

Transmittal Letter

December 19, 2002

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

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present this report on the progress of the Eagle Pass Independent School District (EPISD) in implementing my Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) recommendations.

In July 2001, I released the results of my review of the district's operations. This review offered 64 detailed recommendations that could save Eagle Pass ISD more than \$11.9 million in gross savings by 2005-06. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings less recommended investments) were projected to reach nearly \$10 million by 2005-06. The review also noted a number of EPISD's exemplary programs and model services provided by district administrators, teachers and staff.

After a little more than one year, we returned to check on how well the district's leadership put these proposals into practice. Over the last year, EPISD has implemented, or is in the process of implementing, 57 of the proposals, or 89 percent. The district has realized net savings of \$921,772 to date.

This report is available on my Web site at www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/eaglepasspr/.

Thanks for all that you do for Texas.

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

c: Senate Committee on Education
House Committee on Public Education
The Honorable Judith Zaffirini, Ph.D., State Senator, District 21
The Honorable Tracy O. King, State Representative, District 43

The Honorable Timoteo Garza, State Representative-Elect, District 80
The Honorable Rene Nunez, District 1, State Board of Education

EAGLE PASS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRESS REPORT

Introduction

In November 2000, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander began a review of the Eagle Pass Independent School District (EPISD) as part of a three-district project that also included reviews of the neighboring Crystal City and La Pryor school districts. These three districts are located near each other in Maverick and Zavala Counties. In July 2001, a final Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) report was issued detailing 64 recommendations that could save the district nearly \$10 million by 2005-06. During August 2002, TSPR staff returned to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations.

Since 1991, TSPR has recommended more than 7,000 ways to save taxpayers more than \$700 million over five-year periods in more than 80 public school districts and higher education institutions throughout Texas. TSPR also conducts follow-up reviews of districts that have had at least one year to implement the recommendations. These 47 subsequent reviews showed that more than 90 percent of TSPR's proposals have been acted upon, saving taxpayers more than \$112 million, with the full savings estimated to grow in the future.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Comptroller Rylander, who took office in January 1999, consulted school district officials, parents and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports in an effort to make TSPR more valuable, even vital, to the state's more than 1,000 school districts. With the perspective of a former teacher, and school board president, the Comptroller has vowed to steer TSPR toward increased accountability to local school districts and the communities they represent.

Rylander began by establishing new criteria for selecting school districts for future reviews. Priority is now given to districts judged poor performing academically or financially, and to hands-on reviews that benefit the greatest number of students. To ensure this process also serves small districts, reviews of numerous school districts in close proximity, regardless of academic or financial status, are also completed to achieve

some economy of scale, as was the case with the smaller districts reviewed in Maverick and Zavala Counties.

Recognizing that only about 51 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. In addition, no longer are school districts' best practices and exemplary models left buried inside individual TSPR reports. Instead, Comptroller Rylander has ordered TSPR to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically among all the state's school districts and with anyone who requests such information. There is simply no reason for a district that has solved a problem well to keep the solution to itself. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as an active clearinghouse of the best and brightest ideas in Texas public education. Best practices identified in the original review will be included in the Comptroller's best practices database, *A+ Ideas for Managing Schools (AIMS)*, which is on the Web at www.aimsdatabase.org.

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

- ensure students and teachers receive the support and resources necessary to succeed;
- identify innovative options to address core management challenges;
- ensure administrative activities are performed efficiently, without duplication and in a manner that spurs education;
- develop strategies to ensure the districts' processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;
- understand the links among the districts' functional areas and determine ways to provide a seamless system of services;
- 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 there is a business in the Yellow Pages that can do that job better and at a lower cost.

Finally, Comptroller Rylander has opened her door to Texans who share her optimism about TSPR's potential. Suggestions to improve school reviews are welcome at any time. The Comptroller is a staunch believer in public education and public accountability.

Detailed information can be obtained from TSPR by calling 1-800-531-5441 extension 5-3676, or by visiting the Comptroller's Web site at www.window.state.tx.us.

TSPR in the EPISD

When contacted by the Comptroller's office in August 2000, the EPISD board and Superintendent Mona Hopkins voiced their support for the review. The superintendent and her staff have worked with the review team throughout the project.

The Comptroller contracted with WCL Enterprises, a Houston-based firm, to assist with the review. The team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held public forums on Wednesday, November 8, 2000, at the Memorial Junior High School from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and on Thursday, November 9, 2000, at Eagle Pass Junior High School. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted small focus group sessions with teachers, principals, employees, students, parents and community members. The Comptroller's office also received letters and phone calls from a wide array of parents, teachers and community members.

A total of 698 respondents answered surveys. Of this total, 257 campus and central administrators and support staff members, 67 parents, 340 teachers and 34 principals and assistant principals completed written surveys.

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).

During its more than seven-month review, TSPR developed recommendations for improving operations and saving taxpayers nearly \$12.4 million by 2005-06. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach nearly \$10.4 million by 2005-06.

EPISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The districts chosen were South San Antonio, Mission Consolidated, San Benito Consolidated, Harlandale, Weslaco and San Felipe ISDs. TSPR also compared EPISD with districts in TEA's Region 20 Education Service Center, to which EPISD belongs, and the state as a whole.

Eagle Pass ISD in Profile

Eagle Pass ISD is located in Maverick County on the Rio Grande River near its juncture with the Rio Escondido. The twin cities of Eagle Pass, Texas and Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico are approximately 140 miles southwest of San Antonio and about 260 miles north of Monterrey. EPISD has two high school campuses (grades 9 -10 and grades 11-12), two junior high schools, 13 elementary schools and seven special campuses. Enrollment for 2001-02 was 12,778, making the district the state's 73rd largest district.

