plan and evaluate it on a regular basis. The Texas Education Agency recently developed the STAR Chart to assist school districts in determining their progress with technology. An important target goal stated in this chart is that school districts should evaluate their technology plan on an annual basis.

Recommendation 40:

Revise the district technology plan to include specific actions, positions responsible and timelines, as well as provisions for periodic plan evaluation and revision.

The district technology plan should include action steps to match the goals and objectives of the plan. The plan should limit action responsibility to one or two parties that can be held accountable for their completion.

The plan should also have measurable goals and strategies that can be evaluated on a regular basis. The technology plan process should include regular review of the plan and periodic revision to ensure the plan is aligned with the changing needs of the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the District Technology Committee to revise the district technology plan to include specific actions with accompanying timelines and estimated costs.	September 2002
2.	The District Technology Committee reviews the district technology plan to determine appropriate actions to meet goals and objectives.	November 2002
3.	The District Technology Committee determines timelines for actions to be completed, and designates a party responsible for overseeing its completion and associated costs, if any.	December 2002
4.	The District Technology Committee develops a plan for evaluating and revising the district technology plan, including assignment of responsibilities to appropriate personnel.	January 2003
5.	The District Technology Committee revises the district technology plan to reflect changes.	February 2003
6.	The District Technology Committee submits the district technology plan to the superintendent and board for approval.	March 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's disaster recovery plan lacks key components and a clear action plan. Each technology coordinator conducts system backups, a critical system function, differently- there are no common procedures for back ups or to maintain servers. **Exhibit 9-4** shows the data backup methods each school uses.

Exhibit 9-4
DSISD File Backup Methods by School

School	Method of Backup
District Office	Daily tape backup of financial and personnel data
Primary School	Nightly file server backup and weekend backup of all files to an external hard drive.
Intermediate School	Librarian does a tape backup; technology coordinator performs a manual backup of files onto disk.
Middle School	Tape backup of files every night; two sets of tapes maintained, one offsite
High School	Manual backup of server onto another server located in the school.

Source: Interviews with DSISD technology coordinators and technology directors.

DSISD's data security plan includes a contact list and the general responsibilities of personnel in securing and maintaining systems. While the data security plan lists the parties responsible and resources available during a disaster or power failure, the plan lacks key components and therefore is not a comprehensive disaster recovery plan. While the responsibility for data backup and network and server maintenance is clear, the plan does not detail a sequence of steps to take in case of a disaster or how to test such procedures. The data security plan also does not designate a disaster recovery team to execute the plan.

Exhibit 9-5 lists some of the key elements of an effective disaster recovery plan.

Exhibit 9-5
Key Elements of a Disaster Recovery Plan

Step	Details
Build the disaster recovery team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a disaster recovery team that includes key policy makers, building management, end-users, key outside contractors and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the district. • Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inventory of all computer technology assets, including data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. • Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organizations to share each other's equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the district to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. • Make plans to procure hardware, software and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations are resumed as soon as possible. • Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. • Locate support resources that might be needed, such as equipment repair, trucking and cleaning companies. • Arrange with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders. • Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details within the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so that everyone knows exactly what needs to be done. • Define actions to be taken in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. • Define actions to be taken at the onset of an

	<p>undesirable event to limit damage, loss and compromised data integrity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify actions to be taken to restore critical functions. • Define actions to be taken to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the plan frequently and completely. • Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Deal with damage appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a disaster actually occurs, document all costs and videotape the damage. • Be prepared to overcome downtime on your own; insurance settlements can take time to resolve.
Give consideration to other significant issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make a plan unnecessarily complicated. • Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that others are authorized and prepared to implement if it is needed. • Update the plan regularly and whenever changes are made to your system.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology" (Modified by TSPR)

According to the Texas Department of Information Resources, an effective technology plan provides a road map to reduce decision-making during recovery operations so that an organization can resume services quickly and in the most cost-effective manner. A plan will establish, organize and document risk assessments, responsibilities, policies and procedures, and agreements and understandings for internal and external entities.

Recommendation 41:

Revise the current data security plan to include additional key components of a disaster recovery plan, including standard backup procedures.

Districts should have comprehensive disaster recovery plans that address any system that is subject to failure during a disaster. A disaster recovery

plan must include contingency and backup procedures for information technology.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Technology Services revises the data security plan with assistance from the Vertical Committee and Region 13.	September 2002
2.	The director of Technology Services finds a neighboring district to secure a reciprocal agreement.	September 2002
3.	The board president of each district signs the reciprocal agreement.	November 2002
4.	The director of Technology Services develops a daily backup and alternate location storage procedure for the district.	December 2002
5.	The superintendent approves the disaster recovery plan and reciprocal agreement.	January 2003
6.	The board approves the disaster recovery plan and reciprocal agreement.	January 2003
7.	The director of Technology Services trains staff on the backup and alternate location storage procedures.	February 2003
8.	The director of Technology Services implements backup and alternate location storage procedures.	February 2003
9.	The director of Technology Services tests the disaster recovery plan.	March 2003
10.	The director of Technology Services documents recovery procedures.	April 2003
11.	The director of Technology Services implements the agreement.	May 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district lacks standardized controls to track technology equipment inventories. School technology coordinators maintain inventories of technology equipment for their respective school. Each coordinator keeps an inventory database in a spreadsheet or database. Each database has an itemized record of each piece of equipment, including its serial number

and model. Most of the technology coordinators use serial numbers as the main identifier for inventory. However, the coordinators enter and record additional information inconsistently.

Inventory record reviews showed discrepancies that complicate equipment tracking. For example, one school equipment inventory database contained several blank spaces for the "location" of the equipment and lacked serial numbers. One inventory tracked the location of equipment by the teacher name while another tracked it by room number. In addition, each school inventory database tracked a different combination of data for inventory purposes. Two of the schools had sequentially numbered inventory records, while two did not.

The coordinators do not update inventory on a regular basis. Two of the coordinators conduct a count of computers at the end of the year. When one technology coordinator was asked the method for verifying the computer inventory, the response was, "I just know where all of my computers are and where they are located." Another technology coordinator said that inventory maintenance instructions from district technology staff had never been received. District technology staff, however, said that technology coordinators were given guidance on maintaining inventories.

Many school districts maintain a controlled inventory of all computers and other equipment that may be prone to theft. The control inventory contains a list of every computer, its location and the individual responsible for that item. In addition, the control inventory has standardized identifying fields to ensure that computers can be easily tracked. Periodically, a designated district employee visits each school and compares existing equipment to items on the control list. Inventory procedures and guidelines are documented to ensure that responsible parties follow similar procedures across the district.

Recommendation 42:

Create a procedure for controlling technology equipment inventory.

The procedure should include guidelines and standards for a district inventory database, including consistent methods for identifying equipment as well as for making necessary inventory adjustments.

Inventory control should include computers and other technology items that are either worth more than \$5,000 or are more prone to theft. The inventory control policy should state that the district maintains a controlled inventory of all computers and other equipment that may be

prone to theft. The policy should also include requirements for an annual physical inventory of equipment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Technology Services, in conjunction with the Vertical Committee, develops a process to document inventory of all appropriate equipment.	October 2002
2.	The director of Technology Services, in conjunction with the Vertical Committee, determines a process and timeline for a periodic physical inventory of equipment.	November 2002
3.	The director of Technology Services creates an inventory control policy for the district.	January 2003
4.	The superintendent and board approve the inventory control policy.	February 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Although DSISD offers teachers technology training opportunities, these opportunities are not coordinated to ensure that all teachers achieve technology proficiency. Technology coordinators provide technology support to teachers and occasionally hold teacher-training sessions to explain a specific technology tool. Teachers receive a half-day orientation to computer systems at the beginning of the school year. Principals schedule technology in-service training as the opportunity arises.

The district has received three Technology Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grants that require using a portion of funds for training. District instructional staff also has participated in training at Region 13 as part of a Technology in Education (TIE) grant received by the education service center.

While DSISD has provided a significant amount of training to instructional staff, this training has not been linked to a plan that ensures teachers and other staff members are attaining sufficient technology proficiencies. The District Long Range Plan for Technology states an objective to "provide staff development to accomplish the technological goals of the district in order to attain competency levels as articulated by the campuses." However, the plan does not say how to achieve this objective and does not set basic standards for teacher competencies.

Technology training for instructional staff is ongoing and each school had several examples of training sessions offered to teachers. School-level administrators and technology coordinators are primarily responsible for coordinating training opportunities for their respective staff.

DSISD peer districts each have a technology-training plan in place for its teachers. The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) has recently adopted standards for teacher competencies in technology applications. SBEC requires these standards of all beginning certified teachers and states that they should be used as a guideline for establishing standards for teacher development in technology. The Texas Education Agency's STAR chart sets a goal for educators to meet 100 percent of SBEC proficiencies. Marble Falls ISD, a peer district of DSISD, includes these technology standards as an appendix to its district technology plan.

Recommendation 43:

Create a district training plan for instructional staff that is aligned with current teacher standards.

The district should develop a training plan to ensure that the various technology training opportunities meet the instructional needs of the district and promote adequate teacher proficiencies. The training plan should set goals for staff development, including spending 30 percent of technology funds on technology staff development, consistent with Texas Education Agency STAR chart goals. The training plan should be incorporated into the district's technology plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The District Technology Committee determines technology staff development goals and objectives by surveying principals and staff.	September 2002
2.	The District Technology Committee works with the campus technology committees to establish standards for technology competencies that are aligned with current SBEC standards.	October 2002
3.	The District Technology Committee creates a technology staff development plan with standards for teacher proficiency.	December 2002
4.	The board adopts the standards and specifies timelines by which teachers must demonstrate proficiency in technology as required by the standards.	January 2003
5.	The director of Instructional Technology creates a skills form that specifies the areas in which teachers must attain proficiency and distributes this form to school principals.	March 2003

6.	The director of Instructional Technology prepares an annual report for the superintendent documenting progress in teacher technology proficiency and development.	End of Each School Year
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 9

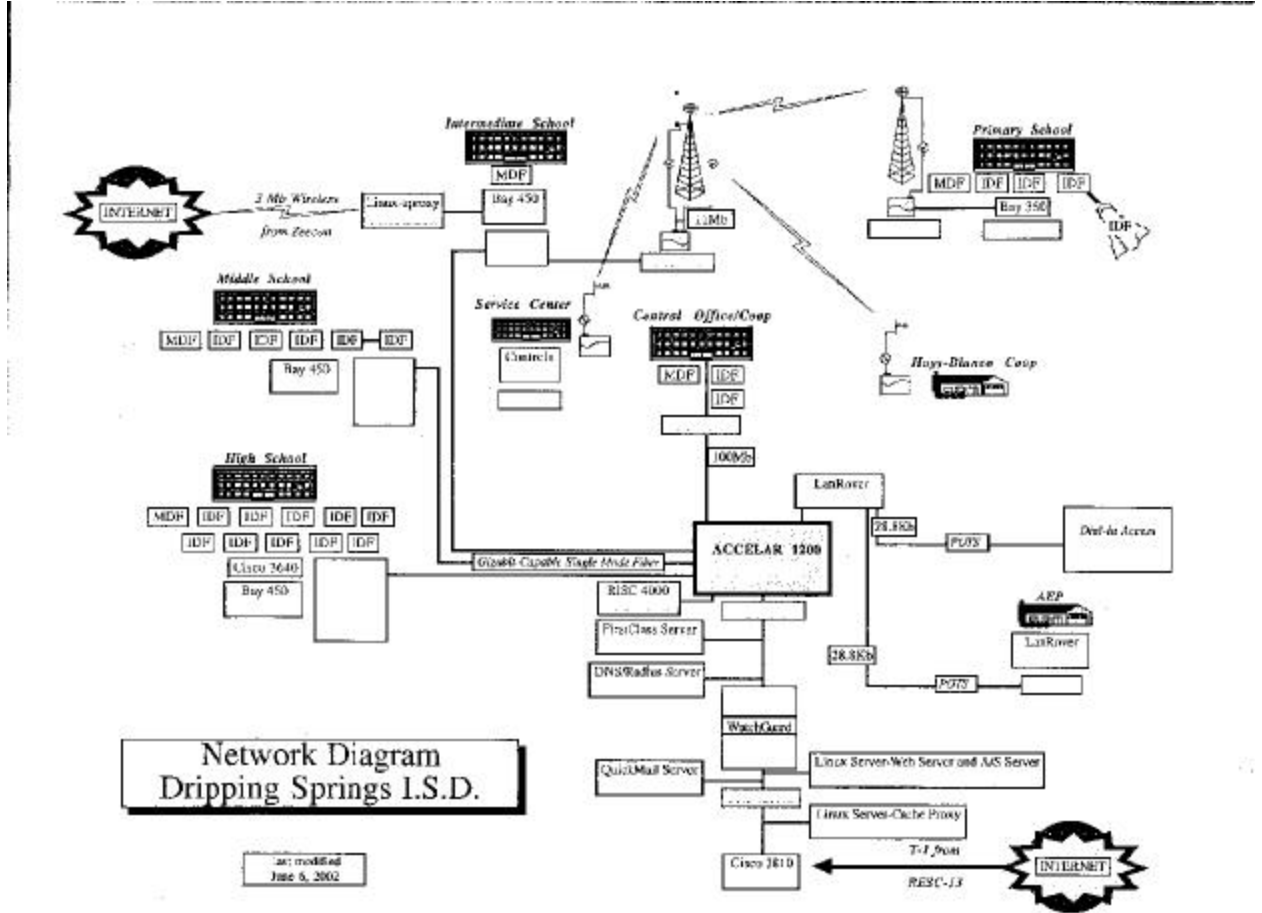
COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

C. INFRASTRUCTURE, SOFTWARE, HARDWARE AND OPERATIONS

DSISD has an estimated 1,000 computers to serve a student enrollment of more than 3,000 students. Students in grades Pre-K through 8 typically use Apple Macintosh computer models for classroom learning and have library access to PC model computers. Students at the high school level use PC model computers primarily for classroom learning; Apple Macintosh systems are used for video, graphics, journalism and Web design. Administrative and support staff use PC model computers, while teachers outside of the high school use Apple Macintosh computer models at their workstations. The district uses Apple servers set up on a dual platform to support Apple and Windows-based systems. The district has two servers located at the district office to support its business functions. The district is networked through a wide area network (WAN), using a network of switches and routers and communicating through fiber optic cable lines acquired at a discount through local business partnerships. The primary school has a wireless network connection, and the alternative school communicates with the WAN through remote dial-up access. The district also has Internet access through a T-1 line linked from the Region 13 service center to the network.

All district teachers and most staff have e-mail, the primary form of communication through the network, and every student has a designated folder on the server to save their work. **Exhibit 9-6** shows a diagram of the DSISD infrastructure.

Exhibit 9-6 DSISD Network



Source: DSISD Technology Department.

The schools use more than 40 different types of software in classroom learning, from keyboarding instruction software to video production systems. DSISD schools work under the premise that technology is a tool to enhance the learning of students, so computers and software applications are integrated into classroom instruction through the cooperation of instructors and technology coordinators.

DSISD cafeterias point-of-sale software system transactions are directly communicated to district financial data systems. The Transportation Department uses management software to handle scheduling and routing issues. The district uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) software to manage its financial and human resources data, while the South Texas Multi-Regional Processing Center (STMRPC) software package manages student information. These software systems are supported by Region 13 and are used to compile data

for the PEIMS state data reporting. The district has determined that these systems may not be meeting its needs, so a special committee has been created to consider options.

FINDING

DSISD has integrated technology into learning. The district also has used its technology funding to develop exceptional programs targeted at creatively teaching students how to use technology.

Middle school students learn about video broadcasting through an in-house broadcasting system called Mighty Tiger Television (MTTV). The students produce a daily program that includes school announcements, weather reports and special news features. In the process, students learn to work with sophisticated video production equipment and develop their presentation skills. In addition, the technology coordinator uses student assistants to provide technical support to teachers and staff, reinforcing student knowledge of computer systems through hands-on experience.

Intermediate school students create the school Web page under the supervision of teachers and the technology coordinator. The Web page is posted on the district Web site and is accessible to students, staff and the community.

Elementary school students combine a common classroom activity with camera animation techniques. The Claymation video production package allows students to create figures with clay and then manipulate the figures while taking still pictures. The Claymation software shows the students the final product, a short animated video of their clay creations coming to life.

The high school requires graduating seniors to make a presentation to a panel of school staff and community members. In this presentation, students must discuss their background, learned skills and future aspirations. As part of the presentation, seniors must demonstrate their ability to select appropriate technologies and use them creatively to demonstrate their technological proficiency, as well as how that proficiency will assist them in their chosen field.

These programs use technology to improve student education and help students develop a true understanding of the real-world environment that surrounds them. Through these technology programs, students also learn creative and communication skills that will serve the students in their future endeavors.

COMMENDATION

The district has enhanced classroom curriculum through innovative programs using technology.

FINDING

The Technology Department has achieved savings for the district by acquiring technology resources through partnerships with community residents and businesses. DSISD enlisted the help, support and skills of several community members employed at local technology companies. These volunteers have provided in-kind technology support and expertise to the Technology Department.

The district also obtained more significant infrastructure savings through local business partnerships. The Technology Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant for nearly \$300,000 that DSISD received in 2001 did not provide sufficient funds to connect two schools to the network through wireless connections. To remedy this situation, the district partnered with the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and Zeecon wireless Internet company. LCRA offered Zeecon free tower space to maintain its wireless Internet services in the Dripping Springs service area; in return, Zeecon agreed to provide free wireless Internet service to DSISD, Dripping Springs Community Library District and the Hill Country Senior Citizen Activity Center.

Zeecon also constructed and donated two 150-foot towers to DSISD, which completed the school district's network and enabled Zeecon to provide high-speed wireless Internet services to the community. This endeavor brought significant savings to the district and was recognized in local media.

CAPCO, a local provider, agreed to connect fiber optic cable to the high school to create a network connection at the discounted price of a T1 line. The provider agreed to charge the discounted rate until the district owns the fiber optic cable. The Pedernales Electric Company (PEC) also provides free rent to DSISD to connect the fiber optic cable to its cable poles.

The district also sought resources from entities located outside the community. Technology Department staff contacted the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) when the high school science teacher learned that NASA has a computer equipment donation program. Subsequently, the technology staff received a large inventory of used computer equipment, including monitors, hardware and video equipment. Although much of the equipment was outdated for NASA, it was useable by DSISD. In addition, the donation provides a large quantity of spare parts for maintenance purposes. Over the years, DSISD has also

received considerable technology equipment donations from Motorola and the Texas Medical Foundation.

These community and business partnerships have allowed the district to save thousands of dollars in maintenance, hardware and infrastructure costs.

COMMENDATION

DSISD successfully fosters partnerships with businesses and other groups as resources to support and enhance district technology services.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

This chapter reviews the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) transportation function in four sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Policies and Procedures
- C. Safety and Training
- D. Maintenance

The main goal of every school district's transportation department is to transport all students to and from school and approved extracurricular activities in a timely, safe and efficient manner. Texas' 35,000 school buses travel more than 380 million miles a year, carrying nearly 1.4 million children every day. The annual statewide cost for public school bus transportation is nearly \$834 million. School districts collectively operate one of the safest forms of transportation in the country, safer than any other form of mass transit and nearly 2,000 times safer than any family car.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Education Code (TEC) authorizes but does not require each Texas school district to provide transportation between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations and for co-curricular and extracurricular activities. In addition, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires school districts to provide transportation for students with disabilities if they also provide transportation for the general student population or if disabled students require transportation to receive special education services.

The TEC also states that a school district may receive state funding for transporting regular and special program students between home and school. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) sets the funding rules. Local funds must pay for transportation costs that are not covered by the state. For the regular transportation program, TEA reimburses qualified transportation expenses according to a prescribed formula that is based on linear density. Linear density is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily to the number of miles driven daily. As linear density increases, so does a district's rate of reimbursement.

State funding for regular program transportation is limited to students living two or more miles from the school they attend, unless the students face hazardous walking conditions on the way to school. The state does

not pay for summer school transportation or for co-curricular routes between schools during the day. Extracurricular transportation, such as trips to after-school and weekend events, is also not funded by the state.

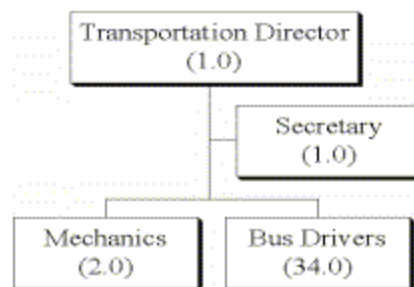
All special education transportation, except for certain field trips, is eligible for state reimbursement. Because special programs, unlike the regular program, are not able to achieve efficiency by clustering students at bus stops, they are not reimbursed based on linear density. The Texas Legislature capped reimbursement for special program transportation at \$1.08 per mile.

In 2000-01, DSISD operated 29 routes per day, each carrying an average of 45 students to school and home on regular runs. Three of the 29 regular runs are for students living within two miles of the school, but whose route to school has been designated as too hazardous to walk. DSISD also operated numerous additional bus trips for athletic, educational and extracurricular programs. The district also operates seven special education routes, transporting a total of 67 students per day.

DSISD buses operate on regular routes between 6:50 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. for morning transport to school and between 3:20 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. for afternoon transport home. A generally accepted rule of thumb for student transport is to design routes so that students are on the bus for one hour or less each way. However, DSISD is 198 square miles in size and some buses must travel nearly 60 miles one way to pick up and return students, so many students exceed the one hour standard.

The Transportation director reports to the assistant superintendent for Business Operations. The director is a recent hire, having started in November 2001. The organization of the Transportation Department is shown in **Exhibit 10-1**.

Exhibit 10-1
DSISD Transportation Organization
2001-02



Source: DSISD Transportation Office, April 2002.

Exhibit 10-2 compares the transportation cost of DSISD, peer districts and the state as a percentage of total district operating expenditures. DSISD spends a greater percentage of its operating budget on transportation operations than peer districts except for Burnet Consolidated which is the same.

Exhibit 10-2
Transportation Cost as a Percent of
Total Budgeted Operating Expenditures for
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01

District	Total District Expenditures	Transportation Operations Cost*	Percent of Total Expenditures
Dripping Springs	\$17,940,279	\$818,357	4.6%
Burnet Consolidated	\$17,359,664	\$793,728	4.6%
Lake Travis	\$26,366,120	\$1,081,844	4.1%
Marble Falls	\$21,590,157	\$885,732	4.1%
Wimberley	\$10,375,986	\$380,921	3.7%
Eanes	\$50,140,910	\$1,143,353	2.3%
State Total	\$26,948,681,700	\$676,770,906	2.5%

Sources: Total expenditures from Texas Education Agency (TEA), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2000-01. Transportation operations cost from TEA, School Transportation Operation Report, 2000-01.

**Includes both regular and special education transportation; excludes debt service and capital outlay.*

Exhibit 10-3 compares 2000-01 regular route mileages in each peer district and the state as a whole by type of mileage and the cost per mile. DSISD had the second highest route mileage, but the third lowest extracurricular and co-curricular mileage. DSISD also had the second highest "other" mileage, which is defined as incidental operational miles, such as those required for inspection, maintenance, repair, or driver training. For DSISD, other mileage includes the shuttling of students to the intermediate school as part of its transfer system. Nevertheless, DSISD had by far the lowest cost per mile for regular education transportation. Its \$1.721 cost per mile also was substantially less than the statewide average of \$2.145 per mile.

Exhibit 10-3
Total Regular Education Mileage Data for
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01

District	Route Mileage	Extra/Co-Curricular Mileage	Non-School Organizations Mileage	Other Mileage	Total Annual Mileage	Cost per Mile
Eanes	317,656	71,704	1,093	1,250	391,703	\$2.723
Marble Falls	290,840	54,255	0	2,856	347,951	\$2.595
Lake Travis	287,177	63,735	377	23,759	375,048	\$2.424
Wimberley	72,440	27,238	0	5,085	104,763	\$2.451
Burnet Consolidated	474,889	101,337	0	83,855	660,081	\$2.055
Dripping Springs	323,319	60,249	0	81,535	465,103	\$1.721
State Total	228,426,523	57,087,950	737,378	6,795,443	293,047,294	\$2.145

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 2000-01.

Exhibit 10-4 compares 2000-01 special education route mileages in each peer district, and the state as a whole, by type of mileage and cost per mile. As with regular education, DSISD had one of the lower route mileage totals for special education. It had by far the largest accumulation of other mileage, yet still managed to have one of the lowest costs per mile among the peer districts. Its \$1.444 cost per mile was much less than most of its peers and much less than the statewide average of \$2.272 per mile.

Exhibit 10-4
Total Special Education Mileage Data for
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01

District	Route Mileage	Extra/Co-Curricular Mileage	Non-School Organizations Mileage	Other Mileage	Total Annual Mileage	Cost per Mile
Lake Travis	114,863	375	0	1,335	116,573	\$2.296
Marble Falls	89,617	886	0	672	91,175	\$2.266
Burnet Consolidated	152,594	0	0	0	152,594	\$2.085

Wimberley	61,356	0	0	1,975	63,331	\$2.016
Dripping Springs	76,791	2,677	0	19,553	99,021	\$1.444
Eanes	109,899	23,777	0	300	133,976	\$1.309
State Total	85,627,915	3,056,020	69,914	1,701,993	90,455,842	\$2.272

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 2000-01.

Exhibit 10-5 shows the annual riders, total annual odometer miles and number of total buses for DSISD compared to the peer districts and the state for 2000-01. DSISD had one of the lowest number of annual regular program riders, but one of the higher number of odometer miles. With its fleet of 39 buses, DSISD drove 18 percent more miles than Eanes ISD did with 55 buses.

**Exhibit 10-5
Operating Statistics for
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01**

District	Regular Program			Special Program		
	Annual Riders	Total Odometer Miles	Total Buses	Daily Riders	Total Odometer Miles	Total Buses
Lake Travis	274,500	375,048	36	42	116,573	13
Burnet Consolidated	236,880	660,081	41	36	152,594	3
Eanes	219,420	391,703	55	97	133,976	11
Marble Falls	209,880	347,951	35	59	91,175	8
Dripping Springs	201,780	465,103	59	67	99,021	7
Wimberley	69,300	104,763	16	72	63,331	3
State Total	N/A	293,047,294	26,974	90,207	90,455,842	8,074

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000-01.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

It should be the objective of all transportation departments to deliver their services efficiently and effectively. Greater efficiency potentially will return dollars to the classroom and greater effectiveness will lead to higher quality transportation services, or even expanded services.

A school district may receive state funding to transport regular and special program students between home and school, and career and technology students to and from vocational training locations. The state does not reimburse districts for extracurricular transportation, such as trips taken to after-school and weekend events. All special education transportation, except for certain field trips, is eligible for state reimbursement.

Exhibit 10-6 provides a comparison of total annual operation costs and the state allotment for regular and special transportation in 2000-01 for DSISD, the peer districts and the state as a whole. DSISD has one of the highest percentages of state funding among its peers for regular transportation. It recovers 41 percent of its regular program costs from the state. DSISD recovers a higher percentage of its regular program costs than Texas districts as a whole.

At 68 percent, DSISD's special education program recovers an even higher percentage of its transportation costs from state funding. DSISD also recovers a higher percentage of its special education transportation program costs than Texas districts as a whole.

Exhibit 10-6
Total Program Allotment for
DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01

District	Regular Program			Special Program		
	Operations Cost*	State Allotment	Percent State	Operations Cost*	State Allotment	Percent State
Burnet Consolidated	\$642,574	\$367,772	57%	\$150,728	\$164,802	109%
Dripping Springs	\$696,603	\$284,521	41%	\$122,754	\$82,934	68%

Marble Falls	\$733,303	\$261,677	36%	\$152,429	\$124,805	82%
Lake Travis	\$837,424	\$234,258	28%	\$244,420	\$73,404	30%
Eanes	\$982,305	\$256,088	26%	\$161,048	\$85,056	53%
Wimberley	\$254,448	\$63,747	25%	\$126,473	\$66,264	52%
State Total	\$544,233,385	\$205,374,635	38%	\$184,542,526	\$80,453,610	44%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000-01.

*Operations cost excludes capital outlay and debt service.

Exhibit 10-7 compares the cost efficiency, or cost per odometer mile, and the cost effectiveness, or cost per daily rider, of DSISD and the peer districts. Across the board, DSISD had better-cost efficiency and cost effectiveness than the peer and state averages. For regular education, DSISD had the lowest cost per odometer mile and the third-lowest daily cost per rider. For special education, the district had the second-lowest cost per odometer mile and the third-lowest annual cost per rider.

Exhibit 10-7
Cost Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness Indicators
for DSISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01

District	Regular Program		Special Program	
	Cost/ Odometer Mile	Daily Cost/Rider	Cost/ Odometer Mile	Annual Cost/Ride r
Eanes	\$2.723	\$4.86	\$1.309	\$1,808.01
Marble Falls	\$2.595	\$4.30	\$2.266	\$3,502.10
Lake Travis	\$2.424	\$3.31	\$2.296	\$6,372.79
Wimberley	\$2.451	\$3.71	\$2.016	\$1,772.96
Burnet Consolidated	\$2.055	\$5.73	\$2.085	\$8,836.47
Dripping Springs	\$1.721	\$3.97	\$1.444	\$2,133.70
State Average	\$2.145	NA	\$2.272	\$2,278.01

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000-01.

Exhibit 10-8 compares service effectiveness or productivity indicators for DSISD and its peers in regular education transportation. Dividing total annual riders by total annual route miles determines riders per route mile. Dividing average daily riders by the total number of buses determines riders per bus. DSISD has the second-lowest number of riders per route mile and the second-lowest number of riders per bus. Its number of riders per route mile is 25 percent below the peer average and its number of riders per bus is 13 percent below the peer average. These figures indicate that DSISD could improve its service effectiveness.

Exhibit 10-8
Service Effectiveness Indicators
DSISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Riders/ Route Mile	Riders/Bus
Lake Travis	1.09	48.3
Eanes	1.05	39.6
Wimberley	0.96	24.1
Marble Falls	0.74	38.3
Burnet Consolidated	0.58	36.7
Peer Average	0.88	37.4
Dripping Springs	0.66	32.4
Percent Different from Peer Average	(25%)	(13%)

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports and School Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000-01.

Eanes ISD is able to achieve its high levels of service effectiveness because it operates its buses on a partial three-tier system-buses, on average, complete three separate runs in the afternoon. Generally, such tiering is only feasible when, for example, there are enough middle school students to fill buses on relatively short routes. The routes must be short, because the bus has to drop off its load of middle students and then pick

up elementary or high school students. The other peer districts do not use tiering.

