

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

March 29, 1999

The Honorable George W. Bush
The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the Texas Legislature
Commissioner Michael A. Moses, Ed.D.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to present our performance review of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD).

This review, requested by EPISD's superintendent and endorsed by Senator Eliot Shapleigh, is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's operations by identifying problem areas and recommending innovative improvements. To aid in this task, the Comptroller's office contracted with Empirical Management Services, a Houston-based consulting firm.

We have made a number of recommendations to improve EPISD's efficiency, but we also found a number of "best practices" in district operations. This report highlights several model programs and services provided by EPISD's administrators, teachers, and staff.

Our primary goal is to help EPISD hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that every possible tax dollar is spent in the classroom teaching the district's children. This report outlines 142 detailed recommendations that could save EPISD \$27.9 million over the next five years, while reinvesting \$14.9 million to improve educational services and other operations.

We are grateful for the cooperation of EPISD's administrators and employees, and we commend them and the community for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities offered to the children of El Paso.

Sincerely,

Carole Keeton Rylander

Carole Keeton Rylander
Comptroller of Public Accounts

Executive Summary

In September 1998, the Comptroller's office conducted a performance review of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) at the request of the superintendent. After more than seven months of work, this report identifies exemplary programs in EPISD and suggests concrete ways to improve the district's operational efficiency. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 142 recommendations could save EPISD nearly \$28 million over the next five years.

Executive Summary - Discussion

Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation - Chart

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Comptroller Carole Keeton 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 the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) more valuable, even vital, to the state's more than 1,000 school districts. With the perspective of having served as a teacher, and later a school board president in her own career, the Comptroller has vowed to steer TSPR to being more accountable to local school districts and the communities they represent.

Comptroller Rylander began by establishing new criteria for selecting school districts for future reviews. Priority will be given to districts judged poor performing academically or financially, and to hands-on reviews that will benefit the greatest number of students. *These are the school districts and children that need help the most.*

In EPISD about 52 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction. Recognizing this fact, Comptroller Rylander emphasizes an approach that will give local school officials in El Paso and in other Texas communities the ability to move every possible dollar to the classroom. In addition, no longer will school districts' best practices and exemplary models be left buried inside individual TSPR reports. Instead, Comptroller Rylander has ordered best practices and exemplary programs to be shared 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 smartly solved a problem 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.

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

- ensure that students and teachers receive the support and resources needed to succeed;
- identify innovative options for addressing core management challenges facing the district;
- ensure that administrative activities are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a manner that spurs education;
- develop strategies for ensuring continual assessment and improvement of processes and programs;
- understand the link between functional areas of the district 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"; if a private firm can do a job better and at a lower cost than the school district, that firm should be awarded a contract to provide that service.

Finally, Comptroller Rylander has opened her door to Texans who share her optimism about the potential for the TSPR. Suggestions to improve school reviews are welcome at any time. The Comptroller believes that Texas has a responsibility to raise its education standards and strive for excellence in all public schools.

For more information, contact TSPR by calling toll-free at 1-800-531-5441 ext 3-4900, or see the Comptroller's website at www.window.state.tx.us.

TSPR in El Paso

TSPR began its review of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) in September 1998. As in previous reviews, TSPR came to El Paso in response to a local call for assistance. In August 1997, Dr. Stan Paz, then superintendent, requested a review, along with the superintendents of the Ysleta and Socorro ISDs and Senator Eliot Shapleigh of El Paso. At the request of the former superintendent, work on the performance review was delayed to allow EPISD time to implement the findings of a manpower efficiency study begun in 1997.

With the help of Empirical Management Services, a Houston-based consulting firm, the TSPR team held community meetings in each of the district's four regions. Participants were invited to write their observations on major topics of concern or be interviewed by a member of the review team. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted focus group sessions and interviewed district employees, school board members, students, parents, business leaders, and representatives from community

organizations. The team also collected comments from letters to the Comptroller and calls to the Comptroller's toll-free hotline.

Written surveys were sent to district personnel. TSPR received completed responses from 111 principals and assistant principals; 71 central and district administrators; and 294 teachers. Some 870 EPISD students completed a written, self-administered questionnaire. A telephone survey of 600 El Paso citizens provided additional public input. Details from the surveys and public forums appear in **Appendices A through H**.

TSPR 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). For the review, EPISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes based on similarities in size, location, student enrollment, and property values. The selected peers were the Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Socorro, and Ysleta Independent School Districts (ISDs). TSPR also made comparisons with averages among districts in the TEA's Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 19, to which EPISD belongs, and the state as a whole (**Exhibit 1**).

Exhibit 1
District Property Value per Pupil/ Percent of Students Passing the
TAAS
EPISD Versus Peer Districts and the State
1997-98

District Name	1997-98 Enrollment	1997-98 Property Value per Pupil	Rank by Property Value	Percent of Students Passing TAAS	Rank by Performance
Ysleta ISD	47,616	\$82,401	8	80.0%	1
Socorro ISD	22,051	\$82,404	7	74.0%	3
San Antonio ISD	61,112	\$96,936	6	56.5%	8
El Paso ISD	63,909	\$125,829	5	70.7%	4
Corpus Christ ISD	40,975	\$142,013	4	76.6 %	2
Fort Worth ISD	76,901	\$150,465	3	63.0%	6
Houston ISD	210,988	\$222,444	2	69.5%	5

Dallas ISD	157,622	\$264,440	1	59.9%	7
State of Texas		\$182,154		77.7%	

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller and Empirical Management Services wish to express appreciation to the EPISD Board of Trustees, Interim Superintendent Ken George, and the district employees, students, and community residents who helped during the review. Special thanks are due to Ms. Kari Hutchison, who acted as EPISD's liaison by arranging for office space, equipment, and meeting rooms and otherwise accommodating the review team's needs.

El Paso ISD

EPISD is the fourth largest school district in Texas, serving nearly 64,000 students. In recent years enrollment has held relatively stable. EPISD's property value per student is below the state average, and 68 percent of its students are economically disadvantaged. However, the percentage of students passing the state-mandated achievement tests, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), is only slightly less than that of students statewide.

In 1997 the board approved a district reorganization into four distinct regions, each responsible for providing services and supporting educational programs in the district's 85 campuses and centers. The district has a staff of more than 8,400 employees, and teachers make up about 4,300 (or 51 percent) of the EPISD total. The district's annual operating budget is about \$400 million. This revenue is generated from local, state, and federal sources.

In all, TSPR found EPISD to be a school district with some notable successes and some daunting challenges ahead. In recent years, board members have not focused on issues that potentially will improve EPISD as a whole. The district's reorganization into regions has improved EPISD internal operations, but its downtown Education Center seems inaccessible to many community members. Some parents believe that education resources are not fairly allocated among the region's schools. Parents also have expressed frustration with EPISD administration and complained of poor communication, redtape, and unresponsiveness.

During its seven-month review of the district, TSPR developed 142 recommendations to improve operations and save taxpayer dollars. The EPISD review identified potential savings of \$27.9 million that could be realized by fiscal 2003-04. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings less recommended investments) are projected to reach \$13 million by fiscal 2004.

The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered the minimum that can be realized if all of TSPR's recommendations are implemented.

A summary of the recommendations and associated costs or savings is listed in **Exhibit 2**. It should be understood that many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct financial impact but would nonetheless result in improvements in the overall operation of the district.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

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

- **Student Performance.** EPISD pursues a number of strategies to improve student performance as measured by TAAS scores. To bolster student performance, the district provides tutoring based on individual student needs; additional training for teachers and administrators; and parental and community involvement. In 1997-98, four EPISD schools were rated exemplary, 19 schools were rated recognized, and 53 schools were rated acceptable. Only one EPISD school was rated low-performing during any of the five years between 1993-94 and 1997-98.
- **Regional Day School for the Deaf.** EPISD operates a highly successful Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD). The RDSPD serves about 160 students from within EPISD and nine neighboring districts, including Ysleta, Anthony, Canutillo, San Elizario, Clint, Fabens, Socorro, Tornillo, and Fort Hancock ISDs. About 97 percent of the RDSPD students use total communication, simultaneously employing speech, sign language, finger spelling, and amplification. The school's students compare favorably with other students in the state on the Stanford Achievement Test, which sets norms for hearing-impaired students. RDSPD staff consistently earn teaching awards. The

school has sought and received grants to enhance the level of services to its children.

- **School-to-Career Program.** EPISD offers an exemplary School-to-Career Program, which affords students a wide range of career and technology education courses and an opportunity to make informed occupational choices. School-to-Career involves both classroom instruction and on-site training at a business or industry. The goal is to allow students to develop marketable skills and learn job shadowing and work-based training.
- **Community Involvement.** EPISD's efforts to involve parents, businesses, and community members to improve educational services are a model that can be usefully studied by every school district in the state. A bright example is Lee Elementary School's volunteer and parental involvement program, which garners an average of 2,500 volunteer hours each month. The district's Volunteers in Public Schools and Partnership in Education programs bring together key business and community leaders, local government, civic organizations, and parents to improve public education in El Paso. The EPISD Foundation for School Community Enrichment, founded in 1995 by a group of community leaders, provides fundraising and supplemental assistance for education. To date the foundation has awarded grants to more than 140 district teachers totaling \$170,000--funds that have been channel directly to district classrooms to enhance educational programs.
- **Energy Management.** Since 1989, the district has reduced utility bills by \$13.5 million through effective energy management. Although the district increased its total available space by 23 percent over the last decade, it has decreased energy consumption by 18 percent. All EPISD schools have computer-controlled energy management for heating and cooling. The district is active in conservation, recycling, ensuring best energy rates, and monitoring utility consumption.
- **Investment Returns.** The district uses a variety of investment instruments to achieve its investment goals of safety, liquidity, and maturity sufficient to meet anticipated cash needs requirements. EPISD invests in the TexPool and Lone Star investment pools, U. S. Treasury Notes, Flexible Repurchase Agreements, and U. S. Agency Obligations. In fiscal 1998 the district earned about \$9.9 million in investment income, an amount that exceeds the district's investment benchmarks.
- **Cooperative Education.** For the past ten years, EPISD's Internal Audit Unit has successfully partnered with the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) to assist students in career choices and give them practical work experience before they graduate. The district hires UTEP interns who assist with school campus activity fund

audits in the summer. Many of the students who worked in this cooperative program have gone on to professional careers in accounting, business, and finance in the El Paso area.

- **Property Tax Collection.** EPISD has achieved a high overall rate of property tax collection through an interlocal agreement with the City of El Paso. The city wires funds directly into the district's investment pools at least once weekly and daily during the peak collection period. Tax collections as a percentage of the total levy have averaged 97 percent over the last five years.
- **Warehouse Services.** EPISD's Gamble warehouse facility, built in 1997, allowed the district to consolidate its warehouse services and eliminate lease costs. The Gamble facility is climate-controlled, secure, and state-of-the-art. The district is implementing a barcode system to improve warehouse operations and save time in stocking and filling orders.
- **Food Service.** For the third consecutive school year, the district's Food Service Unit in 1997-98 achieved a positive fund balance of \$2.6 million. Food service has made good use of this fund balance by investing in up-to-date equipment and ovens for each of its cafeterias, which should continue to improve profitability in the future. Food Service also uses an innovative array of educational and promotional campaigns to increase breakfast participation among the district's elementary students.
- **Discipline Management.** Through its Raymond Telles Academy, EPISD operates an exemplary Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. In addition to a core curriculum, the Telles Academy offers guidance counseling services and mandatory conferences with students' parents to review academic progress and establish a specific graduation plan. The Telles Academy is noted for its unique, self-paced instruction program. In two other innovative alternative education programs, EPISD offers academic and social services to meet the needs of pregnant teens, students in the juvenile probation system, and students with psychological disorders.

Chapter by Chapter: Key Findings and Recommendations

District Organization and Management: EPISD's present superintendent has served on an interim basis since September 1998, when the former superintendent left the district after a period of public controversy with board members. The incoming superintendent and board members can ensure a smooth transition by participating in team-building training to build trust with the administration and the education leadership team.

EPISD has not undergone a strategic planning process since 1996-97 school year. Proper planning establishes a mission and identifies goals and

objectives; sets priorities; and identifies resources and benchmarks. A comprehensive strategic plan will reflect the shared vision of the board, superintendent, education leadership team, and community.

Educational Service Delivery: Student performance in EPISD is improving but remains below state and regional averages. Two district policies bear directly on success in the classroom. First, board policies on curriculum management identify a district's classroom goals and resources. By reviewing its curriculum management, the district can ensure that all resources are available to better serve students' needs. Second, by undertaking a comprehensive review of its curriculum guides, EPISD can ensure that teachers have work plans that are current, functional, and easy-to-use.

Community Involvement: Some parents and community members have criticized EPISD for being inaccessible and unresponsive to requests for information or assistance. By creating a district ombudsman, EPISD can improve dialogue with taxpayers, parents, and the business community-- and provide a single person to go to for information or to have an educational issue resolved. To promote community interest and involvement, the district could explore having monthly board meetings broadcast by the local cable television operator.

Personnel Management: By reorganizing the Human Relations unit and transferring employees to more appropriate departments, EPISD can improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs by more than \$500,000 over five years.

Facilities Use and Management: A major concern for the community is the cost to operate the downtown Education Center, a 16-story office building that the district received as a donation from El Paso Natural Gas Corporation and known locally as the "Blue Flame Building." By using this facility more efficiently and leasing out surplus space, EPISD could realize additional revenues and savings of an estimated \$2.4 million over the next five years.

Asset and Risk Management: EPISD has higher than average health care costs when compared to peer districts and the state. Together, EPISD and Ysleta ISD have 14,000 employees and formidable potential bargaining power. By collaborating with Ysleta ISD on a joint request for proposals for health care coverage, EPISD could lower health care costs by an estimated \$1.9 million a year.

Financial Management: A strong internal audit function is a valuable management tool. By reporting functionally to a committee of the Board of Trustees, EPISD's internal auditor could strengthen independence and

objectivity and incorporate professional best practices into the district's audit plan. To encourage broader participation in the bid process for its external auditing services, EPISD could expand the field of qualified Certified Public Accountant firms who respond to the district's request for auditing services every four years.