In 2001-02, EPISD's students were 97.1 percent Hispanic, 1.3 percent White, 0.1 percent African American and 1.5 percent Asian/ Pacific Islander or Native American. Ninety-one percent of EPISD's students were classified as economically disadvantaged.

In 2002, two of EPISD's campuses received an *Exemplary* rating from TEA, including Henry B. Gonzales and Austin Elementary Schools; 12 schools received a *Recognized* rating including the Eagle Pass High School, the C.C. Winn Campus, the Eagle Pass Junior High, the Rosita Valley Literacy Academy as well as eight elementary campuses. All other schools were *Academically Acceptable* and the district overall received a *Recognized* rating.

In 2001-02, 89.1 percent of all EPISD students passed the reading portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS); 91.4 percent passed the math portion of the test, 88.5 percent passed the writing portion of the test and 82.6 percent of students passed all tests taken.

In 2001-02, the district employed a staff of 1,889 employees, with 731 teachers, or 38.7 percent of EPISD's staff. The district spent \$96.7 million, including \$12.4 million for 2000 Bond issuance, in 2001-02. That same year, 12.4 percent of EPISD's budgeted revenues were generated through local taxes; 4.5 percent came from other local and intermediate sources; 67.5 percent came from the state, and 15.6 percent came from the federal government.

In 2001-02, EPISD budgeted 52.8 cents of every tax dollar on classroom instruction, compared with the state average of 51 cents.

In 2002, stability was restored to the district. Much of the controversy that existed at the time of the review has been cleared up and the superintendent and her staff have reorganized to provide support for academics and tighter control over financial management.

EPISD's staff and the TSPR team members have a sense of steady progress. Thirty-seven of the Comptroller's recommendations have been implemented; 20 are in various stages of progress; and seven have been

reviewed but not implemented. (See **Appendix A** for details on the recommendations' status.)

Eagle Pass ISD Report Card

Chapter	Total	Complete	In Progress	Not Implemented	Rejected	Percent Complete/ In Progress	Grades
District Organization and Management	2	2	0	0	0	100%/0%	Excellent
Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures	5	2	3	0	0	40%/60%	Satisfactory
Community Involvement	3	1	2	0	0	33%/67%	Satisfactory
Personnel Management	4	3	0	1	0	75%/0%	Needs Work
Facilities Use and Management	7	3	3	1	0	43%/43%	Satisfactory
Financial Management	9	5	3	1	0	56%/33%	Satisfactory
Purchasing	6	3	2	1	0	50%/33%	Satisfactory
Computers and Technology	8	3	4	1	0	38%/50%	Satisfactory
Transportation	8	5	2	1	0	63%/25%	Satisfactory
Food Services	10	9	0	1	0	90%/0%	Excellent
Safety and Security	2	1	1	0	0	50%/50%	Satisfactory
Overall Grade	64	37	20	7	0	58%/31%	Satisfactory

Excellent = More than 80% complete
Satisfactory = 80% to 100% complete or in progress
Needs Work = Less than 80% complete or in progress

Exemplary Programs and Practices

EPISD is a school district with some notable successes, and TSPR has identified numerous "best practices" in the district. Through commendations in each chapter, the original report highlighted model programs, operations and services provided by EPISD administrators, teachers and staff members. 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 are listed below, followed by updated information on each topic.

- ***Using staffing allocations to distribute staff resources equitably.*** In 2000-01, EPISD developed and began applying staffing formulas for campus personnel at each school. This change helps the district better distribute educational resources and helps campus and other personnel better understand the district's desired staffing levels.

Since the review, EPISD continues to use staffing allocation formulas for campus personnel, and has expanded the staffing allocation formulas to include maintenance and custodial staffing as recommended by the Comptroller's review. Administrators said that the staffing formulas in place for custodians allowed the district to avoid hiring four additional staff when they opened new facilities in September 2002.

- ***EPISD aggressively seeks federal and state grants to support needed district programs.*** From 1998-99 to 2000-01, EPISD increased federal grants from \$6.8 million annually to almost \$8.2 million, and increased state grants from \$634,000 annually to \$1.6 million.

Seeking and obtaining grants for various programs, especially those related to technology, is a priority for EPISD, and is regularly used to supplement state and local funding for programs that the district might not otherwise be able to afford. During the follow-up visit, EPISD administrators said they were exploring options for assisting technology staff seeking new grant opportunities.

- ***Energy conservation program brings solar power to EPISD.*** In May 2001, EPISD's C.C. Winn Campus was selected as one of 11

schools in Texas to participate in the Solar for Texas Schools Project. This project, part of the state's Renewable Energy Demonstration Program, will fund the installation of a solar energy system in the school as a demonstration program. The state sent out requests for information to all 1,034 school districts, and 11 were selected.

As part of an overall energy management program, and in response to one of TSPR's recommendations, about 10,000 old light fixtures were replaced in September 2002 with newer and more efficient lighting systems. Also, the Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning systems were retrofitted at Eagle Pass High School, Memorial Middle School, Old Eagle Pass Junior High School and at Ray H. Darr, Seco Mines, Graves, and Glass Elementary Schools. In all, EPISD is saving more than \$170,000 annually on utilities and is helping conserve resources in the process.

- ***EPISD developed an extensive range of programs to meet the diverse needs of students.*** EPISD developed many innovative programs to assist students both academically and emotionally. From programs for assisting migrant students to programs helping pregnant students and programs for Native Americans, EPISD uses a wide array of programs to give students the tools they need to succeed.

Most recently, the district began an extensive curriculum alignment project to ensure that the needs of all of the students in the district are met and that students move effectively between grade levels and between schools. Integrating these special programs into the curriculum and ensuring that each of these programs builds upon the other is a critical step toward student success.