Student enrollment and growth rates can have dramatic impacts on student transportation needs. **Exhibit 10-9** compares the growth rates of DSISD with the peer districts. DSISD and Lake Travis ISD had the highest average growth rates from 1995-96 through 1999-2000. For the last five years, DSISD has had an average growth in student population of 6.7 percent. Assuming that the number of DSISD bus riders increased at the same rate, the district added the equivalent of more than one full busload of students per year.

Exhibit 10-9
Student Enrollment Comparison
DSISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 through 1999-2000

	Percent Increase/(Decrease) From the Previous Year					
School Year	Dripping Springs	Burnet Consolidated	Eanes	Lake Travis	Marble Falls	Wimberley
1995-96	8.8%	3.0%	4.8%	7.4%	8.9%	4.2%
1996-97	9.6%	4.5%	1.3%	10.9%	3.0%	6.9%
1997-98	8.3%	2.3%	3.3%	8.9%	1.9%	(0.3%)
1998-99	4.5%	3.2%	3.3%	9.6%	4.7%	2.5%
1999-2000	2.5%	0.5%	0.3%	6.9%	(2.2%)	0.3%
Average	6.7%	2.7%	2.6%	8.7%	3.3%	2.7%

Source: TEA, Snapshots, 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

FINDING

DSISD is not claiming all the miles that it could for state reimbursement. The district has not requested funding for "shuttle" mileage that is necessary to transport all students to and from the middle school transfer point and other schools in the district. According to TEA officials this 'shuttle' mileage can be included as part of regular route mileage.

When the district began its shuttle system in the mid-1990s, district administrators, according to information they received from TEA at that time, believed that the shuttle mileage would not be reimbursable under the TEA rules. Thus, the district began recording shuttle mileage as part of

"other" mileage, which is not reimbursable. In a recent review, TSPR determined that shuttle mileage should always have been submitted as reimbursable mileage.

The state reimburses districts for transportation expenses incurred for regular education students based on linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular education students transported daily to the number of miles traveled daily. To establish route mileage and daily ridership figures, TEA requires districts to gather mileage and ridership data on the first Wednesday of each month.

TEA has defined seven linear density groups and allocates per-mile reimbursements to school districts based on each district's group. School districts receive more in state reimbursements as their linear density increases. **Exhibit 10-10** shows the seven categories as defined by TEA.

Exhibit 10-10
State Linear Density Reimbursement
for Regular Bus Routes
2001-02

Category	Linear Density Range	Reimbursement per Mile
1	.000-.399	\$0.68
2	.400-.649	\$0.79
3	.650-.899	\$0.88
4	.900-1.149	\$0.97
5	1.150-1.649	\$1.11
6	1.650-2.399	\$1.25
7	2.400-9.999	\$1.43

Source: Article III, Section 1, Texas Education Code, May 20, 2001.

Reimbursable miles are those miles driven on routes with students on board. Deadhead miles, or miles driven without students on board, and maintenance miles, also driven without students, are not reimbursable. TEA evaluates its group assignments every two years by recalculating linear densities.

For its regular education transportation, DSISD reported annual ridership of 201,780 students and annual mileage of 305,501 miles, yielding a linear density of 0.660. This translated to a reimbursement rate of \$0.88 per mile.

The district, however, did not include shuttle mileage as part of regular route mileage.

Each day, DSISD transports all students to the middle school. In the morning, students transfer from their route buses to shuttle buses that will take them to the appropriate schools. In the afternoon, students transfer from the shuttle buses to their route buses for the ride home. In 2001-02, the district did not record this mileage properly as route mileage, but instead recorded it as part of "other" mileage. Of the 81,535 other miles recorded for the year, the district could only estimate that most of the mileage was actually shuttle mileage.

According to the TEA's *Handbook on School Transportation Allotments* (revised May 2001), regular route mileage includes "verified mileage for serving eligible student riders between their respective residences (or established stops at or near their homes) and their respective campuses of regular attendance, beginning and ending at the last campus served (for home-to-school route service) or first campus served (for school-to-home service)." By this standard, DSISD shuttle mileage would qualify as regular route mileage and thus be eligible for allotment funding.

Recommendation 44:

Request state reimbursement for shuttle mileage as part of regular route mileage.

The district should claim all actual route miles, in accordance with TEA policy. This includes shuttle mileage.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director classifies all shuttle mileage as part of standard regular education transportation and calculates the actual figures for 2001-02 reporting to the TEA.	September 2002
2.	The Transportation director submits the required TEA reports with shuttle mileage as part of regular route mileage.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming that 80 percent of the "other" mileage (81,535) was actually shuttle mileage, the district would have had a 2000-01 annual mileage of 370,729 miles ($81,535 \times .8 = 65,228 + 305,501$), instead of 305,501. This would have yielded a linear density of 0.544 (201,780 annual ridership/370,729 miles) instead of 0.660 and a reimbursement rate of \$0.79 instead of \$0.88. The total reimbursement for regular education

mileage would have been \$306,952 (305,501 route mileage + 17,818 reimbursable deadhead mileage + 65,228 x \$0.79 = \$306,952), an increase of \$22,431 over the \$284,521 that was actually reimbursed. TSPR has included an additional \$22,431 in 2002-03 because the district can file an amended 2000-01 report and claim the shuttle mileage as regular route mileage, increasing its reimbursement for that year.

The district could generate additional funds by filing amended reports for other past years. However, because TEA could not determine how many years would be reimbursable without reviewing all amended reports, these potential additional funds have not been included in the fiscal impact.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Request state reimbursement for shuttle mileage as part of regular route mileage.	\$44,862	\$22,431	\$22,431	\$22,431	\$22,431

FINDING

DSISD bus driver absenteeism and turnover is high. Both absenteeism and turnover reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the department. The district does not have any program in place to reduce absenteeism and turnover.

The Transportation Department does not track driver absenteeism at the macro level. To gauge the extent of absenteeism, TSPR reviewed the files of 11 randomly selected bus drivers and extrapolated the absenteeism data for the entire pool of 34 drivers for the August 2001 through February 2002 time period. TSPR then calculated the percent of absenteeism for each month by dividing the total number of absences by the total scheduled driver days. Drivers were absent as much as 5 percent of the time (in December and February). While this may seem to be a low percentage, it translates into 1.8 morning and 1.8 afternoon runs without a driver. The problem also seems to worsen over the course of the school year, indicating that driver burnout may be a contributory factor in absenteeism.

According to the Transportation director, finding and keeping drivers is the toughest part of his job. As of April 2002, the department was short two drivers for regular routes. To compensate for this shortage and driver absenteeism, the director of Transportation, the Transportation secretary and two mechanics regularly fill in as substitute drivers. The secretary and one mechanic arrive early each day so that they will be available to drive a route if needed. The director and the other mechanic are available to drive routes in the afternoon. At least one of the four staff members drives a

route almost every day. This reduces the time they have available to perform their other duties during regular hours. In 2000-01, the two mechanics received a total of \$7,258 in overtime pay.

The Transportation director, mechanics and drivers in the focus group generally agree that some part of driver turnover is tied to the state of the economy. When the economy is good, drivers leave for other higher-paying positions. When the economy is bad, some people seek to become drivers to earn money while they look for another position. DSISD drivers in the focus group also stated that some of the current turnover is due to issues of student discipline. Some new drivers are either not prepared to handle student bus behavior or realize that they are not temperamentally well suited to dealing with a large group of children. Some more established drivers quit because they feel abandoned by the district on discipline matters and do not feel they are able to improve bus discipline on their own.

Corpus Christi ISD implemented a "zero absence" initiative program in August 1998. The program offered \$100 per semester to drivers with no absences. Corpus Christi found that when the regular bus driver was present on the route, there were fewer discipline problems, resulting in safer transportation.

Recommendation 45:

Establish an incentive plan to decrease bus driver absenteeism and turnover.

Reduced absenteeism would give the district's other transportation staff more time to complete their primary functions. Reduced driver turnover would result in a more seasoned, experienced workforce and contribute to increased transportation safety. A program to reduce driver absenteeism and turnover should include monetary and non-monetary incentives.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director works with a committee of drivers to identify appropriate non-monetary methods of reducing absenteeism and turnover.	October 2002
2.	The director oversees implementation of non-monetary methods of reducing absenteeism and turnover.	January 2003
3.	The superintendent requests funds for a modest monetary rewards program for drivers and attendants, based on perfect driver attendance, to begin in the 2003-04 school year.	April 2003

4.	The Transportation director oversees the implementation of the monetary rewards program to recognize drivers and attendants with perfect attendance.	August 2003
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FISCAL IMPACT

The non-monetary rewards program will have little fiscal impact and can be accomplished with existing resources. The fiscal impact of the monetary rewards program will vary depending on the specific details of the program developed. It should be at least partially offset by a reduction in overtime for mechanics who currently substitute for absent drivers nearly every day.

Assuming the rewards program provides a \$100 bonus to each driver or attendant who has zero days of absence each semester, the program could cost as much as \$6,800 per year (34 drivers x \$100 bonus x 2 semesters). Since only two of the 11 drivers reviewed for the August 2001 - February 2002 time period had perfect attendance, it seems reasonable to project that only six drivers and attendants would qualify for the award each semester, therefore the district would incur an annual cost of \$1,200 (6 drivers x \$100 bonus x 2 semester).

In 2000-01, the two mechanics received a total of \$7,258 in overtime pay. For the 2001-02 year through April, they received \$4,453. Considering how often mechanics substitute for absent drivers, half of this overtime pay can conservatively be attributed to driver absenteeism. Assuming an annual average of \$6,103 in mechanic overtime pay, the district could expect to save \$3,052 per year by reducing driver absenteeism. Annual net savings would total \$1,852 (\$3,052 minus \$1,200). Savings are projected to begin in 2003-04.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Establish an incentive plan to decrease bus driver absenteeism and turnover.	\$0	\$1,852	\$1,852	\$1,852	\$1,852

To calculate an annual average for 2001-02, \$4,453 is divided by nine months to reach the monthly overtime estimate and that amount (\$495) is added to the \$4,453 August through April total (\$4,453 + \$495 monthly estimate for May 2002 = \$4,948 for 2001-02; [(\$7,258 = \$4,948)/2 = \$6,103 annual average].

FINDING

DSISD uses large buses to transport small numbers of students for extracurricular activities, such as student field trips, athletics, band and University Interscholastic League (UIL) events. This practice costs the district significant amounts of money. In addition, the extracurricular use of large buses also causes unnecessary wear-and-tear on DSISD's already aged bus fleet.

Texas Education Code, Section 34.003 (a) states that school buses or mass transit authority motor buses shall be used for the transportation of students to and from schools on routes having 10 or more students. On those routes having fewer than 10 students, passenger cars may be used for the transportation of students to and from school. Section 34.003 (b) goes on to state that passenger vans are acceptable for extra-curricular or co-curricular activities, but not for school routes.

The Transportation director said that he believes the district decided not to use passenger cars or vans based on perceived liability issues. In reviewing district Board of Trustees minutes from 1996 through the present, TSPR found no indication the district had adopted any official policy prohibiting the use of passenger cars or vans.

Each of DSISD's large buses costs an average of \$1.721 per mile to operate, the district completed 60,249 extracurricular miles in the 2000-01 school year using its buses, costing the district \$103,689. Making smaller buses, passenger cars or vans available for extracurricular trips would ultimately save the district money. Contracting extracurricular trips to a private transportation provider also would save wear on the district's large buses, but might not result in a net cost savings.

Exhibit 10-11 compares the number and type of non-bus vehicles used to transport students in DSISD and the peer districts. In comparison to most of its peers, DSISD has few non-bus vehicles available for student transport.

**Exhibit 10-11
Non-Bus Vehicles Used for Transportation
DSISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

District	Regular Education		Special Education	
	Passenger Car	Passenger Van	Passenger Car	Passenger Van
Burnet Consolidated	4	7	0	2
Lake Travis	4	3	0	0

Eanes	1	3	0	0
Marble Falls	3	0	1	0
Wimberley	0	0	0	0
Dripping Springs	0.5*	0	0	0

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 2000-01.

**The district does not report any cars available for use in transporting students on its annual School Transportation Operations Report. One-half of one car has been included here because the district does have one vehicle available for occasional use.*

A passenger car, as defined by TEA, is a vehicle that is designed to transport 10 or fewer passengers. All passengers in the car must have their own seat belt restraint. A passenger van, which can transport more than 10 passengers, has to be fitted with numerous additional safety and identifier devices; the purchase cost of passenger vans often approach the cost of a standard school bus.

DSISD owns one sedan, a 1995 Chevrolet Cavalier, which staff members use to attend meetings or conferences. District coaches also use it for scouting trips. It has occasionally been used for extracurricular trips when only a few students are involved. None of the other current district vehicles are suitable for student transport.

DSISD funds most extracurricular trips that require the use of large school buses from individual school budgets. In the last two years, the athletic director has required all coaches to become commercial driver license certified so that the athletic department can save the cost of paying regular bus drivers. This has become a common practice in many Texas districts.

DSISD asks parents to directly fund the cost of one field trip each year for primary school students. The funds the parents provide cover the cost of contracted transportation; district buses are not used because they are not available for the entire school day. All other extracurricular trips are either funded by the schools or, in some cases, by the extracurricular group's booster club.

Recommendation 46:

Develop alternative methods of funding extracurricular transportation.

Currently the majority of extracurricular transportation costs are paid out of the budget of the school needing the transportation. By encouraging the high school and middle school to use smaller vehicles instead of the larger buses to transport small numbers of students to extracurricular activities the district could realize significant savings. Based on the extracurricular trips made in 2000-01 a much smaller vehicle costing significantly less to operate could have been used for the majority of these trips.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business Operations develop cost analyses for various ways of providing transportation services for small numbers of students, including smaller buses, passenger vans, passenger cars and private transportation.	November 2002
2.	The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business Operations develop options for requesting the assistance of booster clubs in defraying the cost of extracurricular transportation.	December 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations presents the options to the Board of Trustees.	January 2003
4.	The Board of Trustees adopts appropriate options for providing transportation for small groups and adopts a plan to reduce the cost of extracurricular transportation.	March 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

In 2000-01, DSISD completed 60,249 extracurricular miles using its buses. The district could reduce this mileage by 5 percent, or 3,012 (60,249 x .05), by using an alternative to large buses for transporting small numbers of students. At an average cost of \$1.721 per mile, this would save the district \$5,184 (3,012 x \$1.721) in fuel, driver wages, bus wear and maintenance costs.

Enlisting the support of the booster clubs to defray transportation costs for extracurricular trips would save the district more money. Currently, the Transportation Department charges schools the cost of driver wages, plus a set rate of \$0.25 per mile for extracurricular trips. Requesting that the booster clubs fund half of the \$0.25 per mile rate for booster club supported activities, 57,242.8 miles in 2000-01, would save the district \$7,155 annually (57,242.8 x \$ 0.125 = \$7,155).

TSPR estimates that a minimal savings of \$2,000 would be realized in 2002-03, from the implementation of measures to reduce reliance on large buses for small groups beginning in March 2003.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop alternative methods of funding extracurricular transportation.	\$2,000	\$12,339	\$12,339	\$12,339	\$12,339

FINDING

DSISD's paper-based field trip scheduling and billing processes are manual and inefficient, even though all of the persons involved have access to e-mail.

In the current process, a teacher who wishes to schedule a field trip completes a paper bus requisition form. The form requires the principal's signature. Once signed, it is sent to the Transportation Department, where the Transportation secretary logs it into a spreadsheet. If the district has a bus available, the request is approved.

On the day of the trip, the driver completes a field trip report, noting odometer readings, as well as departure, pick-up and return times. The field trip sponsor must sign this report to verify its accuracy. The driver then returns this form to the Transportation secretary who enters the figures into another spreadsheet to determine driver and fuel costs. The secretary then prints two copies of this spreadsheet; one copy is filed and the other is sent to the central office so that the appropriate accounts can be credited and debited. Some districts have begun using a paperless process for requesting, scheduling and billing field trips, which has cut down on the time and the paperwork required to handle the requests.

Based upon interviews with the Transportation director, Transportation secretary and school administrators, an electronic request, approval, scheduling and billing system could be implemented on the district's existing e-mail network. All of the persons involved have daily access to e-mail.

Dallas ISD has developed an Internet-based computer scheduling system to handle all field trip transportation functions. The TRIPS (Transportation Requisition Input Process System) application allows principals and teachers to make reservations online. Billing and payments also are handled online. Finally, users can generate reports at several different levels.

Recommendation 47:

Use the district's e-mail system to improve the efficiency of the field trip scheduling and billing processes.

A teacher could access a request form on the district's Intranet, complete it and route it to the principal's office via e-mail. The principal could then electronically approve the trip and send it via e-mail to the Transportation Department. Transportation would schedule the trip and notify the teacher and the principal via e-mail. After the trip was taken, Transportation would determine the cost and send, via e-mail, the bill to the principal and the central office so that the appropriate accounts could be debited and credited.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent for Business Operations, the director of Transportation, the director of Technology and a teacher develop the procedures to use the district's e-mail system and/or Intranet for approving, scheduling and billing of field trips.	November 2002
2.	The director of Technology develops the electronic trip request form and the template(s) or Internet-based application.	December 2002
3.	The director of Technology and the director of Transportation meet with the principals to explain the procedures.	January 2003
4.	The principals meet with the teachers/staff to explain the procedures.	January 2003
5.	The teachers/staff implement the procedures.	February 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

DSISD does not include an observation of driving performance in its annual evaluation of bus drivers. Annual evaluations of district bus drivers include four areas of specialized driver skills: appropriate management of student behavior; proper completion of safety maintenance checks; adherence to bus route schedules; and bus cleanliness.

In the most pro-active school systems, a bus driver supervisor annually conducts an unscheduled "ride along" with each driver. The supervisor observes the driver during the pre-trip inspection, rides on the bus

throughout the route, evaluates the driver's student management skills and observes the post-trip inspection. In addition to observing the job performance of the driver, the supervisor may verify route times, identify any route hazards and assess ride times for students. Deficiencies in either the driver's performance or the route can be corrected in a timely manner. The results of the "ride along" and follow-up become important components in the driver's annual evaluation.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Systems (NASDPTS), in its *National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures*, recommends that pupil transportation directors monitor and evaluate school bus drivers in the performance of their duties. This monitoring and evaluation includes direct observation of drivers while driving their routes. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has concluded that in one recent fatal school bus accident, a lack of sufficient performance evaluation was a contributing factor in the tragedy. In a January 2002 letter to all state governors, the NTSB noted that although the bus driver involved had received classroom training, her actual driving performance had not been evaluated. Had it been, the NTSB concluded, her performance deficiencies might have been discovered and corrected before the accident.

Recommendation 48:

Include a "ride along" in each driver's annual evaluation.

By conducting an annual "ride along," bus drivers can be evaluated on their skill in performing their actual job, and DSISD can help ensure that it is employing the safest bus drivers possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director develops a department policy and procedure for conducting an annual "ride along" with each driver as part of the 2002-03 employee evaluation process.	September 2002
2.	The Transportation director conducts an unannounced "ride along" with each driver.	March - May 2003
3.	The Transportation director uses the results of the "ride alongs" in annual driver evaluations and in the development of additional necessary training opportunities.	May 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

B. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

School boards adopt sound, clearly written and legally valid policies to govern the operations of schools and school districts. Districts develop procedures to implement these policies. Effective transportation policies guide a school district's transportation department to ensure that public funds are spent in the most effective manner possible.

FINDING

Despite having an aged fleet and facing certain student growth in the near future, DSISD has no bus replacement policy. A bus replacement policy ensures a younger average fleet, with a corresponding reduction in maintenance requirements and operating cost.

Exhibit 10-12 details DSISD's school bus inventory for regular routes. Its newest bus is a 1998 model that was purchased (used) in 2000. Its oldest route buses are 1985 models. The average age of the regular route fleet is 10.8 years and the average odometer reading is 113,020 miles. In 2000-01, DSISD's regular buses averaged 11,149 miles each in route mileage alone.

Exhibit 10-12
DSISD School Bus Inventory, Regular Routes
2001-02

Passenger Capacity	Year of Manufacture	Manufacturer	Year Acquired	Mileage
71	1985	Chevrolet	1985	135,663
71	1985	Chevrolet	1985	176,100
71	1985	Ford	1985	163,647
71	1985	Chevrolet	1985	135,663
71	1985	Chevrolet	1985	176,100
71	1985	Ford	1985	163,647
71	1986	GMC	1986	106,818
71	1986	GMC	1986	106,818
71	1987	GMC	1987	155,657

71	1987	GMC	1987	175,236
71	1987	GMC	1987	168,335
71	1987	GMC	1987	155,657
71	1987	GMC	1987	175,236
71	1987	GMC	1987	168,335
71	1990	Chevrolet	1989	86,088
71	1990	Chevrolet	1989	86,088
71	1990	GMC	1990	146,925
71	1990	GMC	1990	146,925
71	1992	International	1992	138,291
71	1992	International	1992	138,291
71	1993	Ford	1993	121,524
71	1994	Ford	1993	110,196
71	1993	Ford	1993	121,524
71	1994	Ford	1993	110,196
71	1995	International	1995	91,458
71	1995	International	1995	102,710
71	1995	International	1995	106,110
71	1995	International	1995	91,458
71	1995	International	1995	102,710
71	1995	International	1995	106,110
72	1996	GMC	1996	96,386
72	1996	GMC	1996	48,219
72	1996	GMC	1996	96,386
72	1996	GMC	1996	48,219
71	1991	International	1997	167,207
71	1991	International	1997	145,694
71	1991	International	1997	129,198
71	1991	Ford	1997	32,337
71	1991	Ford	1997	108,275

71	1991	Ford	1997	96,270
84	1989	ASIA	1997	123,098
84	1989	ASIA	1997	111,957
71	1991	International	1997	167,207
71	1991	International	1997	145,694
71	1991	International	1997	129,198
71	1991	Ford	1997	32,337
71	1991	Ford	1997	108,275
71	1991	Ford	1997	96,270
84	1989	ASIA	1997	123,098
84	1989	ASIA	1997	111,957
71	1991	Ford	1998	101,501
71	1991	Ford	1998	101,501
77	1997	Spar	1999	44,159
77	1997	Spar	1999	41,212
8+1	1992	GMC	1999	109,763
77	1997	Spar	1999	44,159
77	1997	Spar	1999	41,212
78	1998	GMC	2000	47,298
78	1998	GMC	2000	47,298

Source: DSISD's Transportation Department, April 2002.

Exhibit 10-13 compares the age of DSISD's bus fleet with those of the peer districts. DSISD and three of the peers operate quite aged fleets. Over 60 percent of DSISD's buses are more than 10 years old. In addition, DSISD has one of the smallest percentages of buses that are five years old or less.

Exhibit 10-13
Comparison of Bus Age for
DSISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	1-5	5-10	10 Years	Total	Percent	Percent
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	Years	Years	or Greater	Number of Buses	Greater Than 10 Years	Less than 5 Years
Lake Travis	15	1	33	49	67%	31%
Eanes	9	14	43	66	65%	14%
Dripping Springs	6	17	36	59	61%	10%
Burnet Consolidated	19	10	15	44	34%	43%
Marble Falls	20	18	5	43	12%	47%
Wimberley	2	19	0	21	0%	10%

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 2000-01.

DSISD's aged fleet will face special maintenance challenges in the future. To help address these issues, DSISD Transportation Department's "spare/other" category includes fleet spares and two 1980 buses that are no longer working. The district has kept the spares in case they need spare parts. Only four buses in DSISD's entire fleet have engines that are still in production. Of the engines that are no longer in production, four have only limited or no parts availability. A firm that is no longer in business manufactured the bodies of 10 of the buses DSISD currently owns and uses. Two of these are of particular concern, since they were manufactured by ASIA, which has been out of business since 1993. When the district recently needed spare brake parts for one of the ASIA buses, the closest place it could locate suitable parts was Canada. Transportation personnel are concerned that they will be unable to locate parts the next time one of these buses requires repair work.

Even without the maintenance concerns of running an older than normal fleet, DSISD will need to add buses to accommodate student growth. For the last five years, DSISD has had an average annual growth in student population of 6.7 percent. Assuming that the number of DSISD bus riders increased at the same rate, the district added the equivalent of more than one full busload of students per year. Based on the district's demographic study completed in July 2001, the district will likely have more than 6,200 students in 2010-11, an 86 percent increase over its current enrollment. Without a solid bus replacement policy and plan, the district soon will face a need for yearly multiple bus purchases. For the 2002-03, the district has already encumbered funds for three additional buses.

Exhibit 10-14 shows the amount DSISD has spent on buses and the number of buses purchased between 1999-2000 and 2001-02.

Exhibit 10-14
Amount Spent on Bus Purchases and
Number of Buses Purchased in DSISD
1999-2000 through 2001-02

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Amount Spent on Bus Purchases.	\$94,596	\$138,060	\$95,978
Number of Buses Purchased.	2	3	2

Source: DSISD Transportation Department.

While buses represent a large capital investment for small districts, a regular procurement and replacement plan provides many benefits. Buses with the highest cost of maintenance can be replaced. Introduction of new buses into the fleet on a regular basis prevents emergency purchase of multiple buses in any one year. Planned bus replacement, based on an analysis of the fleet's age and condition, as well as the district's capacity needs, allows districts to set procurement amounts for budgeting purposes and to plan the timing of debt or other types of financing. Replacement plans also maximize bus use.

Comal ISD has an effective vehicle replacement plan. Comal ISD's plan is designed to replace buses every 11 to 15 years. The plan maintains the necessary fleet size and concurrently increases safety by replacing buses once they reach the end of their life cycle. The plan also allows staggering of replacement costs.

Recommendation 49:

Establish a bus replacement policy.

Years of service, total miles operated and the cost of maintenance determines which buses should be replaced each year. Some buses may be retired in 10 to 12 years; other buses may be kept in active service for a longer period of time. The replacement policy also should include guidelines to accommodate growth in the student population.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business Operations analyze the district's school bus fleet usage	December 2002
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	data and growth issues to develop a replacement and purchase plan.	
2.	The Transportation director presents the replacement and purchase plan to the superintendent for approval.	January 2003
3.	The Transportation director presents the replacement and purchase plan to the Board of Trustees for approval as a policy.	February 2003
4.	The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business Operations coordinate the bus replacement and purchase policy when developing future budgets.	March 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, as the district is already budgeting funds for bus purchases to accommodate growth. This recommendation seeks to adopt a logical, consistent plan for replacing old buses and purchasing necessary additional buses. Such a plan would likely reduce the overall cost to the district, both in maintenance costs for old buses and costs associated with unplanned bulk purchases.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

C. SAFETY AND TRAINING

Above all else, the safety of students on the bus should be the paramount concern of a transportation department. According to the NASDPTS, school buses are the safest vehicles on the road. This safety record is the result of the coordination of several factors: the design and construction of school buses; the operating condition of the buses; the planning of school bus routes; the location of loading zones; the safety of school bus drivers.

A well-trained bus driver can safely operate a bus and effectively manage student behavior on the bus. Safety-conscious districts regularly provide refresher training for drivers. Safety-conscious districts treat both bus discipline and school campus discipline with equal seriousness.

FINDING

DSISD does not adequately enforce the district's policy on bus discipline. Bus drivers are inconsistent in their initial enforcement of bus rules and do not always report violations in a timely fashion. The district could not provide documentation that administrators routinely follow district policies and procedures regarding bus discipline issues.

DSISD has a well-articulated bus discipline policy. The DSISD *2001-02 Student Code of Conduct and Extracurricular Code of Conduct* states that bus riding is a privilege, not a right. It also outlines the district's expectations for student behavior on the bus and possible consequences for misbehavior.

In addition to the *Code of Conduct*, DSISD distributes a separate publication, *School Bus Rules and Regulations*, to all students. This provides further detail on acceptable student behavior while on the bus, as well as the district policy on student transportation. In order to be eligible to ride the bus, all students must complete and return the attached bus rider registration card.

The review team conducted a focus group with 11 DSISD bus drivers. All 11 drivers agreed that bus discipline was by far the most difficult aspect of their work. Although drivers are greatly concerned with bus discipline, they enforce district rules for bus behavior unevenly and do not follow consistent reporting procedures for bus incidents. This contributes to student misbehavior because expectations are inconsistent.

Bus drivers also expressed dissatisfaction with the way school administrators handle reported bus discipline issues. They believe principals handle bus discipline problems in a less serious manner than they treat classroom discipline problems. Drivers said they rarely hear anything at all about the results of bus discipline reports, citing several examples where they submitted a report to the school principal and never received any notification of actions taken or punishments given. One bus driver gave examples of students being punished weeks after they committed an offense. Finally, drivers do not believe that the district administration supports them in discipline matters, generally believing students' versions of events.

The *Code of Conduct* outlines the process the district follows for bus offenses, based on whether it is the student's first, second, third or subsequent offense. The review team found that this process is generally not followed. Bus drivers in the focus group stated that they generally attempt to handle discipline problems on their own. If they are unable to do so, they complete a "notice of unsatisfactory conduct on school bus" form. If they choose to process this written report, they provide two copies of the four-part form to the student's principal. The bus driver keeps the third copy and gives the fourth copy to the student. Some drivers give their copy to the Transportation director; some keep it themselves.

TSPR reviewed the discipline reports on file in the Transportation Department and found few examples of resulting punishments that appeared to be in accordance with *Code of Conduct* policy. TSPR found that when any disciplinary action was noted by the school administration, the most common punishment was an office visit where bus rules were reviewed with the student. Of the 32 reports where a school administrator noted disciplinary action taken, 23 limited punishment to an office lecture. In five cases, the principal discussed the incident with the student's parents. In only three cases was the student suspended from the bus; each time the suspension was two days. DSISD administrators told TSPR that incomplete reporting is more of an issue than improper enforcement of the *Code of Conduct*.

In the TSPR parent survey, one of the questions asks parents to agree or disagree with the statement, "The bus drivers maintains discipline on the bus." Although 43.7 percent of parents agreed that bus drivers do maintain discipline, 15.2 percent disagreed. Community participants in the TSPR public forum also raised bus discipline issues; parents feel that younger children are imitating the poor behavior of older students they see on the bus.

The TSPR publication *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School* outlines steps that districts must take to ensure the safety of their students and

employees. One of the steps in preventing violence is to "establish clear expectations for students, parents, teachers and administrators." Another step is to "leave no room for double standards," while another is to "ensure that discipline management extends inside and outside the classroom." As part of establishing expectations, the district must apply the *Code of Conduct* in a consistent and fair manner.

Recommendation 50:

Improve enforcement of the district policy on bus discipline by developing a written and agreed-upon procedure for staff at all levels to follow.