Purchasing: Textbooks are the main educational resource provided in any school district, yet they are not always available to children in EPISD. Board policy allows a student to take a textbook home, at a parent's request; and parents need to be informed of this policy. By taking advantage of an automated textbook accounting system that can order, inventory, and track textbooks and speed textbook delivery, EPISD's students could be better served and the district's resources protected.

Computers and Technology: Technology can be a powerful resource for teaching, but a school district must have in place an organizational structure that creates the best possible environment for implementing and supporting technology. EPISD does not have this structure. By redefining their working relationship, the EPISD board and the district's Technology and Information Systems unit can take advantage of technical resources. An important step would be the creation of a technology committee, empowered by the board to monitor and consult on technology projects. A technology committee could ensure that students have full and equitable access to technological resources. Resources must be fully integrated, including computer infrastructure, hardware, software, technical support, and staff development.

Transportation: EPISD has a school bus driver absentee rate of 30 percent a day, causing buses to run late, straining the district's mechanical and manpower resources, and adding to overtime costs. By establishing a performance-based reward to bus drivers with low absentee rates, the district could reduce absenteeism and improve overall effectiveness. Other efficiencies, like route-scheduling software, a staggered bell schedule, and instituting a 15-year bus replacement schedule are also available to EPISD.

Food Services: EPISD's Food Service unit is a model in many ways, particularly in its innovations to increase elementary student meal participation. Still, high-school lunch participation across the district is low, ranging from 15 to 39 percent. By creating a second lunch period and a "food court" concept, EPISD could reduce lunchtime crowding at high school cafeterias and add variety and appeal to food offerings. If the district can increase overall high school lunch participation by only 1 percent annually, it can realize nearly \$68,000 a year in additional net revenues.

Safety and Security: EPISD's police department is understaffed when compared to peer school districts, resulting in slow response times and inadequate area coverage. By negotiating an agreement to share police services with the City of El Paso, EPISD can greatly enhance safety and security on its campuses.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many of TSPR's recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that could be used to enhance classroom instruction. The savings opportunities identified in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums. Proposed investments of additional funds usually are related to the creation of increased efficiencies or savings or the enhancement of productivity and effectiveness.

Full implementation of the recommendations in this report could produce net savings of nearly \$1.6 million in the first year (**Exhibit 2**). EPISD could achieve total net savings of more than \$13 million by 2003-04 if all of TSPR's recommendations are implemented.

**Exhibit 2
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of El Paso Independent School District**

Year	Total
1999-00 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$1,566,221
2000-01 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$2,640,487
2001-02 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$3,331,595
2002-03 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$3,984,769
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$3,981,769
One Time Net (Costs)	(\$2,485,768)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2000-2004	\$13,019,073

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 3**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines, and estimates of fiscal impacts follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the series of actions needed to achieve the proposed results. Some should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two, and some over several years.

TSPR recommends that the EPISD board ask district administrators to review the recommendations, develop a plan to proceed with

implementation, and monitor progress. As always, TSPR staff are available to help implement proposals.

6	Develop a comprehensive strategic plan that reflects the shared vision of the board, superintendent, administration, and community, as well as the district's long-term goals and objectives. p. 33	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
7	Implement a local board policy requiring board members who are business owners to file timely affidavits disclosing substantial interests in business entities. p. 37	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
8	Create one Policy, Research, and Evaluation Unit and eliminate the position of associate superintendent for Policy and Planning. p. 42	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$524,925	
9	Hire two attorneys to reduce the district's legal costs. p. 44	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$543,630	
10	Reclassify the position of associate superintendent for Support Services as deputy superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Support Services, and assign supervision of the regional associate superintendents to	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	this position. p. 46							
11	Align the administrative services of the district under one associate superintendent. p. 47	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
12	Establish policies and procedures whereby unions and the board and administration can work together. p. 49	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	\$0	\$0	(\$4,500)	
13	Actively engage the District Educational Improvement Committee in the district's policy and goal development process. p. 52	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
14	Assign principal representation to the educational leadership team and review all potential decisions for their impact on schools, instruction, and students. p. 53	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
15	Move budget authority for campus-based staffing to the individual campuses and refine staffing allocation formulas to give principals the flexibility they need to adjust staffing patterns within their budgets. p. 57	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
16	Ensure participation of	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	principals and District Educational Improvement Committee members in the budget development process. p. 59							
17	Provide opportunities for Campus Improvement Team members to participate in making any recommended changes to Campus Improvement Plans, and reduce central and regional office editing of CIPs. p. 59	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 1	\$212,211	\$212,211	\$212,211	\$213,711	\$213,711	\$1,064,055	\$0
Chapter 2 Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures								
18	Develop and adopt board policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control. p. 78	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$6,900)
19	Revise or develop functional curriculum guides to provide direction for all instruction. p. 81	(\$31,950)	(\$63,900)	(\$63,900)	(\$63,900)	(\$63,900)	(\$287,550)	
20	Develop and formally document strategies to assist students with improving SAT and ACT scores p. 83	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
21	Develop independent study courses that fulfill	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,300)

	the requirements for state graduation credit as outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. p. 87							
22	Develop and fund programs designed to reduce or eliminate advanced placement examination fees. p. 90	\$0	(\$40,033)	(\$40,033)	(\$40,033)	(\$40,033)	(\$160,132)	
23	Document the rationale for making program changes in bilingual and English as a Second Language instruction and communicate the rationale and the results of all program assessments to the public. p. 93	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
24	Devise a plan for compliance with state law to report all referrals, assessments, and activities consistently and regularly monitor the operation of the plan and report results to the public. p. 96	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
25	Develop a long-range plan to ensure the placement of special education students in least-restrictive environments consistently across regions. p. 97	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

26	Improve communications between the district and Special Education parents through use of an ombudsman. p. 99	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
27	Provide programs of intense remediation for students with disabilities who have not performed well on the TAAS. p. 101	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$28,000)	
28	Develop a plan to ensure that research, assessment, and evaluation are used for all technology spending decisions from any source, and that the EPISD technology plan is communicated to internal and external constituencies. p. 104	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
29	Improve the district's communication with and oversight of the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf, and review and correct compensation, if appropriate. p. 110	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
30	Review the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf's budgeting and accounting procedures and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	establish procedures for allocating appropriate startup and activity funds. p. 111							
31	Provide greater emphasis on student service in career counseling by improving accountability reporting, the connection between support center counselors and the Center for Career and Technology Education, and professional development for vocational counseling. p. 117	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
32	Institute an Early College Start program to provides benefits to students and financial savings to parents. p. 122	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 2	(\$37,550)	(\$109,533)	(\$109,533)	(\$109,533)	(\$109,533)	(\$475,682)	(\$10,200)
Chapter 3 Community Involvement								
33	Create an ombudsman position as a means of establishing better two-way communication between the district and the community. p. 131	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$203,000)	
34	Relocate Communications Unit staff members who regularly communicate with	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	the public and the proposed ombudsman position to the first floor of the downtown education center to improve public access and strengthen community relations. p. 133							
35	Centralize the open records request functions within the office of the ombudsman. p. 134	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
36	Further enhance relations with the media by providing increased communication with the superintendent, more direct access to school personnel, and earlier dissemination of detailed board agenda materials. p. 135	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
37	Contact the local cable television operator and radio stations and negotiate a contract to broadcast monthly district board meetings. p. 136	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$120,000)	
38	Expand the outside use of district facilities as a means of promoting community involvement and positive	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	community relations. p. 143							
39	Operate Media Production and the Print Shop as internal service funds to recover the full cost of providing graphics design and printing services to schools and administrative units within the district. p. 145	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 3	(\$64,600)	(\$64,600)	(\$64,600)	(\$64,600)	(\$64,600)	(\$323,000)	\$0
Chapter 4 Personnel Management								
40	Consolidate Employee Benefits and Risk Management into one functional area called Employee Benefits and Risk Management. p. 154	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$196,800	
41	Merge Employee Relations and the Office of Compliance into a single area called Employee Relations and Compliance. p. 156	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
42	Merge Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, and Certification into one functional area called Elementary and Secondary Personnel. p. 157	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$344,510	
43	Transfer the functions of hiring all support personnel from Certification and	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	Personnel Administration to Support Personnel. p. 159							
44	Develop a Human Resources procedures manual for the 1999-2000 school year. p. 161	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
45	Revise the EPISD Employee Handbook and require employees to sign for the book when distributed. p. 162	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
46	Complete the process of revising all job descriptions in the district and develop procedures to require them to be systematically updated every three years. p. 164	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
47	Review all position classifications and ensure that the job description for each position classification reflects the job's complexity and the experience it requires. p. 165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
48	Establish policies and procedures that will lead to the hiring of the most qualified applicants. p. 170	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
49	Develop a formal recruitment plan and written procedures that includes expected performance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	measures and means to evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment efforts. p. 174							
50	Develop a policy and administrative procedures to ensure that appraisals are returned to Human Resources by a specified deadline. p. 176	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 4	\$108,262	\$108,262	\$108,262	\$108,262	\$108,262	\$541,310	\$0

Chapter 5 Facilities Use and Management

51	Ensure accountability in the long-range plan by requiring quarterly reporting on the status of key activities to the school board. p. 184	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
52	Complete a comprehensive and accurate assessment of deferred maintenance needs and use the master plan to set priorities. p. 185	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
53	Develop five-year enrollment projections annually. p. 186	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
54	Reorganize the maintenance function into regional groups based on the district's existing regions. p. 187	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$999,800)	
55	Reauthorize the Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds Section	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	to warehouse commonly used maintenance materials and equipment in shops and on trucks. p. 189							
56	Provide a comprehensive training program for the Maintenance staff to improve its effectiveness and productivity. p. 190	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$222,000)	
57	Conduct annual cost-comparison studies of selected services to determine the most cost-effective delivery method. p. 192	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
58	Use the downtown Education Center more efficiently and lease out surplus space. p. 194	\$0	\$400,000	\$800,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000	\$3,800,000	(\$1,400,000)
59	Institute quality control procedures for all school construction projects. p. 196	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
60	Examine all schools with a utilization rate of less than 85 percent and more than 105 percent to determine if attendance boundary adjustments are needed. p. 199	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
61	Establish site-based decision management budgets for custodial services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	and supplies and clearly define the role of the director of Custodial Operations as a support role. p. 200							
62	Conduct a cost-comparison study for the privatized custodial services used at the downtown Education Center. p. 201	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
63	Develop a custodial staffing formula based on appropriate factors to achieve an industry standard of at least 19,000 square feet per custodian. p. 204	\$317,109	\$634,218	\$951,326	\$951,326	\$951,326	\$3,805,305	
64	Establish a reasonable level (about 5 cents per square foot) for the cost of cleaning supplies and allocate an amount to each school based on this yardstick. p. 207	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	
65	Develop a comprehensive and mandatory training program for custodial staff. p. 209	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$240,760)	
66	Reassess the salary level of the energy management positions in light of the money this program saves the district. p. 211	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$87,000)	
	Totals-Chapter 5	\$107,197	\$824,306	\$1,541,414	\$2,041,414	\$2,041,414	\$6,555,745	(\$1,400,000)

Chapter 6 Asset and Risk Management

67	Coordinate with the Internal Audit Unit to conduct comprehensive fraud reviews of workers' compensation claims at least annually. p. 226	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
68	Consult with outside legal counsel regarding the implications of the allegations against the TPA and examine the district's options pending the outcome of the investigation. p. 228	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
69	Aggressively pursue the \$171,000 owed to the district under its risk-sharing arrangement with Advantage Care Network, Inc. p. 229	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$171,000
70	Develop a policy to maintain the health plan fund balance at safe levels and make the budget modifications and health plan contributions needed to maintain a safe fund balance, as projected by the actuaries. p. 232	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
71	Collaborate with YISD on a joint RFP for health care coverage. p. 235	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$9,618,180	
72	Transfer property	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	and casualty insurance responsibilities and duties from the Operations Unit to the Risk Management Section. p. 238							
73	Hire a property control officer to establish and maintain a districtwide fixed-asset control and accountability system. p. 241	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$174,000)	
74	Require the Internal Audit Unit to review fixed-asset procedures, controls, and inventory records. p. 242	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Totals-Chapter 6	\$1,888,836	\$1,888,836	\$1,888,836	\$1,888,836	\$1,888,836	\$9,444,180	\$171,000

Chapter 7 Financial Management

75	Review instructional budget allocation formulas annually to determine if the resulting allocations are reasonable. p. 259	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
76	Establish an audit committee of the Board of Trustees to serve as an oversight body for the internal auditing function. p. 264	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
77	Authorize the Internal Audit Unit to immediately complete the overtime audit and implement plans to reduce overtime across the district	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	p. 265							
78	Enhance the internal audit plan document by incorporating the elements of a well-constructed audit plan. p. 268	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
79	Aggressively seek to expand the field of qualified CPA firms responding to the district's quadrennial RFP for auditing services. p. 270	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
80	Require full implementation of the automated substitute caller system and create an electronic attendance interface with the automated payroll system. p. 273	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
81	Develop a formal procedures manual that details district policies and processes related to payroll and require all employees to receive full training on these procedures. p. 275	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
82	Eliminate the requirement that schools and units complete purchase order reports. p. 276	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
83	Require written audit reports to be provided to the Board of Trustees and superintendent, and made	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	available free of charge to all interested individuals at the school level. p. 279							
84	Implement the automated activity fund accounting system at all schools and require all transactions to be recorded on the automated system. p. 283	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
85	Assess the impact on district local and state revenues of returning \$59 million to the property tax rolls and develop a strategy to mitigate any negative effect of such action. p. 288	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
Totals-Chapter 7		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 8 Purchasing and Warehousing