- ***EPISD uses a series of strategies for recruiting and developing teachers.*** EPISD has had problems recruiting teachers and has had to devise innovative strategies to do so. To attract enough new teachers, the district must target graduates from non-education programs and help them become certified as teachers. The district also works more closely with the Education Service Center, Region 20, through a cooperative that helps school districts identify potential applicants.

Since the review, EPISD has undertaken an extensive staff development planning process to ensure that teachers have all of the tools needed to meet the diverse needs of the students in the district. Every campus improvement plan and the district

improvement plan have a staff development component linked directly to the academic goals for the district.

- ***EPISD saves money by performing in-house automotive bodywork, glass replacement and upholstery.*** The district discovered it had employees who could perform certain maintenance for district vehicles. Now, the district determines if it would be cheaper to do some automotive work in-house, rather than automatically contracting for repairs.

According to administrators, the district has begun systematically painting the tops of buses with a white reflective paint and replacing windows to reduce the heat inside older buses. All this work is being done in-house with minimal costs to the district.

TSPR Key Recommendations

Following are some of the key recommendations that administrators and staff said had the greatest impact on district operations. The recommendations are organized by chapter and by area of operation in the original report. The comments came from district administrators during the TSPR team's follow-up visit to the district.

District Organization and Management

Recommendation 1 - Reorganize responsibilities among EPISD senior managers to enhance student performance and program evaluation.

According to the superintendent, the reorganization was extremely beneficial for the district and affected nearly all aspects of the district's organization. During the process, the board and superintendent, with input from various key administrators, prioritized the district's goals and objectives for the coming years, and have attempted to build an organization that supports those goals.

Recommendation 2 - Modify the district planning process to assign specific responsibilities by position, either districtwide or by campus, and tie the allocation of resources to the district and campus improvement plans.

At the time of the review, the district did not have a district improvement plan. In October 2002, after considerable work by the board and all levels of district staff, Region 20 and TEA are asking the district to share their plan with other districts because it is well written and contains a sound presentation of how the district is going to use its Compensatory

Education funds in 2002-03; an area that is going to be audited for the first time in 2002.

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

Recommendation 5 - Develop a formal program evaluation process.

An evaluation process for individual programs adds accountability and allows a district to establish criteria for evaluating new programs or for determining if old programs should be continued. According to the EPISD superintendent, the need for this type of evaluation became very apparent as they began to prepare a plan and evaluate the district's Gifted and Talented program. Principals from all campuses worked together to evaluate the program. Through classroom observations and feedback forms, the principals devised a way to monitor the programs and determine if they were effective.

Recommendation 7 - Develop a comprehensive staff development policy including procedures that address key issues and support EPISD goals.

The superintendent said that many staff members and teachers were requesting training that didn't necessarily contribute to the instructional goals of the district. Now that staff development plans are in place in every campus improvement plan, staff development is targeted toward meeting those goals. This has cut down on travel and ensures that staff is meeting educational goals. Training is more effective when everyone understands why he or she is there and what he or she hopes to accomplish with the information obtained during training.

Community Involvement

Recommendation 8 - Redirect the *Eagle Times* from an employee newsletter to a district newsletter, and place it as an insert in the local paper six times a year.

The superintendent said she feels there is a lot of potential for involving the community and area business in the district, and a district newsletter could help improve community involvement. The district needs to share the good things in the district with the community to help the community more fully understand the challenges the district faces.

Personnel Management

Recommendation 12 - Adopt a districtwide incentive plan to reduce the use of substitute teachers.

Teacher absences have a profound affect on student learning, simply because a substitute is limited by a lack of familiarity with classroom routines and the children in any particular class. The district allows teachers with a perfect attendance to earn an additional \$1,000 a year. The program improved teacher attendance and save the district \$156,000 in substitute teacher costs.

Facilities Use and Management

Recommendation 21 - Develop an energy management plan for all EPISD's current and planned facilities and acquire a system to track/monitor associated energy costs.

The administration made this a priority because it had the potential to save more than \$150,000 a year in utility costs. The district was able to implement this recommendation primarily through a series of lighting and air conditioning retrofits, where old inefficient equipment is replaced with new energy-saving equipment.

Financial Management

Recommendation 24 - Transfer EPISD's tax levy and collection operations to the Maverick County Tax Office.

The district didn't do exactly what TSPR suggested, but they did comply with the spirit of the recommendation by completely revamping the tax office and developing improved procedures for the office and for the delinquent tax attorney. The district is bringing in \$343,000 more each year in local revenues as a result of improved and more aggressive tax collection efforts, but the best part is the fact that the state's funding will be enhanced as well, as a result of this improvement since state funding is tied to the collection rates of the school districts.

Purchasing

Recommendation 32 - Enhance "sole-source" purchasing procedures to include documentation requirements and a definition that matches TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*.

This issue was at the heart of some major controversies in the district at the time of the review. Clarifying the policy and ensuring that all staff and vendors are aware of the procedures has ensured that the district seeks

competitive bids purchases whenever possible. In all, the district believes this practice will reduce costs as well as controversies in the future.

Computers and Technology

Recommendation 39 - Develop and implement technology measurements that match the goals and objectives of the district's technology plan.

Developing measurable goals and objectives for the technology plan has helped the district focus on its technology needs. When, for example, the district was challenged to meet the needs of a particular group of students, such as the bilingual students or special education students, school officials explored the possibility of distance learning. When the district has successfully implemented a distance-learning program, success can be measured by the number and quality of courses offered, and by feedback from the teachers and students participating in the program. If adjustments need to be made to improve the program, the district can make those modifications based upon the facts, rather than on perceptions.

Transportation

Recommendation 45 - Purchase automated bus routing software.

Recommendation 50 - Perform behind-the-wheel evaluations of all bus drivers at least once a year.