Lack of bus discipline can become a serious safety issue. Drivers who are distracted by unruly students cannot give their full attention to driving. Students who are unruly on the bus could potentially harm other students and themselves. DSISD could improve its level of enforcement by:

- posting the bus rules on the bus;
- providing training to drivers on the bus rules students are to follow;
- providing training to all drivers in assertive student management techniques and the proper procedures to follow in reporting discipline issues;
- improving the reporting process so that the Transportation Department receives a copy of the report from the driver immediately after the incident so the Transportation director can follow up with school principals as needed;
- routinely including bus drivers in any student conferences that result from discipline reports;
- developing a monthly report of student bus discipline statistics that includes the number of infractions by type and the type of punishment given. This report would be circulated to school principals and the superintendent to highlight the enforcement (or lack of) of the policy; and
- asking principals to inform the Transportation Department when they believe that a driver could benefit from additional assertive discipline training.

Assertive discipline training should be scheduled during the district's annual in-service day for bus drivers, which occurs shortly before the start of each school year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director develops an annual training package	September
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	in assertive student discipline that will be provided to all bus drivers. This package includes reiteration of the bus rules to be followed, proper reporting procedures and a revised discipline report form.	2002
2.	The Transportation director develops the format for the monthly report of student bus discipline statistics.	September 2002
3.	All drivers complete training, including appropriate assertive discipline training.	October 2002
4.	The Transportation director begins monthly reporting of school bus incidents and subsequent disciplinary actions.	November 2002
5.	The Transportation director meets with each principal to discuss the progress made by drivers in enforcing bus discipline and to address any specific concerns.	February 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

DSISD does not currently conduct annual bus evacuation drills with students. The Transportation director has only recently joined the district staff, so he could not provide a date for when the last drill was conducted. The previous Transportation director said that drills had been conducted recently, but could provide no documentation. Long-time DSISD bus drivers remembered doing evacuation drills with students, but only as recently as three or four years ago. Some drivers said that they had not conducted bus evacuation drills for at least eight years. Most drivers in the TSPR focus group stated that they had discussed emergency procedures with their oldest students, who might be expected to assist.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's Highway Safety Program Guideline Number 17 establishes minimum recommendations for pupil transportation safety. The guideline recommends that at least once during each school semester, each pupil transported from home to school in a school bus should be instructed in safe riding practices, proper loading and unloading techniques, proper street crossing to and from school bus stops and should participate in timed supervised emergency evacuation drills.

Recommendation 51:

Practice bus evacuation drills twice per school year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops and distributes bus evacuation procedures to all bus drivers and discusses with the drivers how best to implement these procedures.	September 2002
2.	The director of Transportation and school principals develop a plan for announced bus evacuation drills with all students in the Fall of each school year, as well as unannounced, surprise evacuation drills throughout the Spring of each school year.	November 2002
3.	The superintendent approves the plan.	February 2003
4.	The director of Transportation and school principals implement the plan.	August 2003
5.	The director of Transportation assesses bus evacuation drill performance and adjusts bus evacuation procedures as needed.	May 2004 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

DSISD bus drivers do not participate in ongoing training. Other than the state-required initial and refresher training, bus drivers complete no additional annual training in the areas of bus inspections, safe bus operation and student management. Such training should improve bus driver skills, reduce preventable accidents and improve student bus behavior.

Driver training consists only of the 20-hour state-mandated bus driver certification course. Drivers receive state-mandated retraining to renew their certification every three years, but they do not receive required annual retraining.

The Transportation director is a certified driver instructor in another TEA region. Although he would have to be recertified to officially train drivers in Regional Education Service Center XIII, he is more than qualified to provide refresher and update training to DSISD drivers.

An example of the kinds of refresher and update training that could be offered would be training in the ROSCO grid, which was originally developed by the ROSCO Company, a maker of mirrors for school buses. The ROSCO grid is a series of painted circles on the ground that, when a bus is parked in the grid, can be used to properly adjust the mirrors.

ROSCO offers a free video and pavement grid chart on their website. Some districts around the country heavily promote use of the grid by their drivers and have reported a reduction in preventable accidents. Other districts publish regular department newsletters with quizzes for drivers. Still other districts require regular sessions with driving simulators.

Recommendation 52:

Provide opportunities for reinforcement of driver skills.

At a minimum, the district should provide access to a ROSCO grid so that drivers can regularly check for proper mirror adjustment. The Transportation director should also develop additional training aides for drivers to keep their skills sharp. This could include periodic pop quizzes that would require minimal driver time, a 10-minute discussion of particular skill sets during transportation staff meetings, or providing access to self-paced materials. DSISD should require drivers to complete, at minimum, an hour of paid self-training per quarter.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director determines the best methods for reinforcing driver skills with input from the drivers.	October 2002
2.	The Transportation director begins reinforcement training, selecting a new skill set each month.	November 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

D. MAINTENANCE

An efficient and effective bus maintenance team has a positive impact on the school system. Well-maintained buses break down less often, which means fewer disruptions for students and staff. Well-maintained buses also contribute to the safety of students.

DSISD employs two full-time mechanics to provide preventive maintenance and repair services for its fleet of 46 regular and special education buses. Two of these buses are permanently deadlined or out of service; 44 running buses require maintenance. In addition, the mechanics provide maintenance and repair work for the district's four vans, seven pick-up trucks, one sedan, one cargo van and several pieces of lawn mowing equipment.

Common practice in the transportation industry calls for a ratio of 20 to 30 vehicles per mechanic, depending upon the age of the fleet, the level of maintenance equipment available and the mechanic's expertise. DSISD has a ratio of 22 buses per mechanic, which is within commonly accepted guidelines. Given the extreme age of many of the DSISD buses, as well as the other equipment supported, and the fact that the mechanics often have to substitute as bus drivers, the effective ratio of buses to available mechanic time is closer to the high end of the acceptable range.

The DSISD mechanics do all preventive maintenance and repair on the district's buses except for major bodywork or rebuilding transmissions or engines. They work in the bus garage, which is part of the new Transportation Department building. The garage has eight bays for maintenance and repair work. It also has drive-thru capability. DSISD provides all the major tools the mechanics need; the mechanics provide their own tool sets.

In the TSPR bus driver focus group, drivers were complimentary of the efforts of the mechanic team. Although they acknowledged that the fleet is in some cases quite aged, they believe the mechanics keep the buses in good working order and are responsive to their requests for service.

FINDING

The Transportation director has recently installed an automated vehicle information management system. For a smaller district, this level of automation is uncommon.

In November 2001, the Transportation director purchased an automated fleet maintenance program for use on the department's three personal computers. The program allows the department to computerize all work orders for maintenance and repair services on each bus. It alerts the mechanics when buses are due for maintenance based on mileage. It also allows the department to track lifetime maintenance and repair costs for each bus. Finally, it, for the first time, provides the district with inventory tracking capabilities.

The director and mechanics have taught themselves to use the system, and, since January 2002, they have input all maintenance and repair work orders. New inventory items are added to the database as they arrive. None of the peer districts has a comparable level of automation.

The Transportation Department will reap continuing benefits from this investment in automation, since it will provide instant reports to the district concerning maintenance and labor costs for its buses, keep better track of its inventory and analyze repair data for possible areas of improvement.

COMMENDATION

DSISD has taken positive steps to increase its bus maintenance service effectiveness.

FINDING

DSISD's Transportation Department does not effectively use climate control strategies on its bus fleet. Although the district operates in a hot climate, it does not adequately employ strategies to reduce the interior temperature of its buses. In May 2001 the average high was 87.1 degrees in Dripping Springs; in August 2001 the average high was 95.2 degrees. Without air-conditioning, the interior temperature of a school bus can often be 10-15 degrees higher than the ambient temperature.

DSISD does not have air-conditioning on any of the buses in its regular fleet, despite the one hour or longer ride times of many students. Retrofitting buses with air-conditioning is expensive, costing between \$7,000 and \$9,000 per bus. None of the peer districts have air-conditioned bus fleets either, due to the expense.

There are other less expensive alternative measures which can reduce interior bus temperatures, including painting the roofs white to absorb less heat, installing roof vents to increase air flow and tinting the windows to reduce the amount of sunlight inside. DSISD bus drivers in the TSPR focus group stated that they noticed a reduction in heat when some or all

of these measures are used. On April 18, 2002 the DSISD board approved the purchase of three new buses for delivery in May. All three of these buses will arrive with a white roof, roof vent and tinted windows, but not air conditioning.

Recommendation 53:

Implement heat reduction measures on all regular route buses.

Ideally, the district would reduce heat on every route bus by installing a roof vent, tinting the windows and painting the roof white. Given the extreme age of some of the buses and their short expected life span after this year, implementing this plan in its entirety is not advisable. Instead, the district should adopt a policy of retrofitting all buses that are less than 10 years old with roof vents and white roofs.

The district should also consider making air conditioning and tinted windows standard features in the new buses it purchases as part of its replacement schedule. To partially offset this additional cost, it could charge slightly more for extracurricular teams that choose to use these buses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business Operations propose minimum standard heat reducing features for all new bus purchases.	January 2003
2.	The Transportation director proposes sliding fees for bus use by extracurricular groups depending on the type of bus used.	January 2003
3.	The Board of Trustees reviews the minimum standards and sliding fee schedule and approves changes for implementation in the 2003-04 school year.	February 2003
4.	The Transportation director and assistant superintendent for Business Operations determine which buses require roof vents and roof painting.	March 2003
5.	The Transportation director seeks bids for the installation of roof vents and the painting of roofs.	April 2003
6.	The Transportation director selects a parts provider for the roof vents and a service provider for the roof painting.	May 2003
7.	The selected roof vent provider delivers the roof vents and the DSISD mechanics install them.	June 2003
8.	The selected service provider paints the roofs.	June 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

A typical bus roof vent costs \$230 and requires 1.5 hours of mechanic labor to install. DSISD has approximately seven buses that are 10 years old or less that do not already have roof vents.

During the 2000-01 school year, personnel in the Transportation Department received a bid to paint the bus roofs white for \$650 per bus. DSISD has approximately 12 buses that are 10 years old or less that do not already have white roofs.

Retrofitting buses with tinted windows is not cost-effective. It would require approximately \$1,300 per bus to retrofit tinted windows. However, the same option selected in a new bus would cost approximately \$276 (the exact amount would depend on the type of bus). Therefore, tinted windows should be included on new bus purchases only.

Purchasing new buses with standard air conditioning would add approximately \$5,750 to the final price (the exact amount would depend on the type of bus).

Installing roof vents and painting bus roofs white on buses that are less than 10 years is cost effective and would greatly reduce the interior temperatures on these buses. To implement these measures would cost \$9,410 (\$1,610 or \$230 x 7 buses to ins tall the root vents and \$7,800 or \$650 x 12 buses to paint the roofs white).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement heat reduction measures on all regular route buses.	(\$9,410)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 11

FOOD SERVICES

This chapter reviews Dripping Springs Independent School District's (DSISD's) food service operations in four sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Financial Management and Reporting
- C. Student Meal Services
- D. Staffing

An effective school food service program provides students with affordable, appealing and nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches in a safe, clean and accessible environment. Successfully managed school food service programs provide customer satisfaction and contain costs while complying with applicable federal, state and local board regulations and policies.

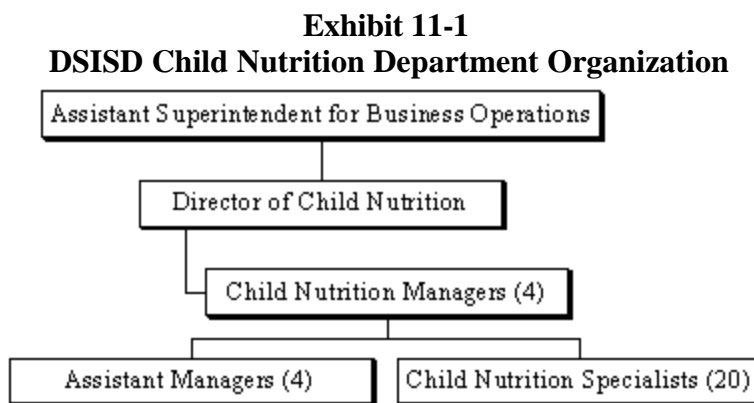
Chapter 11

FOOD SERVICES

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The DSISD Child Nutrition Department prepares breakfast and lunch meals for students and adults at four schools. With the exception of the high school, cafeterias operated by the Child Nutrition Department participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). After determining that nine percent of DSISD's high school students were eligible to receive free or reduced-price meal benefits, the Child Nutrition Department decided it was not cost-effective to participate in NSLP or SBP at the high school, as the district would receive very little reimbursement money.

As shown in **Exhibit 11-1**, the Child Nutrition Department employs 29 people and is headed by the director of Child Nutrition who reports to the district's assistant superintendent for Business Operations. Four Child Nutrition managers operate as cafeteria managers and report directly to the director of Child Nutrition. Each kitchen also has an assistant manager who reports to the Child Nutrition manager. In most cases, the 20 Child Nutrition specialists report directly to the Child Nutrition managers, although some report to assistant managers, at the discretion of each Child Nutrition manager.



Source: DSISD Administrative Office.

FINDING

The director of Child Nutrition works part time, which saves the Child Nutrition Department half the cost of the salary associated with this position or almost \$30,000 annually. The director of Child Nutrition earns

\$33,938; other full-time DSISD directors with comparable years of experience earn between \$61,569 and \$62,868. Because of the size of the food service operations, this is a cost-effective way to provide management services to the Child Nutrition Department. When she is not working for DSISD, the director of Child Nutrition works for the Central Texas Purchasing Cooperative through which the Child Nutrition Department purchases food and supplies. Her employment at the cooperative enables the director of Child Nutrition to learn about additional opportunities for the Child Nutrition Department to save money on purchases.

COMMENDATION

The Child Nutrition Department saves on salary costs by employing a part-time director.

FINDING

The director of Child Nutrition does not engage in employee development planning or employee goal-setting. The director of Child Nutrition annually reviews the performance of Child Nutrition managers and, in turn, the Child Nutrition managers review their cafeteria staff. However, these reviews do not include goal setting for employees, nor do they incorporate department goals. The strategic and long range planning performed by the Child Nutrition Department is the creation of a department improvement plan in fulfillment of district requirements.

A comprehensive strategic planning process helps to direct an organization and provides benchmarks to determine whether the organization is successfully meeting goals. An inclusive planning process boosts the morale of cafeteria managers by informing them which job goals are important to the department.

A comprehensive strategic plan includes overall goals for the Child Nutrition Department, individual goals for central office staff and cafeteria managers, specific strategies for achieving goals, timelines for implementation of strategies and clear lines of responsibility for implementation. In addition, resources necessary to implement strategies are allocated to the appropriate cost center in the department budgets. Specific goals for cafeteria managers include both professional development goals as well as performance goals for their cafeterias. Setting such goals helps managers improve management skills, resulting in the increased profitability of individual cafeterias.

During its annual strategic planning process, the Office of Food and Nutrition Services in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) integrates

planning and budgeting to reflect the goals of the school system. In support of these goals for the department, BCPS food service supervisors set goals for their areas of responsibility related to the department goals, and each staff member sets goals to help achieve the supervisors' goals. Staff members are accountable for achieving the goals, which are described in detail in the budget and must be achievable and measurable. Linking the goals to the budget process ensures that the necessary resources to achieve the department's strategic goals are available and that the effect these goals have on the department's financial performance can be measured.

Recommendation 54:

Create employee-level goals related to goals set in the Child Nutrition Department improvement plan.

A culture of strategic planning requires time to develop, but the groundwork for creating that culture can be set by giving individual employees a sense of how their work relates to the Child Nutrition Department's overall goals. After the director of Child Nutrition develops the Child Nutrition Department's goals for the department improvement plan, she should meet with Child Nutrition managers to help set cafeteria performance goals. Managers should then set goals for assistant managers and work with assistant managers to set goals for Child Nutrition specialists. These goals should be included in each employee's performance evaluation to ensure that targets are met and appropriate employee training planned to help achieve the goals.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Child Nutrition works with individual Child Nutrition managers to develop individual cafeteria performance goals that support the Child Nutrition Department improvement plan.	October 2002
2.	The Child Nutrition managers work with assistant managers to develop goals that support the school-level cafeteria goals.	October 2002
3.	Child nutrition managers and assistant managers develop goals for individual Child Nutrition specialists that support the school-level cafeteria goals.	November 2002
4.	The director of Child Nutrition revises employee evaluations to include ways to measure achievement of strategic goals.	December 2002
5.	The director of Child Nutrition and Child Nutrition managers evaluate staff performance on these goals as part of the annual personnel evaluation process.	Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 11

FOOD SERVICES

B. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The Child Nutrition Department fund balance has varied over the past three years, with a slightly negative balance in August 2000 and a positive net for August 2001. The Child Nutrition Department ended 2000-01 with a positive fund balance of \$81,523, which represents 7 percent of the Child Nutrition Department's annual revenues. From 1998-99 to 2000-01, the department steadily increased revenues, while maintaining control on expenses. There was a 16.6 percent increase in revenue during this time period, but only an 8.4 percent increase in expenses (**Exhibit 11-2**).

Exhibit 11-2
DSISD Child Nutrition Department Revenues and Expenditures
1998-99 through 2000-01

	1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		Percentage change from 1998-99 through 2000-01
	Dollars	Percentage of Revenue	Dollars	Percentage of Revenue	Dollars	Percentage of Revenue	
REVENUE							
Local and Intermediate Sources	\$877,517	87.3%	\$985,856	85.7%	\$1,047,996	89.5%	19.4%
State Program Revenues	\$6,144	0.6%	\$6,448	0.6%	\$6,606	0.6%	7.5%
Federal Program Revenues	\$121,202	12.1%	\$139,584	12.1%	\$116,703	10.0%	(3.7%)
Other Resources	\$0	0.0%	\$18,222	1.6%	\$0	0.0%	-
Total Revenue	\$1,004,863	100.0%	\$1,150,110	100.0%	\$1,171,305	100.0%	16.6%
EXPENDITURES							
Support Services - Student (Pupil)	\$1,005,802	100.0%	\$1,150,464	100.0%	\$1,067,812	98.0%	6.2%
Support Services -	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$3,747	0.3%	-

Nonstudent based							
Other Uses	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$18,222	1.7%	-
Total Expenditures	\$1,005,802	100.0%	\$1,150,464	100.0%	\$1,089,781	100.0%	8.4%
NET OPERATING INCOME	(\$939)	(-0.1%)	(\$354)	0.0%	\$81,524	7.0%	8,782.0%
Beginning Fund Balance (Sept. 1)	\$1,292		\$353		(\$1)		
Ending Fund Balance (August 31)	\$353	0.0%	(\$1)	0.0%	\$81,523	7.0%	22,994.3%

Source: DSISD Child Nutrition Department.

**Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Department's participation in the Central Texas Purchasing Cooperative for the Regional Educational Service Center XIII (Region 13) enables it to receive lower prices. Through the cooperative, the Child Nutrition Department has access to goods including all food items, uniforms, paper goods (including printed menus) and small equipment. Periodically, the cooperative invites Child Nutrition Department employees and students to food shows to provide input on which products the cooperative should purchase. The purchases the Child Nutrition Department makes on its own are for large pieces of equipment, for which the director of Child Nutrition issues a request for proposals or uses the state's approved vendor list.

The director of Child Nutrition prepares order guides for Child Nutrition managers that list the cooperative-available items, automatically controlling the cost of items that Child Nutrition managers can purchase. Managers place orders in accordance with the director of Child Nutrition's planned menus (with some discretion to add or substitute items) both by Internet directly with one vendor and by email to the director of Child Nutrition for other items. The Child Nutrition Department also benefits from not having to lease or purchase warehouse space because most vendors ship purchases directly to the schools. Only the Child Nutrition Department's logo napkins require storage and are kept with the district's custodial supplies.

For small school districts, purchasing cooperatives provide an opportunity to obtain lower prices available to bulk purchasers. The Child Nutrition Department takes advantage of this opportunity to reduce purchase prices and warehousing costs, while maintaining input in product selection through participation in the cooperative's food shows.

COMMENDATION

The Child Nutrition Department participates in Region 13's food purchasing cooperative to lower food costs.

Lake Travis	3%	<1%	1%	6%	1%	19%
Marble Falls	46%	30%	12%	78%	61%	27%
Comparison Average	21%	16%	7%	44%	31%	22%
High School						
	Breakfast			Lunch		
District Name	Free	Reduced	Paid	Free	Reduced	Paid
Dripping Springs	22%	13%	0%	42%	46%	16%
Burnet Consolidated	5%	2%	8%	16%	6%	26%
Eanes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lake Travis	2%	<1%	5%	2%	<1%	23%
Marble Falls	16%	0%	1%	47%	20%	30%
Comparison Average	11%	5%	4%	27%	24%	24%

*Source: DSISD Child Nutrition Department and peer districts.
Eanes ISD does not participate in the SBP and offers only a la carte lunches at the secondary schools.
Note: Wimberley ISD did not provide data.*

Exhibit 11-4 shows breakfast and lunch prices for elementary, middle and high school students in DSISD and four peer school districts. Prices for Dripping Springs High School students are significantly higher than those for high school students in the peer districts. Higher lunch prices in Dripping Springs High School are the result of the Child Nutrition Department's decision not to participate in the USDA's school lunch program due to the low free and reduced-price meal eligibility of the high school's students.

**Exhibit 11-4
Breakfast and Lunch Prices
DSISD vs. Peer Districts**

District	Breakfast			Lunch		
	Elementary	Middle	High	Elementary	Middle	High
Dripping Springs	\$0.85	\$0.85	a la carte	\$1.75	\$1.85	\$2.65

Burnet Consolidated	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.00
Eanes	N/A	á la carte	á la carte	\$1.80	\$2.30	á la carte
Lake Travis	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.65	\$1.75	\$2.00
Marble Falls	\$0.80	\$0.80	\$0.80	\$1.60	\$1.85	\$1.85

Source: Source: DSISD Child Nutrition Department and peer districts.

**Dripping Springs High School does not participate in the National School Lunch Program.*

***Comparison average does not include free breakfasts served at Burnet CISD or DSISD high school breakfast.*

Note: Wimberley ISD did not provide data.

The low number of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals at the high school results in low potential reimbursements to the Child Nutrition Department for meals served as part of the NSLP. In districts with high percentages of free and reduced-price eligible students, the high reimbursement figures for free and reduced-price meals served helps to pay the food and labor costs associated with serving full-price meals at relatively low cost to students. At Dripping Springs High School, low enrollments of free and reduced-price eligible students results in a low potential for such reimbursements so the district has chosen to operate the high school outside of the NSLP.

Those students who would be eligible for free meals may eat free in the "café" line in the food court, while those who would be eligible for reduced-price meals may purchase meals from the café line for \$0.40 for lunch and participate in breakfast for \$0.30. Because the Child Nutrition Department does

not participate in the NSLP, the Child Nutrition Department does not receive reimbursements for the costs of these meals but is able to provide these meals because the full-price meal sales are sufficiently profitable. High school cafeteria operations profit and loss reports compiled by the director of Child Nutrition for August 2001 through February 2002 showed that the high school was profitable every month.

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Department uses the PCS Revenue Control Systems, Inc. ScMP electronic point-of-sale (POS) system, which allows parents to prepay for student meals. Through the system, parents of K-3 students can exercise control over student a la carte purchases such as restricting milk purchases for students who are allergic to milk. Parents can also restrict how and when the child purchases extra items. The parent can choose to have extra items purchased only on certain days of the week or have the student pay cash for these items rather than debiting the prepaid account. The electronic POS system handles sales that are cash and prepaid, processes free and reduced-price lunch applications and discretely identifies a student's eligibility status at the time of sale, performs day-end functions and automatically creates reimbursement and other end-of-the day reports.

Students key their personal identification number (PIN) in the machine during the purchase. The majority of students use prepaid accounts, although at the high school many students pay in cash. Students enter their PINs even if they pay in cash. The Child Nutrition Department has trained most of the staff to use the electronic POS and rotates this function among staff; all new hires receive POS training. The director of Child Nutrition personally installed the computers and software in the cafeterias and performs most of the technical support for the Child Nutrition Department.

The electronic POS system selected by the Child Nutrition Department allows Child Nutrition to track student purchases, create reimbursement reports and discretely identify free and reduced-price students. Use of an electronic system ensures accuracy of reimbursement claims and facilitates the administrative burden of complying with federal reporting requirements associated with the NSLP and SBP.

COMMENDATION

The Child Nutrition Department uses an electronic POS system to automatically create accurate reimbursement claims and discretely identify free and reduced-price students.

FINDING

DSISD does not optimize identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. In 2001-02, the district sent free and reduced-price meal applications to students' homes at the beginning of the school year for all students through grade 8. Applications were not sent to the homes of high school students, although applications are available to students who seek them out in the school cafeterias or the Child Nutrition Department's office. The district uses family applications to ensure that if one student in a family is certified as eligible for free and reduced-price

meals, other students in the same family are also certified. However, the district does not use direct certification of students who are already receiving benefits from the Texas Department of Human Services through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The district also does not offer an incentive program for completing the eligibility form for free and reduced-price benefits.

The percentages of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals decreases as students progress through the school district. About 12.3 percent of primary students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, compared to 10.7 percent of intermediate school students, 8.3 percent of middle school students and 5.8 percent of high school students.

By failing to identify all students eligible for the free and reduced-price meal benefits through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, DSISD is losing state compensatory education funds. School districts receive compensatory education funds based on the number of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches and breakfasts. DSISD receives an increased compensatory education allotment for each student identified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Identifying students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches and breakfasts is a difficult process. Parents are sometimes reluctant to complete program applications because of pride, or they may not understand the forms. Also, students may not want to be identified as economically disadvantaged and request that parents leave them off the applications.

Some successful programs have adopted the following techniques:

- *Direct certification*-Not requiring families to complete an application for the federal free and reduced-price lunch and breakfast programs if the students are pre-certified as eligible by the Texas Department of Human Services through the TANF program.
- *Incentive awards*-Giving prizes to students and parents for completing an eligibility application. Such contests are open to all students regardless of family economic status. There is no stigma attached to the application process since all students could complete an application and be eligible for the prizes, which have included televisions and bicycles in various districts. Houston ISD placed all of its applicants' names in a drawing with a television as the top prize. Prizes were donated by local businesses and purchased with funds from the Food Services Department budget.

- *Advertising campaigns*-Using billboards, posters and flyers to disseminate information about the program in a positive manner.
- *Parental assistance*-Providing parents with assistance in completing applications. This technique is critical for non-English speaking or illiterate parents. El Paso ISD provides applications in both English and Spanish. Other districts have staff available during registration and the first days of school to help parents read and complete the applications.
- *School-based, at-risk budgeting*-Under this strategy, principals are encouraged to be aggressive in qualifying eligible students because the district makes funding for at-risk programs in their school budgets dependent on their number of identified students. In the Texarkana ISD, for example, principals are motivated to identify every eligible child for the program because their schools' Compensatory and Title I budget is linked directly to the number of children identified in the program.

Districts that aggressively strive to identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meal benefits are harnessing increased compensatory revenues.

Recommendation 55:

Develop strategies to increase the identification of students eligible for free and reduced-price meal benefits.

At a minimum, the district should send the eligibility forms home to the parents of the high school students as it does for students through grade 8. If the district implemented strategies such as incentive awards and an aggressive advertising campaign to increase identification by 10 percent, DSISD could receive an additional \$1,470 annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, principals and director of Child Nutrition establish a marketing program to increase awareness of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program through media available to the district that encourages completing the application for free and reduced-price meal benefits.	September 2002 - March 2003
2.	The director of Child Nutrition assists parents in completing applications during registration.	July - August 2003
3.	The superintendent, principals and director of Child Nutrition evaluate the success of the campaign each year and revise it as needed.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The district could receive \$1,470 in additional federal revenues by increasing identification of students for free and reduced-price benefits by 10 percent (.10 increase x 308 students currently identified = 30 additional students x \$49 in additional state Compensatory Education funds = \$1,470) in additional revenues. However, compensatory enrollment is based on the prior year's best six-month average of eligible students, so the district would not financially benefit from increased enrollment until 2003-04.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop strategies to increase the identification of students eligible for free and reduced-price meal benefits.	\$0	\$1,470	\$1,470	\$1,470	\$1,470

FINDING

In Dripping Springs Middle School, sodas are available to students during the lunch serving period from a vending machine located just outside of the cafeteria that is not run by the Child Nutrition Department. This is in violation of USDA guidelines for the NSLP rules regarding the sale of competitive food items and food items of minimal nutritional value.

The Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Administrator's Reference Manual, Section 16.1 states:

"School districts must establish rules or regulations as necessary to control the sale of foods in competition with meals served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Such rules and regulations shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value in the food service area during the breakfast and lunch periods. The restricted foods may be sold, at the discretion of local school officials, in other areas of the school campus throughout the school day."

The competitive food regulation specifically restricts the sales of "soda water or any carbonated beverage." The policy prohibits the sale of food by any other organization other than the Child Nutrition Department during meal times. This prohibition includes the sale of fund-raising food items unless the foods are approved and purchased by the Child Nutrition program. The policy also designates the location and the hours of service for vending machines. Under this policy, vending machines with non-approved food items should be located outside of the cafeteria service area, which includes the area in which meals are eaten. If they are in the

area, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the machines are shut off during student meal service. The middle school vending machines are located in an area just outside the cafeteria dining room where there are lunch tables available for students to sit and eat their lunch; this area is considered part of the cafeteria service area and falls under NSLP policy constraints. While the district noted that the vending machine is outside of the cafeteria, the machine is still accessible to students during the lunch period.

To prevent the sale of sodas and food items that are in direct competition with the cafeterias, Aransas County Independent School District uses timers to shut off the machines during breakfast and lunch hours.

Recommendation 56:

Turn off vending machines in Dripping Springs Middle School during the lunch serving periods.

Implementing this recommendation will bring DSISD into compliance with the USDA rules governing administration of the National School Lunch Program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Child Nutrition circulates a copy of the competitive food regulation to the Dripping Springs Middle School principal.	September 2002
2.	The principal of Dripping Springs Middle School ensures that the machines are turned off during meal serving times.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 11

FOOD SERVICES

D, STAFFING

Staffing a food service operation requires balancing the number of staff necessary to provide quick and high-quality service while meeting administrative requirements of the USDA's lunch and breakfast programs to minimize labor costs to keep the program cost-effective.

DSISD's Child Nutrition Department currently employs 29 people, 20 of whom are Child Nutrition specialists preparing and serving meals in the district's kitchens. Four employees are Child Nutrition managers, who manage individual kitchens and four employees are assistant managers. The remaining position is the director of Child Nutrition, who oversees the Child Nutrition Department's operations.