86	Revise purchasing policies to require all competitive sealed bids to be tabulated and processed through Purchasing, and with those requiring board approval, to be reviewed by the appropriate standing committee of the board. p. 298	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
87	Implement catalog bid policies and related procedures and develop a vendor qualification	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	textbook systems that are integrated with the districtwide program and require all schools to use the textbook accounting system to track all textbooks and to facilitate efficient ordering and delivery of textbooks throughout the district. p. 320							
	Totals-Chapter 8	\$35,790	\$35,290	\$35,290	\$35,290	\$35,290	\$176,950	(\$10,000)
Chapter 9 Computers and Technology								
96	Revise the reporting structure so that the executive director of TIS reports directly to the associate superintendent for Support Services. p. 328	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
97	Adopt work policies requiring that each technology project begin with a plan that shows how it will be sustained over time. p. 328	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
98	Develop strategies to establish and maintain a close working relationship between the Training and Instructional Technology section and the Curriculum and Instruction Department. p. 329	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

99	Redesign and recreate the EPISD Technology Plan to make it a more useful document. p. 332	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
100	Establish an EPISD Technology Committee and authorize it to monitor and provide advice regarding all district technology operations. p. 333	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
101	Establish a technology subcommittee of the board to study technology issues. p. 335	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
102	Develop a formal schedule to implement the WAN as called for in the Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education that includes milestones and target dates for the completion of the middle and elementary school connections. p. 337	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
103	Establish an EPISD Technology Committee and authorize it to monitor and provide advice regarding all district technology operations. p. 338	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
104	Establish and publicize network standards for the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	district that provide clear guidance to schools installing local area networks. p. 339							
105	Develop a plan to annually replace and reposition computers as specified in EPISD's Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education. p. 340	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
106	Establish a baseline standard of technology for each school to ensure that all students have adequate access to technology. p. 341	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
107	Establish districtwide software standards and inform schools and administrators that only those software packages will be supported by TIS. p. 344	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
108	Establish a three-level classification scale for network specialists. p. 346	(\$15,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$110,000)	
109	Add a new network specialist position. p. 347	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$223,300)	
110	Expand the district's use of the Internet as a means of providing useful information to schools, teachers, parents, and the community. p. 348	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
111	Provide	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	technology-related training at campus sites if at all possible. p. 349							
112	Develop a comprehensive Internet-based staff development program. p. 350	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
113	Increase the training budget for both hardware and network support technicians. p. 351	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$162,500)	
	Totals-Chapter 9	(\$92,160)	(\$97,160)	(\$102,160)	(\$102,160)	(\$102,160)	(\$495,800)	\$0

Chapter 10 Transportation

114	Establish a comprehensive awards program that provides tangible recognition to Transportation employees with low absentee rates. p. 360	\$0	\$214,038	\$196,038	\$350,712	\$350,712	\$1,111,500	(\$34,400)
115	Designate 10 percent of the peak service drivers as lead drivers and use them as substitute drivers as needed. p. 362	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$1,930,680)	
116	Reclassify foremen and assistant foremen to exempt status and eliminate overtime pay. p. 364	\$9,250	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$83,250	
117	Collect data on key performance indicators to measure and monitor the performance of the district's transportation operations. p. 366	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

118	Upgrade the computer-based route scheduling software and train the foremen and assistant foremen in its use. p. 369	\$0	\$143,400	\$143,400	\$143,400	\$143,400	\$573,600	(\$24,000)
119	Establish three uniform school starting and ending times to accommodate three runs per bus in the morning and three in the afternoon. p. 374	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$793,000	\$6,500
120	Charge other districts for the cost of transportation to the health magnet school. p. 376	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$1,009,255	
121	Initiate a staffing policy mandating 25 vehicles per mechanic. p. 378	\$118,500	\$237,000	\$237,000	\$237,000	\$237,000	\$1,066,500	
122	Establish a bus procurement program to systematically replace buses every 15 years. p. 380	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$4,882,500)	
123	Establish an oil analysis program to determine appropriate oil change intervals. p. 380	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$56,240)	
124	Make full use of the Gateway systems' capabilities as vehicle maintenance information systems and install them in each maintenance shop. p. 382	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$9,000)
125	Provide ASF	(\$750)	(\$3,750)	(\$6,750)	(\$9,750)	(\$12,750)	(\$33,750)	

	analyze, and increase lunch participation rates at district high schools. p. 403							
133	Review food service labor costs regularly to determine if individual campuses' MPLH figures are within industry standards. p. 408	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
134	Negotiate an exclusive vendor contract for vending machines. p. 410	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000
	Totals-Chapter 11	\$316,628	\$547,630	\$547,630	\$547,630	\$547,630	\$2,507,148	(\$1,000,000)

Chapter 12 Safety and Security

135	Coordinate programs related to student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management through the Pupil Services Section of the Special Services Unit. p. 421	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
136	Delegate complete management authority, responsibility, and attendance accountability to the interim administrator of the Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy. p. 422	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	
137	Monitor, track, and report the progress of students from the School Age Parent	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

	Center when they return to their home schools. p. 423							
138	Allocate the number of random K-9 searches for alcohol, drugs and weapons to give special emphasis to campuses experiencing higher incidences of contraband found. p. 429	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
139	Realign the Police Services Unit reporting relationship so that the police chief reports to the associate superintendent for Support Services. p. 430	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
140	Develop a program for shared security services between the City of El Paso and EPISD for police officers and school resource officers. p. 433	\$0	(\$278,550)	(\$278,550)	(\$278,550)	(\$278,550)	(\$1,114,200)	(\$175,668)
141	Share information about violence, drug use, and gang-related incidents with the El Paso Police Department. p. 435	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
142	Hire a districtwide safety coordinator. p. 437	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$208,800)	
	Totals-Chapter 12	(\$36,760)	(\$315,310)	(\$315,310)	(\$315,310)	(\$315,310)	(\$1,298,000)	(\$175,668)
	TOTAL	\$3,523,137	\$4,956,436	\$5,655,544	\$6,310,218	\$6,310,218	\$26,755,553	\$1,177,500

SAVINGS								
TOTAL COSTS	(\$1,956,916)	(\$2,315,949)	(\$2,323,949)	(\$2,325,449)	(\$2,328,449)	(\$11,250,712)	(\$3,663,268)	
NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	\$1,566,221	\$2,640,487	\$3,331,595	\$3,984,769	\$3,981,769	\$15,504,841	(\$2,485,768)	

5 Year Gross Savings	\$27,933,053
5 year Costs	\$14,913,980)
Grand Total	\$13,019,073

Chapter 1

This chapter reviews the organization and management of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) in five major sections:

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

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Board of Trustees consists of seven members elected from single-member districts and serving alternating three-year terms. School board elections are held every two years during the month of May. At each election, either three or four board members are elected, depending on the number required to complete the board.

The current board is listed in Exhibit 1-1.

Exhibit 1-1 EPISD Board of Trustees 1998-99

Name	Title	Term Expires	Length of Service as of 5/99	Occupation
Kathy Becker	President	1999	6 years	Housewife
Carlos Cordova	Vice President	1999	4 years	Retired Teacher/Admin.
Barbara Forester Coleman	Secretary	1999	12 years	Business Owner
Richard Telles	Member	2001	14 years	Business Owner
Charles Roark	Member	2001	4 years	Executive Director
Ada Gonzalez-Peterson	Member	2001	2 years	Consultant
Josephine F. Barron	Member	2001	2 years	Retired School Registrar

Source: EPISD.

Board meetings are held twice monthly on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Regular meetings are held at 5:00 p.m. in the boardroom of the Education Center at 6531 Boeing Drive. The public is welcome to attend all meetings; citizens wishing to address the board either must inform the superintendent's office in advance or sign up before 5:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting. During the Public Forum agenda period, citizens are allowed three minutes to discuss any issue they want, but the board can take no action on these issues during that meeting. The board also provides a forum for parents and community members to voice complaints about EPISD's policies, procedures, or operations during a Public Complaints agenda item. Complainants are allowed sufficient time to voice their complaints and the board may take action in response if it is appropriate.

The agenda for board meetings is developed from a variety of sources, including suggestions by board members, the superintendent, and items presented by members of the education leadership team, which includes the:

- superintendent,
- four region associate superintendents,
- associate superintendent for Support Services,
- associate superintendent for Operations,
- associate superintendent for Policy and Planning,
- executive director of Employee Relations,
- executive director for Finance, Budget, and Accounting,
- executive director of Communications and Business Partnerships,
- director of Auditing, and
- program administrator for the Urban Systemic Initiative.

The superintendent and the education leadership team organize the agenda beginning two weeks before each regularly scheduled board meeting. The agenda is finalized in the week prior to the regular board meeting and supporting materials for board review are delivered to each board member on the Friday afternoon before the regular board meeting on Tuesday. Board members must read the agenda material over the weekend and submit any questions they have to the superintendent by the day of the regular board meeting.

The superintendent's secretary prepares the official minutes of open sessions. The board secretary, along with other board members, reviews the official minutes of all meetings for accuracy and completeness prior to approval. Minutes of executive sessions are not recorded. Instead, the superintendent's secretary prepares a certified agenda listing topics discussed in closed session.

Special meetings of the board are called as necessary.

FINDING

Communication between the interim superintendent and board members is good. Individual board members usually meet with the superintendent at least twice each month. A majority of board members said these one-on-one meetings are effective and allow them to obtain answers to many of their questions. Moreover, EPISD has purchased and installed fax machines in the homes of each board member to facilitate communication with the superintendent and administration. The interim superintendent communicates emergencies to board members either via telephone or fax.

COMMENDATION

Periodic, one-on-one meetings between board members and the superintendent and fax machines in the homes of board members contribute to open communication between the board as a whole and the superintendent.

FINDING

EPISD Board Policy GF (LOCAL), issued November 15, 1996, establishes the foundation for the board's hearing of complaints from members of the public regarding district policies, procedures, practices, or operations.

Each complainant is required to complete, in advance, a five-page Public Complaint Form that records the complainant's name, address, school or department, date of the event leading to the complaint, nature of the complaint, and recommended solution. The form documents actions taken related to the complaint at four distinct levels:

- **Level One** - Actions taken by the appropriate administrator who first attempts to resolve the complaint, with a brief summary of the conference with the complainant.
- **Level Two** - Actions taken by the superintendent or a designee, with a brief summary of the conference with the complainant.
- **Level Three** - The date of receipt of a formal written request for a board appearance by the complainant, the date the appearance is placed on the board agenda, and the date the complainant is notified by the superintendent that his or her complaint will be heard by the board.
- **Level Four** - Final action taken by the board.

TSPR representatives attended EPISD's regular board meeting on October 27, 1998 and observed complaints brought by two citizens. The complainants were allowed sufficient time to state their cases. The board listened attentively, asked questions of both the complainant and EPISD administrators, allowed complainants sufficient time for rebuttal, and took appropriate action.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's board has implemented a formal complaint process to allow citizens to present their complaints about district policy, procedures, practices, and operations directly to the board for corrective action.

FINDING

Generally, EPISD's board members do not communicate with each other well, and although communications between individual board members and the interim superintendent are good, some board members trust neither the superintendent nor the administration. The board routinely has a four/three voting split, with the three members representing central and southern El Paso consistently voting together. Board members representing districts in central and southern El Paso feel their districts receive allocations inequitably and unify on many votes. For instance, the majority of the board recently approved \$2 million in allocations to each of EPISD's four geographic regions (a total of \$8 million) for reducing deferred maintenance on school facilities, yet many of the most serious conditions are concentrated in central and southern El Paso.

The absence of dialogue between board members affects their ability to work together as a team. Based on interviews with board members, TSPR found that the members communicate with one other infrequently, and sometimes are surprised by positions their colleagues take. For example, in a meeting held to approve the contract for the consulting firm hired to conduct a search for the new superintendent, some board members were surprised by a motion to replace the board president as the point of contact with the consultant. Some members felt this action was important enough to have been communicated to the entire board in advance.

A majority of board members said that the board as a whole understands its role as a policymaking body. However, several members tend to micromanage the district by participating in administrative and operational decisions. For instance, the EPISD board approves hiring and transfers for assistant principals, counselors, and facilitators. Normally, school boards do not become involved with employment decisions below central administrators and principals; the members in question told TSPR that their involvement in approving hiring, transfers, and terminations below

the principal level is necessary to ensure "fairness." In focus group sessions conducted with school administrators, TSPR also was told that some board members call schools and pressure administrators to hire certain personnel; moreover, some said they feared retaliation if board member requests are not honored.

Board members generally take advantage of continuing education opportunities. In fact, in each election year the board is required to cite the continuing education training its members have received. The board complied with the law as all EPISD board members are current in meeting their minimum continuing education requirements.

Even so, most board members said they need additional training in governance to allow them to be more effective in their roles. The board allocates adequate budget resources to travel and training to cover additional continuing education training for its members. For instance, in the 1997-98 school year, the board allocated \$18,000 for travel and training, and increased the amount to \$20,000 for 1998-99. **Exhibit 1-2** presents a summary of training sponsored by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) that was attended by EPISD board members during the period from March 1, 1996 through April 15, 1998.

Exhibit 1-2
TASB Board Member Training Report
Summary of Credit Hours by EPISD Board Member
March 1, 1996 through April 15, 1998

Board Member	Credit Hours	Hours In Board Member Roles/Responsibilities
Jo Barron	22.50	6.00
Kathryn Becker	51.00	3.50
Barbara Coleman	46.75	1.00
Carlos Cordova	16.25	1.00
Ada Gonzalez Peterson*	10.50	6.50
Charles Roark	49.50	2.50
Richard Telles	11.75	0.00
Average	29.75	2.93

Source: Texas Association of School Boards.

** Elected in May 1997.*

Exhibit 1-3 shows that about 10 percent of the TASB continuing education received by board members related to enhancing governance skills. **Exhibit 1-3** summarizes additional continuing education received by board members from the Region 19 Education Service Center (ESC) during the period from February 1, 1997 through September 25, 1998.

Exhibit 1-3
Region 19 Education Service Center Training Report
Summary of Credit Hours by EPISD Board Member
February 1, 1997 through September 25, 1998

Board Member	Credit Hours	Hours In Board Member Roles & Responsibilities	Hours in "Team of 8" Team Building
Jo Barron	22.0	3.0	3.0
Kathryn Becker	26.0	5.0	3.0
Barbara Coleman	20.0	2.0	3.0
Carlos Cordova	24.0	2.0	3.0
Ada Gonzalez Peterson*	26.0	5.0	3.0
Charles Roark	18.0	0.0	3.0
Richard Telles	17.0	0.0	3.0
Average	21.86	2.43	3.0

Source: Region 19 Education Service Center.
** Elected in May 1997.*

Exhibit 1-3 further shows that about 11 percent of the training received from the Region 19 Education Service Center related to board member roles and responsibilities.