The district didn't buy automated bus routing software, but instead, the former director of Transportation did an internal review of the routes, which included behind-the-wheel evaluations of not only the drivers but also the routes. From this preliminary analysis, the district discontinued the practice of picking children up at their front doors and began picking them up at designated corners. Hazardous routes, which are eligible for state funding, were designated to improve state funding and the director made the routes more efficient. As a result, children are getting to and from school quickly and safely.

Food Service

Recommendation 58 - Expand menus and recipes to include more food choices, brand name foods and meals that taste good.

Recommendation 59 - Increase breakfast participation by creating new programs and offering alternative serving methods.

During the review, TSPR heard a number of complaints about the food served in the district. Not many students were purchasing school food, compared with other districts. To address some of the complaints, a student committee samples the food, conducts surveys of the student body and has made recommendations for changes that the food service department implemented. Region 20 also reviews all menus in advance and provides feedback to the district to ensure that meals are nutritious. Breakfast is brought to most students in classrooms, and at the schools where this is not done, campus administrators and teachers encourage students to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. Not only are participation rates improving and students getting more nutritious meals, but the district's food service department has also improved its finances.

Safety and Security

Recommendation 63 - Update the *Student Code of Conduct* to standardize discipline policies and the consequences for violations.

Updating the student code of conduct helped the district clarify the roles and responsibilities of the district police compared with those of the campus administration. Until this was done, some campus administrators were more lenient than others. Each campus now enforces student conduct more consistently, and students, parents, teachers, campus and district administrators and the district police know what they are expected to do and what the ramifications are for rules infractions.

What Still Needs to be Done?

EPISD has made steady progress implementing TSPR recommendations. The district has implemented 37 recommendations; 20 are in various stages of progress; and seven have been reviewed but have not been addressed. This section addresses the key areas requiring additional attention.

Facility Use and Management

While the district has made some strides by updating its facility master plan, and by closing the de Luna campus, there is still work to be done. The district elected not to close Lee, Austin or Kirschner, (Recommendation 16) stating that they expect enrollment growth to make these campuses viable in the future. Recommendation 17 suggested that the district use Austin Elementary School as a new central administrative office building, primarily because Austin Elementary had so few students and the administrative facilities are antiquated and in general disrepair. While enrollment is increasing, there is no evidence that enrollments are

increasing where these schools are located, yet the board has not adjusted attendance zone boundaries so that all of the schools in the district are used efficiently. Because the state's funding formulas are based upon attendance, the district must examine five-year enrollment trends and then explore ways to contain costs so that costs match funding for the number of students in attendance in those schools. Some ideas for containing costs include consolidating low enrollment classes, operating schools with some shared administrative staff and closing off sections of the building to save on utility and custodial expenses. TSPR encourages the district to rethink this decision and consider options that might preserve the neighborhood school concept to the extent possible, while still saving money.

Settle the Tax Issue With the County

EPISD has a seriously delinquent tax account with Maverick County for more than \$300,000 in tax, penalties and interest (Recommendation #25). While the board met and considered hiring an independent attorney to pursue this account in early 2002, the account remains outstanding. This delinquency was the major reason an agreement could not be reached between the county and the district for joint tax collection efforts. This dispute needs to be resolved, not only because the district is owed money, but also because the dispute is hindering further cooperation between the two entities.

Point-Of-Sale System for Food Services

EPISD Food Service employees continue to track meals and prepare reports manually or with limited computerized assistance. Under the Federal Free and Reduced Price Meal Programs, all students in EPISD are eligible for free meals. To get sufficient federal reimbursements, the accurate tracking and reporting of meals served becomes even more critical, since this is the department's primary source of revenues. Anything not obtained through federal reimbursements must be made up through general operating budgets. When this complex process is done manually, the likelihood of error is greatly increased. Once students and staff become accustomed to a point-of-sale system (Recommendation #54), TSPR believes that reporting will be more accurate and management oversight and monitoring will be greatly improved.

EPI SD's Ideas for Improving the Texas School Performance Review

The TSPR team does not assume that its process for performing school reviews works so well that it cannot be improved. Therefore, as part of the progress report preparation process, TSPR asked Eagle Pass ISD staff

members and administrators to discuss what went right and what went wrong-and how the process could be improved.

The feedback TSPR has received from other districts led to improvements in the review process. For example, early reports did not include implementation strategies, and districts told TSPR they needed help getting started. As a result, the reports now include IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES to complement the recommendations. Districts have told TSPR these blueprints are invaluable to implementing the recommendations. It is important for TSPR to continually be mindful of things that did not work as intended so the review process can be improved.

Eagle Pass administrators and board members made the following observations:

One relatively new board member stated that he felt he greatest benefit to the report was that people were made aware of the problems facing the district. The superintendent, key administrators and one board member who visited with the Comptroller's staff in Austin stated that the report has helped the district focus on issues. Because of the report, they said they were able to tackle some difficult projects, which may not have been possible without the supporting documentation provided in the report.

One of the more troubling issues, however, for the district's staff was that some recommendations did not take into account the location of the district and the resources available to EPISD. For example, Recommendation #26 for contracting for payroll processing was not practical since there were no vendors in the area able to perform these duties. Some administrators were also frustrated because many of the interviews and data gathering were confined to only a few people within the district-they simply did not talk to all of the parties involved with an issue. Consequently some of the information reported reflected only one side of an issue. They felt that consultants should have interviewed a broader base of employees and that more documentation should have been obtained to ensure all sides of an issue was explored.

TSPR takes this comment seriously, and will examine its procedures to ensure that all recommendations are thoroughly researched to determine if they can be implemented or if they are objective. One thing TSPR has already implemented since this review is the use of tracking sheets during the findings meeting, where the district officials read and comment on the near-final draft findings and background data. Instead of simply taking verbal comments, TSPR asks every individual to write their concerns on a tracking sheet. A copy is retained by TSPR and one is left for the district's

records. Before the final report is issued, TSPR must address every concern on the tracking sheet.