FINDING

New Child Nutrition workers are hired first as substitutes, providing the Child Nutrition Department with a trained pool of readily available substitute workers, as well as ensuring that new hires are compatible with the Child Nutrition Department before their employment becomes permanent.

Lack of substitute labor plagues many food service operations. School districts struggle to find trained workers available on short notice to work in the kitchens when employees are absent unexpectedly. Dripping Springs' Child Nutrition Department has implemented an innovative solution to this problem by initially hiring new staff as substitute workers. The district trains these substitutes and requires that they work 30 days as substitutes before hiring them for a permanent kitchen position. This solution also ensures that new hires are compatible with the Child Nutrition Department and the kitchen in which they are placed. This action should reduce turnover and improve managerial satisfaction with new staff.

COMMENDATION

The Child Nutrition Department fills its positions from a pool of trained and readily available substitute workers.

FINDING

The Child Nutrition Department's average meals per labor hour (MPLH) are slightly below the district's MPLH standards. MPLH is a standard efficiency performance measure for school districts, hospitals, restaurants and other food services operations. MPLH is the number of meal equivalents served in a given period divided by the total hours worked to produce those meals during that period. Meal equivalents are lunches plus an equivalent number of breakfast and a la carte sales.

DSISD's director of Child Nutrition analyzes meals per labor hour twice a year, once in the fall and a second time in the spring. She uses an average of two different staffing standards, one for preparation and serving of conventionally prepared meals and another for use of convenience foods, which require less labor to prepare and serve. A mix of both types of meals are prepared and served by the Child Nutrition Department; therefore the director of Child Nutrition compares actual meals per labor hour (MPLH) to an average of the two standards.

In comparing January 2002 statistics to either staffing standard, the Child Nutrition Department's MPLH are, on average, slightly below the district's MPLH standards. According to the Director of Child Nutrition, because staffing and logistical changes were implemented as a result of the Primary School closure for mold MPLH statistics for the Primary and Intermediate schools are not representative. The MPLH statistics for the combined Primary and Intermediate schools more accurately reflect DSISD's special circumstances (**Exhibit 11-5**).

Exhibit 11-5
DSISD Meals per Labor Hour Statistics
January 2002

Campus	Average Daily Meal Equivalents	Average Labor Hours	Actual District MPLH	District MPLH Standard	Over/(Under) District MPLH Standard
Primary	434	42	10	16	(6)
Intermediate	542	21	26	17	9
Combined Primary and Intermediate	977	63	16	21	(5)
Middle School	930	48	19	21	(2)
High School	803	67	12	19	(7)

Source: DSISD Child Nutrition Department.

MPLH in the middle, high school and combined primary and intermediate schools range from two to seven MPLH lower than the district's MPLH standard. While this low MPLH can be attributed in part to the primary school's closure for mold that has forced Child Nutrition's preparation of primary school lunches at the intermediate school, monthly profit and loss reports by schools show that labor costs for this function are high and could be reduced.

In 1995, TSPR conducted a review of the San Angelo Independent School District (SAISD) and recommended the district reduce staffing levels through hiring freezes and attrition. When reviewing the district in August 2001, TSPR found that by reducing 11 part-time positions by approximately four hours each, SAISD saved more than \$41,000 annually in salary costs.

Recommendation 57:

Adopt food service productivity standards and staff cafeterias accordingly.

The director of Child Nutrition should develop and implement staffing productivity standards at all cafeterias. Labor costs would be reduced for the Child Nutrition Department, assisting in improving the overall financial performance of the food service operation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Child Nutrition implements a hiring freeze for the Child Nutrition Department.	September 2002
2.	The director of Child Nutrition drafts staffing productivity standards for all cafeterias.	September 2002
3.	The director of Child Nutrition and Child Nutrition managers develop recommendations for each cafeteria to increase productivity and reduce labor costs.	October 2002
4.	The director of Child Nutrition generates MPLH reports twice a year and distributes to Child Nutrition managers	November 2002 and Ongoing
5.	The director of Child Nutrition evaluates the MPLH twice a year and adjusts the number of Child Nutrition specialists needed.	November 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished through attrition, and staffing changes will not be realized until 2003-04. By not filling the positions of

four six-hour Child Nutrition specialist through attrition, the Child Nutrition Department would achieve the district's meal per labor hour standards. According to the director of Child Nutrition, a Child Nutrition specialist earns \$8.00 per hour. Using this wage, for six hours per day over 180 serving days, and a benefits rate of 16.5 percent, eliminating four Child Nutrition specialist positions would result in an annual cost savings of \$40,264 ($\$8.00 \text{ per hour} \times 6 \text{ hours per day} \times 180 \text{ days} = \$8,640$ in salary costs $\times 1.165$ benefit rate = $\$10,066 \times 4$ positions = $\$40,264$ in total savings).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Adopt food service productivity standards and staff cafeterias accordingly.	\$0	\$40,264	\$40,264	\$40,264	\$40,264

Chapter 12

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter reviews the safety and security operations of Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD) in three sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Safety
- C. Security

School districts must provide a safe and secure environment for their staff and students. To accomplish this, effective school districts develop policies, procedures and programs to address crisis contingencies, student discipline, facility safety and violence prevention. Failure to adequately address any one of these areas weakens the safety and security of the school district.

Chapter 12

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

School districts are responsible for the safety and security of both students and staff. Effective safety and security programs ensure that all facilities comply with school system policies and appropriate state and federal regulations. Safety and security personnel develop programs for safety training, security, electronic surveillance, facility safety, fire and sanitation inspections, accident investigations, risk elimination and minimization and emergency planning and response.

A variety of staff in DSISD perform safety and security functions. The directors of Human Resources, Maintenance and Transportation, the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, school principals and school assistant principals all play a role in safety and security.

The district improvement plan includes goals and objectives related to districtwide safety and security. Each district department includes safety and security goals in their department improvement plans, while each campus sets goals for safety and security in its school improvement plans.

FINDING

No department or individual has overall responsibility for safety and security planning at the districtwide level. Prior to the arrival of the current superintendent, the district had a director of Compliance and Safety, who was responsible for districtwide safety and security and the development of the DSISD Crisis Response Manual. The district determined the full-time position was not necessary. As a result, personnel with responsibility for the safety and security functions within the school system are now located in different departments.

The director of Human Resources oversees criminal background checks conducted on each new district employees. The director of Plant Operations maintains security and fire alarms installed in district buildings. The director of Transportation maintains the safety of district vehicles and oversees referrals for student discipline infractions occurring on school buses. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning oversees grief and trauma counseling and new employee orientation, which includes raising awareness of sexual harassment and bullying. School administrators are responsible for campus safety and security, including student discipline. It does not appear that these various

efforts are coordinated, and there are some necessary tasks that are not the responsibility of any employee.

No district employee coordinates safety and security activities to ensure all schools have viable crisis response plans in compliance with the districtwide crisis response plan. No district employee ensures that schools enforce safety and security policies. As a result, the level of emergency preparedness and the enforcement of security measures, such as visitor sign-in procedures and employee badges, vary between schools. There is little oversight and accountability for principals to develop specific procedures, conduct emergency drills other than fire drills, enforce security measures and ensure adequate staff training in safety and security matters. Because safety and security issues cross the organization chart in school districts, the most effective districts assign a senior administrator the responsibility to coordinate the district's safety and security initiatives.

Recommendation 58:

Create an energy manager and safety coordinator position.

This position would be under the director of Plant Operations and in addition to energy management responsibilities would be responsible for overall coordination of safety and security functions in the district. The position would fill both Plant Operations and safety and security needs.

Student discipline and personnel-related security issues should remain the responsibilities of school administrators and the director of Human Resources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent requests that the Board of Trustees create the energy manager and safety coordinator position.	September 2002
2.	Following board approval, the director of Plant Operations fills the energy manager and safety coordinator position.	November 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact for this position is reported in Chapter 5 of this report.

Chapter 12

SAFETY AND SECURITY

B. SAFETY

In the past, school safety measures consisted of surrounding schools with fences and creating alternative education programs for violent or disruptive students. After the Columbine incident and in the face of continued violent school incidents around the country, school districts recognize the need for a more comprehensive approach, involving awareness, prevention, intervention and a recognition that school violence is a community problem requiring community involvement.

The best approaches to school safety are aggressive in nature. A safe school district will effectively manage its resources and assertively plan for future situations. Proactive planning for safety requires accurate and up-to-date information regarding the current and future status of conditions in the system's schools and facilities. Routine and thorough safety inspections, procedures that facilitate quick reporting of emerging safety situations and the prompt response to identify situations are hallmarks of effective safety planning. The National School Safety Center, created in 1984 by presidential designation, released a document in 1999 entitled *Working Together to Create Safe Schools*. This document outlines numerous strategies for improving school safety and states:

Perhaps the most important strategy is to place school safety on the educational agenda. This includes developing a safe schools plan - an ongoing process that encompasses the development of districtwide crime prevention policies, in-service training, crisis preparation, interagency cooperation and student/parent participation. An appointed task force should develop and implement the plan with representatives from all elements of the school community.

FINDING

DSISD does not have district or school-level safety and security advisory committees to shape the strategic direction and plan for safety and security needs. In the absence of such committees, safety and security planning is not coordinated throughout the district, resulting in different levels of building security, emergency preparedness and staff awareness in the district schools.

Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS) in Maryland established a committee with membership drawn from state, county and city law

enforcement agencies, the local Department of Health, local business management, the media, Board of Education members, the superintendent, special education, health and students. The committee enabled ACPS to establish a student hotline to report illegal activities, launch a community awareness campaign for the hotline and update individual school emergency school plans using a special committee-created emergency plan checklist.

School-level safety committees create a heightened awareness of school safety issues and promote occupational safety and health. Such committees can affect loss prevention by decreasing the frequency and severity of workplace accidents, injuries, occupational diseases and fatalities and the associated cost of workers' compensation. These committees are normally comprised of school system personnel and community stakeholders.

Recommendation 59:

Create district and campus-level safety and security advisory committees to provide strategic direction in the area of safety and security.

A district-level safety and security advisory committee will communicate the school district's commitment to maintaining a safe learning environment. The committee will serve as the focal point for districtwide safety and security programs, develop appropriate strategies, coordinate the efforts of central office departments as they relate to safety and security, support the needs of school administrators in safety and security and provide direction for individual school safety committees.

Specific benefits of campus-based safety committees include:

- coordination all safety efforts on the school site;
- promotion of awareness of safety issues;
- demonstration of the school board's concern for safety issues;
- assurance that safety efforts are visible and documented, providing a stronger defense for the principal and school board when safety is an issue in a liability suit; and
- provision of safety communication channels from school to central office and area office, from area and central offices to school, from employees to school and from school to employees.

Effective school safety committees meet at least once quarterly. They are composed of school staff and community members as is shown in **Exhibit 12-1**.

Exhibit 12-1
Recommended Members of a School Safety Committee

- Principal
- Assistant principal
- SRO, if a high school, or other law enforcement or fire department representative
- Person responsible for initiating work orders
- One physical education teacher
- Teacher representatives (including Special Education)
- Head custodian
- Lunchroom manager
- Parent
- School volunteer
- PTA, PTO, PTSA, Parent Advisory or School Improvement Team representative
- Science Department representative, if a secondary school
- Vocational Education representative, if a secondary school
- Business partner
- Student
- Youth-serving agencies

Source: Created by MGT of America, 2002.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent informs the board and community of the need for district- and school-level safety and security advisory committees.	January 2003
2.	The superintendent submits a draft policy calling for creation of a district-level committee to the Board of Trustees for approval and review.	January 2003
3.	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Plant Operations to draft guidelines requiring the establishment of school safety committees. Drafts to include committee composition, primary functions and meeting frequency.	January 2003
4.	The Board of Trustees reviews and implements the policy and the superintendent coordinates the establishment of a districtwide Safety and Security Advisory Committee.	February 2003
5.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Plant Operations submit a proposed policy	March 2003

	statement for superintendent review and approval.	
6.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Plant Operations assist schools as necessary in the formation of their safety committees.	April - May 2003
7.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Plant Operations receive and review copies of meeting minutes from school safety committees.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

No procedure exists to ensure that new district employees receive safety and security training during orientation. Many school and district administrators are misinformed about safety and security issues in the district, indicating that the lack of training translates into a lack of awareness and knowledge. For example, two administrators thought their alarm systems are remotely monitored by the local fire station or other agency. According to the director of Plant Operations, who responds to alarms, none of the alarms are remotely monitored. Confusion about alarm monitoring could lead district staff to fail to alert fire or other emergency personnel to an emergency.

Schools with effective safety and security systems have principals who are well informed of the security systems in place on their campuses, and all personnel know how to maintain a safe and secure environment. Administrators introduce new employees to emergency procedures and basic safety and security information, so they are prepared to respond to problems. For example, teachers may face discipline issues and require guidance on how the district expects them to deal with disruptive students. Lack of familiarity with emergency procedures leaves employees little choice but to improvise or spend crucial minutes studying the district's crisis response manual, possibly exposing the district to lawsuits if mandated actions are not taken or are delayed.

San Angelo ISD (SAISD) puts substantial resources into safety-related staff development to ensure staff and students have the knowledge and skills necessary in crises. Staff development programs cover the following:

- substance abuse;
- anger management;
- conflict resolution;

- peer mediation;
- gang violence prevention;
- discipline management;
- crisis preparedness;
- dealing with parents in a crisis situation;
- gangs and violence;
- lab safety;
- vehicle safety;
- hazardous chemicals;
- lifting hazards;
- electrical and fire safety; and
- CPR and various health-related issues including blood-borne pathogens.

Recommendation 60:

Create a safety and security component for new employee orientations.

New employee orientations offer an ideal opportunity to start an employee's tenure at DSISD with an awareness of the importance of following safety and security procedures. By integrating safety and security training in the orientation process, DSISD would send new employees the message that safety and security are an integral part of their job. Dealing with this vital subject at the beginning of an employee's orientation to the district ensures that even the newest employees are ready in the event of an emergency and are able to assist students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to develop a safety and security component for new employee orientation.	January 2003
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning presents the objectives and training outline to the superintendent for review and approval.	June 2003
3.	All new employees complete safety and security training as part of new employee orientation.	August 2003 and Ongoing
4.	School administrators survey existing employees to determine whether existing employees require additional training in crisis response and provide training as needed.	October 2003 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The director of Transportation does not have a Crisis Response Manual. As a result, he does not have guidelines on how the district expects him to respond to an emergency situation or how to direct bus drivers to support the district's planned response. Bus drivers do not have any guidelines on how to respond to a crisis, including the role the district would expect them to play in evacuating schools.

Corsicana ISD distributes an emergency plan flipchart to all new employees that is indexed by department and type of crisis, and presents information in an easy-to-use format. This flipchart includes step-by-step guidelines to help bus drivers deal with emergencies ranging from vehicle problems to severe weather conditions. Drivers keep the flipcharts in their buses for quick reference.

Recommendation 61:

Create a crisis response flipchart tailored for bus drivers.

The director of Transportation and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning should work to create a crisis response flipchart that bus drivers use to quickly determine actions they should take to support the district's crisis response plan. Emergency plan materials should be distributed annually to new drivers and reviewed with all drivers to ensure that they are familiar with emergency procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Transportation to create a crisis response flipchart tailored for bus drivers.	October 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Transportation collaborate to produce a draft flipchart for bus drivers to use that is consistent with the district's Crisis Response Manual.	November 2002
3.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Transportation present the draft flipchart to the superintendent for review and approval.	January 2003
4.	The director of Transportation distributes the flipchart to bus drivers and reviews the procedures with drivers.	May 2003 and Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Traffic safety is a major district concern. A traffic safety survey prepared in January 2000 by the Hays County Sheriff's Office revealed the difficulty vehicles exiting the middle schools face due to high traveling speeds along U.S. Highway 290. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, 72 traffic accidents occurred on U.S. Highway 290 between Hays County Road (HCR) 187 and HCR 163 from October 1999 to October 2000, the latest one-year total available. Of these accidents, six were reported to be incapacitating, with zero fatalities. According to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning, five DSISD students have been killed on area roadways in the past three years. School administrators also said that the roads and traffic are major problems and cite the cause as "a combination of road conditions and community growth." Interviewees expect the problem to worsen with the planned widening of the highway.

Several school districts nationwide, such as Washington County School District in Utah, have established School Traffic Safety Committees to address such concerns. The committee is composed of representatives from:

- district schools;
- Parent Teachers' Associations;
- the municipality or county;
- state or local law enforcement; and
- state or local traffic safety engineering.

Tasks assigned to the committee include: working with parents, teachers and the community to develop school traffic safety recommendations; providing training to elementary school children on school crossing use; and reviewing child access routing plans, including loading/unloading areas, existing traffic controls and established school crossings. A similar committee in Calabasas, California, part of the Las Virgenes Unified School District has implemented a safe-walk-to-school program and successfully lobbied for a traffic signal.

Recommendation 62:

Create a School Traffic Safety Committee to develop a plan to improve safety on U.S. Highway 290.

Administrators should create a School Traffic Safety Committee comprised of key community members, law enforcement personnel and representatives from the Texas Department of Public Safety to determine how to address the safety concerns of administrators. Without coordination and planning, these problems will only get worse as road improvements create more hazards and traffic increases with community growth.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of Transportation and the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning to create a districtwide School Traffic Safety Committee with representatives of DSISD, local law enforcement, the Texas Department of Public Safety and the community.	September 2002
2.	The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Learning and the director of Transportation meet with the Hays County Sheriff, key community members and a representative of the Texas Department of Public Safety to request their cooperation in creating a plan to improve safety on US Highway 290.	October 2002
3.	The director of Transportation and the sheriff's office gather data to analyze the number and causes of accidents occurring near district schools.	November 2002
4.	The superintendent schedules a public forum to present the accident data and solicit community input on strategies to improve safety on US Highway 290.	February 2003
5.	The School Traffic Safety Committee works to create a plan addressing community concerns to improve safety on the highway.	March-August 2003
6.	The Hays County Sheriff, the Texas Department of Public Safety and the director of Transportation, as appropriate, implement the plan.	September 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 12

SAFETY AND SECURITY

C. SECURITY

The task of establishing a secure environment in which teachers can teach and students can learn requires comprehensive planning, appropriate policies and programs that address the needs of both the school system and situations unique to each school. Districts need to ensure their personnel understand and know how to respond to incidents involving security hazards, threats of violence or student abductions.

FINDING

Although DSISD employs no security officers, since fall 2001 a school resource officer (SRO) has been assigned to DSISD schools by the Hays County Sheriff's Office. A *Cops In Schools* federal grant awarded to the sheriff's office funds the SRO position until 2004. As part of the grant application, DSISD agreed to begin paying three-fourths of the salary of the SRO beginning in fall 2004, with the sheriff's office funding the remaining portion. At the June 4, 2002 board meeting, the DSISD school board voted to participate in the sheriff's application for a second SRO for the district.

The purpose of the SRO is to deter crime. As part of this effort, the SRO interacts with students in the classroom, presenting safety, crime prevention and law enforcement career information. The SRO also presents safety and crime prevention training to school staff, such as how to improve building security; and handles reports by school administrators on criminal activity, including student infractions that break the law. The SRO reports to the high school campus and works with principals of both the high school and middle school. The SRO receives training in working with youth and in school districts through state and federal government workshops for SROs, covering such topics as "When is behavior a crime?" and "Guns, gangs and drugs in school."

Sheriff's deputies also perform school safety assessments to provide the district recommendations on improving building security. The district contracts with the sheriff's office on an as-needed basis to provide security for athletic and other extracurricular events.

COMMENDATION

DSISD maintains an excellent relationship with the Hays County Sheriff's Office, resulting in improved security at low cost to the district.

FINDING

Although DSISD requires sign-in procedures in all of the school buildings and administrative building, a TSPR team member wandered freely in several schools. In one case, a teacher approached the team member and asked her business in the school, then failed to ask the team member to return to the front office to sign-in. Of all schools visited, DSISD Intermediate School was the only one that had staff who enforced the sign-in policy. All schools and the central office have signs directing visitors to a front office, but it is difficult to determine the locations of the front office at facilities with multiple buildings. When school visitors cannot find a school's front office and staff are reluctant to question unidentified visitors, visitor sign-in policies lose their effectiveness.

Recommendation 63:

Require districtwide enforcement of sign-in and visitor badge procedures.

The intermediate school staff's compliance with the district sign-in policy should be duplicated districtwide. DSISD staff should be trained to be aware of visitors who are not wearing school-issued badges and are walking through the schools and administrative buildings. Staff should also be trained to be politely assertive when approaching visitors, insisting upon observance of sign-in and badge procedures. District administrators should study the practices used by the intermediate school to determine which practices have been effective in communicating the importance of these procedures to staff and replicate these practices throughout the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	School administrators meet to discuss strategies to raise awareness of visitor sign-in and badge procedures.	September 2002
2.	School administrators tailor these strategies to meet the needs of their campus staff.	October 2002
3.	School administrators implement the strategies to communicate the importance of enforcing sign-in and visitor badge procedures.	November 2002
4.	The director of Plant Operations conducts periodic reviews	December 2002

to ensure school-level compliance with the sign-in and visitor badge procedures.	and Ongoing
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Appendix A

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

The narrative comments below are the actual comments from the public forum and focus groups do not reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or the review team.

District Organization and Management

- I've viewed the system at all levels and it works! In decision-making I would tend towards risk management; the board seems averse to taking risks and prefers to throw money at problems.
- Strategic planning is debatable.
- The board and superintendent have done a great job of managing the budget, faculty, facilities, etc.- even the mold problem! - in trying times, in both boom and recession.
- The superintendent and board have taken great strides in identifying and beginning to correct problems. Keep up the good work!
- I have full faith in the job they've done.
- The school board has done a great job in all areas. They consider the responsibility of teaching and guiding our students to be theirs, along with administration, teachers, staff, and parents. This is an excellent school board. The superintendent is outstanding. She is extremely knowledgeable and is a supporter of all employees, students, and parents. We are lucky to have her.
- How does the Special Education Co-op interface with the superintendent and school administrators in needs of special students? It doesn't seem that "the hand knows what the foot is doing."
- During the past two years, the lines of communication have really opened up. The board has always been open to public input, but recently, the district has gone in search of opinions, not waiting for people to come to them.
- Site-based decision making should include parents and students.
- The superintendent is the shining star of this community!
- Superintendent, board and principals are proactive, positive, and extremely competent. Very student oriented administration.
- The superintendent is very compassionate and cares for all students.
- For the most part, superintendents and school boards over the years have had the best interests of the students at heart. Unfortunately, special interest groups have occasionally gotten their ears and wielded too much influence. I believe the district management is

trying to correct these mistakes in an open forum process. Even the most informed, high paid business managers couldn't predict economic circumstances. What is needed is more help from the state so that districts are not strapped financially- especially fast-growing districts like DSISD.

- There has been some poor planning and actions regarding some areas, such as purchasing land that was unnecessary or purchasing land during a period of "high prices." The district has also received the benefit of land donated to build facilities. As with any government entity, there is going to be waste in spending dollars and managing resources. This district is dependent on a tax structure that is not supported by industry; however, it has received overwhelming support from the community when growth created the need to build new schools, hire more teachers, etc. The superintendent is respected. The administrators were in place prior to her arrival, so she must use the hand she has been dealt. Personal experience in strategic planning has demonstrated a very professional, systematic approach run by a competent team. One meeting has been held to date.
- For all the hard work invested by teachers, administrators, and parents in our special education students, we are failing them. The most glaring fault in our special education delivery system is our failure and perhaps unwillingness to challenge and assist to become as self-sufficient as they are capable of becoming. Instead, we communicate to them in a multiplicity of ways that their handicap defines them and that they are entitled to "crutches" and need not become independent. We are creating a generation of special education students who have not been encouraged or expected to be successful. We have padded the sharp edges of their world instead of teaching them how to identify and adjust for those edges. IPR's should be required to address how teachers and parents will help the child become more self-sufficient.

Educational Service Delivery

- The arts programs are very much under funded and underrepresented. The organizations with the most active or loudest booster clubs seem to maintain their top-shelf status while the arts/music programs are reduced to three hours a week. Much smaller districts are able to squeeze out money for art programs. Where is the equity regarding funding of arts and athletics?
- I wish there was a way my special education students could be "tested" and included in some form of TAAS. I wish the regular education teacher was more involved. As a teacher, I wish everything in special education didn't just boil down to "time and

money." I wish the "special area" teachers were more involved in teaching special education students.

- The special education program is dependent on the administrators to carry out the law. This district prides itself in designing each program for each child, yet puts special needs children in a "one size fits all" resource classroom and attempts to teach children each with different needs-the same program the same way. This district falls short in effectively and correctly addressing the needs of the special education students that confers benefit. Personal experience has demonstrated that school administrators lie, if needed, coerce, if needed, retaliate, if needed, to in fact prove their point that the child is getting all he/she needs to receive a FAPE. Principals and directors have discriminated against the very children they are supposed to assist in receiving a beneficial education.
- It is unfortunate that the district takes the "drill and kill" approach to the TAAS (and the coming TAKS). Focus should be on full coverage of the TEKS elements in the classroom. There must be an insistence that all teachers are aware of the links of the TEKS to each grade. Focus on the TEKS, and TAAS/TAKS success will follow.
- I have two children who graduated from DSHS and entered college as second semester sophomores. The GT/AP programs not only prepare students very well for what they need to know in college, they also can help them save money. My daughter has even said that some of her classes at UT were easier than some of her HS classes.
- Teachers of the GT/AP programs are dedicated and work very hard, but often at the cost of personal/family time. Higher expectations for student performance and teacher preparedness should be supported by additional planning time for teachers. This in turn needs to be supported through the budget. All teachers work hard, but GT and AP teachers especially.
- The district promotes one mold for all with the least restrictive environment, overlooking students whose needs cannot be met in this "one choice" program. TEKS curriculum is not mandated for all students and only partially for regular students. Use of technology, especially computers, is very lacking. The science program in primary school is hit and miss (except for the space shuttle, which is awesome).
- Unfortunately, the decisions for the GT placement are made in primary school and students seem "tracked" for their academic career. Hopefully this has changed. My children are now through the system. Ignorance by some faculty as to strengths and weaknesses of children and their wanting to promote all children's strengths.

- Special Education is proactive and attentive to the needs of the children. Parents who want to be involved in the decisions made about their special needs child are welcomed and valued.
- ESOL students' needs are not being met. They need more one-on-one help! Budget for a full-time ESOL teacher at each campus. These kids are being discriminated against. They are not being provided the same quality education.
- The Gifted and Talented Program sets the standard and should be retained.
- [Regarding the G&T Program] Very impressive - especially at the upper levels.
- The Special Education Co-op in Dripping Springs has a wide range of responsibilities. It is actually the Hays-Blanco Special Education Co-op and divides its resources between various schools. Some children's needs are met, yet others can't get specific programs that they need because resources have to be shared. This should be looked at to see if there is a better way to meet the children's needs.
- Can't spend enough on special education, but TAAS is far too emphasized. "Dumbing down" our curriculum to a lowest common denominator.
- As a parent of four children identified as gifted and talented, I am very impressed with the quality of education they have received both in GT classrooms and regular classes. The program is well designed to meet a variety of needs of this population in a creative, dynamic and challenging fashion. The instruction is exceptional!
- We are blessed with outstanding teachers, especially considering the low salaries they receive.
- Our special programs service the students enrolled in them well. Most importantly, they are constantly improving and adapting to the population they have. Unfortunately, the programs are not funded sufficiently by the state!

Community Involvement

- Communication is not always clear between staff and parents. General (generic) communication is fine. There is a breakdown with some staff in the area of special education, where verbally things are expressed but follow-up doesn't occur as promised. It leaves parents and students hanging and feeling more alienated.
- One of the main reasons people move to this district is because of the community. They see the need to leave the city and come to the country. The district has grown as a result and we are now an extension of the city. People still try to keep the small town environment intact without feeling totally isolated from the diversity of city life. Parents are very involved in the district's

activities and contribute greatly to the success of the environment between the school and the community. There is a great need to donate "extra" funds by businesses for "extra" projects, and this can be too large a burden for the small businesses that operate in this community. However, they continue to donate time, money, and services because this is a great community.

- Great communication regarding DSPS.
- One of the strongest features of the program. Outstanding parental and community involvement. I'm on two committees and feel very good about input.
- Parent volunteers contribute greatly to the programs, projects, and goals of the primary school.
- Communication is good. Parents are made to feel welcome and like being involved.
- Without the parent involvement through the PTA, booster clubs, and other fundraisers, this district would not see a lot of the special things we have: track fields, supplies, field trips, etc.
- The district actively seeks community involvement and is central to our community. Dripping Springs wouldn't be what it is today without the schools.
- As a media representative, I've been very happy with the cooperation I get from DSISD, especially from the superintendent and other administrators. They return my calls even when they know I'm going to ask tough questions.
- Communication is greater than when I grew up, but parents are far less available and receptive.
- The district is one of the most inclusive ones with which I have ever had contact. Parents are actively encouraged to participate and are appreciated for their involvement with the schools. Multiple opportunities are made available for us as parents to be a part of the decision-making process. [Evidence of the] close bond of cooperation between community and schools was the parent-initiated fundraiser to help teachers replace school supplies they had purchased with their own money.
- Working parents are at a disadvantage [and] not able to participate with decisions unless it is a booster club or after-school meeting. Rarely have I had teachers call me, positively or negatively, in regard to the two children who I have who had go through the system. Administrators are pleasant but aloof.
- With direct experience with the middle school currently and all other campuses previously: community input and assistance is continuously sought. Report card comments, assignment logs, VIP's, and e-mail are some of those structures. It is true that parents who initiate dialogue receive it more frequently than those who do not.

- Parent/teacher communication would be easier to keep at the optimum level if teachers were not stretched to the maximum. We have been given additional periods to teach and willingly take on other responsibilities such as club and class sponsorships, committee membership, grant writing, and miscellaneous duties. But it grows increasingly difficult to meet all obligations, attend all meetings, call all parents, and help all kids.