In all, then, only about a tenth of the training EPISD board members receive from TASB and Region 19 ESC is directly related to enhancing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as board members. This low percentage, coupled with incidents of micromanagement, underscore a need for additional governance training.

Chapter 61 of the Texas Administrative Code, Subchapter A, Section 61.1 (b)(2), requires the entire board, along with the superintendent, to

participate in a team-building session facilitated by the ESC or another registered provider. The team-building session can be of a length deemed appropriate by the board, but generally should last at least three hours. Commonly referred to as "Team of Eight" training because most Texas school boards have seven members and a superintendent, the purpose of the team-building session is to enhance the effectiveness of the board-superintendent team and to assess its continuing education needs. EPISD's board and superintendent attended mandatory Team of 8 training in November 1996 and September 1997. As of January 1999, however, the board and interim superintendent had not held the annual team building training session for the 1998-99 school year, as required by law.

Recommendation 1:

Provide "Team of Eight" team-building training to restore trust among board members and the superintendent, and increase training related to the roles and responsibilities of board members.

Immediately after hiring a new superintendent, the board should hire an outside team-building facilitator to conduct a series of workshops to comply with "Team of Eight" training requirements. This training should be intended to build trust among board members and between the board, superintendent, and education leadership team. Team-building sessions should be held once each year, simultaneously with the board planning retreat. Board members should attempt to understand their colleagues and, through team building, commit to work together to advance the district's mission, goals, and objectives. For the team-building sessions to be effective, board members, the superintendent, and the education leadership team should commit to listen to and respect each other's points of view, work through their differences, resolve communication problems, and above all to put the interests of EPISD students above personal differences.

This joint commitment would restore trust, open lines of communication among board members, and lead to a more cohesive relationship between the board and administration that ultimately should benefit EPISD students and employees.

The EPISD board also should implement a policy requiring board members to increase their percentage of continuing education training hours attended related to governance. At a minimum, the policy should require each board member to attend governance-related training hours equal to 25 percent of total continuing education training hours each year. This would greatly enhance their understanding of their roles and responsibilities and should limit the tendency to participate in day-to-day administrative matters.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board president request proposals to conduct team-building retreats from at least three facilitators.	April 1999
2.	The board outlines a minimum number of training hours board members should attend related to governance and puts the policy in place or amends current policy.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent and board review the proposals and select a team-building facilitator to conduct the workshops.	May 1999
4.	The board reviews the outline of training hours related to governance and provides comments as necessary.	May 1999
5.	The superintendent schedules a two-day team-building retreat at a location away from EPISD facilities.	May 1999
6.	The board, superintendent, and central administration attend the two-day retreat.	June 1999
7.	The superintendent obtains scheduled training sessions from TASB and Region 19 ESC and provides to the board.	June 1999 and each month thereafter
8.	Board members attend training sessions and increase the number of training hours related to governance.	July 1999 and each month thereafter as appropriate

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of each team-building session would be limited to the fees and expenses charged by one facilitator for two days. The cost of securing a facility away from EPISD for two days should be minimal since several locations, such as those at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) usually are offered free to the school district. The facilitator's fees should be about \$1,000 per day, with an additional \$200 per day for expenses (\$1,200 x 2 days x 2 sessions = \$4,800). Depending on the location of the retreat, food and beverages could be provided by the district's Food Service Department. This recommendation could be implemented within EPISD's \$20,000 travel and related expenses budget that is primarily used for board member training.

FINDING

EPISD's board has two standing committees, the finance committee and school name committee. The finance committee meets once each month before the second regular board meeting. The committee reviews, with district administrators, financial data and contracts that will be placed on the agenda for the regular meeting. The school name committee meets as needed to formally name schools and other district facilities.

The existing committees do not adequately address issues related to important instructional, operational, and administrative functions of EPISD. For example, neither committee addresses the quality of instructional programs necessary to achieve student performance or facilities needs other than their names.

The use of standing committees has been criticized by some school boards, who believe that an element of trust among board members, the superintendent, and administrative team is required for such committees to be effective. However, TSPR has found that standing committees, appropriately configured, allow boards to interact with the superintendent and administrative team and better understand how policy decisions relate to district administration and operations. Committees can examine administrative and operational issues in considerable detail without prolonging regular board meetings.

Recommendation 2:

Create two additional standing committees and eliminate the school name committee as a standing committee.

The board should consider creating two additional standing committees, one for instruction and the other for facilities and technology. Because instruction-related costs consist primarily of teachers' salaries, all personnel matters and instructional programs should be reviewed and discussed by the same committee. Since facilities must be wired for technology and computer equipment represents a substantial capital investment, these two areas can be reasonably combined under one standing committee. The standing committees should be appointed annually and each committee should include one or two board members, the superintendent or a designee, one or more members of the education leadership team responsible for the area covered by the standing committee, and one or more community members with specific expertise in the committee's functional area.

Each committee should be responsible for reviewing action and informational items to be presented to the board during regular meetings. Committee meetings would allow board members and the education leadership team to engage in extended discussions and clarification of

policy issues. Actions taken by the committees would be presented to the full board for ratification.

More significantly, community members should be allowed to attend committee meetings because they might provide valuable input for the board. For example, during the facilities planning process, community participants would be allowed input at facility committee meetings when the board and educational leadership team deem appropriate.

When the two additional standing committees are created, the school name committee should be established as an ad hoc committee that is assembled and meets only when district facilities require naming.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board president, in conjunction with the education leadership team, creates the two additional standing committees.	May 1999
2.	The board approves the standing committees and revises board policies.	June 1999
3.	The board revises policies and establishes the school name committee as an ad hoc committee.	June 1999
4.	The board establishes regular meeting dates and times for each standing committee.	June 1999
5.	The board president appoints a different member of the board to serve as chairperson of each of the standing committees.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD's board meets twice each month, requiring agenda material to be prepared by the interim superintendent and administration by the Friday before each Tuesday board meeting. Central administrators told TSPR that preparing for two board meetings each month places a significant administrative burden on administrators.

Exhibit 1-4 compares the number of regular board meetings held in peer districts versus EPISD.

Exhibit 1-4
Regular Board Meetings Per Month
EPISD versus Peer Districts

Peer District	Number of Regular Meetings per Month
Corpus Christi ISD	2
Dallas ISD	1
El Paso ISD	2
Fort Worth ISD	2
Houston ISD	1
San Antonio ISD	2
Socorro ISD	1
Ysleta ISD	1

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

Of the seven peer districts, four hold a single board meeting once each month. Houston and Dallas, the state's two largest school districts, hold monthly board meetings. Monthly board meetings reduce the amount of administrative staff time devoted to preparing agenda items. For example, Houston ISD went from semi-monthly to monthly board meetings in 1996, and district administrators report a reduction of almost 50 percent in the amount of administrative time devoted to preparing for board meetings. Moreover, Houston ISD's administrators' productivity has increased, with more time available for district administration and operations.

Recommendation 3:

Reduce the number of regular board meetings to once each month.

This would relieve the current administrative burden and allow administrators to focus more time on district administration and operations. Moreover, it would give each board member additional time to review agenda items in preparation for board meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board revises its policy to reduce the number of regular board meetings to once each month.	April 1999
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2.	The board implements the new policy and begins meeting once each month.	May 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In past years, EPISD's board meetings were lengthy, often ending at midnight or later. In September 1998, the board implemented a policy designed to limit the length of board meetings. The new policy requires all business to be completed by 11:00 p.m. or the board must reconvene the following day at 5:00 p.m. Board members and the superintendent told TSPR the new policy was implemented to ensure that meetings end at a reasonable time and that board members remain alert as they deliberate on district issues.

TSPR attended EPISD's October 27, 1998 regular board meeting to observe the structure of the meeting and how it was conducted. TSPR found the meeting to be conducted in an orderly fashion, but individual agenda items were lengthy and considerable discussion took place for certain items on the consent agenda, two of which lasted for more than 20 minutes each. Moreover, toward the end of the meeting board members hurried through agenda items to be sure the meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Recommendation 4:

Develop a timed agenda for board meetings.

The EPISD board should develop a timed agenda requiring board action, in the form of an amendment, for any deviations from the proposed agenda. Each section of the agenda should be appropriately timed and the board president or designee should closely monitor the time devoted to each agenda item. A timed agenda should keep the board meeting on schedule and limit the need for lengthy meetings. **Exhibit 1-5** presents a sample of an abbreviated agenda for EPISD board meetings in a format that specifies a time to begin each item.

**Exhibit 1-5
Sample Abbreviated Timed Agenda for EPISD Regular Board Meetings**

October 27, 1998 - 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item Number	Start Time	Description
1.	5:00 p.m.	Pledge of Allegiance
2.	5:05 p.m.	Recognition, Awards, and Special Items
	5:05 p.m.	A. Project Toward Excellence
	5:10 p.m.	B. State Supervisor of the Year Award
	5:15 p.m.	C. October Employees of the Month
	5:20 p.m.	D. American Cancer Society
3.	5:25 p.m.	Executive Session
4.	6:30 p.m.	Public Forum and Public Complaints
5.	7:30 p.m.	Consent Agenda
6.	7:30 p.m.	A. Approve Minutes
	7:33 p.m.	B. Approve Revisions to Board Policies
	7:39 p.m.	C. Approve Budget Amendments
	7:42 p.m.	D. Approve Purchase Orders
7.	7:45 p.m.	Action Agenda
	7:45 p.m.	A. Approve Contracts
	8:00 p.m.	B. Approve Campus Improvement Plans
8.	8:15 p.m.	Discussion Items
9.	8:45 p.m.	Information Items
10.	9:15 p.m.	Adjournment

Source: Empirical Management Services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, in cooperation with the board president, drafts a timed agenda to be used for board meetings.	April 1999
2.	The board president and superintendent receive comments from board members and revise the agenda as appropriate.	May 1999
3.	The board president designates the secretary of the board to keep	May

	time and alert the board president when time periods expire.	1999
4.	The board begins using the timed agenda.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Agenda materials prepared for the board do not contain enough information about EPISD's management and operations to allow board members to make informed decisions. Twice each month, the superintendent and education leadership team prepare an agenda packet. Board members receive the packet on the Friday before the Tuesday regular meeting. The agenda packet includes an executive summary for each agenda item. The executive summary is one page in length and contains the following summary categories:

- Subject or Title for Agenda Posting
- Purpose of Agenda Item
- Authority for Action (e.g., legal local policy, law or rule, other)
- Staff Responsible
- District Improvement Plan Objective, Goal or Need Addressed
- Summary of the Item
- Administrative Recommendation/Motion
- Fiscal Impact and Cost
- Impact on Other Functions/Operations
- Consequences of Nonapproval
- Implementation Timeline
- Comments Received

Financial information is provided to board members under a separate cover and includes:

- summaries of monthly travel expenditures for in-city mileage reimbursement, student travel, board travel, and employee travel
- monthly budget changes and amendments
- monthly internal financial statements showing budgeted revenue and expenditures, current month revenues and expenditures, year-to-date revenues and expenditures, remaining budget, and percentage of budget received
- quarterly investment report showing maturities, market values, and the like

Neither the agenda packets nor the monthly financial reporting packets contain monthly or year-to-date budget versus actual expenditure comparisons with accompanying comparative analysis between years or percentage differences between years for executive-level review.

Furthermore, the board agenda packet lacks a monthly summary of education-related program performance data such as the number of students participating in specific educational programs, comparative funding of specific programs between years, anticipated funding in subsequent years, and actual versus planned program performance. Most board members told TSPR they would like to have more educational program-related information in the packets.

Recommendation 5:

Develop a summary-level, user-friendly executive reporting format to present financial, management, and program-related information to the board.

The board, superintendent, and education leadership team should develop an executive reporting format for presenting financial, management, and educational program-related data to the board. **Exhibit 1-6** presents examples of summary-level executive management reports EPISD's education leadership team should present.

**Exhibit 1-6
Examples of Summary-Level Executive Management Reports**

Report Title	Sample Contents
Budget Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of departmental budgets by function, with columns for prior year actual amounts, adopted budget, revised budget, projected balance at year end, and associated variances. • Departmental performance measures, including the status of performance measures for the month. • Summary section highlighting operational or administrative issues affecting performance goals.
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue and expenditure data showing columns for current and prior-year actual amounts for similar periods. • Notes explaining significant variances of interest to board members. • Bar graphs and pie charts depicting comparative

	<p>revenue and expenditure information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative cost ratios, cost per student, transportation costs per mile, food and labor cost per meal, etc., compared to prior years. • Monthly reconciliation of fund balance, including specific items increasing or decreasing fund balance. • Summary of monthly grant activity, including number and dollar value of grants submitted, number and dollar value of grants awarded, and the ratio of grants awarded to grants submitted-all compared to prior years. • Notes explaining significant variances.
Education Program Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative data related to performance such as annual graduation rates, dropout rates, and TAAS test scores by school. • Comparative funding of specific education programs between fiscal years (ESL, Compensatory Education, Gifted and Talented, Magnet Schools). • Actual versus planned performance, with accompanying notes explaining significant variances.

Source: Empirical Management Services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board identifies critical management information desired by board members and designates the type, format, and content of executive management reports.	May 1999
2.	The superintendent, in conjunction with the education leadership team, develops draft executive-level reports for review and comment by the board.	May - June 1999
3.	The board suggests the appropriate revisions and the education leadership team finalizes the reporting formats.	July - August 1999
4.	The superintendent submits executive-level management reports to the board on a monthly basis.	September 1999 and each month thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

B. Planning

Planning is essential to effective school district management. Proper planning establishes a mission and identifies goals and objectives, sets priorities, identifies ways to complete the mission, and determines performance measures and benchmarks to achieve goals and objectives. In its purest sense, planning anticipates the effect of decisions, indicates possible financial consequences of alternatives, focuses on educational programs and methods of support, and links student achievement to the cost of education.