Appendix A

Status of Recommendations and Savings

Rec. #	Recommendations	Status	TSPR Projected Five - Year Savings (Costs)	CCISD Savings (Costs) to Date	CCISD Projected Five - Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
Chapter 1 District Organization and Management						
1	Reorganize responsibilities among EPISD senior managers to enhance student performance and program evaluation. p. 22	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent has made a number of organizational changes including changing the assistant superintendent position to an executive director of Curriculum and Instruction. The position of executive director for Human Resources was also changed to a director's position. The costs and savings associated with these changes are recognized under the corresponding recommendations in the areas where they are discussed in greater detail.
2	Modify the district planning process to assign specific responsibilities by position, either district wide or by campus, and tie the allocation of	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district began working on a new planning format in February 2001. During the 2001-02 school year the district

	resources to the District and Campus Improvement Plans. p. 28					used the new format for the 2002-03 District Improvement Plans (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs). The district noted that Regional Education Service Center XX (Region 20) has asked the district for copies of the DIP and CIPs to serve as models for use in other districts. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also was interested in sharing its format for compensatory education programs with others, particularly since the external auditors will be auditing the plans for compliance beginning this year.
	Total, Chapter 1		\$0	\$0	\$0	
Chapter 2 - Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures						
3	Reorganize the Curriculum and Instruction Department for effectiveness and efficiency. p. 56	In Progress	\$403,434	\$114,264	\$571,320	As mentioned in Recommendation #1, the board eliminated the assistant superintendent position and replaced it with an executive level position that is now responsible for curriculum and

						instruction. The new executive director has only been in the position for a short while; consequently, the administration is still discussing some additional changes for the future. One change that has occurred within the organization is that EPISD now has only one curriculum director that handles both elementary and secondary programs.
4	Conduct a curriculum audit to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control. p. 61	Complete	(\$68,000)	\$0	\$0	Staff began an evaluation of the curriculum in November 2000, including a vertical alignment of the curriculum.
5	Develop a formal program evaluation process. p. 63	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	EPISD is in the process of developing a complete evaluation program. The following have already been evaluated: Gifted and Talented (August 2002), Bilingual (October 2002). Surveys were sent to Bilingual teachers in May 2002; a timeline for the evaluation of the EPISD Bilingual programs is now being mapped out In

						attempting to identify someone with the skills to oversee the evaluation process, the district found that the current special populations evaluator has a masters degree in evaluation that could qualify her to work in this capacity. The district is now considering funding a portion of her salary through general revenues so that all program evaluations can be done in one location.
6	Eliminate administrative responsibilities of the counselors to allow them more time to devote to counseling. p. 64	Complete	\$0	(\$5,000)	(\$25,000)	The executive director for Support Services performed this function in 2001. Administrative direction was given to all principals: No administrative duties will be issued to counselors. This stipulation has also been added to the district's Guidance & Counseling Plan. A lead counselor was hired on a part-time basis to address the needs of district counselors and to coordinate services. A current guidance counselor is

						being paid a stipend to perform these duties.
7	Develop a comprehensive staff development policy including procedures that address key issues and support EPISD goals. p. 69	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	EPISD is in the process of developing local policy and the District Education Improvement Committee will be responsible for approving the districtwide plan. The DIPs and CIPs now contain staff development plans which the Board of Trustees approved these plans and the administration will build policies and procedures around those plans.
Total, Chapter 2			\$335,434	\$109,264	\$546,320	
Chapter 3 - Community Involvement						
8	Redirect the <i>Eagle Times</i> from an employee newsletter to a district newsletter, and place it as an insert in the local paper six times a year. p. 111	In Progress	(\$5,190)	\$0	\$0	The district did not feel that redirecting the employee newsletter was financially feasible, since costs would increase from \$500 to \$3,600 annually. The district is' however, attempting to address the spirit of the recommendation in a less costly manner The

						administration is beginning to use the television channel to post information for the community and is also getting help from a local radio station. Staff continues to examine this issue and the administration is holding some group discussions to address the need for more information sharing with the community.
9	Expand the district's use of the Internet to provide useful information to schools, teachers, parents and the community. p. 112	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is attempting to expand its technical capabilities in order to address this recommendation by hiring additional persons to assist in the training of employees. One position has been filled and another one is being recommended at the November School Board Meeting.
10	Standardize elementary parent/student handbooks, secondary student handbooks and teacher handbooks. p. 114	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	During 2001-02, the Support Services Department standardized handbooks throughout the district and distributed them at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year.

	Total, Chapter 3		(\$5,190)	\$0	\$0	
Chapter 4 - Personnel Management						
11	Create a coordinator of Human Resources position to head the Human Resources Department. p. 129	Complete	(\$233,890)	\$29,947	\$29,947	EPISD eliminated the executive director's position for Human Resources and changed it to a director's position. The old position was vacated in April 2002 and the new one was filled on August 2002 at one pay grade lower., The new salary structure makes this recommendation a one-time savings because the pay scales have been evened out.
12	Adopt a districtwide incentive plan to reduce the use of substitute teachers. p. 131	Complete	\$839,520	\$156,000	\$780,000	Prior to the review, the superintendent had approved a Perfect Attendance incentive that has resulted in savings for the district. Under this plan, teachers can qualify for \$1,000 per year if they have perfect attendance. In the first year, savings from substitutes were \$156,000.
13	Implement a controlled retirement incentive plan. p. 140	Not Implemented	\$4,315,504	\$0	\$0	The district has not had an opportunity to fully evaluate this