Personnel Management

- More money needs to be spent by the state for increased teacher salaries in every district in Texas. Minimum teacher salaries need to be raised. So many teachers are retiring, and the newest teachers don't stay in it for the long haul. You [State of Texas] get what you pay for. Is Texas 38th in the nation for salaries? This school district gets its bang for the buck. Look at the tax rate vs. the per-pupil expenditure vs. the academic rating of this school. Money is not being wasted here.
- Administrators are the keys to effective personnel management. They can create a positive working environment for their teachers or just the opposite. Their concerns and priorities-from my experiences-are more attuned to "budget" needs than "child" needs. Staff development seems to happen after the fact, after a crisis has occurred, after a due process has been filed. They are reactive instead of proactive. The teachers do the best they can with the resources made available to them. They are dedicated but limited in their abilities to teach, assess, and cope with the needs of every child.
- This district is no different than others in trying to provide salaries that are measurable to the competence and expectations of teachers. A state issue, not a district issues. As far as turnover, that depends on the campus. Some teachers do not seem happy here, or at least the students get that impression. At high school level, parental involvement is not wooed. Very active booster clubs, however, so special interests are catered to.
- Some teachers, but especially teacher aides, are not trained thoroughly to work with special students. Student is lucky just to get someone assigned even though IEP and ARD require it. There is a shortage of properly trained staff (administrative as well) for students with learning disabilities especially behavioral issues that accompany students trying to function in a placement that doesn't meet their individual needs. All staff needs sensitivity training for all components of student population but especially students with learning disabilities and behavioral issues. The majority of the staff will come into contact with these students sometime and need to respect their rights.

- Rapid growth in this area has put a strain on the budget at all levels. Each family that moves in will pay property taxes, true, but those taxes do not cover the cost of educating those children. Each year we cut budgets more and are asked to do more with less. When will the state step in to rescue struggling districts and underpaid teachers? The Robin Hood Plan is a poor Band-Aid. When will educating our youth become a STATE BUDGET PRIORITY? Our school district is doing a magnificent job coping with and keeping up the high standards we have set for ourselves. But sooner or later, we will be unable to cut more or tax at a higher rate. WE NEED STATE LEADERSHIP ON THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE!
- I have had the opportunity to interact with teachers and administrators at all four campuses. The majority is excellent. There are a few (enough to make me comment) that demonstrate a limited knowledge of the TEKS and the links between the grade levels. Staff training and development must be strengthened for the staff.
- I am always amazed at the quality of the staff in DSISD and the dedication to the profession. There are some instances where personnel secure positions that others seek who seem more qualified or "in line." So the process is sometimes not clear. It would be worthwhile to consider staff development opportunities that occur outside of the school setting and award "comp time" for these worthwhile endeavors. Salary is always a difficult subject. As an educator I know I work 60-70 hour weeks all the time and receive almost half the compensation that my husband earns or an equal amount that my just-graduated-from college son receives. There has to be some way to address this inequity.
- Salaries in the area are very competitive. We lose too many outstanding teachers/educators to outside groups. Teachers need our support. They must make a living wage!
- Our teachers are doing an outstanding job-they should be paid accordingly so we don't have a large turnover each year.
- It is sad to say teachers do not get paid at a professional level but yet they are the most important of all.
- The teachers, in general, are overworked and underpaid. The state and the district need to cooperate to give our teachers the financial and educational support they deserve. I've also seen many instances where the teacher is "stuck" between the parents and administration. This is also a ridiculous situation to put a person in. Our teachers care about "their" children and should be given the basic respect to achieve their goals...educating our children.
- DSISD has great, enthusiastic teachers. There seems to be low turnover. We need to do what is possible to continue this! Teachers are our most valuable assets!

- Salaries are pathetically low across the board.
- Teachers who are the sole breadwinners for their family cannot afford to teach. We are losing exceptional teachers because they cannot afford health insurance for their children (literally), nor can they afford to live in this district. The state needs to adopt teacher retention policies such as a teacher discount on property taxes.
- This is an expensive community in which to live. It is sad that teachers can't afford to live here.

Facility Management

- Schools are clean! Thank you, custodial staff!
- Our campus is wonderfully maintained and cleaned. Facilities should be available to the community and [the community should be] encouraged to use them to help subsidize the bills.
- Our facilities are well planned and student-centered. This creates pride among students. The result is less vandalism, etc. Our custodial staff works very hard, and is often understaffed due to work demand and low pay.
- 900+ k-3 students in one campus! And growing!
- The intermediate school still doesn't have a gym. It seems to me that the only way to get things such as tracks, equipment, etc. is through the PTA, booster clubs, etc.
- There are already too many "extras" available; I would prefer to focus on basic needs of education rather than the costly frills. The school maintenance program must be enforced; no more "mold" problems.
- I have found facilities to be clean; custodians to be available when needed. The buildings themselves are well planned and beautifully completed. The response to the mold problem has been quick and complete.
- I truly feel the district has done a wonderful job with its facilities, being flexible when needed (dealing with the mold issues) and maintaining the facilities...with the exception of the intermediate school gym. School fundraising cannot be expected to finish out buildings.
- Too many students at primary school and the district. There needs to be planning (buying land, etc.) for the future. When are we getting a new primary school? The plans for expansion need to be in the works now.
- Primary school needs to be broken down into two campuses. Intermediate campus needs to finish the gym.
- The district is planning for the future, but school funds are so tight that it is a difficult situation. The state needs to pick up more of the cost of education.

Asset and Risk Management

- I am concerned about this area. Information is not as easily disseminated to the public, largely due to its highly legal and/or technical nature. I would like to see more information, especially on cash investment practices and bond issuance. We care about our district and just want to make sure we are being prudent and responsible.
- Health insurance is the hot button for me. We cannot allow our teachers and administrators to be without insurance or with insurance that is too expensive.
- Have you looked at the cost of the insurance plans? Many part-time support personnel will have to pay to go to work. If you don't have enough cafeteria workers or bus drivers do you think this will help them stay? I don't see how teachers and administrators can afford the new plan, much less part-time support staff.
- Children of some teachers (primarily single-income families) are not covered by the insurance. The state must help; districts are too small an insurance pool to attract reasonable insurance plans.
- Health insurance will change soon with the new plan initiated by the State Legislature. This should help out. This is not a district issue, but rather a state issue.
- I do not feel that information is easily obtained from the district as to how the money is spent. There have been public forums but these are very structured, and agendas are set.
- Please review the skill, training, and expertise of district personnel responsible for cash and investment practices. This is a very complex issue and few people have the necessary skills.
- Attend school board meetings to find out more about what goes on. The community doesn't attend the meetings unless there is a special issue of interest to their group.
- The state has neglected using its size to procure affordable health care insurance for educators. This should not be a district-level problem.
- The state insurance plan will not cost teachers and families any less. We need the equivalent of what state employees get! Help is still needed from the district.
- Health insurance that is comparable to other state employees is essential. All of the districts in Texas need to pool all of the employees together to get cheaper, more manageable, and more competitive rates. This is a state problem, NOT a local district problem.

Financial Management

- What can the school district do to initiate commercial growth in the community to help the tax base? Can they start school/business partnerships with existing businesses?
- PTO/PTA is to be commended for the amount of money they supplement to the budget.
- The school district faced an extremely difficult decision last year to remove the local 20 percent [homestead] exemption. Really, it should have been done earlier, but the district knew it would upset a lot of people and shift the burden of paying for education even more to the homeowners. The district waited as long as it could, but the state is paying less and less of the cost to educate our children. At the meetings last year, most of the people were in support of the teachers and the district. Our cost to educate students is less than surrounding districts. We do an awful lot with less money.
- Please, the state needs to help pay to educate all children in Texas. Relying on property taxes, especially in a district with minimal commercial tax base, is a terrible situation. The district has done an incredible job educating our students. It is our expectation that students will receive the best education they can, and the district delivers it on a shoestring budget.
- Again, the state has abdicated too much of its financial responsibility. A statewide method of funding education is required; local property taxes are not the way to do it.
- Focus on long-range planning must be primary. Expansion/addition of programs that are above the "basics" should be closely reviewed. They are now, but expenditures that are for items outside direct student services must be prioritized.
- Education is an investment in the future of this country. I would be very concerned if I were to send an astronaut into space without proper training and equipment. Teachers work creatively every day to help cut costs and often spend their own money to provide what's needed. The district decision to cut the homestead exemption allowed us to keep teachers, something other districts have been unable to do. As a taxpayer I regret the loss of the exemption, but I feel it allows our district to continue to provide an excellent education, and I am willing to accept the loss. I am concerned, however, about future funding.
- Our school taxes are too high. We have virtually no commercial tax base. We are a growing district.
- Concern regarding elderly that their homestead exemption was taken away without a vote. Taxes are ridiculous! [This is a] fast growing district and [there is] no business to relieve the burden, and the Robin Hood Plan is killing homeowners. Where are the state funds for schools?
- School taxes are NOT too high. These kids are the future.

- My concern is: will the community growth and increasing property values be enough to keep pace with school costs and rising student enrollment? And if not, where do we turn next if we've taken the homestead exemption away? We continue to be slow on commercial development. Are we financially sound for 2 years, 5 years, and 10 years????
- Educational financing must be addressed at the state level. The budgeting process was open and discussed at a number of meetings. There is a limit to counting "paper clips" when the major cost is manpower. You either cut programs or print more money.
- Getting rid of the homestead exemption allowed teachers to get a much-needed raise, allowing many of them to stay here instead of going to other districts.
- The state, through Robin Hood, is stealing from the taxpayers, from our children, from our future. I wish that Texas would take a stand and realize that you have to educate our kids. As far as I see they have backed away from their responsibilities.

Purchasing

- It is a difficult process to buy things from stores in the area. Many times they have better prices than that of a catalog, but many times we buy from the catalog because of the cumbersome process of getting funds for buying from stores.
- In addition, because of the required bid process, we often pay more for items in bulk numbers when we have great opportunities to purchase individual items with special prices. We have to bypass the great deal and spend more money for the item.
- Find a way to get a fair deal for supplies with a streamlined way for teachers to order. Run it like a nonprofit business. No one should be making money off the school district.
- Ensure that contracting personnel have received training in the government procurement process and procedures. Require basic procurement skills and competencies. The greater the competence level of the purchasing department the greater the possibility of negotiations that benefit the district.
- We need centralized ordering for basic office supplies. Twenty people don't need to be ordering paper clips from ten different vendors.
- No problems here. It's a racket...textbook purchasing.
- Going through the bid process prevents teachers and departments from taking advantage of great deals. Some flexibility needs to be worked into the system.

Computers and Technology

- I would love to be as computer-literate as my students are. Teachers need training available with the time to do it. Both time and training cost money!
- We need an integrated software package for student accounting, PEIMS, business management, etc. We need the ability to rapidly analyze data so we can make decisions based on appropriate information.
- I cannot speak highly enough about the technology training going on at the middle school grade levels. Technology is an integral part of many classes and an important vehicle for gaining information and sharing it. Technology coordinators on campuses and especially at the middle school are knowledgeable and ready to troubleshoot...so much that they rarely leave campus during school hours to be available to teachers who need assistance. Teachers are encouraged and offered training to increase their skills. They are challenged to produce greater products with their expertise.
- Computers are very important in learning for both students and teachers at the primary school. Our computer specialist provides individual attention for students' and teachers' needs. She is a very effective technology instructor by working with teachers, who then teach computer skills to their students. We're all successful!
- I believe most of the computers at the schools were donated by corporate sponsors (Motorola, etc.) Thank you very much. But those donations were years ago and the equipment is outdated, even though it is still functional.
- Computers and technology are fine tools but nothing takes the place of the basic "3 R's." Do not cut basic learning courses to bow to the technology beast.
- Almost all technology items are cut from individual department budgets so that technology money can be used for computer labs, etc. this is good in that it allows for computer classes to have up-to-date equipment and software. It is partially harmful in that individual departments cannot get useful learning tools.
- I find from students that they know more than the teacher and the teacher suggests the student do less. If the teacher needs training, get it, or work with the student. Don't make them regress.
- All students and staff need to be proficient in computer use to be part of the "real world." They need as much education for that as for arts, music, etc.
- Something is wrong when a high school student is a computer aide, yet doesn't touch type or know how to do Power Point. Where is the vertical alignment and sequence of scope for this curriculum?

Transportation

- 1.5 hours to school in the morning. 1.5 hours home in the afternoon. Three hours on a bus is too long! We need more buses.
- I think the district is doing a decent job with the limited number of routes and buses available. However, the district really needs to address the long amount of time kids are on the bus, and the issues inherent in mixing so many age groups together for so long.
- This is a real problem! Elementary children should be separate from older children.
- People in charge of buses - salary is too high. Too many people getting paid high salaries but doing low pay jobs. Jobs can be combined and [some positions] eliminated. Buses could be added.
- I agree that they need more buses and the kids should be segregated by age.
- The bus safety record has been very good. There is no substitute for safety. Highway 290 and RR 12 are very difficult and the buses do a great job.
- I agree with most things on the "big sheet." Where is the money for more buses? If drivers are overpaid, why aren't there enough? Routes are long; find a bus and a driver. Go to the bus parking lot and look at the "extras." Children should be segregated by age. I think the little kids "copying" the big kids causes discipline problems that we probably wouldn't see as often in the primary schoolers. We need a real director with the brains and the fortitude to fill the job. Any takers?
- Bus numbers/drivers, etc. and budget necessitates the long rides and is a scheduling straitjacket. Fund more buses and drivers - solve many problems at once!
- Need seat belts in the buses.
- Bus ride from some parts of the district is too long (1.5 hours). They can't do it all on one bus - pick up and deliver all ages together and then drop at middle school to get on another bus. Get seat belts and try having buses pick up and drop off from home to school in a timely manner.

Food Service

- Since when do we let the almighty Coca-Cola buck dictate what we put into our growing children? What does this say when we have vending machines at the middle school campuses? The quality of the cafeteria offerings is below sub-standard and unacceptable. The issue of teaching the whole child should be addressed. You can't educate children who subsist on sugar and fat.
- The nutrition in food is horrible! High in sodium, sugar, nitrates, hydrogenated. Facilities, equipment, meal participation are great.

- The facilities, equipment, and staff are great. Menus should be revamped to reflect healthy eating habits. GET RID OF THE JUNK FOOD AND SODAS!
- When kindergartners can get a Hot Pocket and chocolate milk and call that lunch...Veggies are "offered" but they're not chosen.
- Too much FAT.
- [Food Service is] generally good BUT my first grader complains that they sugar the apples. Please don't cut the apple in two and then add sugar to the apple half.
- Food Service shouldn't be a fundraiser. Get rid of junk food. Parents/students who don't like it can bring a lunch from home.
- Closely review the menus and determine waste due to lack of student interest. Work for a high student interest/use of the lunch services and thus keep the money from being spent off-campus. Keep student lunch money on campus.
- Parents need to teach their children to make healthy choices and then talk to them about what they eat. The healthy choices are available.
- Staff at campuses works very hard. They do well considering budget limitations. I love the fried okra.
- Kids will eat what kids will eat - but at least offer healthy alternatives!

Safety and Security

- This high school has so much better discipline than virtually any district in the Austin area. I challenge any parent to either a) send your child to another district or b) teach or work at another school. You'll find great students who are well-mannered and well-behaved. That is the best part of DSISD. You have extremely supportive administration. It is all relative. This building has virtually no vandalism or graffiti and NO FIGHTS. We have had four fights all year. All of those involved were disciplined. I'd stake that record against the other metro schools.
- The high school needs additional administrators to deal with their overwhelming workload. This would certainly help them deal with discipline issues.
- All students need to be safe at school by having enough trained staff to enforce school rules. Parents can help by being allowed to be active volunteers in all classes (even special education). They could be trained too.
- The high school doesn't enforce student discipline policies on the dress code, language use or physical touching of students!
- Many of the problems start with the parents. They must support the school staff and administrators. Schools are neither baby sitters nor jailers. Let the parents share in the responsibilities.

- I agree with the above comment. Any parent who has yelled at and/or belittled a teacher with their child present has reinforced an opinion that the rules don't matter. Anarchy reigns. Parents, children need to realize that their actions, apathy, and lethargy contribute to the lack of discipline, safety, and security.
- Our new schools need to be community-centered...not stuck off in a pasture, but in the new burgeoning neighborhoods, so they can be community centers and children can walk to school.
- I agree with the above statements [regarding lack of student discipline]. As a substitute I have seen this from the classroom on a regular basis. I will not substitute for some classes because the students are so rude and disrespectful. The pay isn't enough to begin with and it isn't worth being abused.
- The underlying issue, here and elsewhere, is respect for authority. Parents are the key. They either teach to deal respectfully and effectively with authority or they don't by example. To disagree agreeably and to treat opposing views with respect while defending one's position is a critical skill both schools and parents must address. For the most part, students in this district handle this issue well; however, the exceptions are glaring.
- You will find bad apples in any barrel. For the most part, discipline works at this school. What can a school do in the face of a parent who will not see that their child has behavior issues? For the most part, the administration sets high expectations for the students and they generally support the teachers in disciplinary matters. We are not perfect, but I would rather have my kids here than in any other neighboring community's schools.

Appendix B

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

(n = 108)

Demographic Data

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response				
	23.1%	72.2%	4.6%				
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
	70.4%	0.0%		17.6%	0.0%	1.8%	10.2%
3. How long have you been employed by Dripping Springs ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response	
	59.3%	14.8%	12.0%	9.3%	2.8%	1.8%	
4. Are you a (an):	Administrator		Clerical Staffer	Support Staffer		No Response	
	19.4%		26.9%	48.1%		5.6%	
5. How long have you been employed in this capacity by Dripping Springs ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response	
	63.9%	12.9%	10.2%	5.6%	1.8%	5.6%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows	1.8%	18.5%	34.3%	39.8%	5.6%	0.0%

	sufficient time for public input at meetings.						
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	1.8%	16.7%	37.0%	35.2%	6.5%	2.8%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	1.9%	41.7%	33.3%	22.2%	0.9%	0.0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	1.8%	42.6%	26.9%	24.1%	4.6%	0.0%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	1.9%	22.2%	39.8%	25.0%	10.2%	0.9%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	1.9%	29.6%	37.0%	29.6%	1.9%	0.0%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	1.8%	24.1%	26.9%	39.8%	6.5%	0.9%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Education is the main priority in our school district.	1.8%	38.0%	41.7%	14.8%	3.7%	0.0%

9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	1.9%	23.1%	38.0%	33.3%	3.7%	0.0%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	1.9%	18.5%	41.7%	33.3%	4.6%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	1.8%	6.5%	34.3%	40.7%	13.0%	3.7%
12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
	a) Reading	1.8%	24.1%	45.4%	23.1%	5.6%	0.0%
	b) Writing	1.9%	22.2%	48.1%	25.0%	2.8%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	2.8%	23.1%	48.1%	23.1%	1.9%	0.9%
	d) Science	1.8%	21.3%	51.9%	24.1%	0.9%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	1.8%	24.1%	49.1%	23.1%	1.9%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	1.9%	25.0%	47.2%	23.1%	2.8%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	1.9%	19.4%	54.6%	24.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	1.9%	17.6%	53.7%	25.0%	1.9%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	1.9%	21.3%	53.7%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	i) Business	1.9%	9.3%	43.5%	37.0%	8.3%	0.0%

	Education						
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	1.9%	7.4%	38.9%	36.1%	14.8%	0.9%
	l) Foreign Language	1.8%	13.9%	50.9%	30.6%	1.9%	0.9%
13.	The district has effective special education programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	1.9%	19.4%	44.4%	31.5%	1.9%	0.9%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	1.9%	25.9%	47.2%	24.1%	0.9%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	1.9%	25.0%	51.8%	17.6%	3.7%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	1.8%	7.4%	27.8%	54.6%	6.5%	1.8%
	e) Dyslexia program	1.9%	7.4%	28.7%	50.9%	11.1%	0.0%
	f) Student mentoring program	1.9%	9.3%	32.4%	48.1%	7.4%	0.9%
	g) Advanced placement program	1.8%	20.4%	39.8%	35.2%	2.8%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	1.8%	13.0%	34.3%	47.2%	3.7%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	1.8%	6.5%	28.7%	45.4%	13.9%	3.7%
	i) Summer	1.9%	6.5%	33.3%	39.8%	13.9%	4.6%

	school programs						
	k) Alternative education programs	1.8%	6.5%	38.0%	39.8%	11.1%	2.8%
	l) "English as a second language" program	1.8%	10.2%	38.9%	43.5%	2.8%	2.8%
	m) Career counseling program	2.8%	8.3%	30.6%	47.2%	8.3%	2.8%
	n) College counseling program	1.9%	9.3%	34.3%	46.3%	5.6%	2.8%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	1.9%	9.2%	28.7%	49.1%	8.3%	2.8%
	p) Drop out prevention program	1.8%	6.5%	20.4%	54.6%	13.9%	2.8%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	1.8%	12.0%	24.1%	46.3%	9.3%	6.5%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	1.9%	4.6%	36.1%	37.0%	15.7%	4.6%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	1.9%	10.2%	40.7%	39.8%	6.5%	0.9%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	1.9%	13.9%	43.5%	36.1%	4.6%	0.0%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	1.9%	6.5%	15.7%	54.6%	17.6%	3.7%

19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	1.9%	3.7%	32.4%	55.5%	4.6%	1.9%
20.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	1.8%	18.5%	42.6%	32.4%	2.8%	1.8%
21.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	1.8%	9.3%	48.1%	28.7%	9.3%	2.8%
22.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	1.8%	20.4%	46.3%	20.4%	8.3%	2.8%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	1.9%	20.4%	34.2%	35.2%	4.6%	3.7%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	1.8%	6.5%	15.7%	21.3%	38.0%	16.7%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new	1.9%	8.3%	36.1%	20.4%	19.4%	13.9%

	employees.						
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	1.9%	15.7%	30.6%	31.5%	15.7%	4.6%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	1.8%	6.5%	41.7%	27.8%	12.0%	10.2%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	1.9%	5.5%	30.5%	39.8%	13.0%	9.3%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	1.9%	4.6%	44.4%	30.5%	13.0%	5.6%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	1.8%	13.0%	56.5%	19.4%	6.5%	2.8%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	1.8%	1.8%	20.4%	38.9%	24.1%	13.0%
32.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately	1.8%	3.7%	31.5%	45.4%	12.0%	5.6%

	and timely.						
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	1.9%	6.5%	34.3%	46.3%	5.5%	5.5%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	1.9%	3.7%	20.4%	18.5%	25.0%	30.5%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	1.9%	21.3%	44.4%	26.9%	4.6%	0.9%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	1.9%	5.5%	35.2%	39.8%	13.9%	3.7%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	1.9%	23.1%	45.4%	25.0%	3.7%	0.9%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	1.9%	15.7%	48.1%	25.9%	6.5%	1.9%

E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	1.9%	15.7%	42.6%	25.9%	11.1%	2.8%
40.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	1.9%	7.4%	25.0%	47.2%	12.0%	6.5%
41.	Schools are clean.	1.9%	28.7%	52.8%	10.2%	5.5%	0.9%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	1.9%	19.4%	50.9%	13.9%	11.1%	2.8%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	1.9%	15.7%	46.3%	19.4%	13.9%	2.8%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	2.8%	27.8%	47.2%	14.8%	7.4%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used	1.9%	17.6%	31.5%	43.5%	5.5%	0.0%

	effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.						
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	1.9%	13.9%	35.2%	43.5%	4.6%	0.9%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read	1.8%	6.5%	29.6%	46.3%	13.9%	1.8%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	2.8%	10.2%	30.5%	53.7%	1.9%	0.9%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	1.9%	12.0%	38.0%	32.4%	12.0%	3.7%
50.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	1.9%	8.3%	36.1%	38.9%	10.2%	4.6%
51.	Purchasing processes are	1.8%	7.4%	32.4%	39.8%	16.7%	1.8%

	not cumbersome for the requestor.						
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	1.9%	5.6%	23.1%	53.7%	15.7%	0.0%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	1.9%	12.0%	34.3%	47.2%	4.6%	0.0%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	1.9%	11.1%	39.8%	40.7%	5.6%	0.9%
55.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	1.8%	16.7%	39.8%	33.3%	6.5%	1.8%

H. Safety and Security

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	1.8%	20.4%	47.2%	17.6%	9.3%	3.7%
57. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	1.8%	2.8%	13.0%	19.4%	45.4%	17.6%
58. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	1.9%	3.7%	35.2%	19.4%	28.7%	11.1%
59. Security personnel have a good	2.8%	8.3%	35.2%	46.3%	4.6%	2.8%

	working relationship with principals and teachers.						
60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	1.9%	4.6%	25.9%	60.2%	4.6%	2.8%
61.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	1.9%	14.8%	59.2%	21.3%	0.9%	1.9%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	1.9%	9.3%	43.5%	28.7%	12.0%	4.6%

I. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	1.9%	28.7%	50.0%	18.5%	0.9%	0.0%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	1.9%	25.0%	45.4%	23.1%	3.7%	0.9%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the	1.9%	22.2%	50.0%	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%

	classroom.						
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	1.9%	19.4%	52.8%	24.1%	0.9%	0.9%
67.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	1.8%	18.5%	49.1%	27.8%	2.8%	0.0%
68.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	1.9%	10.2%	39.8%	42.6%	5.5%	0.0%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	1.8%	21.3%	50.0%	24.1%	1.8%	0.9%

Appendix B

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below are the actual comments received and do not reflect the findings or opinions of the comptroller or review team.

- Very impressed with motivated staff and atmosphere. Parent/community involvement and understanding of admin/educators high experience.
- Administrators receive large salary and don't deserve it. Money should be distributed to benefit students. Rooms are overcrowded.
- More raises and better health insurance at lower rates.
- Well-managed and high performance district. Need to be paid more for the work.
- Too much homework, projects that go with homework and no time for family.
- District is doing best it can given the resources available and conditions. Funding and expenditures have tightened.
- Don't get support from administration. Short staffed. Forced to do a job for 2 or 3 people. Little overtime, need help and support.
- No money or support for support staff.
- School needs funds. State insurance is not helping families. Why do two state organizations monitor schools?
- Insurance is too high.
- Math Program lacks a way to catch kids falling through the cracks.
- Not enough attention towards students not college bound. High school needs more discipline. District spends too much money on athletics.
- Personnel who have been working for years make same as new hires. This has cost valuable staff.
- Students need harsher punishment. Students smoke on campus. Affordable insurance.
- Administration is afraid of students. Students show lack of respect towards staff.
- Communications between teachers and students lacking at high school.
- Discrepancy between performance/goals per move from primary to secondary level. Assistance available.
- Opportunities for below average/special education students. More life skill classes (i.e. balance checkbook).
- Graduates exceed our expectations. Many have gone to best colleges and become role models.

- Accountabilities ratings show better scores. Support staff is working directly with students. Most offices appear to be short staffed.
- Maintenance and custodial over worked and underpaid. If they have family can't afford insurance. 10 buildings and 4 employees.
- Primary school always operates below the average per pupil as reported.
- A lot of stereotyping of students but always that way. Teachers and administrators helpful. Need parents to help more.
- We don't use our resources to the max. Math program does not meet the TEKS and TAAS objectives.
- Good school district.
- Drop-out prevention is non-existent.
- More computer math.
- Need an alternative education program for students who withdraw for other discipline reasons.
- My two children are both graduates of DSISD. We are very pleased with the education and opportunities they received. They are both very successful as adults.
- This place is a "Buddy System." If you have a "Buddy" at the Administration, you are sure to get a high paying job, with that high paying job those people can afford this insurance. Why is my insurance going to cost me \$689.00 a month starting in September 2002? Obviously someone needs to be audited other than this school. The State is not a big help to the schools of Texas, are they? You want your children educated but we can't afford to insure them with the premiums being so HIGH!!!! Who is going to pay the medical cost for us and our children since we can't afford the insurance?
- I am not involved with education but I will say that the support team such as maintenance and custodial are over worked and under paid and if you have a family you can't afford insurance. There are four schools and about 6 other buildings that the maintenance team takes care of. We have four employees, how can this work?
- In my 16 months with this district (30 + in the workforce - government and private sector), I am very impressed with the highly motivated staff and the team atmosphere. "All Campuses exemplary" is a reflection of parent/community involvement and the understanding of the administrators/educators of the very high expectancies for education performance, less than 5 percent of the teachers leave to take jobs in other districts - a sure sign that this is a good place to teach and work.
- District performance/ratings overall are good. However, there is a discrepancy between performance/goals as you move from the primary to secondary level. The pre-kindergarten (PPCD) eighth grade levels are much more student-centered. In addition, when

things come up that are unexpected (like the Primary School closing due to mold), many individuals make/(made) a great deal of sacrifices to keep things running as smoothly as possible. There should be some kind of assistance available (financial) to help us rectify this situation, especial educationally since it is due to the contractor error. We could really use the help. They already can't afford to pay us a comparable salary. How are we going to survive the millions it's going to take to rebuild the entire school? The educational goals of this district have been put to the test due to the crisis of the 2001-2002 school year. Hands-down, DISD teacher overall are first rate.

- I feel like this district is wonderful, overall, especial educationally for above average and gifted students. My only doubts would be about opportunities for below average and special education students, particularly at the high school level. I would also like to see more taught about simple life skills, even for exceptional students, in such areas as balancing a checkbook. Not only am I an employee of the district, but I have had two children graduate from here and I still have one child in high school.
- When we reflect back and look at statistics we find our graduates to have exceeded our expectations. Many have not only gone to college, they have graduated from the best universities in the U.S. and become important models for our world as leaders to be proud of.
- The accountability ratings over time speak for themselves. The district recently removed the 20 percent optional homestead exemption to better support staff working directly with students. Most offices appear to be short in staffing.
- Education is good. This has nothing to do with Support Staff.
- I believe that the district is doing the best it can, given the resources available and conditions in the district. Funding and expenditures have historically been "tight" and the results are evident in scores, student success and student outcomes.
- We are Support Staff but rarely do we get support from Administration or Facility. Once a year we get a big thank you but they forget about us when we are short staffed as we often are. Some principals and teachers get so upset at us for not cleaning or maintaining buildings better at this time. We are forced to do the job of 2 or 3 people. We are offered little overtime but not enough and what we need is help and support. Support for Support Staff is hard to come by; sometimes we feel we don't matter at ALL.
- What I really want to know is when are the politicians going to solve the school-funding problem? State insurance did not help families. It was a waste of time on the government part. Why are there two state organizations monitoring our schools? The real waste is in the state and government.