CURRENT SITUATION

The board, superintendent, and education leadership team are ultimately responsible for EPISD's planning effort. The board establishes the overall strategic direction for the district and develops broad goals and objectives to be used as a foundation for planning efforts.

A District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC) develops the overall instruction goals and objectives for the district; each school develops its own campus improvement plan in accordance with DEIC goals and objectives. Other units such as facilities and technology develop their own long-range plans.

A Policy and Planning Unit was formed in the 1997-98 school year to coordinate districtwide planning efforts.

FINDING

EPISD lacks a strategic planning process that provides for input from the community. Administrators told TSPR that the previous superintendent moved away from strategic planning because he wanted to get away from a "massive" planning document. As a result, the previous superintendent focused on the District Improvement Plan (DIP) as EPISD's strategic plan, and this focus has not changed to date. The DEIC is responsible for developing the overall instruction goals and objectives for the district included in the DIP. Community members participate on the DEIC but have not been involved in a comprehensive strategic planning process for five years.

Although EPISD calls the DIP its strategic plan, it is an annual districtwide instructional plan required by the Texas Education Code; as such, it does not include strategic goals and objectives for operational and administrative functions such as food service, transportation, safety and security, administrative technology, and facilities planning, or show the relationship between these support functions and the district's overall

vision. Individual units within the district have prepared separate long-range plans for technology (a 13-year plan) and facilities (a 10-year plan). Even so, EPISD does not have a comprehensive strategic plan that includes instructional, administrative, and operational functions.

Most board members complained of limited involvement in establishing EPISD's goals and objectives and suggested that the board should increase its involvement in determining district goals and objectives, despite the fact that a subcommittee of board members created goals and objectives for 1998-99 that were ratified by the full board. The board has not, however, conducted a planning retreat to establish long-term district goals and objectives since the 1996-97 school year. Planning retreats with the board and superintendent, facilitated by an outside consultant, were held annually until the 1996-97 school year. In these retreats, the board would establish broad goals and objectives for the district, but these often proved subordinate to those developed by the DEIC. As a result, board members felt their participation in the districtwide planning process was perfunctory, with the DEIC's goals and objectives receiving a higher priority.

In a search for best practices, TSPR found that Spring ISD uses a comprehensive planning and management system to establish a clear direction for the district; build support for and concentrate resources on district priorities; assist the district in accomplishing its objectives; and provide valid information for decision-making. Spring ISD's strategic planning process is directed by the board and begins with the district's Five-Year Education Plan, which is used to make decisions from the board down to every administrative level. The plan is the result of a collaborative effort involving input from teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members. Surveys and interviews are used to gather perceptions and information critical to developing a comprehensive plan. Task groups of community members, parents, teachers, and administrators are then established, with a district administrator serving as chair and providing the necessary clerical support. The task groups meet and develop priorities to be presented to the board, and recommend a series of action steps and performance measures for the coming year to guide staff members and give the board a means of measuring success. Each year the plan is updated and adjusted to reflect the results of the prior year's efforts. The board reviews the updates annually, adopts objectives for the upcoming year, and allocates budget resources based on current year's priorities.

Recommendation 6:

Develop a comprehensive strategic plan that reflects the shared vision of the board, superintendent, administration, and community, as well as the district's long-term goals and objectives.

EPISD should undertake a comprehensive strategic planning initiative to build upon the process started by the DEIC in developing the DIP. This process must include the board, superintendent, administration (including school-based administrators), teachers, students, and community. This initiative should be designed to develop agreement on the district's long-term goals, objectives, implementation initiatives, timelines, and responsibility assignments. Additionally, performance measures should be defined to measure accomplishment of objectives and priorities should be established and linked to the district's budget. The strategic plan should include the following components recommended by TASB:

- Shared Vision and Values
- Purpose/Mission Statement
- External Data Collection and Analysis
 - External Factors
 - Key Stakeholders
 - Competing Factors
- Internal Data Collection/Analysis
 - Student Outcomes
 - Learning Environment (Campus, Classroom, and Home)
 - Supporting Environment
- Critical Issues
- Threats/Opportunities
- Student Outcomes
- District Goals
- Best Ideas/Innovations
- Operational Plans/Objectives
- Annual Review and Update

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board president combine the strategic planning retreat with the team-building retreat and have the facilitator lead a session to establish a shared vision for the district.	June 1999
2.	The board directs the superintendent to develop a strategic plan for the district from goals and objectives agreed to in the retreat.	June 1999
3.	The superintendent forms a strategic planning oversight committee consisting of administrators, board members.	June- August 1999

	principals, teachers, parents, members of Campus Educational Improvement Committees, community leaders, and business leaders.	
4.	The superintendent designates an associate superintendent as chairperson of the committee.	August 1999
5.	The superintendent presents the goals and objectives from the retreat to the chairperson of the strategic planning oversight committee.	September 1999
6.	The associate superintendent chairing the committee creates functional work teams to address the goals and objectives defined by the board and superintendent.	September 1999
7.	The work teams develop action plans, timelines, and performance measures for the strategic plan.	October - December 1999
8.	The strategic planning oversight committee prepares an initial draft of the strategic plan.	January - March 2000
9.	The strategic planning oversight committee presents the initial draft of the strategic plan to the board for review and comments.	April 2000
10.	The work teams revise the initial draft to include the board's comments and present the strategic plan to the community for public input.	April - May 2000
11.	The strategic planning oversight committee includes substantive comments from the community into the draft and finalizes the strategic plan.	June - July 2000
12.	The board approves the strategic plan.	July 2000
13.	The superintendent and board monitor and update the strategic plan.	August 2000 and each year thereafter.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

C. Policies and Procedures

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD subscribes to TASB's policy service which provides regular updates for changes in state education policy affecting school districts. The associate superintendent for Policy and Planning is responsible for coordinating the development of new policies and all updates to the board's policy manual. When policy updates (both legal and local policies) are received from TASB, they are logged by the secretary of the Policy and Planning Unit and distributed to the board and appropriate unit administrator. Unit administrators make revisions to local policies affecting their units as necessary.

The board has 30 days to review legal policy updates. If no comments are received from board members, the associate superintendent prepares the policy for a first reading by the board. Comments received from unit administrators related to local policies also are reviewed and included in a draft policy for a first reading by the board. Prior to the first reading, all revisions or updates to instructional policies are reviewed by the education leadership team and DEIC. If the policies in question are complex, a second reading by the board may be required before approval. Once approved by the board, new policies and revisions or updates to existing policies are distributed to all unit administrators, who are responsible for updating their own copies of the policy manual.

FINDING

EPISD has a comprehensive policy manual that has been updated for all legal policies through TASB Update Number 58, the most recent update available, dated April 2, 1998. Local policy updates based on Number 58 are included in the manual after extensive review and approval by the education leadership team, the district's attorney, and school board. The local policies are in various stages of review and approval. However, the policy manual includes all changes required by the revised Texas Education Code.

COMMENDATION

EPISD maintains up-to-date policy manuals, incorporating recent changes to the Texas Education Code.

FINDING

EPISD prepares a binder containing bulletins with specific directions and procedures for implementing district policy. This binder is distributed to

each unit within the district and is used to interpret the meaning of both legal and local policies in the board's policy manual. The binder contains bulletins covering the following functional areas:

- Communications and Business Partnerships
- Finance
- Operations (includes custodial, facilities, food service, transportation, and warehouse operations)
- Regions
- Superintendent's Office
- Support Services (includes curriculum and instruction, human resources, research and evaluation, special services, and technology and information systems)

COMMENDATION

EPISD distributes a comprehensive binder containing specific procedures and relevant examples for implementing district policy related to management, administration, and operations to all district administrators.

FINDING

EPISD Board Policy BBFA Legal addresses ethics and conflict of interest and requires board members to disclose substantial business interests in accordance with the state's Local Government Code, Sections 171.001 - 171.002. This business interest must be disclosed in a signed affidavit. Based on data provided by the district, EPISD has no local policy regarding conflicts of interest. As a result, EPISD has two board members with potentially substantial business interests that have filed no affidavits for the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years.

A "substantial" interest in a business entity is defined in Section 171.002(a) as ownership of 10 percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity or ownership of 10 percent or more or \$5,000 or more of the fair market value of the business entity; or the receipt of 10 percent or more of one's gross income for the previous year from the business entity. Section 171.002 goes on to state that a person has substantial interest in real property if the interest is an equitable or legal ownership with a fair market value of \$2,500 or more. Furthermore, a local public official is considered to have a substantial interest under this section if the business entity or property is owned by a person related to the official in the first degree by consanguinity or affinity as determined under Chapter 573 of the state's Government Code.

Section 171.003 states that a public official commits an offense if the official knowingly violates Section 171.004. Section 171.004, in turn, states that if a local public official has a substantial interest in a business entity or in real property, the official shall file, before a vote or decision on any matter involving the business entity or real property, an affidavit stating the nature and extent of the interest and shall abstain from further participation in the matter if:

1. in the case of a substantial interest in a business entity, the action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the business entity that is distinguishable from the effect on the public; or
2. in the case of a substantial interest in real property, it is reasonably feasible that an action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the value of the property that is distinguishable from its effect on the public.

The affidavit must be filed with the official record keeper of the governmental entity.

While TSPR found no evidence that EPISD's board members have conflicts of interest, there could be a public perception of potential conflicts of interest if affidavits are not filed by board members with potentially substantial business interests.

Recommendation 7:

Implement a local board policy requiring board members who are business owners to file timely affidavits disclosing substantial interests in business entities.

To ensure compliance with the Texas Local Government Code regarding matters coming before the board for which individual board members may have conflicts of interest, EPISD should implement a local board policy requiring, at minimum, that the appropriate affidavits be filed in a timely manner.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent drafts a local policy requiring board members with substantial business interests to file affidavits within the first month of each year.	May 1999
2.	The board reviews and approves the policy.	June 1999

3.	The board implements local policy requiring timely filing of substantial business interest affidavits.	August 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

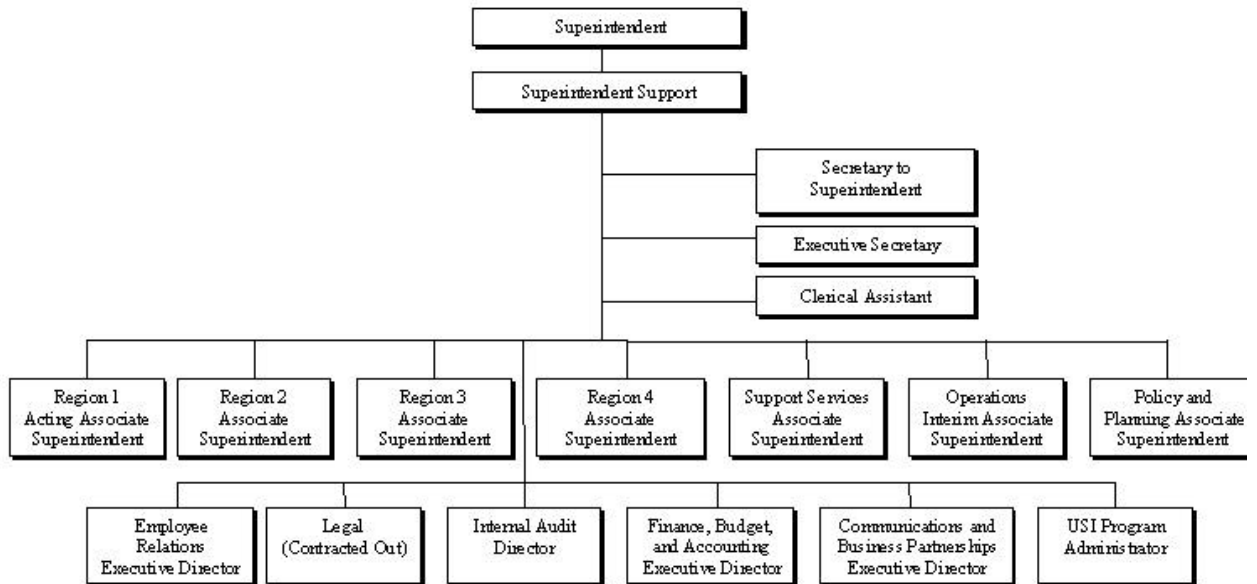
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

D. District Management

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's organizational structure includes a central office and four regional offices. Thirteen executive staff members report to an interim superintendent. These executives include an associate superintendent for Policy and Planning, an associate superintendent for Operations, an associate superintendent for Support Services, four regional associate superintendents (one for each of the district's geographic regions), an executive director of Employee Relations, a director of Internal Audit, an executive director of Finance, Budget and Accounting, an executive director of Communications and Business Partnerships, an administrator for the Urban Systemic Initiative (USI), and contracted Legal Services. The 1998-99 organizational chart for central office is shown in **Exhibit 1-7**.

**Exhibit 1-7
EPISD Organizational Chart
1998-99 School Year**



Source: EPISD.