						recommendation to determine whether it can or should be implemented.
14	Redesign the paraprofessional applicant testing process to test for specified skills such as spelling, math and grammar. p. 143	Complete	(\$66,500)	\$0	\$0	District administrators have redesigned the applicant examination in-house to test reading, grammar and math. However, due to Title I regulations, the exam will need to be reviewed and revised again to comply with the most recent federal regulations. Because staff did the work, there were no additional costs for implementing this recommendation.
Total, Chapter 4			\$4,854,634	\$185,947	\$809,947	
Chapter 5 - Facilities Use and Management						
15	Establish a facilities committee to re-evaluate the facilities master plan. p. 154	Complete	\$0	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)	The district developed a new five-year master plan at a cost of \$15,000. The plan covers the period 2001-02 through 2004-05.
16	Close three EPISD elementary schools: Lee, Austin, and Kirchner. p. 156	In Progress	\$2,210,660	\$166,000	\$830,000	The new Master Plan developed last year did not recommend the closing of any elementary schools because it appears that future student population

						growth will require all available classrooms, particularly at Lee Elementary. Instead, the district closed the De Luna campus that housed the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program and some Special Education staff. The district is saving the cost of staff and maintenance for that facility, and realizing additional revenues by renting the facility to a private school for \$6,000 each year.
17	Close the current District Service Center and convert Austin Elementary School to a new central administrative office building. p. 158	Not Implemented	(\$400,000)	\$0	\$0	The new Master Plan proposes the continued use of Austin Elementary; consequently, moving the administration to that facility is not an option at this time.
18	Increase the number of EPISD Facilities and Maintenance Department crafts positions. p. 162	In Progress	(\$588,236)	\$0	\$0	The board rejected this proposed staffing addition for the 2002-03 budget. To address the need, the department has shifted some grounds personnel into mechanic positions and feels that current staffing is now

						adequate. This situation will be reevaluated next year during the budget cycle to determine if staffing is adequate to meet increasing needs.
19	Reassign the grounds crew to the coordinator of Facilities and Maintenance. p. 164	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The executive director of District Operations and the Facilities and Maintenance coordinator made the recommended changes in 2001-02.
20	Redesign custodial areas of responsibility using industry standards, reallocate more custodial work schedules to hours when school is not in session, and reduce the number of custodians. p. 171	Complete	\$ 1,381,712	\$0	\$0	With additional facilities opening in September 2002, the number of custodians assigned to each campus will fall in line with industry standards. While the district achieved no savings with the redistribution of personnel, EPISD did not have to hire four additional custodial personnel to staff the new facilities, consequently avoiding an additional cost of approximately \$120,000 annually.
21	Develop an energy management plan for all EPISD's current and planned facilities and acquire a	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$684,000	In September 2002, approximately 10,000 old light fixtures were replaced with

	system to track/monitor associated energy costs. p. 176					newer and more efficient lighting systems. Also, the Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems were retrofitted at Eagle Pass High School, Memorial Middle School, Old Eagle Pass Junior High School and at Ray H. Darr, Seco Mines, Graves, and Glass Elementary Schools. Also, the old San Luis Elementary campus was demolished and a new energy efficient campus was built at the same location. With all the changes the district has made EPISD feels that it will be able to save about \$171,000 annually in lighting and climate control costs.
	Total, Chapter 5		\$2,604,136	\$151,000	\$1,499,000	
Chapter - 6 Financial Management						
22	Eliminate the position of Assistant Director for Financial Services and reassign employee benefits management and risk management functions to other departments and	Complete	\$304,590	\$52,000	\$260,000	EPISD eliminated the assistant director of Finance position and reassigned duties to existing personnel in the Financial Services Department.

	perform these functions with existing personnel. p. 187					
23	Establish a committee of staff and administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action. p. 195	Complete	\$0	(\$59,800)	(\$119,600)	The district's course of action for health insurance was determined by the Teacher Retirement System guidelines, board policy, the Budget Committee and through the budget process. Because of increased paperwork the district added a temporary position that continues for at least the next two years.
24	Transfer EPISD tax levy and collection operations to the Maverick County Tax Office. p. 199	In Progress	\$698,170	\$343,676	\$1,718,380	The district made an effort to consolidate tax collections with the county. The board considered and rejected the recommendation at the February 12, 2002 regular meeting due to the substantial dollar amount owed by the county to the school district. The board, however, established a tax collection committee and the administration replaced all of the personnel in the tax department

						including the tax assessor, developed new procedures and now keeps the tax attorney fully aware of all procedures. As a result current tax collection rates jumped from 85.2 percent to 88.5 percent in just one year and total collections, both current and delinquent, are up to 97.7 percent. This means not only additional tax revenues for the district, but because state aid is tied to the collection rate in the district, state aid is increased as the collection rate increases.
25	Hire an independent tax attorney to settle the Maverick County delinquent tax account. p. 201	In Progress	\$183,000	\$0	\$0	The board considered this at the February 12, 2002 regular meeting and the district's attorney is looking into the matter.
26	Contract for payroll processing. p. 202	Not Implemented	\$192,731	\$0	\$0	The district researched this recommendation but found that outsourcing the payroll function and eliminating related positions was not possible due to lack of outside vendors who were capable of handling the EPISD payroll.