- Drop out prevention program is non-existent. Alternative education program is not offered. Great school for academically sound students that can survive a 7 period traditional setting. Great student body, wish we offered more to the non-traditional students to prevent dropouts.
- Performance is exemplary. Our primary school always operates below the average per pupil costs as reported on the annual AEIS report.
- DSISD has always been a great district for education. There seems to be a lot of stereotyping of students but that has always been that way. Mostly all teachers and administrators have been very helpful to make sure students get a proper education. Parents should really help more. Bring back prayer; discipline at school and things would work better.
- We need more raises for staff and better health insurance at an affordable rate. More employees need to quit building things and buying things we don't need.
- I feel we need an alternative education program for students who withdraw for other than discipline reasons.
- I would like to see a lot more of computer math, such as into the high tech careers, Apollo NASA for their future.
- I feel the administrators receive a large salary that they do not deserve. They are overpaid and the money should be distributed to the benefit of the students. Better-qualified teachers especially educationally in high school. The rooms are overcrowded and getting as large as schoolrooms in Austin. What the taxpayers pay for is not put to good use.
- Administration is afraid of students. I have never seen the lack of respect that youth have for adults. Our youth today are headed on a collision path with amounting to absolutely nothing when they reach adulthood. These people are one day going to try to run our country.
- I feel that the personnel who have been there for years are making same as new hires. This has cost us valuable staffing in the attempts to keep all cafeteria help pay rates the same, regardless of time on the job and experience.
- I don't think we use our resources to maximum efficiency. We have a math program that does not meet the TEKS and the TAAS objectives. Time and money are spent funding, buying and copying supplementary materials when a high percentage of the student population performs inadequately on a TAAS practice. Money is spent on a tutor; all we really need is a qualified program that meets the needs.
- I have taught and worked in this district for 24 years. I think it is the best place. I have no desire or intention of working elsewhere. Administrators, teachers, parents and community are all striving

toward the same goal, the best possible education for our children. This includes both academic and citizenship education.

- There is so much homework in sixth through twelfth grades. There is not time for "family time". There are too many projects that go along with homework. Cut out projects or the homework.
- At the high school level, the 504-program modifications are not effectively communicated to the student's teachers. Therefore, adequate modifications are not being met. Failure has increased because students learning needs were not met. Communication is highly lacking at the high school.
- There is no attention to students who are not college bound. Discipline at the high school level is sad. No responsibility is placed on students who misbehave. Students are allowed too much free time. Special Education has become an escape for many students who have learned to work the system to get out of doing assignments or to get out of trouble when they misbehave. This district spends too much money on athletics.
- Students need harsher punishment for discipline problems. Students are smoking on campus and doing drugs right in front of staff and parents. There is nothing being done about this either. Insurance is not affordable for employees and the pay is inadequate. Coaches are teaching then driving school buses to games and putting in eight hours teaching, and then driving buses to games till all hours of the night. This is not safe for students or coaches. Staff is treated with no respect by students and the higher up staff/administrators to not stand behind the employees.

Appendix C

PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

(n = 9)

Demographic Data

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response							
	56.0%	44.0%	0.0%							
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response			
	100.0%	0.0%		0.05	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%			
3. How long have you been employed by Dripping Springs ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response				
	45.0%	33.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%				
4. What grade levels are taught at your school?	Pre- Kindergarten						Kindergarten	First	Second	Third
	3.2%						6.7%	6.7%	3.2%	10.0%
	Fourth		Fifth		Sixth	Seventh	Eighth			
	6.7%		6.7%		10.0%	10.0%	10.0%			
	Ninth		Tenth		Eleventh	Twelfth				
	6.7%		6.7%		6.7%	6.7%				

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	sufficient time for public input at meetings.						
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	0.0%	66.7%	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6.	Central administration is efficient.	0.0%	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
7.	Central administration supports the educational process.	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
8.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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9.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.0%	22.2%	56.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
13.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	0.0%	11.1%	66.7%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%
14.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	0.0%	22.2%	55.6%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%
15.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	0.0%	0.0%	77.8%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%
16.	The district has effective educational						

	programs for the following:						
	a) Reading	0.0%	88.9%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Writing	0.0%	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	d) Science	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	e) Social Studies (history or geography)	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Fine Arts	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	g) Physical Education	0.0%	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	h) Business Education	0.0%	44.4%	11.1%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	i) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	33.3%	22.2%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	j) Foreign Language	0.0%	55.6%	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
17.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

c) Special Education	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	77.8%	0.0%	0.0%
e) Dyslexia program	0.0%	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
f) Student mentoring program	0.0%	44.4%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%
g) Advanced placement program	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
h) Literacy program	0.0%	55.6%	11.1%	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	0.0%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%
j) Summer school programs	0.0%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
k) Alternative education programs	0.0%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%
l) "English as a second language" program	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
m) Career counseling program	0.0%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%
n) College counseling program	0.0%	55.6%	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
o) Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	44.4%	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%

	p) Drop out prevention program	0.0%	22.2%	33.3%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%
18.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%
19.	Teacher turnover is low.	0.0%	11.1%	44.4%	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%
20.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	11.1%	44.4%	0.0%	44.4%	0.0%
22.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
23.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
24.	Students have access to a school nurse.	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
25.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	22.2%	55.6%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%
27.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
28.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
29.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0.0%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
30.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0.0%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%
31.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	0.0%	55.6%	22.2%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
32.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
33.	The district rewards	0.0%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%	44.4%	0.0%

	competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.						
34.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0.0%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
35.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
36.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	0.0%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	44.4%	22.2%

D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. The district regularly communicates with parents.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
38. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

39.	District facilities are open for community use.	0.0%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
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E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.						
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	44.4%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
47.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
48.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	0.0%	22.2%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
49.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	0.0%	11.1%
50.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	0.0%	22.2%	44.4%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
51.	The district provides teachers and	0.0%	11.1%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%

	administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.						
52.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	0.0%	44.4%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
53.	Textbooks are in good shape.	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
54.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
56.	Food is served warm.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
57.	Students have enough time to eat.	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
58.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
59.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	0.0%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%

60.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	0.0%	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
61.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
62.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

I. Transportation

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
64.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
66.	Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	0.0%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%

J. Safety and Security

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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67.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
68.	School disturbances are infrequent.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
69.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	77.8%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
70.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%	0.0%	55.6%	0.0%
71.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	0.0%	22.2%	77.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
72.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
73.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%
74.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
75.	Students receive fair and equitable	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	discipline for misconduct.						
76.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	0.0%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%

K. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77.	Students regularly use computers.	0.0%	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
78.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	0.0%	55.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
79.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
80.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	0.0%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
81.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	0.0%	55.6%	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

83.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
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Appendix C

PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of principal and assistant principal survey respondents.

- The district maintains high level of excellence.
- Size/Budget school is efficient, well educated productive citizen what makes our district an example. Certain weakness but overall our community supports and appreciates the DSISD.
- District an incredible education at low cost. Money limited, but focus on instruction & students. Good school board and superintendent.
- DSISD excellent job of educating students & prepare for future goals. Lack of organizations & directions of professional.
- No comment.
- District stride in last 2 years. Allocation resources and personnel top priority on instructional students. State funding major challenges
- This is a clearly outstanding district in most all areas.
- I feel DISD does an exceptional job of educating students and preparing them to meet future goals. I am concerned with the lack of organization and direction in the area of professional development for teachers and administrators. I don't feel professional growth and life long learning are encouraged to the degree they could be.
- DSISD is absolutely the most efficient and effective school district I have ever been associated with. The district provides an incredible education at a very low cost per student. Money is very limited but its use is focused on instruction and students. If the district has a flaw, it is that we do not provide enough administrative and support staff at the district and campus level to address the needs of our parents and students. We have a fabulous school board and the finest Superintendent in the state. Even with the issues our district has and is facing such as the mold issue at the primary school, elimination of the homestead exemption, tight budgets, etc., our district continues to produce outstanding graduates.
- I feel the district is maintaining a high level of excellence in a very efficient manner.
- For the size of our school district and the budget that we have to operate under, we have a highly efficient school district and our

final product. A well-educated productive citizen is what makes our district exemplary! We have certain weaknesses that need to be addressed, but overall our community supports and appreciates the DSISD.

- The district has made remarkable strides in the past two years in the area of fiscal responsibility. The allocation of resources and personnel clearly places top priority on the instructional services for students. Central Administration is spread thinly as focus is directed toward campuses. State funding for public education is presenting major challenges for this district (and others). As we meet these challenges, the level of community support and communication is refreshing and reassuring. This community values education and goes the "extra mile" to support the efforts of the district. Through leadership of this superintendent, DSISD will continue to make strides in the education of the community's children.

Appendix D

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

(n = 190)

Demographic Data

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
	23.7%	70.0%	6.3%			
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
	82.6%	0.0%	8.9%	1.1%	0.5%	6.9%
3. How long have you lived in Dripping Springs ISD?	1-5 years		6-10 years	11 or more years	No Response	
	38.4%		33.2%	27.9%	0.5%	
4. What grade does your child(ren) attend?	Pre- Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	
	1.7%	6.7%	7.5%	9.2%	6.4%	
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	
	9.5%	7.0%	7.5%	7.8%	7.8%	
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth		
	7.2%	7.0%	8.1%	6.1%		

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	1.0%	6.3%	41.1%	43.7%	5.3%	2.6%

2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	1.0%	7.4%	37.9%	43.2%	5.8%	4.7%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	0.5%	21.0%	43.7%	29.5%	2.1%	3.2%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	1.0%	20.5%	36.8%	33.2%	4.7%	3.7%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	The district provides a high quality of services	1.0%	23.2%	60.0%	8.4%	6.3%	1.0%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	1.0%	12.1%	39.0%	42.6%	5.3%	0.0%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0.5%	19.5%	39.0%	31.6%	6.8%	2.6%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student	0.5%	7.9%	30.5%	49.0%	11.1%	1.0%

	are being met.						
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
	a) Reading	0.5%	22.6%	65.8%	2.1%	7.9%	1.0%
	b) Writing	0.5%	19.5%	64.7%	4.2%	10.5%	0.5%
	c) Mathematics	0.5%	19.5%	64.7%	3.7%	11.1%	0.5%
	d) Science	0.5%	17.9%	65.8%	5.3%	8.9%	1.6%
	e) English or Language Arts	0.5%	19.5%	66.3%	7.4%	5.8%	0.5%
	f) Computer Instruction	0.5%	14.7%	60.5%	11.6%	10.5%	2.1%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	0.5%	16.8%	66.3%	10.5%	5.3%	0.5%
	h) Fine Arts	0.5%	15.8%	57.4%	16.3%	9.5%	0.5%
	i) Physical Education	0.5%	15.8%	65.3%	10.0%	6.8%	1.6%
	j) Business Education	0.5%	7.4%	34.2%	52.1%	5.8%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	1.0%	6.3%	30.0%	52.6%	7.9%	2.1%
	l) Foreign Language	1.0%	11.6%	42.6%	29.5%	11.6%	3.7%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	1.0%	15.3%	57.4%	18.4%	6.8%	1.0%

b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	1.0%	12.1%	47.9%	27.9%	7.4%	3.7%
c) Special Education	1.0%	14.2%	37.4%	41.6%	4.2%	1.6%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	1.0%	3.7%	16.8%	75.3%	2.6%	0.5%
e) Dyslexia program	1.0%	3.7%	8.4%	79.0%	5.8%	2.1%
f) Student mentoring program	1.0%	9.0%	26.3%	52.6%	9.5%	1.6%
g) Advanced placement program	1.0%	16.3%	34.7%	43.7%	3.2%	1.0%
h) Literacy program	1.6%	7.9%	21.1%	64.7%	4.2%	0.5%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	1.6%	3.7%	11.5%	71.6%	10.0%	1.6%
j) Summer school programs	1.0%	4.2%	26.3%	45.3%	15.3%	7.9%
k) Alternative education programs	1.6%	5.3%	15.8%	64.2%	12.1%	1.0%
l) "English as a second language" program	1.0%	5.8%	18.4%	68.0%	6.3%	0.5%
m) Career counseling program	1.1%	6.3%	22.6%	52.1%	16.8%	1.1%
n) College counseling program	1.1%	7.4%	26.3%	50.0%	12.6%	2.6%

	o) Counseling the parents of students	1.0%	11.1%	28.4%	39.0%	16.8%	3.7%
	p) Drop out prevention program	1.6%	4.2%	13.2%	73.1%	5.3%	2.6%
11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	1.6%	17.4%	24.2%	35.8%	17.9%	3.1%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	1.0%	10.5%	41.1%	24.7%	16.8%	5.8%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	1.0%	12.1%	47.4%	17.4%	20.0%	2.1%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child	1.0%	5.3%	53.2%	7.9%	27.9%	4.7%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	1.6%	17.4%	65.8%	8.4%	6.3%	0.5%
16.	All schools have equal access to education materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	1.0%	15.3%	48.4%	22.1%	10.5%	2.6%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	1.0%	18.4%	63.7%	5.3%	10.5%	1.0%

18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	1.0%	17.4%	50.5%	26.8%	3.7%	0.5%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	1.0%	29.5%	57.4%	5.3%	5.8%	1.0%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	1.0%	27.4%	47.9%	13.2%	8.9%	1.6%

C. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	1.0%	26.3%	55.3%	3.7%	10.0%	3.7%
22.	District facilities are open for community use.	1.6%	16.3%	38.4%	25.3%	15.8%	2.6%
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	1.0%	23.2%	51.1%	15.3%	8.4%	1.0%

D. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff	1.6%	10.0%	38.4%	31.0%	17.4%	1.6%

	and the board provide input into facility planning.						
25.	Schools are clean.	1.0%	32.6%	61.1%	2.6%	1.6%	1.0%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	1.0%	21.0%	51.1%	11.6%	12.1%	3.2%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	1.0%	15.8%	42.1%	21.1%	16.3%	3.7%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	1.0%	19.5%	62.1%	10.5%	6.3%	0.5%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	1.6%	20.5%	33.7%	34.2%	7.4%	2.6%

E. Asset and Risk Management

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30. My property tax bill is reasonable for the education services delivered.	1.0%	7.9%	31.6%	13.2%	30.5	15.8%
31. Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars	1.0%	8.9%	29.5%	22.6%	26.8%	11.1%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	1.0%	5.3%	18.9%	63.7%	7.9%	3.2%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	1.0%	4.7%	19.5%	64.7%	7.4%	2.6%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read	1.0%	4.7%	23.7%	51.1%	15.8%	3.7%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	2.1%	6.8%	29.0%	55.3%	4.2%	2.6%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	1.0%	17.9%	65.8%	11.1%	4.2%	0.0%
37.	Textbooks	1.0%	19.0%	66.3%	9.5%	3.7%	0.5%

	are in good shape.						
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	1.0%	20.0%	56.3%	11.1%	9.5%	2.1%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria	1.0%	31.1%	49.0%	2.6%	12.1%	4.2%
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	1.0%	21.6%	52.6%	23.7%	0.5%	0.5%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	1.0%	12.6%	44.7%	20.5%	13.7%	7.4%
42.	Food is served warm.	1.0%	14.7%	52.1%	22.6%	9.0%	0.5%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	1.0%	5.8%	39.5%	8.4%	33.2%	12.1%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	1.0%	7.4%	63.7%	10.0%	13.7%	4.2%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer	1.0%	5.3%	31.6%	25.8%	24.7%	11.6%

	than 10 minutes.						
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	1.0%	10.5%	66.8%	16.3%	3.2%	2.1%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	1.0%	14.7%	59.5%	19.5%	3.2%	2.1%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	1.0%	17.4%	70.0%	10.0%	1.0%	0.5%

I. Transportation

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	1.0%	17.9%	36.3%	8.4%	16.8%	19.5%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on bus.	1.0%	9.5%	34.2%	40.0%	8.4%	6.8%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	1.0%	6.8%	37.9%	27.9%	15.3%	11.1%
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	1.0%	17.4%	56.3%	20.5%	2.6%	2.1%
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	1.6%	21.1%	52.1%	22.6%	2.1%	0.5%
54.	The bus stop is within	2.1%	24.7%	50.0%	18.4%	2.6%	2.1%

	walking distance from our home.						
55.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	1.6%	21.0%	49.5%	24.2%	3.2%	0.5%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	1.0%	10.0%	27.4%	49.5%	7.4%	4.7%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	1.0%	11.6%	45.8%	40.0%	1.6%	0.0%
58.	Buses are clean.	1.0%	10.5%	41.6%	42.1%	3.2%	1.6%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	1.0%	13.7%	41.1%	39.5%	4.2%	0.5%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	1.0%	6.3%	21.6%	65.3%	5.3%	0.5%

J. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	1.0%	23.2%	66.3%	5.3%	3.7%	0.5%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	1.0%	21.1%	62.6%	11.1%	3.7%	0.5%
63.	Gangs are not	1.0%	21.1%	52.6%	17.9%	5.8%	1.6%

	a problem in this district.						
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	1.0%	6.8%	30.5%	17.4%	31.0%	13.2%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	1.0%	9.5%	43.7%	21.0%	21.0%	3.7%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	1.0%	10.5%	35.3%	50.0%	1.0%	2.1%
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	1.0%	9.5%	27.4%	57.4%	2.6%	2.1%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	1.0%	13.2%	53.2%	29.0%	2.6%	1.0%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	1.0%	11.1%	48.4%	20.0%	17.4%	2.1%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	1.6%	10.0%	48.9%	27.4%	8.9%	3.2%

K. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	1.0%	10.5%	51.6%	30.0%	5.8%	1.0%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	1.0%	12.1%	59.0%	20.0%	7.4%	0.5%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	1.6%	8.9%	60.0%	17.9%	9.5%	2.1%
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	1.0%	9.5%	27.4%	47.4%	11.0%	3.7%
75.	Students have easy access to the Internet.	1.0%	10.5%	36.8%	39.0%	7.9%	4.7%

Appendix D

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below are the actual comments received and do not reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or the review team.

- Teachers do not return phone calls or emails. Very high turn around rate at High school.
- More Funds.
- Taxes have gone up considerably. A program for students not college bound.
- Prejudiced teachers, and a demand for computers. Vandalism is common in the areas.
- More buses, kids stand outside waiting for the bus at 6:50am, school does not start until 8:40.
- More buses. Hire teachers with more education and with higher pay.
- School is overrated and expensive.
- Worried about the rapid growth in DSISD.
- Too much money spent on Administration.
- Drugs in high school, tax rate too high, school board needs to listen to concerns of parents.
- Buses need monitors. Divided by grade levels.
- Counselors should be more aware of the children they supervise. School does not have a summer school, have to pay elsewhere.
- Higher pay for those who actually interact with the students, not higher pay for the administrators. Teachers are the ones who do the teaching for students.
- Have a homework policy.
- Less group work, more individual work.
- Drug issues in middle schools.
- Drugs serious problem. Teachers not available for student help.
- Hire qualified teachers.
- Teachers not supported by Administrators. More action taken for bus rules.
- School growing, class size decreasing.
- Turnover over the past year due to budget cuts.
- Coach as teachers lack the respect for the student. Teach the students like they were in sports.
- Need improvement on the math programs.
- Administration doesn't manage funds correctly.
- Taxes are high. Bus rides are too long for the children. They spend actually 3 to 3 1/2 hours on the bus both ways.

- Property Taxes too high.
- Science needs more instructional time. Increase PE time.
- Too much homework given out. Cut projects if given a lot of homework.
- Too much homework. Coaches teach advanced placement classes but are not available for questions if the students need help.
- Taxes way too high.
- Academic areas such as science need to be given more instructional time. Science, in particular need longer time periods in order to set up, explain, perform, and interpret experiments. More science labs need to be incorporated into the program. Increasing the P.E. time next year to 135 minutes per week is most unfortunate given the time limits on some important academic areas. Also, parents are not informed about computer technology instruction. We do NOT know what the goals are or what is being accomplished in this area.
- Academics are very strong; students who want to be are well education ucated. Cafeteria- missing and should be available simple, fresh low fat choices. Discipline- students who disrupt classes frequently should be dealt with more seriously. Removed so other students who want to learn can. Teachers should exercise more control over classes, some seem unable to do this. Consistency- Board policies such as dress code are not enforced by administrators and teachers, staff should be held accountable for not enforcing "policies and rules." Students think policies such as dress code are a "joke" because of lack of enforcement. More visibility of administrators and teachers in hallways, cafeteria, before and after school in public areas, very reckless driving by unsupervised adolescents creates hazardous conditions. Better traffic control, frequently students purposefully go wrong way on one-way areas. Hallways during class changes are chaotic and lots of profanity, kids picking on others, hitting, kicking, etc... no adults visible...would like to see all staff in hallways before, after school, class change. More choices- For extra curricular activities most revolve around athletes and athletics, need more clubs for fine arts, and students who are not athletes, if you are not an athlete or interested in agriculture, there is little available to join and participate in. Maintenance- Bathrooms are poorly maintained, door to stalls missing, locks broken, no toilet paper, generally dirty.
- The special education program needs improvement. There are many lawsuits and parents are leaving the district. Principal does not support and look how many kids are separated for academics. Teachers not trained to include and parents are told that least restrictive environment is segregating into special class. Special class has too many kids "18".

- Our school district has been met with the challenge of mold this year. Our parents, teachers and staff have met and exceeded these challenges with little recognizable disruption to our children's learning process. I commend our school district officials, teachers and staff for a very challenging job well done. I live in Dripping Springs because of our school district and community support.
- I have been very please with DSISD. I fell the majority of the teachers are very professional, trully enjoy the students and teaching and go out of their way to help any student that needs extra instruction.
- Mighty fine.
- Excessive homework and projects in 6th-11th grades. My daughters have homework nights, weekends and holidays. I think if there is going to be a lot of homework then cut out projects. The projects they get seem to be extra "busy work" which leaves very little time for "family" which DSISD seems to promote so highly.
- Students are given excessive amounts of homework. Coaches teach some of the advanced placement classes, which is a problem because they are not as available to answer question or for tutorials before and after school as regular teachers are. High School students are not allowed to check out books or use library computers without a student OD, which is difficult to obtain.
- I have had my children enrolled in a private college preparatory school for 4 years. The best thing I found in this environment was the fact that parents could stop in any time and talk to faculty and administration. When we moved here I found the complete opposite. I had to make an appointment to talk to the principal and when I sent an email to every teacher to let them know I would be out of town for 3 months but I still wanted to know my children's progress, only 2 teachers responded to my message and only 1 kept me aware of what was going on with my child. I don't think parents are kept up to date of their children's progress.
- Taxes way too high for what we get. Mold issue showed we had no disaster recovery plan. Too much of a "good old boy/girl" network for hiring of faculty and staff. Staff very unclear about objectives for example I am told my child has a listening problem but my child gets high marks. If my child has a listening problem how does he/she have the ability to get high marks? Good old boy/girl network results in decreasing staff quality.
- A general consensus of dissatisfaction with the special education services and the primary school administration (from grades 1-3) exists among the parents of special education students. The older children's program seems to be satisfactory as does the early education and kindergarten levels.
- As a whole, I believe DSISD is a great district. I would like to see more attention given to preparing children for Middle School.

Many 6th graders, including my own, who excelled in their last 6 years at school are now struggling and finding it very difficult to get on the honor roll anymore. They are overwhelmed with their work requirements as well as not used to not having reminders. The elementary level needs an extra round of applause for the outstanding job done in dealing with the mold situation and relocating children. Awesome job by all staff! I believe better computers are needed in middle school. Most questions I answered no opinion to on account they either don't pertain to my children, or I'm not there to see for myself.

- The school board and school staff (especially for the Primary School) have done an exceptional job of dealing with the mold situation at the primary campus. The school, community, parents and especially teachers have risen above and beyond their duty to ensure that these little kids get the most out of the school year. I think it truly speaks to the ability of this district as a whole to work with the families and community in the best interest of our children.
- Some parts of this survey could have been better answered by teachers, principals, security personnel, etc. As a parent, how would I know if a teacher's input on materials suggestion is being considered? Too many children in this school district are being diagnosed with a learning disability. Therefore their scores on TAAS are not being counted. Most parents in DSISD will agree that this school district's main objective is passing TAAS. I feel that these kids are not being taught the basics well enough.
- Must teach keyboarding in elementary. Middle school students know how to use computers but typing with two fingers. Typing papers takes too much time. The district needs more computers and bigger labs. Need to start teaching Spanish in elementary. Scientists have proved that kids who learn a second language earlier learn it easier and retain it.
- With the current mold situation it has been great to see the community come together to help and support the school district. The school district has been great about keeping parents and students informed of the status of the remediation. Parents are very concerned about where the money will come from to clean up the primary school.
- Thanks!
- My fifth grader is doing well, however he received his kindergarten and 1st grade reading and writing from Irvine, CA (Vista Verde school) so he was advanced when he entered DSISD in 2nd grade. My 1st grader is low performing in reading and math. He is bright and capable but the education program is lacking in the primary school. The mold situation did not help. The district had no emergency contingency plan for this or any other situation.

My 5th grader reports he has a substitute each and every week. The food services and buses are good, but I honestly feel ripped off by DSISD for the amount of taxes I pay.

- First year with school-aged child and new to M.S. method of teaching. However, academically my child is doing well and is learning to my expectation. Difficult year to analyze certain entries in this survey due to mold problem and disruption it caused. Computers etc are few in temporary facility and conditions are not always ideal.
- It is a wonderful school and community. We moved here for the sole purpose of getting our daughter into a quality school.
- The education performance of Dripping Springs ISD is severely hampered by the districts inability to utilize tax funds that are generated within the ISD. The state should allow the ISD to utilize these funds.
- I would like to clarify my marks of "disagree". My younger child has difficulty-receiving tutoring for math. My children in High school have counselors that are over-burdened and don't have enough time to help. The High school computer teachers lack the computer skills to teach the subject well.
- I am fairly a new resident of D.S. therefore I am not fully aware of all the services or financial records. I know that there has been a complaint from my children regarding the length of time it takes to get to school and back. We only live 1-1.5 miles from school and it is a 40-minute ride! I wish there were some way to allow my children to ride bikes, but I'm concerned with 290 traffic in the AM. I am impressed with your GT programs and have been fortunate to have been able to take advantage of those. Another area of complaint from my kids is the length of time to eat lunch. They mention how long it takes to get through the line, most of the "hold up" is from kids cutting or jumping the line ahead of people, leaving the kids only a few minutes to actually eat.
- This is a wonderful district. There are strong concerns about the faculty turnover rate at the High School campus. This can adversely affect students who are preparing for college. Some reason for high turnover are low pay, teaching 6 out of 7 periods, lack of functional equipment to facilitate teaching (overheads, screens, carts, working and dependable copy machines) incredibly boring and useless in-service days etc. The lowest campuses seem to have fully stocked and operational work rooms for teachers. Too much money spent on athletics, too little on the fine arts (dance, art, choir). Band gets money because it is associated with football. Some coaches at the High School and Middle School discourage students from trying other interests at the same time they are participating in athletics. For instance, if a student, on the rare occasion misses a practice so that he or she can go to a contest to

perform at a UIL event, the student may find upon their return that they have been cut from their position or forced to run laps as punishment. This is contrary to the ideal of working together as a staff and sharing kids.

- High ratio of teacher principal turnover. The teachers are underpaid. Funds misappropriated by school board beginning several years ago when new schools built over budget.
- I am very pleased with the school district overall. I feel the mold situation they have handled very well considering what we have for other facilities. My only problem is that all Texas schools teach to the TAAS test and leave a lot of basics out.
- The DSISD is wasteful and extravagant with tax dollars, opting for Mercedes-Benz version of everything. An example is a huge expensive computer system, which is, used at too early grade levels, instead of basic 3 r's. Children are weak in academic fundamentals even and especially gifted and talented programs. My children are getting a mediocre education despite the highly held school district. The district freely spends tax money on all kinds of facilities and programs, which have little or nothing to do with fundamentally, sound education ucation.
- Dripping Springs overall has a very good school system. It is hard, I realize to meet the needs of all students. I believe if the district had a more diversified curriculum for the students we could better meet the needs of all the students. I personally would like to see the teachers making a higher salary and the administrative position paid less. After all what is the reason for the district in the first place? Our children should come first.
- Teachers aren't compensated as much as other school district, and not given the tools to do the job. High school English department has too much power and too much say in curriculum. Need senior counselors (for seniors). Very poor college counseling, very ignorant on college advising understaffed to adequately send transcripts and letter of recommendations and very rude. Registrar (to parents and student). Need Dyslexia program and teachers all grade levels that are trained to recognize and teach dyslexics and dysgraic students. They cover by putting them into special education or 504. I don't understand modification idea. School changing rapidly all of Austin with their problems moving here strutting and taxing a system with low tax base to begin with. The school only accommodates certain kinds of leaning styles too many kids fall through cracks. Counselors are more assistant principals than counselors and not just in Dripping. I've been affiliated with 2 other school districts. They are useless at working with parents, kids at risk (of any kind) give parents lip service to get rid of them they have too much paper work and no time for people.

- I am especially concerned about accidents at school and procedures in place to handle them. My first grader was struck in the head by a dry erase board and knocked to the ground. He had a large hematoma and abrasion wound on his head and bruised on his thigh resulting. He was not examined by his teacher or the school nurse, nor was I notified. This in my opinion is a serious breach of common safety. I emailed the principal and superintendent, and received only a mild apology from the principal.
- Property tax is not the way to fund schools!
- We lived in Austin so many years and were actually neighbors of Carole Rylander in Tarrytown. Unfortunately our 3 sons were delayed readers. Casis elementary our neighborhood school did a very poor job of addressing their issues with reading. We moved to Dripping Springs seeking a better education option for our children and have been delighted with their school district.
- Bathrooms in all campuses could be cleaner.
- I understand the reason for relocating our children to other places since the elementary school was shut down due to mold problems; however, it taking 1/2 of a school year for repairs is ridiculous. Students need a structure/schedule and when you up and interrupt this schedule it does affect them. I work with builders/contractors on a daily basis and I think that the repairs for the elementary school could have been muck quicker.
- With the closure of the elementary campus administrators went all out to make arrangements for our students to continue with their schooling. This was no easy task. Teachers, administrators (all of them) went out of their way to communicate all that was happening. I was proud to have my child going to school at DSPS.
- I moved to Dripping Springs primarily for the school district. By and large I believe the system is well run with the interests of the students foremost. The administration and board has done well with managing and accommodating the explosive growth within the district.
- I relocated my family from East Austin to DSISD based solely on the school district's success and reputation. Financially, the move has been hard but to date I am pleased with my children's education and sense of community. I would do it again. The violence in Austin schools was too much! Parents and teachers working with the district are creating success stories each day! I am happy! I mentored at Mendez Middle School (AISD) for 4 years but quit because I did not feel safe on that campus! Sad situation!
- We have had problems in the past with counselors assisting our students. They seem to do their work begrudgingly. When

assistance is requested, such as obtaining a TEA form, it might be days before the student's request is acknowledged and granted.