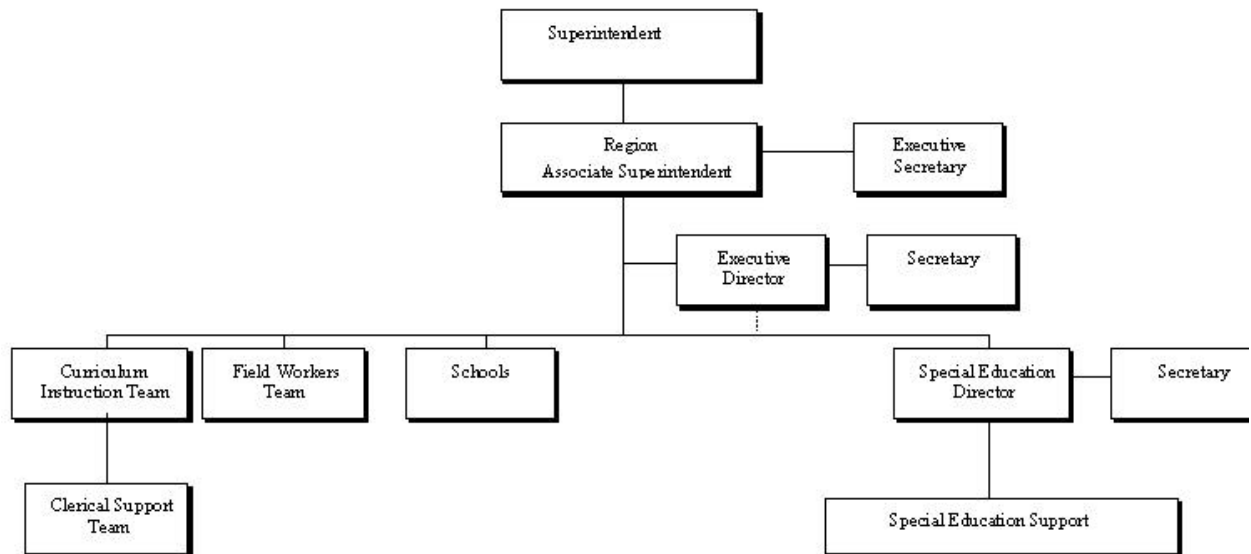
Beginning in July 1997, the EPISD board approved the reorganization of the district into four distinct regions, each responsible for providing services and supporting educational programs in its share of the district's 85 campuses and centers. The reorganization was a direct result of the *El Paso ISD Manpower Efficiency Study* conducted in 1995-96. This study

recommended that a regional organizational structure be developed to accomplish the following six objectives:

- Improve the overall quality of support to the teaching function and empower teachers to be involved in the design and implementation of site-based curriculum development and associated staff training.
- Move the decision making process closer to parents.
- Flatten the management layers between principals and the superintendent.
- Provide the resources and a meaningful framework for site-based decision making.
- Incorporate the best attributes of both a large district and a smaller district.
- Enhance accountability in all areas.

Exhibit 1-8 provides an overview of the organizational structure used in the regions. Each region employs both an associate superintendent and an executive director to oversee school operations. The regional offices each supervise a Curriculum and Instruction Team consisting of 10 or more facilitators; a Field Workers Team of attendance officers; a Special Education Support Team of special educational facilitators, psychologists, homebound teachers, physical and occupational therapists, education diagnosticians, counselors, special education transition specialists, and speech therapists; and the schools themselves.

**Exhibit 1-8
El Paso Independent School District
Organizational Structure of Regional Offices 1998-99**



Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 1-9 provides an overview of the schools assigned to each region. Each regional associate superintendent is responsible for two or three school zones consisting of K-12 feeder schools and one or more districtwide schools or educational programs.

**Exhibit 1-9
Summary of EPISD Schools by Region
1998-99**

REGION 1	REGION 2	REGION 3	REGION 4
<p>Andress Zone (9 schools)</p> <p>Andress High Charles Middle Terrace Hills Middle Nolan Richardson Middle Bradley Elementary Collins Elementary Dowell Elementary Fannin Elementary Newman Elementary Dr. Nixon Elementary</p> <p>Irvin Zone (11 schools)</p> <p>Irvin High Canyon Hills Middle Magoffin Middle Burnet Elementary Crosby Elementary Lee Elementary Park Elementary Schuster Elementary Stanton Elementary Wainwright Elementary Whitaker Elementary</p> <p>Districtwide Schools</p> <p>Center for Career and Technology Education School-age Parent</p>	<p>Austin Zone (12 schools)</p> <p>Austin High Bassett Middle Coldwell Elementary Crocket Elementary Houston Elementary Bliss Elementary Clendenin Elementary Logan Elementary Milam Elementary Rusk Elementary Travis Elementary Cordova Middle</p> <p>Burges Zone (8 schools)</p> <p>Burges High Ross Middle MacArthur Elem. Inter Boham</p>	<p>Bowie Zone (9 schools)</p> <p>Bowie High Guillen Middle Alamo Elementary Aoy Elementary Beall Elementary Douglass Elementary Hart Elementary Roosevelt Elementary</p> <p>El Paso Zone (5 schools)</p> <p>El Paso High Wiggs Middle Lamar Elementary Mesita Elementary Vilas Elementary</p> <p>Jefferson</p>	<p>Coronado Zone (8 schools)</p> <p>Coronado High Morehead Middle Dr. Green Elementary Johnson Elementary Putnam Elementary Rivera Elementary Western Hills Elementary Zach White Elementary</p> <p>Franklin Zone (8 schools)</p> <p>Franklin High Dr. Hornedo Middle Lincoln Middle Guerrero Elementary Kohlberg Elementary Lindbergh Elementary Polk Elementary Roberts Elementary</p> <p>Districtwide Schools</p> <p>Raymond Telles Academy</p>

<p>Center</p> <p>Future Schools</p> <p>Northeast High School at Logan Heights (2000)</p>	<p>Elementary Celilo Vista</p> <p>Elementary Hawkins</p> <p>Elementary Hillside</p> <p>Elementary Hughey</p> <p>Elementary</p> <p>Districtwide Schools</p> <p>Sunset High</p> <p>Highland School</p> <p>Occupational Center</p> <p>Regional Day School</p> <p>For the Deaf</p> <p>Future Schools</p> <p>Moreno Elementary (1999)</p>	<p>Zone (6 schools)</p> <p>Jefferson High</p> <p>Henderson Middle</p> <p>Alta Vista Elementary</p> <p>Burleson Elementary</p> <p>Clardy Elementary</p> <p>Cooley Elementary</p> <p>Zavala Elementary</p> <p>Districtwide Schools</p> <p>Silva Health Magnet High*</p> <p>Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy</p> <p>El Paso Psychiatric Center</p> <p>San Jacinto Adult Learning Center</p>	
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**A school within Jefferson High Source: EPISD.*

The board has employed an interim superintendent since September 1998, and has contracted with a local firm to conduct a search for a new superintendent. The board anticipates filling the vacant position in spring 1999.

FINDING

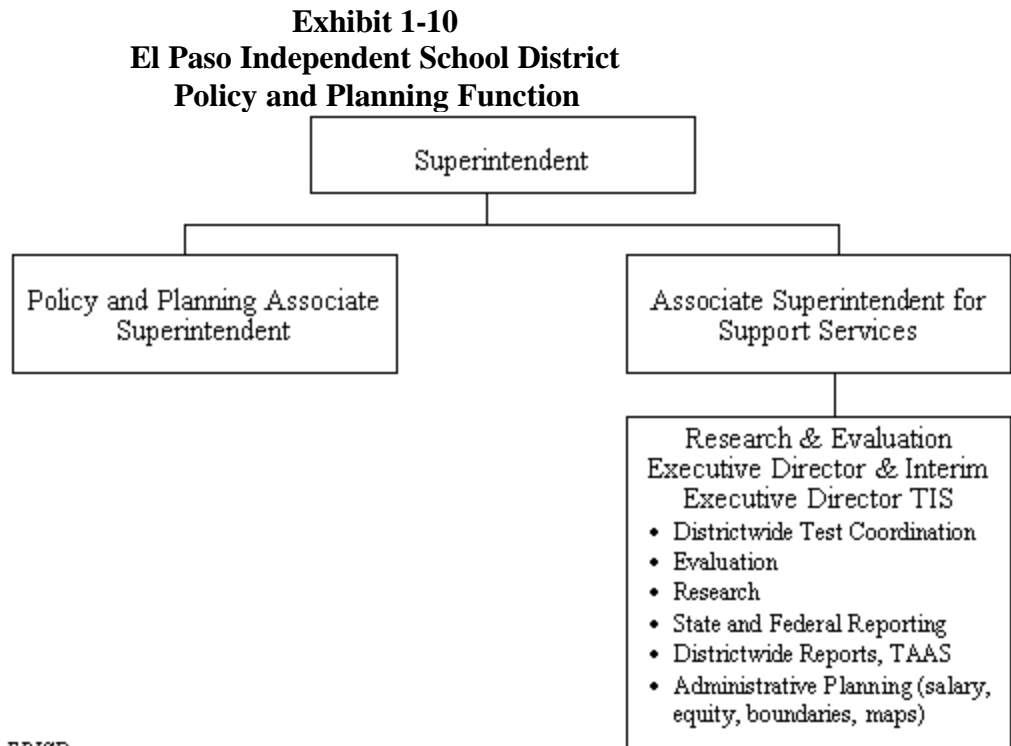
EPISD established a Policy and Planning Unit in the 1997-98 school year to coordinate the districtwide planning effort and assist in the development and monitoring of EPISD policy. This unit reports directly to the

superintendent. The Policy and Planning Unit has only two staff members, an associate superintendent for Policy and Planning and a secretary.

The associate superintendent for Policy and Planning is primarily responsible for developing, updating, and coordinating EPISD policy. The associate superintendent is a member of the Boundary Review Committee and facilitates the District Educational Improvement Committee meetings. The associate superintendent also coordinates the development of the District Improvement Plan.

Since the unit's inception, the associate superintendent for Policy and Planning has not been involved in several key areas of the district's planning process. Instead, the Research and Evaluation Unit that reports to the associate superintendent for Support Services conducts many districtwide planning functions. This unit is responsible for districtwide test coordination, evaluation, research, state and federal reporting, and the development of many of the planning reports used by the district, such as enrollment projections and salary summaries.

Exhibit 1-10 provides an overview of EPISD's policy and planning function.



Source: EPISD.

Many districts of EPISD's size combine their policy, research, and evaluation activities into a unit that reports directly to the superintendent.

The primary functions of a Policy, Research and Evaluation Unit typically include the gathering and analysis of information needed for districtwide planning, program evaluations, and the preparation of reports that inform staff and board members about critical programs.

Recommendation 8:

Create one Policy, Research, and Evaluation Unit and eliminate the position of associate superintendent for Policy and Planning.

A Policy, Research, and Evaluation Unit would coordinate the district's policy, planning, research, and evaluation activities through a single office, thereby providing comprehensive policy and planning services to district administrators. The new unit should develop a comprehensive operational plan that includes a schedule for policy review and development; an agenda for annual reports to the board, staff and community; and a five-year plan for evaluating district programs. An executive director should head the office and report directly to the superintendent. This would allow the district to eliminate the position of associate superintendent for Policy and Planning. The secretary to the associate superintendent should be reassigned to the new unit.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent recommends establishing one Policy, Research, and Evaluation Unit that reports directly to the superintendent.	April 1999
2.	The board approves the new unit.	May 1999
3.	The executive director of Policy, Research, and Evaluation, in conjunction with the Education Leadership Team, establishes a comprehensive plan for services to be provided by the unit. The plan should include a comprehensive plan for operation that includes a schedule for policy review and development; an agenda for annual reports to the board, staff and community; and a five-year plan for evaluating district programs.	June - August 1999
4.	The superintendent eliminates the position of associate superintendent for Policy and Planning.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The Research and Evaluation unit's responsibilities could be expanded to coordinate policy development with the transfer of one secretary from the existing Policy and Planning Unit to the new unit. Eliminating the position of associate superintendent for Planning and Policy would save \$104,985

each year beginning in 1999-2000 (\$90,504 actual salary plus 16 percent benefits).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Create one Policy, Research and Evaluation Unit and eliminate position of associate superintendent for Policy and Planning	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$104,985	\$104,985

FINDING

EPISD has contracted for legal services with the same legal firm for more than 20 years. One attorney is assigned as the district's primary representative, but other attorneys in the firm are engaged to meet specific needs such as special education hearings.

The contracted attorney works directly with the superintendent but reports to the board. The attorney is primarily responsible for representing the board's legal interests. In many instances, this attorney is able to represent the combined interests of the board and the district. When a conflict of interest has become apparent, the superintendent traditionally has assumed responsibility for retaining alternative counsel. Some districts hire two attorneys, one assigned to the board and the other to the superintendent, to manage their respective legal issues.

Exhibit 1-11 shows EPISD's legal expenses for fiscal 1996, 1997, and 1998. In each year, the legal expenses for the district rose. Between 1996 and 1998, the legal fees rose by more than \$100,000.

**Exhibit 1-11
Legal Fees Paid By Episd, Fiscal 1996-1998**

Period	Original Budget	Adjusted Budget
1996	\$403,000	\$532,290
1997	\$455,000	\$573,464
1998	\$350,000	\$634,390

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 1-12 shows the cost of legal services in several functional areas.

Exhibit 1-12
EPISD Legal Fees by Functional Area

Functional Area	Total Cost
EEOC Claims	\$47,313
Litigation	183,533
Special Education Litigation	88,829
Other Claims	4,384
Subtotal Litigation/Claims	\$324,059
Unit - Specific:	
Communications Unit	2,448
Employee Relations	12,597
Finance, Budget & Accounting	2,558
Human Resources	50,544
Instructional Areas	37,137
Policy & Planning	5,560
Research & Evaluation	1,992
Special Education	24,491
Special Services (Non-Special Ed)	1,789
Superintendent/Board	68,372
Technology	16,468
Subtotal Unit-Specific/Incidental Costs	\$223,956
Incidental Costs	\$14,694
Grand Total Costs by Functional Area	\$562,209

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 1-12 shows that the district spent about \$222,000 in legal fees in 1997-98 for routine legal services in areas such as human resources, employee relations, instructional areas, special education, and the superintendent or board. Hiring an attorney to handle routine legal services can be more cost-effective than contracted legal services. Moreover, district attorneys often assist outside attorneys to perform some of the research needed to prepare specific court cases. Corpus Christi ISD (CCISD), for example, employs two attorneys. CCISD reports that it has already reduced legal fees by \$400,000 (22 percent) by relying on in-

house attorneys instead of contracted legal services and anticipates additional savings when several long-standing lawsuits are concluded.

Recommendation 9:

Hire two attorneys to reduce the district's legal costs.