27	Complete network installation of Kronos time clocks. p. 205	In Progress	(\$4,480)	\$0	\$0	The district is currently working on completing the Kronos installation. Certain paraprofessional employees and some of the manual trade employees are currently on the system and plans are underway for full implementation by 2003-04.
28	Develop an implementation strategy for GASB Statement No. 34 to meet annual external financial reporting guidelines and TEA regulatory reporting requirements. p. 213	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Region 20 is providing training for district staff and EPISD is working with their independent auditing firm to fully implement GASB 34, which significantly changed the way Texas school districts and other state and local governments report their finances to the public. Administrators presented an action plan to the board at the June 11, 2002 regular meeting.
29	Contract with an external audit firm to perform internal audits. p. 215	Complete	(\$37,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$32,500)	The Board of Trustees approved an external auditing firm to perform an internal audit of the Tax Office operations at a one-time cost of \$6,500 Annually

						the district plans to conduct internal audits of high-risk areas such as payroll, tax office, maintenance department, food service and activity funds.
30	Include provision for overnight investments on Requests for Proposals for depository banking agreement. p. 218	Complete	\$107,300	\$0	\$0	Because the interest rates have declined the district has not achieved the anticipated savings, but overnight investing is part of the new contract and is currently effective.
Total, Chapter 6			\$1,443,811	\$329,376	\$1,826,280	
Chapter 7 - Purchasing						
31	Establish procedures to ensure compliance with all state and local purchasing laws and policies. p. 231	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	EPISD constructed a purchasing procedures manual that was developed and distributed in 2001-02. They also put the purchasing manual online on the district's internal Web site.
32	Enhance "sole-source" purchasing procedures to include documentation requirements and a definition that matches TEA's <i>Financial Accountability System Resource Guide</i> . p. 233	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A procedure was developed and has been reviewed by the school attorneys. Administrators held training with all staff and forms are now available for vendors and staff to sign to prove

						that purchases meet the sole source requirements outlined in state guidelines.
33	Implement the online purchase order system that is currently part of the Region 20 financial software package. p. 234	In Progress	(\$23,430)	\$0	\$0	EPISD is currently working with Region 20 to implement an on-line purchase order system. According to Region 20 the district's contract already provides this option, so there will be no additional cost.
34	Submit all bid extensions to the board for approval. p. 235	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The board has not established a policy to approve all bid extensions, but currently the administration is submitting all bid extensions to the board for approval as part of internal procedures.
35	Place all departments currently housed in the Warehouse under the supervision of the executive director for District Operations. p. 236	Not Implemented	\$0	\$0	\$0	Because of staffing changes made as a part of the total reorganization of the district, all departments housed in the warehouse continue to be supervised by the Financial Services Department.
36	Increase printing charges to the schools to better reflect the actual cost of providing	In Progress	\$0	(\$5,000)	(\$7,000)	The district is constructing a preliminary price sheet and is planning to

	the printing services. p. 237					purchase a software system to aid in the tracking and monitoring of district print shops. The system will cost \$5,000 and annual support will be \$500. Full implementation is expected in 2003-2004.
	Total, Chapter 7		(\$23,430)	(\$5,000)	(\$7,000)	
Chapter 8 - Computers and Technology						
37	Formalize the Technology Committee to assure continuity in monitoring and supporting the implementation of the Technology Plan. p. 237	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Technology Committee has been meeting on a monthly basis since February 2001-02.
38	Use available outside resources that provide free funds acquisition services. p. 246	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is currently joining three other school districts and Texas A&M International University to submit an application for TEA's TARGET Grant. The grant will cover 100 percent of total project cost, thereby taking advantage of outside resources for free funds. The district will continue seeking other opportunities such as this in the future.

39	Develop and implement technology measurements that match the goals and objectives of the Technology Plan. p. 249	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Starting with the existing technology plan that ends in 2002-03, the district is assessing its goals and is attempting to replace them with measurable goals and objectives in the new plan.
40	Stop paying for Region 20 technology training, and instead hire a trainer to provide mobile technology training for all campuses. p. 251	Not Implemented	\$0	\$0	\$0	The total cost documented of \$30,000 for 26 days of training was found to be incorrect. The cost per day is \$325 (\$8,450), therefore the district determined that it is cost-effective to continue using Region 20 for technology training
41	Use the State Board for Educator Certification draft technology standards as a guideline for establishing EPISD's technology knowledge requirements for teachers. p. 252	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district began a review this school year 2002-03 and staff intends to work with Region 20 to complete a plan during this year.
42	Consolidate network documentation in one location and provide backup in an off-site location. p. 254	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	All Network documentation is now available in the Technology Department in hardcopy and in a digital format. Furthermore, the vendor has an off-site copy of the

						documentation.
43	Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan including all district activities, and test it. p. 256	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Region 20 has 5 years of data stored on file; however, the district is still working on a comprehensive disaster recovery plan.
44	Hire a computer technician. p. 258	Complete	(\$118,125)	(\$25,000)	(\$125,000)	A computer technician was hired in 2001-02.
Total, Chapter 8			(\$118,125)	(\$25,000)	(\$125,000)	
Chapter 9 - Transportation						
45	Purchase automated bus routing software. p. 269	Complete	\$238,616	\$72,769	\$363,835	Although the district did not purchase an automated system, this recommendation prompted the district to quit picking up students door-to-door. Furthermore, the transportation director analyzed transportation routes and designated hazardous routes in an effort to reduce transportation costs. The result was increased productivity and considerable savings for the district. This function is now self-supporting for the first time in its history, according to district staff.
46	Establish a community	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Transportation

	transportation committee to identify opportunities to reduce or eliminate hazards affecting student transportation. p. 271					Hazardous Route Committee has been created and includes a school principal, parent, DPS/Police representative, and the Transportation Director. The committee has begun to meet on a monthly basis since 2001-02.
47	Adopt the Transportation Department's functional organization chart and adjust salaries to fit district salary schedules. p. 273	Complete	(\$87,338)	\$0	\$0	Overall, the district was able to upgrade some positions and shift personnel within the organization to add supervisory staff at no additional cost.
48	Develop a pay scale for bus driver salaries based on driver experience and use it to correct discrepancies in driver salaries. p. 276	Complete	(\$129,150)	\$0	(\$284,000)	The pay structure for bus drivers was upgraded to reflect market value for 2002-03.
49	Develop and implement an incentive program to reduce bus driver absenteeism by 25 percent. p. 278	Not Implemented	\$25,775	\$0	\$0	Based on the success with the teacher attendance incentive plan, district administrators said they will revisit this recommendation in the coming year.
50	Perform behind-the-wheel evaluations of all bus drivers at least once a year. p. 279	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district began performing behind the wheel evaluations in 2001-02.
51	Purchase and implement an	In Progress	(\$4,700)	\$0	\$0	The former transportation