- The teachers are very dedicated to the students. Curriculum and class projects are very well thought out and allow the children to grasp a wide variety of subjects. Teacher salaries should be exempt from the Robin Hood school funding formula.
- Problem with the fact of coaches as teachers of academic subjects. They don't get respect as such even if they are respected in the gym. Problem with probably mold in science wing at DSHS and has not been looked into as far as we know.
- As to this date we have been extremely pleased with the teachers and school we are attending.
- I believe that it is a great education facility. My kids coming from private Christian schools for six years found it challenging. I cannot stress enough communication between school and home. Progress reports are crucial to know where kids are at a given point.
- We have been pleased with Dripping Springs Intermediate particularly with their emphasis on critical thinking and their communication with parents. However, I'm worried about the possibility of extremely rapid growth in the Dripping and Hays County area and how this will affect many of the school's better programs/ teacher student ratios.
- I am extremely pleased with DSISD. This is our 4th school district, including private Episcopalian School out of state. The tutoring available for middle and high school students before and after school is excellent! Also very pleased with the demanding academic programs and the art programs are also impressive. I like the character education and multiple school counselors, and midterm reports also. I like the close monitoring of students between the schools and parents. Also like the automated message at DSHS when they notify you that your student is absent or missing a class. I am extremely pleased with the school district in all ways. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere, personal and caring teachers. Many letters or calls to inform parents of any changes or news not just on the mold situation at the Primary. A friend and her family recently moved here because I raved about the schools. The only difficulty is the bus situation. I absolutely detest the younger children riding the same bus as older kids. They hear the F-word daily, amongst others. Since the behavior on the bus is worse in the afternoons, I make my 5 children ride the bus in the mornings and I pick them up in the afternoons. This is something I had not planned on when I moved here, but my conscience won't allow otherwise. Thank you, this is my only complaint.

- Overall, I am very pleased with the experience my children and I have had with the district.
- My youngest daughter will be graduating this year. I believe thanks to the administration at DSHS. She will be more than prepared to be successful academically and socially at college. She has learned tremendous study skills and is well above the field as far as thoroughness of her education, preparation, study habit, etc... When comparing to friends and relatives in other school districts in the state of Texas. All faculties at all levels challenge and encourage students to be everything they can and not underestimate their potential in effecting our world.
- My daughter was failing a few classes. Only 1 teacher called me. I feel the counselors should be more aware of their students and help to correct the situation with involvement. This school does not offer summer school. We have to pay extra for out of district. Report cards are given to the students and not mailed; this gives the students the chance to lose them before they get home.
- I do not think the Elementary School mold problem was handled correctly. I don't think the primary grade student's academic needs were/are being met due to this handled situation. I do not feel that my child's extracurricular school related needs are being met. Only a "select few" are chosen for the sparse school related social/extracurricular and scholastic and sports activities. There are not enough activities offered to meet the population numbers that attend school. Only "select" sports teams are school supported. There is not a feeling of "a place for every child to participate and fit in" environment especially in upper grades.
- The three main obstacles to better education are the excessive amount of time teachers must spend on teaching to the TAAS, there has to be a better way to evaluate school performance for the same amount of money. The archaic method of property tax to fund education; and dwindling parental involvement and attention in children's lives as they enter higher grades.
- In general, teacher quality and performance are excellent. High School administrative staffs are professional and helpful. Recent handling of primary school mold problems has been disappointing. This is a difficult situation, but there seems to be an absence of common sense, good business judgment and long range planning. Primary teachers and students are in a very bad situation with no meaningful relief in sight. Board is not communicating effectively with parents/tax payers on this problem. There has been too much growth in DSISD too quickly, and more is coming. Although school board's resources are limited, decisions need to be made now as to how growing student population will be handled. Based upon public communication (or lack thereof) on the subject of growth and planning, it certainly appears that school board is

behind the curve in the area of planning. If explosive population growth continues (which it will), the DSISD is headed for crisis in a couple of years. The school district did not create this problem, but it is a problem, which the district must address immediately.

- The district has no homework policy. Some "pile it on" and no one seems to care/listen. Four hours of homework over the weekend does not make an "exceptional school" and it hurts the family. Vulgar language and sarcasm is rampant in the middle school and high school. Teachers "join in" with the students. They say this is "adolescence." Parents want it stopped! It is cruel and demeaning.
- I am pleased with the quality of education offered but I have 2 concerns. One is a mold concern at the High School and the second is substitute teachers. They started a new system this year where teachers can no longer request substitutes. Instead it is posted on the internet and who ever grabs the job first gets it. Our school does a criminal background check on subs but that's it. No college hours are required nor are the subs capabilities considered. The students end up with subs that can't teach or even help them. The teachers do not like this new system
- Very unhappy about losing our homestead exemption. Taxes are unreasonable and this will make it unaffordable for the homeowner.
- I went to school in this same school district as my children. I feel it is one of the best. I feel our taxes are very high. We need to do away with the Robin-hood plan or it will make the children in this school district suffer. My money should go to my children's school.
- I think Spanish should be introduced at Primary level. Not even a class, but at least one word per day. I think they don't do art and music often enough.
- One-on-one tutorials of math are very good, yet not easily available; classroom instruction low quality. Keyboarding should be available early in curriculum and reinforced. High School choir director can be arbitrary regarding decisions affecting choir placement of students. Advanced French would be a great addition to curriculum. Mr. Beasley is a terrific teacher regarding getting students in touch with material. In general, AP classes are really good. Regular classes are thumbs down.
- Overrated and expensive.
- High School seems to have lost its focus on education and seems to be more focused on discipline. My child has transferred to a high school out of DSISD because of the strong focus on having everyone "toe the line", that no one wanted to learn. I see that having some freedom in high school allows the student to focus on learning. The teachers at the new school do everything possible to allow the kids to do well in school and do not send anyone to court

for tardies! In fact, there are no tardy bells and being tardy is not even an issue. Ninety five percent of the graduating seniors at this new high school go to college! There are tutorials before and between semester finals. At DS High School, the teacher's attitude about tutorials was, "If you haven't learned it by now, don't bother coming to tutorials." I am seriously considering moving my 2 younger children out of the district before they reach high school.

- Educationally speaking, I think the district does a good job preparing the students for the future ahead of them. Some things in the district that I do have a problem with are the continues rise in tax revenues, community groups and non-profit organizations are charged ridiculous amounts for school facility use, drugs are a terrible problem in our district, and finally school lunches are high in cost and low in nutrition for choices offered students.
- I feel the overall education performance in just fine. The way discipline is handled both here and in all schools should be looked at differently. The authorities to which teachers and faculty have to deal with situations are limited. The actions of old may be to harsh today but they were effective and those of us today aren't bad people. I feel we should raise our children at home but while they are not at home there should be rules set to deal with any problem.
- I do feel that the disruption caused by the mold situation at the DS Primary school has caused my handicapped son and kindergartner to be behind in their learning especially for my son who missed therapies (PT, OT, speech) I feel the seven instructional days they missed should be made up at the end of the term.
- The drugs and alcohol are plenty. You can get drugs in the High School and Middle School parking lots. No help from administration on keeping kids in school. We need more counseling help for students and parents. High School needs more jobs training not just college training.
- Teachers are never on time for meetings. Parents are not notified when a child is having difficulties or failing prior to interim's being sent out. Teachers do not communicate with parents enough. Administrators (back) support their teachers no matter what teachers lie and administration believes them.
- Overall DS has excellent schools (buildings) and well maintained. Teachers are generally excellent and seem to really care about the high performing students, but not as loyal to low performing students. Generally I am very pleased with our schools leadership, teachers, and performance level of the students.
- A tutoring lab at the high school for after school use is absolutely necessary. Some of the AP teachers have other commitments after school such as coaching that doesn't allow for tutoring after school. Before school tutoring is difficult to attend and often conflicts with activities/classes such as band.

- Extremely important life threatening information has been kept from me about my child resulting in her attempting to kill herself. School allows teachers to harass children they do not care for. School allows substitute teachers to teach special education classes without a qualified specialized teacher present.
- I teach in AISD and have for 20 years. I am very glad my kids attend Dripping Springs ISD. On another note, I know you try to help schools be more fiscally responsible. How about finding a way to cut bus costs. The old laws were imposed in a time when many Americans didn't own a car, let alone 2. Nowadays most teens drive themselves and many parents drop off and pick up their younger kids. Unfortunately a district must finance the transportation system as if every child rode the bus. Surely there is a more cost effective method.
- Regarding B.10.B- having worked at the school, I note that there is a high percentage of teacher's children in the GT program. I have been told that if a parent specifically requests their child be in GT, the school is required to let them in. I question the screening process. C.22- The Primary School had not been very willing to host meetings in the evenings for various activities, i.e., cub scouts, church groups, etc. Since the mold situation, they obviously haven't been able to help the community with events. E.30- I oppose the "Robin Hood" plan. Our taxes are exuberant, and this needs to be corrected at the state level. L56- Due to our school being shut down for mold, my 3rd grader is now attending the intermediate school. The district has asked that parents not drive children directly to that campus, but instead take them to a shuttle bus at the primary school. Those buses leave the primary campus at 8:15 or 8:20, and my son tells me he gets to school after announcements. I called the transportation office, but was told he won't get in trouble for being late and we have a situation here. But getting to school on time is not possible with the current shuttle bus.
- If nothing is more important than education, why is the state stealing the money collected to support our schools? There should be a better formula to determine whether a school district is "rich." Average price of a home in the area should not be the only consideration. Business base (none in DSISD) and growth should be considered also. This district has no money for buses to serve our increasing population and has problems providing adequate support services to maintain school property. I look forward to the day when the school districts band together and successfully sue the state to stop what I consider to be an unconstitutional and unlawful appropriation of funds. The "Robin Hood Act" is keeping our education expectations low because we are unable to hire teachers needed or give them a livable wage increase. We won't be

able to replace our computers when they become obsolete, further reducing the quality of education. We also share special education services through the Hays-Blanco Special Education Co-op, and if the special education services in DSISD are any indication, no one in any of the school district served are receiving adequate educational opportunities for LD children.

- Teachers with advanced degrees and or years of service are often not hired. Instead the district chooses less qualified teachers with less experience, in order to pay lower salaries. Athletic coaches and trainers are under qualified and often poor models for middle school and high school students. "Doc", the high school athletic trainer is under qualified to make diagnosis and to prescribe remedies for injuries. Many genuine medical doctors find "doc" to be dangerous at best.
- DSISD has a wonderful, gifted, and talented program for very highly gifted students (only). Because their standard is so high, very few students are in this program. The college bound students are grouped in the same class with everyone else. This group (top 10% IQ's 120+) cannot be consistently challenged in this environment. These are our future leaders and there should be a pull out program or separate class for this group.
- I believe DS schools are better than most school districts, however I would be happy to see less group work in the classrooms and more individual work. Too often my daughter's grades are derived from group projects. This co-op learning should be balanced with individual effort as well. Some teachers seem to do too much. Overall, I'm proud of DSMS. I think Mr. Damron and his staff try very hard to achieve every student learning.
- A few years ago the middle school did not work in the best interest of the child who was in GT classes when they moved into this district. When the curriculum was too different for the child the teacher should have helped orient the child to the GT curriculum which was a spiraling curriculum from one year to the next but not from one district to the DSISD district. The GT child should have not been made to stay in class and make a 69 and then be made to miss athletic games (no pass no play) when the district did not give the child enough transition help. The child should have been taken out of GT class and placed in regular 7th grade (at 3 weeks) class then that child would not have failed the 6 weeks and been made to look like a dummy! The child was not given enough guidance. The teacher said she could not re-teach what this child was not taught because she had to go on with her curriculum (this was the 1st 6 weeks of school).
- Regarding tax equity our property taxes are very high with no limit in sight. However, our district is short on cash for this school year, has the unexpected expenses of mold remediation and repair, and

the campuses are bursting at the seams. We desperately need commercial development within our district, but this development is being choked out by environmentalists who cannot recognize the needs of our growing community. Regarding bus ride times, the bus ride takes an hour and a half each way. My 2nd grader rides the bus in the afternoon, but I won't put him on the morning bus because he would then be spending 3 hours a day on a bus. We greatly agree with the way the school board and administrators have handled our unfortunate mold problem at the Primary School. It has not hindered our son's education this school year. Overall, we love DSISD!! Our son is receiving some special education services, and we thank God everyday for helping us get into this school district. We genuinely feel that if we were to have to move anywhere else, we would have to place him in a private school.

- Dripping Spring ISD provides a challenging academic curriculum for students who aspire to high education ucation. The district provides a curriculum also, that is geared to prepare students for a technology program. Vocational programs seem adequate. Due to a tax base that is totally dependent on property taxes, it often seems difficult for the district to provide programs that are desired by parents and students (i.e., soccer at Middle School level.) Major repairs to the Primary School, that are essential, are complicated by a lack of funds available to the district. Homeowner taxes cannot fund all the needs of this very rapidly growing school district.
- Overall, I believe this is an excellent school district. We have had a few teachers who are not as interested in teaching anymore (ready to retire) or just not capable of handling a class-full of active boys. However, these were the exception, not the rule. I am not a fan of the math program, which does not appear to allow the students to fully explore a concept before moving on to another. I also do not believe the writing/language arts instruction falls through the cracks between 3rd and 4th grade.
- The school district tries to perform well; I do however have a problem with the fact that 9th graders cannot participate in athletics and band. That is a major decision for a 14 year old to make considering if you aren't in band your 9th grade year you cannot join later. Also the high school does not have enough teachers to provide options for students. It almost seems that some students are set up to fail.
- I believe that there should be more computers involved with the kindergarten level. Pre-K has more involvement than they do. Why is that? The office clerical staff I have found to be rude at times. The parents are very involved in our town with the children. We are having a rough time with mold, but the teachers are great and so are the kids!

- For the most part DSISD has provided an excellent education for my children. They have had some caring wonderful teachers and the atmosphere at all the schools in the district is very pleasant and inviting. I do feel they don't meet the needs of all students at the high school level. Limited vocational opportunities and district has struggled to attract strong technology teachers. Can't attract expertise needed for technology due to low pay. Currently we have excellent principals and wonderful superintendent. There are many in town who complain about our high school, property tax rate but to me its worth every penny and schools seem to do a good job budgeting in this growing district. I've served on a couple of school improvement teams so have had the opportunity to participate some in budget process.
- We have been involved with one other Texas school district and one out-of-state district. DSISD exceeds our expectations and we are very excited to be a part of it. Texas Schools were far better than our experience with "the other" state. We were very pleased with AISD, but we are more pleased with DSISD. Teachers and administrators are excellent; programs are great; facilities good, in spite of the mold problems at the Primary School. We were very pleased with the expedience of identifying the problem, relocating students, and working to correct the situation. Allow time for prayer in school! Teach Spanish to our children beginning in elementary school! Thanks for keeping education #1 priority in Texas!
 - A.2- Sometimes Board acts against desires of public.
 - B.6- Suggestions received but often disregarded/not-acted upon.
 - B.9.a- Need phonics program and spelling at least in 1st-3rd.
 - B.9.c- Need lots more repetition and rote memory of multiplication tables
 - B.9.d- Lower grades have no program in place at all. Middle School still does not have uniform programs and no GT plan/program for science (3 years ago all middle school teachers left under duress due to uncooperative principal.
 - B.9.h- Great Primary/Intermediate programs. Strong need for more elective time at Middle School. Poor planning for use of time. They go to English and Math every day for 1 1/2 hours and science and social studies every other day (1/2 as much time to cover required material!) Leaves only time for one elective per year. They have to choose band or art

or Spanish or drama or computer. No time to take Spanish and band (both required 2+ year programs) with art or athletics. Very unfair academically.

- B.9.k- Way too much emphasis on AP/college prep. Need flexibility in scheduling to allow for these courses. Also district claims: no funding" for these programs to grow.
- B.10.b- Lagging way behind- see #B.9.h and B.9.k.
- B.10.j- Not offered-no funding.
- B.10.m-n- Not realistic and functional for course planning for 8th graders going into high school. They have speakers come in, but need more reality planning of college requirements/job requirements, rather than fun-day.
- B.10.o- Need to tell parents. Get real priorities for school in place!
- B.12-13- Teachers are not supported by administration. Low pay, low benefits, low professionalism leads to high stress and high turnover. Rather than stand up to parents and support good teachers and programs, administration has put many under qualified non-certified and inexperienced (i.e., cheaper) teachers in key classes (coaches/student teachers/non-field/non-degreed/immature, unprofessional)
- B.14-15- (see above) No incentive for master or even teacher-field degrees, also no incentives not to be absent.
- C.23- PTA/PTO is so strong and raises so much money that the district is way too reliant on them for support both money and time. District under-budgets money and staff depending on PTA to fill the needs! At each campus over \$40,000 is given each year and at least 100 people with 100's of hours served.
- D.24- Input given, but often not acted upon.
- E.30- Taxes way too high, but city won't put in water/sewer or vote alcohol for even an HEB or other businesses to come into district to offset home owner taxes.
- E.30.f- District too heavy in upper management costs. Positions should be consolidated and or cut to allow for money to use wisely.
- I.50- Need to have/follow rules on bus and be able to have personnel remove students who misbehave (mainly mouthing off) during routes. Call and come

get them right then. But drivers must enforce rather than ignore rules.

- I.51- My students ride K) 7:15am-8:15am and 2:45pm-4:25pm and 6th) 7:15am-8:am and 3:30pm-4:25pm, and travel 18 miles to another section of town. This issue has been called in, personally discussed, petitioned by parents with no response!
- I commend the middle school for providing tutorial time before school hours begin. Overall, the education delivered is good. I feel there should be more attention to writing composition especially creative writing. I know there is a greater drug problem in the middle school than parents and administrators want to admit or see. More drug awareness and general parenting information (i.e., parenting classes) would be helpful. I recommend the parenting class, Redirecting Children's Behavior by the Redirection Connection. It's a 5-week class for parents who are looking for ways of improving communication, mutual respect, and gains a greater understanding of their own and their child's behavior. I found it to be a lifesaver for me and my high school age child and have helped me to avoid some mistakes with my youngest. They have teachers who will come to the school to teach parents as well as teachers. I recommend this course for teachers and administrators. In California my child's elementary school offered a similar course through the PTA. It was also very helpful.
- Our child has been attending DSISD for seven years. We are very pleased with the quality of teaching overall, and the facilities. We have a great deal of parent involvement in Dripping Springs and lots of community support for the teaching staff. I did not comment on board meetings because I have not been involved in this area.
- Speaking only on the high school it has been our experience and that of many other parents in our church and all parents of students on our varsity soccer team, that the more a teacher or coach flaunts his behavior and bad judgment, particularly in exhibiting out-of-control emotional outbursts, or crossing students personal boundaries, the more the administration closes rank and becomes arrogant. Administration is not responsive to parents in the community and has a poor reputation in the community. Our favorite example, small but indicative, and referenced frequently, is the rule against male facial hair (for students) and our principal who sports a mustache and goatee; something which would likely go un-remarked if everyone was not so cynical and disillusioned.
- Generally, we are very pleased with the DSISD. Our children are in Kindergarten and generally our hopes and expectations have been fulfilled. We think that DSISD is better than average and we choose these schools over private or home school options. There

are two major problems with our first year of DSISD. One the school's mold problem is not being handled well, the situation is terrible and there is little hope of it improving. We are very concerned that our children will not be back in the school building for 1st grade. Both our children are having difficulties in learning to read and we feel that the mold situation is a contributing factor. The school is offering their standardized intervention to assist the children (mine and others) however, given the difficult circumstances and subsequent consequences, I think more should be done to improve their reading. We as parents are doing all that we can to help our kids with their reading, but need the school's assistance (Our children test at above average IQ.) The kindergarten teachers that our children have are great! We are extremely pleased with the teachers. We could not ask for anyone better to teach our children in kindergarten. I am concerned that the teachers do not have all that they need to teach effectively. I am sure that I do not have all the information about the mold in the school and the problems that it created for the district. I think the school administration; Board and the community are doing the best that they can give the resources. I do think that some of the decision on the disposal of the teacher supplies was terrible. The remediation process is painfully slow and I don't think that the communication about the outcome is not complete. We need to prepare for next year now; not wait to find out about where the kids will be located in August. Thanks for your concern.

- Dripping Springs schools are doing a great job of teaching our children. They have high academic standards, good discipline, and great professional education ucators. These are the reasons why our family moved to this district. While not perfect they do in my opinion, a much better job of educating children than other districts (like Austin.) In my opinion problems that need attention are drugs especially in the high school, tax rate is too high, school board does not listen to concerns of parents with regard to academic materials, school facilities are not available to community and non-profits due to ridiculous fees charged for use.
- Robin Hood system is not working for DSISD. Too much money is spent in Administration to facilitate the state mandated system! Need to give education back to the student and revise how they are being taught. Too much direction and not enough guidance to "self learn." Two children through special education ucation. On thrived on the extra attention. Both required outside private tutoring. The DMP is not realistic; but I agree with the restrictions.
- The Primary School has never been a problem for my family. Although I think the 6-8 grades have not totally been able to prepare the students for the dramatic change in high school courses, crowding classrooms and inadequate teachers placed in

teaching the required classes. Block scheduling in the junior high is quite a difference to incoming freshman. There is absolutely no High School counseling to college-bound students, unless you're a popular student.

Appendix E

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

(n = 102)

Demographic Data

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
	15.7%	77.4%	6.9%			
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
	88.2%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.8%
3. How long have you been employed by Dripping Springs ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Response
	53.9%	22.6%	10.8%	7.8%	3.9%	1.0%
4. What grade levels do you teach this year?	Pre- Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third	
	6.7%	5.9%	8.8%	1.0%	10.0%	
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	
	6.7%	2.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth		
	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%		

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The school board allows sufficient time for public input	1.0%	19.6%	44.1%	30.4%	4.9%	0.0%

	at meetings.						
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	0.0%	22.5%	45.1%	24.5%	7.8%	0.0%
3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	2.0%	26.5%	39.2%	32.3%	0.0%	0.0%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	0.0%	21.6%	55.9%	18.6%	3.9%	0.0%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	0.0%	52.0%	38.2%	7.8%	1.0%	1.0%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	0.0%	50.0%	34.3%	13.7%	1.0%	1.0%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	0.0%	15.7%	52.0%	16.6%	14.7%	1.0%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	0.0%	21.6%	51.0%	18.6%	8.8%	0.0%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	0.0%	14.7%	41.2%	40.2%	3.9%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	0.0%	50.0%	44.1%	3.9%	2.0%	0.0%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	0.0%	39.2%	41.2%	7.8%	9.8%	2.0%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0.0%	48.0%	36.3%	14.7%	1.0%	0.0%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.0%	14.7%	32.4%	22.5%	25.5%	4.9%
14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	0.0%	20.6%	39.2%	15.7%	20.6%	3.9%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	0.0%	16.7%	54.9%	19.6%	6.8%	2.0%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	0.0%	12.7%	44.1%	19.6%	19.6%	3.9%

17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
	a) Reading	0.0%	49.0%	38.2%	9.80%	2.9%	0.0%
	b) Writing	0.0%	38.6%	45.5%	11.9%	4.0%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	0.0%	39.2%	41.2%	9.8%	6.9%	2.9%
	d) Science	0.0%	36.2%	52.0%	9.8%	2.0%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	0.0%	48.0%	46.1%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	0.0%	25.5%	49.0%	7.8%	14.7%	3.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	0.0%	34.3%	57.8%	6.9%	1.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	0.0%	32.4%	52.9%	7.8%	6.9%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	0.0%	32.3%	49.0%	10.8%	6.9%	1.0%
	j) Business Education	0.0%	13.7%	37.3%	44.1%	4.9%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	8.8%	27.5%	43.1%	19.6%	1.0%
	l) Foreign Language	0.0%	17.6%	43.1%	29.4%	8.8%	1.0%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	0.0%	28.4%	48.0%	15.7%	6.9%	1.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted	0.0%	38.2%	50.0%	5.9%	3.9%	2.0%

	and Talented Education						
	c) Special Education	0.0%	46.1%	45.1%	3.9%	3.9%	1.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	0.0%	7.8%	16.7%	65.7%	8.8%	1.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	0.0%	7.8%	22.5%	49.0%	16.7%	3.9%
	f) Student mentoring program	1.0%	12.7%	38.2%	32.4%	15.7%	0.0%
	g) Advanced placement program	0.0%	41.2%	35.3%	21.5%	2.0%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	0.0%	19.6%	24.5%	48.0%	7.8%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	1.0%	14.7%	35.3%	37.2%	9.8%	2.0%
	j) Summer school programs	0.0%	11.8%	32.4%	33.3%	18.6%	3.9%
	k) Alternative education programs	0.0%	10.8%	26.5%	39.2%	19.6%	3.9%
	l) "English as a second language" program	0.0%	18.6%	47.1%	23.5%	9.8%	1.0%
	m) Career counseling program	0.0%	11.8%	28.4%	48.0%	8.8%	2.9%
	n) College counseling program	0.0%	14.7%	30.4%	47.0%	5.9%	2.0%
	o) Counseling the parents of	0.0%	9.8%	38.2%	37.3%	12.7%	2.0%

	students						
	p) Drop out prevention program	0.0%	6.9%	25.5%	52.9%	13.7%	1.0%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	15.7%	41.2%	38.2%	4.9%	0.0%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	0.0%	8.9%	26.7%	14.9%	41.6%	7.9%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0.0%	28.4%	46.1%	6.9%	14.7%	3.9%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	0.0%	23.5%	48.0%	13.7%	12.7%	2.0%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	4.9%	22.5%	19.6%	41.2%	11.8%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	0.0%	11.8%	51.0%	30.4%	2.9%	3.9%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	1.0%	32.3%	56.9%	4.9%	3.9%	1.0%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors.	1.0%	26.5%	36.3%	16.6%	17.6%	2.0%

	science labs and art classes.						
27.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	1.0%	14.7%	58.8%	8.8%	13.7%	2.9%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	1.0%	39.2%	52.9%	2.9%	3.9%	0.0%

C. Personnel

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	1.0%	1.0%	16.6%	5.9%	55.9%	19.6%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	1.0%	15.7%	62.7%	8.8%	10.8%	1.0%
31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	1.0%	16.7%	45.1%	24.5%	12.7%	0.0%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	1.0%	16.6%	50.0%	15.7%	14.7%	2.0%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	1.0%	13.7%	33.3%	25.5%	21.6%	4.9%
34.	The district operates an effective staff	1.0%	13.7%	52.9%	12.7%	17.6%	2.0%

	development program.						
35.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	1.0%	37.2%	59.8%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	1.0%	3.9%	21.6%	28.4%	30.4%	14.7%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	1.0%	7.8%	48.0%	28.4%	10.8%	3.9%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	1.0%	10.8%	40.2%	40.2%	4.9%	2.9%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	1.0%	3.9%	21.6%	2.9%	38.2%	32.4%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district	2.0%	41.2%	52.9%	2.9%	1.0%	0.0%

	regularly communicates with parents.						
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	1.0%	10.8%	26.5%	27.4%	30.4%	3.9%
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	1.0%	40.2%	46.1%	3.9%	7.8%	1.0%
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	1.0%	29.4%	42.1%	20.6%	5.9%	1.0%

E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44. The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	1.0%	13.7%	36.3%	17.6%	25.5%	5.9%
45. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	1.0%	20.6%	45.0%	24.5%	6.9%	2.0%
46. The architect	1.0%	11.8%	18.6%	56.8%	9.8%	2.0%

	and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.						
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	1.0%	10.8%	36.3%	26.4%	23.5%	2.0%
48.	Schools are clean.	1.0%	43.1%	52.0%	0.0%	2.9%	1.0%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	1.0%	17.6%	58.8%	5.9%	13.7%	2.9%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	1.0%	14.7%	57.8%	3.9%	18.6%	3.9%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	1.0%	24.5%	61.8%	7.8%	2.0%	2.9%

F. Financial Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	1.0%	19.6%	51.9%	14.7%	11.8%	1.0%
53.	Campus administrators	1.0%	17.6%	48.0%	29.4%	3.9%	0.0%

	are well trained in fiscal management techniques.						
54.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	1.0%	17.6%	52.0%	15.7%	10.8%	2.9%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55. Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	1.0%	12.7%	35.3%	21.6%	26.5%	2.9%
56. Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	1.0%	11.8%	34.3%	40.1%	11.8%	1.0%
57. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	1.0%	5.9%	38.2%	19.6%	30.4%	4.9%
58. Vendors are selected competitively.	1.0%	9.8%	37.2%	46.1%	3.9%	2.0%
59. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and	1.0%	7.8%	22.5%	28.4%	37.3%	2.9%

	equipment.						
60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	1.0%	27.4%	58.8%	6.9%	5.9%	0.0%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape.	1.0%	22.5%	59.8%	6.9%	9.8%	0.0%
62.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	1.0%	34.3%	54.9%	3.9%	4.9%	1.0%

H. Food Services

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	1.0%	14.7%	54.9%	12.7%	11.8%	4.9%
64.	Food is served warm.	1.0%	18.6%	64.7%	9.8%	4.9%	1.0%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	1.0%	18.6%	68.6%	4.9%	4.9%	2.0%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	1.0%	10.8%	42.2%	13.7%	28.4%	3.9%
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	1.0%	15.7%	66.7%	7.8%	7.8%	1.0%
68.	Cafeteria	1.0%	29.4%	53.9%	7.8%	4.9%	2.9%

	staff is helpful and friendly.						
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	1.0%	40.2%	53.9%	3.9%	0.0%	1.0%

I. Safety and Security

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	1.0%	30.3%	61.8%	1.0%	5.9%	0.0%
71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	1.0%	25.4%	55.9%	10.8%	6.9%	0.0%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	1.0%	6.9%	17.6%	11.8%	49.0%	13.7%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	1.0%	9.8%	41.2%	13.7%	32.3%	2.0%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	1.0%	12.7%	28.4%	49.0%	5.9%	2.9%
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	1.0%	5.9%	21.5%	69.6%	2.0%	0.0%
76.	A good working arrangement	1.0%	18.6%	55.9%	24.5%	0.0%	0.0%

	exists between the local law enforcement and the district.						
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	1.0%	15.7%	51.9%	9.8%	16.7%	4.9%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	1.0%	11.8%	58.8%	10.8%	14.7%	2.9%

J. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	1.0%	33.3%	51.0%	3.9%	9.8%	1.0%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	1.0%	27.5%	44.1%	3.9%	20.6%	2.9%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	1.0%	25.5%	59.8%	3.9%	9.8%	0.0%
82.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	1.0%	25.5%	55.8%	5.9%	9.8%	2.0%
83.	The district meets student needs in	1.0%	24.5%	50.0%	7.8%	12.7%	3.9%

	computer fundamentals.						
84.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	2.0%	21.5%	30.4%	23.5%	15.7%	6.9%
85.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	1.0%	33.3%	53.9%	2.9%	6.9%	2.0%

Appendix E

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below are the actual comments received and do not reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or review team.