One attorney should report to the board and the other to the superintendent. This would eliminate any potential for conflict of interest and provide for an appropriate check and balance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board recommends that the positions of board attorney and staff attorney be created.	March 1999
2.	The executive director of Human Resources ensures that job descriptions are developed and advertised.	April 1999
3.	The positions are filled.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of hiring an attorney for the district to handle routine legal services and assist with litigation is based on a base salary of \$82,446 plus 16 percent benefits. Based on this estimate, the cost of hiring two attorneys would be a total of \$191,274. Since EPISD could potentially reduce its costs for legal services by as much as 50 percent the anticipated reduction in contracted services is \$300,000 less the cost of the two positions (\$191,274), for a total savings of \$108,726.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire two attorneys	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$108,726	\$108,726

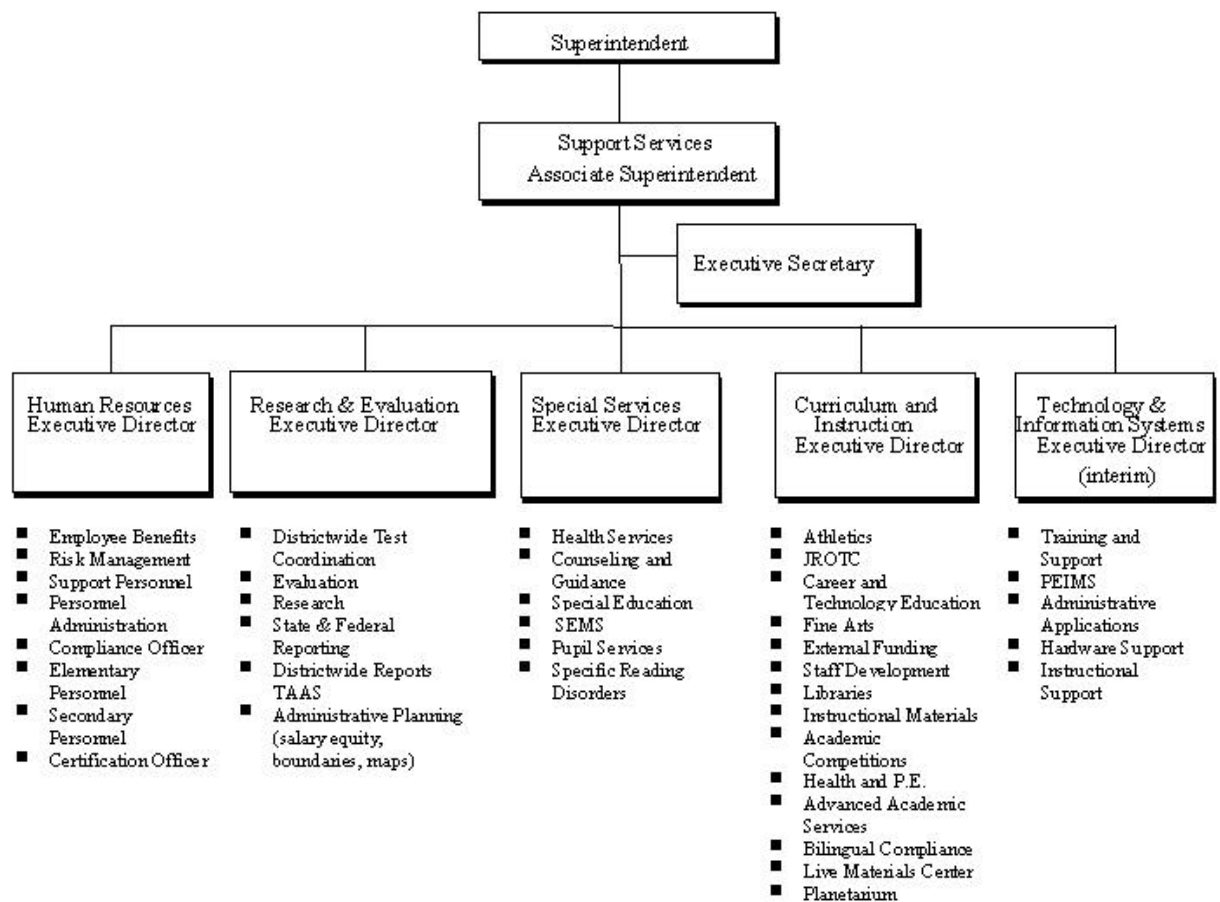
FINDING

The effective management of curriculum and instruction services is critical to ensure that students in all schools have the opportunity to succeed in school and have the resources needed for high-quality instruction. Since EPISD's reorganization into regions, its organization of curriculum and instruction services has been evolving. Many of the curriculum and instruction functions formerly assigned to central office now are assigned to the regions. A lack of standard operating procedures among the regions, however, has created some inconsistencies leaving

staff, parents, and teachers confused. This confusion has been exacerbated by a lack of written procedures delineating individual responsibilities and areas of joint responsibilities for the regions. In an effort to refine the regional concept, the regional associate superintendents are developing procedural bulletins to address this confusion.

At EPISD's central office, the Curriculum and Instruction Department reports to the associate superintendent of Support Services. As shown in **Exhibit 1-13**, this associate superintendent is also responsible for the departments of Human Resources, Research and Evaluation, Special Services, and Technology and Information Systems. Regional curriculum and instruction services are assigned to the four regional associate superintendents.

Exhibit 1-13
El Paso Independent School District
Office of the Associate Superintendent for Support Services



Source: EPISD.

The district needs clear definitions of the roles, functions, and accountability relationships for instruction of the district office, regions, and schools. Interviews indicate that the accountability relationships existing between the district office and regions are unclear at best. Special education directors, for example, report to the regional associate superintendents, who are responsible for special education services for schools in their regions. The executive director of Special Services, however, has primary responsibility for monitoring the accountability of special education in meeting state and federal guidelines for services. This executive director, however, does not evaluate the staff responsible for delivering special education programs.

Such inconsistencies in reporting relationships, roles, and responsibilities are probably due, at least in part, to two factors: the regional concept is in the initial stages of implementation, and the reorganization occurred without a detailed transitional plan for curriculum and instruction services.

Although the old central office was dismantled and downsized, the current positions are not grouped into clear functional arrangements with distinct accountability relationships. Ideally, the central office should set standards, develop procedures for implementing districtwide policies, and monitor compliance. The regions should facilitate the provision of services to schools. Under the current structure, schools and the support personnel at the district and regional offices must attempt to meet the expectations of several associate superintendents. In special education, for example, ultimate responsibility for the program is assigned to the associate superintendent for Support Services, but many of the staff assigned to these programs are assigned to the regional associate superintendent. School-based staff report that they receive conflicting information as a result of such confusing managerial relationships.

To ensure continuity in educational programs, many districts place the instructional function under one deputy superintendent. By creating clear lines of authority, the deputy superintendent can integrate all aspects of instruction into one cohesive model. This is not the case in EPISD. As already noted, the associate superintendent for Support Services has oversight responsibility for several noninstructional functions including Human Resources, Research and Evaluation, and Technology and Information Systems. Yet this associate superintendent does not have oversight responsibility for the regions or schools and cannot therefore create clear lines of authority and responsibilities.

Recommendation 10:

Reclassify the position of associate superintendent for Support Services as deputy superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and

Support Services, and assign supervision of the regional associate superintendents to this position.

This organizational arrangement would ensure clear accountability relationships. The Human Resources, Research and Evaluation, and Technology Information Systems units should be reassigned to the associate superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent recommends the reclassification of the associate superintendent and assignment of the supervision of regional superintendents to this position.	March 1999
2.	The board approves the reclassification.	April 1999
3.	The executive director of Human Resources ensures that job descriptions are modified to reflect these changes in reporting relationships.	April 1999

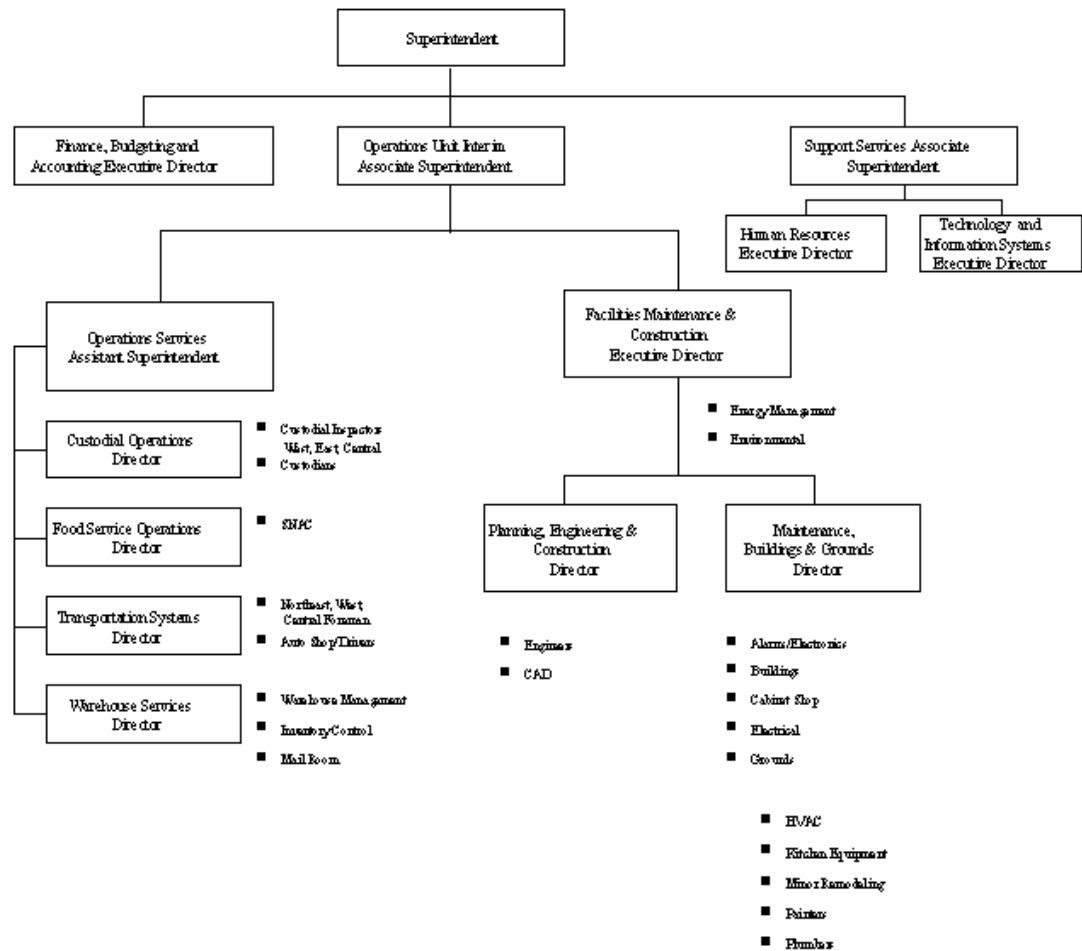
FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished within existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD's noninstructional functions are scattered. **Exhibit 1-14** shows that the departments of Facilities, Maintenance and Construction, and Operations report to an interim associate superintendent for Operations. An assistant superintendent for Operational Services oversees four directors in the areas of custodial operations, food service operations, transportation systems, and warehouse services. The executive director of Finance, Budgeting and Accounting reports directly to the superintendent while the Human Resources and Technology and Information Systems Units report to the associate superintendent of Support Services.

**Exhibit 1-14
El Paso Independent School District
Operations Unit Organizational Chart**



Source: EPISD.

School-based staff expressed a good deal of concern over communications among the administrative departments, the regions, and the schools. A majority of administrators (61 percent) surveyed by TSPR indicated that major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes, leading to unnecessary delays. Almost two-thirds of the principals (65 percent) concurred with the administrators on this issue. As a result of bottlenecks and fragmented operations, principals interviewed by TSPR stated that school personnel must spend valuable instructional time reconciling inconsistent or conflicting information from the central office.

Recommendation 11:

Align the administrative services of the district under one associate superintendent.

The district's administrative and support functions should focus on meeting the needs of schools and the students they serve. This

organizational arrangement would assist the district in developing clear communication and service procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

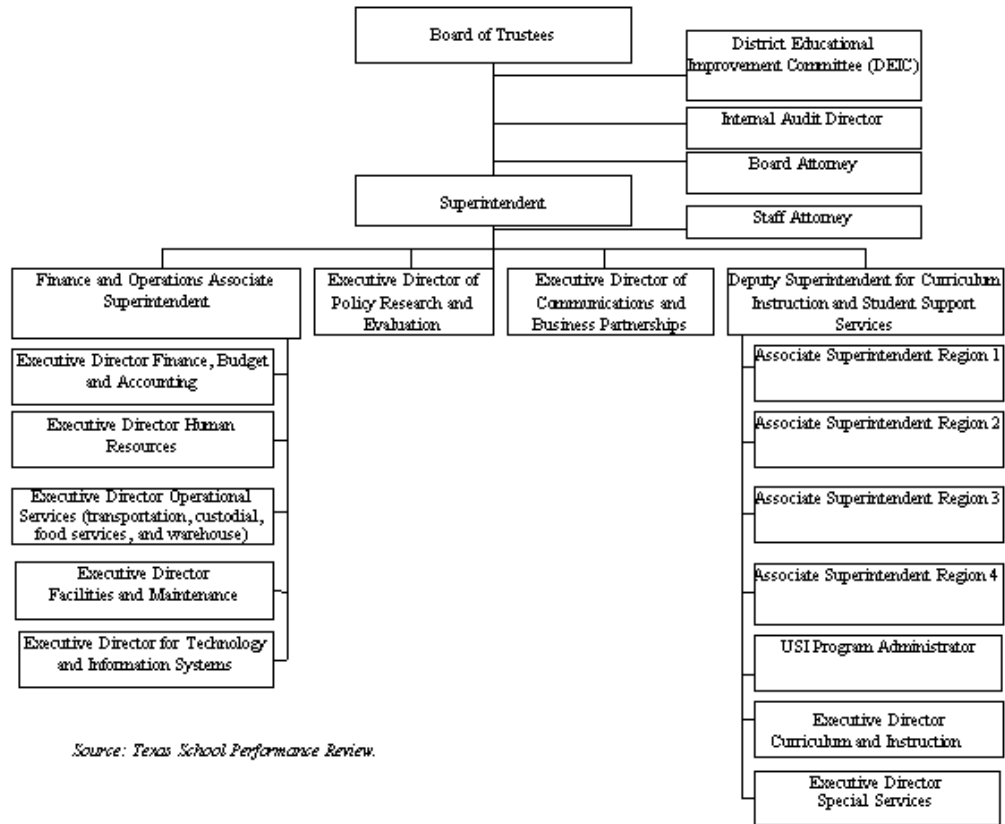
1.	The superintendent recommends the reorganization to the board.	March 1999
2.	The board approves the reorganization.	April 1999
3.	The executive director of Human Resources ensures that the job descriptions are modified to reflect the changes in reporting relationships.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources, and should increase EPISD's organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

A summary of the reorganization for Instructional and Operational Services appears in **Exhibit 1-15**

Exhibit 1-15 Summary of Proposed EPISD Organizational Changes



Source: Texas School Performance Review.