	automated fleet maintenance system. p. 280					director researched costs for implementing this recommendation. Since this person left the district, the new director will revisit this recommendation and continue implementation. While this recommendation has not yet been fully implemented, district officials said that as part of its preventive maintenance schedule, the district plans to update its fuel dispensing system and expects full implementation of this recommendation within the next two years.
52	Purchase white roofs and dark-tinted windows on all new buses and paint the roofs on EPISD buses less than 10 years old over a five-year period. p. 281	In Progress	(\$40,750)	\$0	(\$40,750)	EPISD has determined that all new buses purchased will include air conditioning systems, white roofs and dark tinted windows. Painting and re-windowing the existing buses will be done within the next five years.
Total, Chapter 9			(\$22,547)	\$72,769	\$39,085	
Chapter 10 - Food Services						
53	Develop job descriptions.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In 2001-02, the district

	performance standards and evaluation criteria for the Food Services Dept. p. 291					completed the development of job descriptions, performance standards and evaluation instruments.
54	Purchase a Point-of-Sale (POS) System to maintain financial accountability, increase participation and protect student anonymity. p. 293	Not Implemented	\$743,535	\$0	\$0	The district determined that a Point-Of-Sale (POS) System was not financially feasible at this time.
55	Arrange for the health inspector to inspect all EPISD cafeteria kitchens at least once a year as required by law. p. 294	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Texas Department of Health from Uvalde, Texas is now conducting annual inspections of all cafeterias and will continue to do this annually.
56	Provide nutrition education at all grade levels as a component of health ed. programs and coordinate nutrition education with the Food Services Dept. p. 296	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In 2002-03, the Curriculum and Instruction Department, in conjunction with the Health Services Department has implemented a school research based program called CATCH. This program is designed to promote behavior patterns that develop and maintain cardiovascular health in school-aged children. These behavior patterns are: (1) participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity. (2)

						<p>healthful eating habits that include an awareness of the benefits of a low fat and low sodium diet, and (3) non-smoking. The CATCH program includes physical education, heart health classroom curricula and family components for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, and "Eat Smart" a school nutrition program guide for school cafeterias. The Health Department, working closely with the Curriculum Department, is monitoring and assessing the implementation of the program's curricula.</p>
57	<p>Increase federal reimbursements by requiring all a la carte snack bars in the schools to provide lunch options that qualify for federal reimbursement. p. 298</p>	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>In 2001-02, the district began providing lunch options that qualify for Federal reimbursement.</p>
58	<p>Expand menus and recipes to include more food choices, brand name foods and meals that taste good. p. 299</p>	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>The Nutritional Advisory Committee now submits menus to Region 20 for approval. To address some of the complaints, a student committee now samples food and</p>

						performs surveys of the student body. The committee came up with suggestions and staff are now offering menu choices and different food options that are improving participation rates and nutrition.
59	Increase breakfast participation by creating new programs and offering alternative serving methods. p. 301	Complete	\$157,465	\$103,416	\$517,080	Beginning in 2001-02, EPISD is serving breakfast in the classrooms and non-participating campuses continue to encourage students to eat in the cafeterias.
60	Enforce the regulations to control competitive food sales, including vending machines, as required by Child Nutrition Programs and as outlined in the TEA Administrator's Reference Manual. p. 303	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	During 2001-02, EPISD removed vending items not recommended by TEA and advised the principals to turn off vending machines while Food Service is serving lunch and breakfast. Furthermore, the superintendent and key administrators are conducting spot inspections to ensure that principals are actually adhering to the guidelines. The administration is formulating a policy that will be presented to the board to

						address the sale and serving of foods of minimal nutritional value.
61	Develop a system to monitor turn around time for maintenance requests. p. 304	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Food Service and Maintenance coordinators have distributed maintenance work orders to the appropriate staff and the Food Service coordinator now screens the requests made by the different cafeterias.
62	Conduct a needs assessment of existing kitchens and prepare a plan to upgrade all kitchens to the Federal Food Code. p. 305	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Food Service Department is purchasing identified kitchen items as dollars become available. Much of the needed renovations were addressed as part of the bond construction projects.
Total, Chapter 10			\$901,000	\$103,416	\$517,080	
Chapter 11 - Safety and Security						
63	Update the Code of Student Conduct to standardize discipline policies and the consequences for violations. p. 318	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district updated the Student Code of Conduct and has formed a safety committee. The board reviewed and approved the new Student Code of Conduct during the July 2002 board meeting.
64	Use previously purchased electronic security equipment at	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	EPISD stopped the random use of metal detectors in April

	EPISD high school campuses. p. 323				<p>2002, following the advice of the Texas Education Agency's legal counsel. The district was advised that the litigation risk in Texas remains quite high since no Texas Court or Federal Court within the Fifth Circuit has abandoned the individualized suspicion component in student searches. At the recent TASA/TASB Conference, the senior attorney for the Texas Association of School Boards stated that random searches in Texas have not been judicially tested. However, in light of the recent violence in public schools and a recent Supreme Court decision that could be applied to Texas schools, the Superintendent recommended to the Board of Trustees the random use of metal detectors for the purpose of locating weapons., The school district's attorney, and a committee of secondary school administrators, is reviewing the</p>
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						district's policy and will assist in making revisions to avoid unnecessary problems or concerns that may arise as the policy is implemented.
	Total, Chapter 11		\$0	\$0	\$0	
	TOTAL SAVINGS		\$9,969,723	\$921,772	\$5,105,712	