- Pay needs to reflect the work of teachers.
- Computers in each classroom.
- Food not healthy. Playground not safe. Gym not built correctly. Bus transfer for middle school not safe. Added duties, lower pay.
- Too much money goes into GT programs. No attention to ESL and special ed.
- Hard to keep teachers because cost of living to pay is not very good. Health insurance high. Under staffed due to funding.
- Salaries not competitive, insurance too high. Expectations of teachers are high, but not enough training and materials.
- Low teacher salary.
- Money wasted on certain positions.
- Low budget meaning poor salaries, poor insurance, supply needs.
- Re-educate staff on inner city transplants.
- No gym, tech frustrating, limited use of computers, salaries poor, insurance high, math program poor, no rewards, etc.
- I think Dripping offers the top student excellent preparation. I think as a whole we push all our students to achieve the best possible scores and knowledge. Those students who begin in our schools do well. Those students who enter our schools later and do not have the self-motivation to achieve are not very successful. We do not offer much for these students because our basic expectation for every student is for them to work hard to do the very best they can.
- Not just in our district, but statewide, teachers are asked to teach! Physical Education (Fall of 2002), computer technology, and soon library. I'm two years from retirement so I have done all of that in the past. The only problem is that there weren't as many educational requirements back then mandated by our state and additional committee meetings, teaming and in-service days as required by our district. Whew! No wonder we "OLD DINOSAURS" don't see too many young college graduates rushing to the teaching profession. It is not only the pay, but the long hours of work, both at school and at night (at home). Of course our district could do more for its teachers (goodness knows we have enough highly paid administrators), excluding our

wonderful principals who are dedicated and work very diligently!
Where will the State of Texas find teachers?? I worry.

- It was hard to answer questions about the "district" when I only see one campus. The survey would have been better if we only answered for the campus we are currently at.
- Overall I think the district does a pretty good job. The speech department overall is pretty good. This year one teacher has frequently missed. They have now hired an extra person to help make up all of the missed hours.
- Site based management is truly utilized and not just verbalized at DSISD/DS middle. The team approach is effective in making clusters of teachers with the same students to create a more caring atmosphere and give the teachers the opportunity to interdiscipline/cross discipline their planning. The academic teams meet twice weekly at the middle school to review student issues and meet curricular needs. The leaders of teams and the department coordinators form the leadership team with administration. Decisions are discussed with the teams then go back to the leadership team. The budget, the campus improvement plan (CIP), goals, objectives, mission statement, etc. all filter back and forth in this manner so each member of the faculty is represented. The school improvement team with members from the community, parents, faculty, and administration approve major decisions such as the budget, CIP, novels for the reading list, etc.
- Technology is integrated in each of our academic areas at DSMS. The technology TEKS are divided between each of the disciplines, and they are taught and applied with the English, math, science, and social studies curriculum. In this manner the technology will be experienced and learned naturally as applied. There are computer labs between each two-language arts classes in the 7th and 8th grade halls. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade halls have classroom labs, and the multimedia lab is available for the entire school. All computers in the school are internet accessible. Each student has a file server. The video broadcasting class delivers the announcements each day on a 10-minute newscast of MTTV. Please visit DSMS and see dynamic instruction, teachers who feel like they are part of a family, and administrators who are facilitators to help teachers and students streamline the learning process!
- Teachers have a good working relationship with administrators. Morale is low due to:
 - no gym on campus property
 - technology is very frustrating (computer breakdowns)
 - limited use of computer lab
 - teachers are required to teach technology, but tech coordinator is not present

- salaries are very poor
- insurance costs are ever increasing
- math program is not parent or teacher friendly, very costly
- no stipends for GT teachers or ESL
- UIL stipends cut in half
- No reward/compensation for longevity with the district
- Holidays- you are not allowed to take personal days before or after a holiday even if you have the days/hours. You are "docked" according to your daily rate (salary/10 months)

▪ **Daycare-**

- Benefit of knowing caregivers and locale is convenient.
- Pay as much if not more than local/area day cares. Students' parents (district employees) must provide lunches and milk. Pay full price for December even though children attend for 1/2 the month. No reduction in rate for months with multiple holidays. Daycare operated 7:30-5:00 where does the money go for the days children are not attending? Basically if the teachers are off (district closed) the daycare is closed and the fee is not prorated.
- K-5 math program was unanimously declined- district curriculum director purchased it anyway. We are dedicated to 7 years of a consumable workbook! Teachers must run numerous copies to coincide with program and to supplement gaps in program. VERY COSTLY! Too many administrators! Not reimbursed for travel- miles, lodging and food, but urged to attend conferences for better instructional strategies and to return to campus with wealth of knowledge. No soap in classrooms with sinks. Difficult to communicate with custodial staff due to language barriers. Learning lab needs more certified staff!
- In the years I have been with this district I have seen it become a "check the box" district. The lack of discipline (mainly in the high school), the curriculum (mainly English department) being controlled by one person (sets policy as she sees it) High school has made many parents/students unhappy with inconsistencies (curriculum choices; portfolio process- if student takes Sr. English during summer; Students on "hearing" panel to question peers regarding controversial novel). Teachers have less and less input (curriculum and technology) and are the ones with the children all the time!!! A Pandora's box, perhaps? And, our principal, is a great administrator. She is consistent, fair, and if you do your job you have her respect! She's a good principal! Doesn't play favorites and gets us what we need if she can!
- Dripping Springs has a wonderful staff that works together. I enjoy my team and appreciate the flexibility of teaching styles. However, I have ranked many survey questions poorly due to money

constraints. Our staff (teachers, aides, custodians, cafeteria workers, etc.) works to the best of their abilities with what is given. We are short staffed in many areas and I feel this hurts the children's learning. It is difficult to see teachers working so hard with so little pay to keep our children's ratings at a higher level than the state's

▪ **Money issues-**

- Teachers use a good portion of their own money to help supplement (teaching) subjects
- Our cafeteria workers work too hard trying to give children 4 choices on a daily routine, while using plastic containers.
- Our custodial/reading specialists and special education department are all short staffed.
- K-2 teach their own computer class due to short staffing. Also the computers for these grades aren't up to par.
- DS does a good job in educating children. However, too much emphasis and money go to GT programs. The same attention is not paid to ESL, and Special Education. ESL program is sink or swim philosophy. Lower grades need math small group intervention (to go along with reading). GT pullout program seems antiquated. Curriculum Coordinator at each campus is a miss use of finances. Their duties are not clear to teachers. It seems they are more of an administrator. The recent mold situation was handled poorly. The consultant was not doing his job. Premeditators randomly threw away items. Teachers have not been given adequate reasons for this. The district has no plan for recouping poor workmanship costs. These companies will still be paid. Intermediate school gym is ridiculous. It sits empty while in litigation. It is supposed to be for children. Site based management is not implemented. It is used to discriminate petty jobs to teachers. While decisions are made by administrators. Team decisions are often changed by principals. Teachers do not decide who is on team. Their thoughts are not represented. Overall DS is a good district. However improvements could be made.
- It is hard to keep good teachers here because the cost of living to teacher pay ratio is not very good. Our health insurance is not very good. Because of funding problems we are understaffed with teachers, custodians, and maintenance personnel.
- I enjoy teaching for the district due to my colleagues and helpful parents. However, our salaries are not competitive and our insurance is too expensive. Our district expects a great deal of it's teachers to maintain our exemplary status from TEA yet we rarely receive the training and materials needed to keep up with the pace of neighboring districts.

- District does an excellent job of preparing for life after high school; college bound students receive excellent preparation for AP exams despite small school facilities; teacher retention seems to be a problem due to low salary schedule and high housing costs in district; most young teachers can not afford to live here.
- I believe that from a purely academic standpoint, DSISD is excellent; we have little discipline to deal with compared to other districts. However, the paperwork and extra duties that are assigned without consulting with teachers are both excessive. In Service (professional development) days are often "make work" days- that teachers could use for planning or working on our own. Much too little time is given for planning. Teacher's time in general is not valued or compensated adequately.
- Overall this is one of the best districts I have worked for. Our money shortage is not from waste but from no tax base. In fact for the little money that this school runs on for its size it is very efficient. This is not to say that there are a few things we could change.
- There are times in the schedule at DSMS when the gyms sit empty while too many students are scheduled to use the gyms at other times. I believe this is not efficient use of staff or facilities.
- Every district has its shortcomings, and we are no exception. However, the education our students receive is excellent. I have two children who have graduated from DSHS, and they were very well prepared for college. Both entered college as 2nd semester sophomores. There is never enough money to do all we want and have more programs to serve our students. But we do quite a bit with what we do have!
- I have worked for a number of school districts in the last 15 years, and if you took the best qualities of each of them you would still fall well short of Dripping Springs ISD. We have a fantastic superintendent and a great principal at the High School. Both are fair, strong, consistent, and reliable. Our biggest weakness is low teacher salary and poor benefit package causing high turnover rates.
- DSISD generally does a great job with educating its children. I am completely satisfied with the superintendent board and supervisors at my school. The GT standard curriculum and special education departments are excellent through the middle school. The AP and standard curriculum is great at the High School. However, the special education and vocational training programs (vocational for lower-functioning kids) at the High School level are in my opinion inadequate, evasive of legal and educational responsibilities, and poorly managed. The district does extremely well with its college bound kids at the high school level, but is not geared currently to

meet all the needs of its special ed or special needs populations at the high school level.

- I would love to speak directly on behalf of Dripping Spring Middle School. We have been told repeatedly that our block scheduling is subject to removal due to cutting the budget. DSMS has strove and excelled at improving the math and language arts levels of our students over the past 7 years I've been working in the district. To lose block scheduling and teaming would destroy the foundation of what we have worked so hard to build. Our "Blue Ribbon" status will be based on what has been so tremendously accomplished in our programs currently, and eliminating our programs by deleting block scheduling will defeat all that we stand to be recognized by! I would hope that the focus will be on educating and nurturing our student, not simply having the "in-school."
- I am completing my thirty-second year in public education. Dripping Springs ISD values, nurtures and supports its students, parents, and staff more than any place I have worked. Our district is an efficient affective model of cooperation of professional educators and community to provide student centered learning experiences toward developing each child into a successful citizen who contributes productively to society. We are looking forward to your visit.
- I am disappointed that our comptroller would seek a management and performance review when our district is undergoing relocation and mold remediation. I have worked in many districts, and DSISD always supports, communicates, and listens to their teachers and the community.
- Great school district to work in. Great school district to have kids in. Perfection may be out of reach.
- This district places needs of the students first! The district has excellent communication with the community and among the staff. The administration actively pursues input from the community and staff, and considers what is advised/suggested. We need health insurance that is not so expensive, and the new state plan is not going to help us in that regard. We need to rethink that plan.
- Overall, the quality of the education received by students is excellent. Although I have some concerns about how much time some students are out of classes for extra-curricular activities, students do well on standardized tests, including Advanced Placement exams.
- A lot of money is wasted on certain positions. For instance, the Curriculum Director at the Elementary level is not an effective position; the G/T elementary teachers are extremely ineffective and are doing 1/2-time positions for full time pay. The behavior management position is ineffective because little help is provided for teachers. She only helps the administrators, and we have too

many special needs children who need one-on-one full time aide assistance. Sometimes the "special need" is that they are brats who are unmanageable by their parents- are sent and "given" a diagnosis and then the taxpayers pick up the tab. These are shameful serious waste in our district. Also, administrators here get way too much money. They are better paid than in other districts but teachers are underpaid as compared to the other districts.

- This is my third year here at DSHS. I am a former graduate of this school and my mother taught here for 20 plus years. I feel that I have a pretty clear picture of this school and districts strengths and weaknesses. This school in particular does an exceptional job of "doing the best with what we've got." We have excellent teachers and excellent administrators. Our administrators do their best to ensure that we have the support we need (both emotional and curricular). Our district is having a hard time right now because of budget issues uncontrollable by us. Because of the low budget, we've had difficulty meeting staffing needs (many teachers leave because of poor salaries, poor insurance coverage for families, teaching 6 out of 7 periods a day etc.), meeting supply needs, etc. our local administrators have been wonderful about trying to boost morale, and finding the resources we (as teachers) need. Our principals and office staff are outstanding!
- Having taught in inner city conditions for 10 years the resources and facilities available here have been wonderful. The school performs very well as it should. As population shifts to this area I believe we may need to re-educate staff on the needs of these inner city transplants.
- Our Superintendent and principals are great. The district suffers financially because of lack of industry locally. The huge cost of mold removal has really caught the district in a money bind. Services, I feel, are great.
- This is a great place to teach. Unfortunately with no major business to bring in a higher tax base, we can't have better salaries.
- I feel privileged to teach at Dripping Springs ISD. It is a safe and encouraging environment.
- This is an excellent district. I feel like an important, cared for member. Administrators are friendly and accessible. We have challenges, but work together to solve them.
- Most needs are met within the schools. Budgeting constraints are the main reasons for high teacher turn over.
- I have taught in many school districts- Victoria, San Antonio, Gregory (Portland), New Braunfels, Corpus Christi, Judson, Schertz-Cibolo and Lake Travis- and the teachers at Dripping Springs work harder and longer hours than any teachers at any of my former districts. I am amazed at the time they put in! They do

this for less pay than Lake Travis ISD and they often spend money out of their pocket for classroom needs!

- DS Middle School is an exemplary campus, which has been named a Texas School of excellence and awarded a site visit by the U.S. Department of Education. It doesn't seem equitable that we are facing the removal of some of our programs such as block scheduling, academic teaming, video broadcasting, etc...because of financial difficulties caused by non-coverage of insurance against mold.
- I feel that DSISD is one of the best around. However, I feel to be considered a top notch district for teachers the pay needs to reflect this. I realize there is not a real tax base in Dripping Springs, and that affects the district in terms of revenues. I believe this district meets all students' needs from AP to special education. But, I worry this district is growing so rapidly, the district will soon begin to deteriorate because of budget shortfalls and etc.
- Class size is way too large for the regular classroom. 28-35 students per room is way too many when you add 6 to 7 special education students to the class with their special needs. Special Education and content mastery has gotten totally out of hand with its demands on the regular classroom teacher. The regular teacher at DSHS gets dumped on while the AP teachers have 10-15 students per class. We put way too much emphasis on AP classes here and statewide. The average student is getting left out of the educational process.
- The best school I have been at in over 30 years of experience.
- Dripping Springs is an almost ideal combination of administrative, teacher, student, parent, and community investment of student success in education. DS students regularly perform well above normal on any type of standardized test and that would not be possible if all of the above mentioned groups were invested in the education of our students.
- I am very proud to be a member of the DS school district.
- Process by which teachers, coaches have access to funds is ridiculous. Take too long, so much red tape, ineffective process, I don't need a baby-sitter to determine what my students or athletes need.
- Dripping Springs is one of the finest school districts I have ever been with as a teacher. There is always room for improvement, however. If I had it my way corporal punishment would be reinstated. Discipline problems run amuck especially among the high-grade levels. Teachers have to spend too much time managing problem students, which takes away from the real reason we are here- to teach. Most kids in the district are very spoiled. As for the performance of our district, our kids are high achievers and the teachers' primary focus is seeing that every student tries to meet his

overall potential. The new TAKS Test will be an interesting summation of how our students are really doing. Our district is very keen on the most innovative ways to help our student's performance.

- Dear Comptroller, I wish I could have been more helpful. I live outside the district and have been here such a short time I don't have a good feel for much outside my own school. Our administrators seem determined to make the tax dollar accomplish as much as possible without jeopardizing the education of our students.
- I feel that our teachers are providing the best possible education for our students given the resources and experience we have. I am working harder and harder every year with less each year. To save money teachers have had to take on many more responsibilities than they should have to. My main concerns are our math program, too expensive and not getting the results we have had before, and our technology (computer programs) classroom teachers that basically have very little training, if any, are required to teach computer classes while we have a computer technology coordinator that is never available to assist us. Many times teachers' just pack up and go back to their classrooms because of all the problems they encounter and are unable to solve. Teachers have asked repeatedly for administrators to reconsider having a computer technology instructor so that our children get what they deserve. Our district is a "check the box" district. They make us feel like our opinion is important by asking for it and then administration/central office do what they want to do not what the teachers, those that are "down in the trenches," know is best for the children. I really appreciate the comptroller's office giving me a chance to voice my opinion.
- The issue of teacher salaries and employee benefits must be addressed. When compared to similar surrounding districts, teachers in the DSISD are underpaid while administrative salaries are some of the highest. This extreme discrepancy has greatly contributed to the low teacher morale. As a teacher in the DSISD, I feel overworked, under appreciated and underpaid. I feel the DSISD should increase the salaries of those who actually work directly with children. Every year, the cost of employee insurance increases. This increased cost (with less coverage) negates the state mandated "step" salary increase. Our district has not offered to contribute more toward employee insurance, and has not shown an effort to significantly increase the teacher salaries. (Administrative salaries seem to increase every year.) Our site-based management is totally ineffective. Teachers' voices, suggestions, and concerns are ignored. We are losing quality teachers every year due to these

problems. Thank you for taking a close look into the management and performance of DSISD.

- I would like to see computers in the classroom for students to use on a daily basis instead of only going to the computer lab. To put students of such varied abilities into one class causes the above average and below average to miss out on the best education for those students. The very low student needs a much smaller group environment to be successful. I see a lot of food being wasted by students that could be used for the hungry.
- Cafeteria food is fatty, starchy and nutritionist sells junk food to make cafeteria profitable. Administration is top heavy. High School caters only to college bound high performing students. Others are neglected. Playground has a fire hydrant microwave tower concrete posts, and unfenced electrical box in the middle of it. Gym for intermediate school was partially built by a supervisor with a grudge against the district. Most of what he did has to be torn out and redone costing the district thousands and keeping the children from having a gym for 3 years. Money for our gym was spent on a bus barn. Bus transfer system at Middle School is dangerous. Impossible to tell who is going where or with whom- easy target for someone to pick up a child they are not supposed to. We keep getting added duties and lower pay. Insurance premiums made most of us take home less this year than last. Stipends for UIL were cut in half. In addition to regular classroom curriculum, now we have to teach computer classes, next year we will also teach library and PR classes plus lengthening the day is being considered. Extra duties, longer days, and lower pay devastate morale.
- Teaching in this district is a wonderful opportunity. The staffs are dedicated and willing to help one another. We offer many outstanding programs and have personnel that are dedicated to see these through. There is an area though that I personally feel we are gravely lacking in. While we strive to serve all students we do not provide enough educational choices for those persons who do not choose a college-based career. We need to better serve all students by offering courses, which serve those who prefer vocational employment- those who would be designated as laborers or blue-collar workers.
- The negatives under computer and technology have to do with the campus as opposed to the district. The no opinion answers reflect a lack of knowledge as to what is happening on other campuses.
- During our recent mold remediation process an independent consultant was hired by the district to oversee the remediation. Many inconsistencies and decisions were made regarding materials, books, and supplies in classrooms. Items we were told could be kept were thrown out, items that needed to be thrown out

were kept, and many items were not cleaned as required. This occurred through out the school. This proved to be very frustrating, difficult, and upsetting to most of our teachers. Performance reviews are performed on a scheduled advance notice basis. Superior performance in teaching is not differentiated from poor or mediocre performance.

- Our district does an outstanding job in many areas and is continually working to improve others. It is a mind set and expectation shared by all stakeholders. Unfortunately our resources are limited by circumstances beyond our control.
- Cost of living makes in-district living for teachers prohibitive. Insurance is not meeting my family's needs. We are forced by economic constraints to have coverage outside of school districts program. Students do not seem to have a problem disrespecting authority. For the most part students are polite and well mannered, but many of them don't seem to have a problem breaking rules they disagree with; for example- dress code, parking, policies, and etc. "Nothing is more important than education." Then why do we make it such a low priority when it comes to budget? How can we attract the best and brightest when salaries do not keep pace with the private sector and when the institution as a whole rewards meritocracy by eliminating any form of competition for salaries. If I am the best or the worst, teacher, I am paid the same as every teacher with my years of service. I am very concerned about the state of education. DSISD is one of the most intentional and goal-minded districts I have worked in, but the problems facing education as a whole cast a very dark shadow on the future of our nation.

Appendix F

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions
Narrative Comments

(n = 150)

Demographic Data

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response			
		47.3%	50.7%	2.0%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		66.0%	2.0%	12.7%	1.3%	7.3%	10.7%
3.	What is your classification?	Senior	Junior	No Response			
		50.0%	49.3%	0.7%			

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	0.0%	13.3%	60.0%	17.3%	8.7%	0.7%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.7%	7.3%	49.3%	23.3%	15.3%	4.0%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:						
	a) Reading	0.0%	15.3%	66.6%	12.7%	4.7%	0.7%
	b) Writing	0.0%	14.0%	68.0%	10.0%	7.3%	0.7%

	c) Mathematics	0.0%	18.0%	68.0%	6.7%	6.0%	1.3%
	d) Science	0.0%	17.4%	63.8%	10.7%	8.1%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	0.0%	22.0%	68.7%	3.3%	5.3%	0.7%
	f) Computer Instruction	0.0%	14.7%	58.7%	17.3%	9.3%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	0.0%	14.0%	70.6%	10.0%	4.7%	0.7%
	h) Fine Arts	0.0%	16.7%	60.6%	14.0%	6.7%	2.0%
	i) Physical Education	0.0%	24.0%	54.7%	16.7%	3.3%	1.3%
	j) Business Education	0.7%	8.0%	48.7%	24.0%	15.3%	3.3%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	7.3%	48.7%	26.0%	12.0%	6.0%
	l) Foreign Language	0.7%	15.3%	60.0%	11.3%	9.3%	3.3%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:						
	a) Library Service	0.7%	8.0%	38.0%	20.0%	22.7%	10.6%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0.0%	15.3%	51.3%	24.0%	9.3%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	0.0%	17.3%	31.3%	46.7%	3.3%	1.3%
	d) Student mentoring program	0.7%	8.0%	24.7%	44.6%	18.7%	3.3%
	e) Advanced placement	0.7%	21.3%	50.7%	25.3%	0.7%	1.3%

	program						
	f) Career counseling program	0.0%	6.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	14.0%
	g) College counseling program	0.7%	6.0%	36.0%	25.3%	19.3%	12.7%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	0.0%	13.3%	45.3%	11.3%	26.7%	3.3%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	0.0%	7.3%	58.0%	14.7%	13.3%	0.7%
7.	The district provides a high quality education.	0.7%	18.0%	50.7%	12.7%	11.3%	6.6%
8.	The district has high quality teachers.	0.0%	11.3%	44.7%	22.0%	13.3%	8.7%

B. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	10.6%	56.7%	12.7%	12.7%	7.3%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.0%	11.3%	53.3%	16.7%	14.0%	4.7%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	10.0%	40.7%	16.0%	27.3%	6.0%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled	0.0	14.7%	53.3%	22.0%	7.3%	2.7%

	promptly.						
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C. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	0.0%	12.7%	53.3%	6.0%	24.0%	4.0%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	0.0%	14.0%	69.3%	8.0%	7.3%	1.3%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape.	0.0%	5.3%	32.7%	14.7%	40.0%	7.3%
16.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	0.0%	10.7%	39.3%	13.3%	21.3%	15.3%

D. Food Services

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	0.0%	21.3%	50.0%	18.7%	9.3%	0.7%
18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0.0%	7.3%	35.3%	12.0%	26.7%	18.7%
19.	Food is	0.0%	9.3%	42.7%	14.0%	26.0%	8.0%

	served warm.						
20.	Students have enough time to eat	0.0%	4.0%	21.3%	6.7%	34.7%	33.3%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	0.0%	9.3%	40.0%	9.3%	29.3%	12.0%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	0.0%	5.4%	27.5%	10.7%	36.9%	19.5%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	0.0%	5.4%	61.1%	17.4%	10.1%	6.0%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	0.0%	20.0%	58.7%	9.3%	7.3%	4.7%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	0.0%	14.7%	48.0%	20.0%	14.0%	3.3%

E. Transportation

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	0.0%	0.7%	5.3%	31.3%	18.7%	44.0%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on bus.	0.0%	3.3%	9.3%	74.0%	7.3%	6.0%
28.	The length of the student's	0.0%	0.7%	8.0%	70.7%	10.0%	10.6%

	bus ride is reasonable.						
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	0.0%	7.3%	24.0%	64.7%	1.3%	2.7%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	0.0%	6.7%	25.3%	62.0%	3.3%	2.7%
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	0.0%	6.7%	28.0%	61.3%	0.7%	3.3%
32.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	0.0%	5.3%	16.7%	66.7%	7.3%	4.0%
33.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	0.7%	2.0%	12.0%	65.3%	14.0%	6.0%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	0.0%	2.7%	20.7%	70.6%	4.7%	1.3%
35.	Buses are clean.	0.0%	2.0%	10.0%	63.3%	10.7%	14.0%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	0.0%	4.7%	17.3%	66.6%	6.7%	4.7%

F. Safety and Security

Survey Questions	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. I feel safe and secure at school.	0.0%	20.7%	60.6%	6.0%	8.0%	4.7%
38. School	0.0%	19.3%	59.3%	14.0%	4.0%	3.3%

	disturbances are infrequent.						
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	43.3%	43.3%	10.0%	0.7%	2.7%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	5.3%	18.0%	16.7%	30.7%	29.3%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	0.0%	4.7%	33.3%	24.7%	22.0%	15.3%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0.0%	7.3%	38.7%	38.7%	8.6%	6.7%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0.7%	5.3%	27.3%	34.0%	20.7%	12.0%
44.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	0.0%	6.7%	32.7%	40.6%	12.0%	8.0%
45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	0.7%	4.7%	26.6%	16.7%	26.0%	25.3%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school	0.0%	6.0%	28.0%	32.0%	23.3%	10.7%

grounds.						
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G. Computers and Technology

Survey Questions		No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	0.7%	4.7%	28.7%	9.3%	37.3%	19.3%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	0.0%	4.7%	46.0%	16.0%	22.0%	11.3%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	0.0%	6.0%	60.7%	16.7%	11.3%	5.3%
50.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	0.0%	8.7%	46.6%	18.0%	18.0%	8.7%
51.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	0.7%	7.3%	35.3%	26.7%	19.3%	10.7%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	0.0%	9.3%	43.3%	13.3%	19.3%	14.7%

Appendix F

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below are the actual comments received and do not reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or review team.

- Cleaner bathrooms.
- Too many rules on everything. The food is really bad. All food is fried and not healthy.
- Administration needs to be reviewed for the sake of the students. Punishments are too offensive. All tax dollars are on athletics. Teachers leave classroom for 45 or so minutes.
- Paying for parking cars too high. Why pay if school doesn't own that parking lot? Lunch is expensive and food is not great. Too many rules for school.
- Too much for food and parking. All money on parking and still not space to park. Not all students can ride bus because of after school activities. Find more room for parking.
- More experienced teachers. Need more contact on Internet for projects. Food is also an issue.
- Hire more qualified teachers.
- Hard time getting help from counselors. Parking prices are too high and for food.
- More elective classes.
- Lunch is too expensive at school when we can go elsewhere for cheap.
- Bathrooms need more attention.
- Parking lot needs lots of changes.
- Need to improve parking lots for students and teachers.
- Bathrooms are unsanitary. Parking lot not big enough for students with cars. Food usually cold. Classrooms cold.
- Bathrooms are not very clean. Cafeteria is not clean and the food is not tasteful.
- More lunch time, better books in library, better food, lunch price lower, better teachers.
- More parking lots for the students.
- More parking lots, bathroom needs cleaning, off campus lunch.
- Food could be better, longer lunches, 10 minutes between classes. More language classes should be offered such as German, Russia, Latin, etc. Science could have same branch offices. Bigger computer labs.

- Need more electives. There are hardly any classes to take because you want to learn more about the subject. Electives should include foreign languages.
- Bathrooms need to be more supplied and taken care of better. Lunch food could be better.
- Some teachers have power trips. If the students have rules about items to wear or appearance, teachers should follow those rules also.
- Eating lunch at 10:50 am is too early for a lunch. Drugs are a big issue, especially if no one gets caught with them because of lack of enforcement. The gifted and talented is lacking.
- The attendance policy is stupid. Administrators/Staff in school office has no patience with students. Students should have same respect as staff.
- Why are there three lunches? The first lunch is way too early, 4th period is interrupted by the second lunch. Our counselors should not only be for scheduling classes or college stuff, they should also be there for moral support. Food in cafeteria could be a little more reasonable prices, especially if it takes a while to get.
- The school is over protected of students. Juniors and seniors should have an option to leave campus during lunch hours. It will make it easier on the lunch schedules.
- The computer program needs more work. Teachers are head of projects but don't know much about them. Some teachers learn as they go. PC are new but programs are outdated.
- Parking lots are the only problem I feel are important. There are not enough parking spaces to accommodate the students' vehicles. Between classes should be convenient for students.
- Class dues are not a good idea. Students shouldn't have to pay for hotels or trips for sports.
- Lunch is served too early for some students. The library is not successful. The English department needs assessment. Maintenance is not good at school.
- Harsh punishment for misconduct. The principal should have a relationship with the students. There should be a more effective janitorial and maintenance staff. There should be more sidewalks outside and more parking spaces.
- The late lunches food is too cold. Computer tech teachers need to be better and knowledgeable of computer software.
- Students charged for everything and extremely high prices.
- The food service is very expensive. We don't have enough time for lunch. The parking lots are inadequate for the students.
- If there is not off campus lunch, then you should increase the quality and quantity of food.
- You increase the cost but no increase in quality. The service is bad to students. By the time the last lunch is served, it is cold.

- Lunches should start later and be longer. Juniors and seniors should be able to leave campus during lunch. Better amounts of books.
- The appearance of the school is lacking. The walls have dirt all over them, sewer smell. The school needs an improvement.
- Parking lots are extremely inadequate; library is poorly run, and not accessible at all. Off-campus lunch is needed, rather than to spend the unreasonable amount of money in the cafeteria.
- Need more qualified teachers to teach.
- The school charges too much money for our food and parking. There is not enough parking spots for this kind of money. Where does the money go when we pay to park in a parking lot that is not big enough for everybody?
- The parking lot is a big problem. It is very expensive to park your car on concrete. In certain spots, we can be fined for parking there because there is no more room to park elsewhere. The prices in the cafeteria are very expensive. It keeps getting higher every year. Teachers need more response to students.
- Seniors need off-campus lunch. This will cut down on crowded cafeteria space. Library needs better books. Parking lot doesn't fit the amount of cars. The cafeteria food quality is poor and very over priced.
- Better food in the cafeteria for the students. Last year the food was cheaper and better, and this year the price is higher and food not so good.
- Bathrooms need more cleaning. The cafeteria needs improvement on food. Need more experienced teachers to teach the students.
- The faculty and staff lack patience, understanding, and time to students. The time is too long for staff to talk to students.
- The bathrooms are very unsanitary. The parking lot it not big enough and we fined for parking elsewhere. Tardy causes disruptions. The food is always cold. Need more qualified teachers.
- We as students need more qualified teachers.
- The janitors are always locking the bathrooms before school is even out. There is hardly enough paper towels or toilet paper. Many stall doors are broken.
- DISD are lacking funds for students and teacher to do special projects.