FINDING

The executive director for Employee Relations manages the district's employee relations activities including its grievance process. The executive director reports to the superintendent and has other, unrelated assignments such as Police Services and employee travel. In most districts, the employee relations function is part of the Human Resources Department.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-16**, grievances on the part of school personnel are increasing. Yet many administrators described the unions as having a reputation for supporting "low-quality" employees. The board consistently supports union positions, to the point of allowing employees who work 7.5 hours to be paid for eight.

Exhibit 1-16
Summary of Grievances
1996-98

Year	Total Number of Grievances
1996-97	42

Source: EPISD.

EPISD has an extensive local policy for addressing employee grievances. Local Policy BG provides employees with a process for the prompt and equitable resolution of grievances that cannot be resolved by other administrative means. Best practices in other districts provide for actions to reduce the number of employee grievances and the associated costs. A mediation step in the grievance process, for example, can help to promote more settlements before a formal hearing. Similarly, training in consensus negotiation may be useful. Federation Mediation and Consolidation Service is one company that provides training in interest-based bargaining, a communication method designed to assist districts in improving labor-management and community relationships as well as organizational effectiveness.

Interest-based bargaining training provides techniques in non-adversarial communication and promotes a joint problem-solving approach for resolving disagreements. Interest-based negotiation techniques have been used effectively in many schools systems across the nation.

Corpus Christi ISD has worked with its unions to develop a negotiation process that is less adversarial and supports improved instruction. The 12 unions operating in CCISD have elected one representative to serve as liaison for all the unions. The district gives this person, who is the president of the Corpus Christi Federation of Teachers, a seat at every board meeting and decision-making action of the district. In turn, the unions work with poorly performing employees and assist with termination proceedings when they become necessary.

Recommendation 12:

Establish policies and procedures whereby unions and the board and administration can work together.

Following the CCISD model, EPISD should establish systems for working cooperatively with area unions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent reviews practices and policies from successful districts like CCISD. Furthermore, the executive director for Employee Relations should be reclassified as a director and assigned to the Human Resources Unit where he can work	March 1999
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	collaboratively with employees and the department.	
2.	The superintendent and executive director of Employee Relations recommend policies and procedures to the board for review.	May 1999
3.	The superintendent reassigns the executive director to Human Resources and changes the position title to director.	June 1999
4.	The superintendent and the director of Employee Relations implement the policies and procedures.	July, August 1999
5.	The director of Employee Relations and other appropriate employees attend training programs and support better relations with employee organizations.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The total cost of this training over a three-year period would be \$4,500.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Provide training in interest-based negotiations	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The board, as a legal agent of the State of Texas, has specific statutory powers and duties. According to Texas Education Code 11.151, the board has the legal power and duty to:

- govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district.
- adopt rules and bylaws.
- adopt a policy to establish a district and campus-level planning and decision-making process.
- publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including campus performance objectives and the progress of each campus toward those objectives.

EPISD's current goals and objectives are shown in **Exhibit 1-17**.

Exhibit 1-17 EPISD Goals and Objectives

1 Increase the educational achievement of all students.
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Objective 1: To improve TAAS scores at each school so that each campus increases one academic level within the state accountability system, such as Acceptable to Recognized or Recognized to Exemplary.

Objective 2: To maintain or exceed the state standard of a 94 percent attendance rate.

Objective 3: To continue and refine newly implemented interventions and instructional programs targeting Grades 1, 6 and 9 that should result in a 10 percent increase in the passing rate prior to summer school.

Objective 4: To increase to a minimum of 70 percent the number of students taking the SAT/ACT on each high school campus and 50 percent of that 70 percent mastering one of the exams.

Objective 5: To establish standards for grade levels not assessed by TAAS.

Objective 6: To implement a reading program for grades K-3, with kindergarten students reading first-grade material by the end of the school year and all students able to read by third grade.

2. Create and support effective organizational structure and interactions that ensure positive and efficient operation of the district.

Objective 1: To implement staff development opportunities to promote interschool and interlevel networking throughout the district.

Objective 2: To involve concerned parents, teachers, students, community leaders, and school administrators in the implementation of change processes to improve the quality of education.

Objective 3: To monitor the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the management and operations of the district and each region.

Objective 4: To continue providing training that meets the needs of all employee groups to enhance their contribution toward improving student achievement.

3. Provide a safe and supportive environment so that all students and personnel can be productive.

Objective 1: To use alternative financing to construct new facilities and make appropriate renovations where needed.

Objective 2: To consider historical architecture, energy conservation, demographic trends, and community input for the development of construction, renovation, and maintenance projects.

4. Expand opportunities for parents, business, community, and schools to work together to improve education.

Objective 1: To support high quality cooperative ventures with private and public enterprises to identify and develop students' consumer, entrepreneurial, and workforce readiness skills.

Objective 2: To continue to identify, implement, and evaluate extended educational and recreational programs so that schools may serve as community centers.

Objective 3: To provide additional opportunities for parents to become advocates for public education through involvement with the school/community decision-making process

Objective 4: To promote the dissemination of positive and accurate information about the district throughout the school year.

C5. Develop opportunities for the creation of new programs and services to meet the future needs of students.

Objective 1: To research, implement, and evaluate innovative programs that address challenges academic standards for lifelong, marketable skills for all students.

Objective 2: To develop, implement, and evaluate innovative programs and accelerated programs that address the effective and academic needs of the at-risk students as soon as identified at all grade levels.

Objective 3: To research, implement, and evaluate innovative programs targeted at schools performing low.

Objective 4: To provide for the consistent implementation of the PreK-12 district discipline management plan (Student Code of Conduct).

Objective 5: To continue and expand successful practices in drug and violence intervention in each school/community.

6. Establish effective use of technological resources throughout the District.

Objective 1: To implement the EPISD Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education.

Objective 2: To secure funding to implement the EPISD Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education

Source: EPISD.

The board and DEIC have not worked collaboratively in developing district goals. For example, the board and DEIC did not reach consensus on the final version of EPISD's goals and objectives. In interviews with TSPR staff, DEIC members indicated that Goal 1, Objective 6 (**Exhibit 1-17**) was unrealistic. Furthermore, the DEIC members frequently do not have an opportunity to respond to new policies until the final stages of the policy draft because they are not involved in the formulation of policies. DEIC members report that the vast majority of their agenda includes presentations from administrators on concepts, policies, and directions that already have been developed by central office staff. DEIC members do not play an active role in the development stages.

Recommendation 13:

Actively engage the District Educational Improvement Committee in the district's policy and goal development process.

This recommendation should ensure that the development of goals and local board policies is based on the needs of schools and students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The associate superintendent should develop an annual calendar for policy development.	June 1999
2.	The associate superintendent should solicit policy feedback from the DEIC.	July 1999
3.	The DEIC should review potential policy changes with school-based committees.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's executive staff meets weekly with the superintendent as the educational leadership team. The members of the Educational Leadership Team include all administrators who report directly to the superintendent. The regional associate superintendents also meet weekly to coordinate cross-regional activities and initiatives. All principals meet monthly with the associate superintendent in their region to discuss school administrative issues and information related to districtwide instructional initiatives and mandates.

The principals are not included in the educational leadership team. Consequently, many critical decisions that effect the overall operation of schools are made without direct input from the administrators closest to the students. School staff told TSPR that the recent budget cuts, occurred without adequate school input. Regional associates meet with principals in their regions once a month and districtwide every two months.

Recommendation 14:

Assign principal representation to the educational leadership team and review all potential decisions for their impact on schools, instruction, and students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The educational leadership team develops a process for soliciting principal representation.	May 1999
2.	The educational leadership team completes the solicitation process.	June 1999

3.	Principals attend educational leadership team meetings.	Beginning on September 1999
4.	Principals solicit feedback from peers.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation should have no fiscal impact.

E. School Management and Site-Based Decision-Making

CURRENT SITUATION

Effective schools meet the needs of communities they serve. Population diversity, the economic and ethnic background of the students, special service requirements, the adequacy of facilities, staffing resources, and the instructional priorities of the community all help to shape the unique organization of each school.

State law requires a site-based model for decision-making in Texas school districts. The Texas Education Code specifies many requirements for site-based decision-making, including the following:

- A district improvement plan and campus improvement plans must be developed, reviewed, and revised annually.
- District and campus performance objectives that, at minimum, support state goals and objectives must be approved annually.
- Administrative procedures or policies must clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, and district-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization.
- District and school-based decision-making committees must be actively involved in establishing administrative procedures.
- Systematic communications measures must be put in place to obtain broad-based community, parental, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district-level committee.
- Administrators regularly consult with the district-level committee on the planning, operations, supervision and evaluation of the district's educational program.

Site-based decision-making provides a mechanism for teachers, parents, and community members to assist central and campus administrators in improving student performance.

FINDING

The current EPISD staffing formula for its schools provides guidelines for assigning teaching and non-teaching staff. For example, current staffing requirements for assistant principals state that:

- Elementary campuses are assigned one full-time assistant principal at each elementary campus. When a school's enrollment exceeds 1,000, a second assistant principal is assigned.

- Elementary- intermediate and middle school campuses receive one assistant principal for each campus. When school enrollment exceeds 1,200, a second assistant principal is assigned.
- High school campuses receive three assistant principals at each campus. When a school's enrollment exceeds 2,600, a fourth assistant principal is assigned.

Exhibit 1-18 shows the wide variance in the ratio of assistant principals to students. Bonham Elementary, for example, with 270 students, has one assistant principal-and so does MacArthur, with 860 students. Only Lamar Elementary has a student population exceeding 1,000 students, and therefore two assistant principals.

Exhibit 1-18
Total Number and Ratio of Students per Assistant Principal Positions
By Location

School	Total Number of Students	Number of Assistant Principals	Ratio of Students per Assistant Principals
<i>High Schools</i>			
Andress High School	2,095	3	698
Austin High School	1,886	4	472
Bowie High School	1,524	3	508
Burges High School	1,568	3	523
Coronado High School	2,157	3	719
El Paso High School	1,204	3	401
Franklin High School	2,445	3	815
Irvin High School	2,131	3	710
Jefferson High School	1,168	3	389
Silva Health High School	749	1	749

<i>Middle Schools</i>			
Bassett Middle School	1,115	3	372
Canyon Hills Middle School	982	2	491
H. E. Charles Middle School	603	2	302
Cordova Middle School	782	2	391
Guillen Middle School	1,008	3	336
Henderson Middle School	1,152	3	384
Dr. Hornedo Middle School	1,527	3	509
Lincoln Middle School	1,039	2	520
Magoffin Middle School	974	2	486
Morehead Middle School	1,172	2	586
Richardson Middle School	702	2	351
Ross Middle School	806	2	403
Terrace Hills Middle School	695	2	348
Wiggs Middle School	803	2	402
<i>Elementary Schools</i>			
Alamo	397	1	397
Alta Vista	575	1	575
Aoy	497	1	497

Beall	679	1	679
Bliss	753	1	753
Bonham	270	1	270
Bradley	654	1	654
Burleson	464	1	464
Burnet	457	1	457
Cielo Vista	291	1	291
Clardy	751	2	376
Clendenin	432	1	432
Coldwell	526	1	263
Collins	639	1	639
Cooley	768	1	768
Crockett	658	1	658
Crosby	610	1	610
Douglass	627	1	627
Dowell	424	1	424
Fannin	689	1	698
Dr. Green	540	1	540
Guerrero	788	1	788
Hart	510	1	510
Hawkins	380	1	380
Hillside	676	1	676
Houston	503	1	503
Hughey	641	1	641
Johnson	662	1	662
Kohlberg	816	1	816
Lamar	1,027	2	514
Lee	865	1	865
Lindbergh	602	1	602
Logan	803	1	803

MacArthur	860	1	430
Mesita	564	1	564
Milam	245	1	245
Newman	769	1	769
Dr. Nixon	742	1	742
Park	465	1	465
Polk	738	1	738
Putnam	632	1	632
Rivera	537	1	537
Roberts	866	1	866
Roosevelt	360	1	360
Rusk	811	1	811
Schuster	293	1	293
Stanton	680	1	680
Travis	411	1	411
Vilas	456	1	456
Wainwright	656	1	656
Western Hills	366	1	366
Whitaker	638	1	638
White	663	1	666
Zavala	382	1	382

Source: EPISD.

Note: Special schools not included in this analysis.

Exhibit 1-18 shows that several schools have very high ratios of students per assistant principal. Three high schools-Coronado, Franklin, and Silva Health-have more than 700 students per assistant principal. Similarly, seven elementary schools have a student to assistant principal ratio exceeding 700. If assistant principals are to provide appropriate support to principals in and teachers, a more equitable ratio should be maintained across the district.

Moreover, EPISD's schools do not have enough flexibility in determining their staffing structure. Staffing allocations are determined annually by the

Staff Allocation Committee. School-based staff reported to TSPR that they have little or no input in this process. Similarly, schools are unable to request alternative staffing allocations to assist them in implementing their Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs).

Principals also report that they lack adequate flexibility in managing other resources necessary to operate their schools. Dollars are retained at both the central office and the regional levels and principals must request additional funds throughout the year to cover their operating expenses. Expenditures of most training funds, for example, require regional or district level approval. Similarly, custodial supplies could be budgeted by individual schools instead of through centralized requests.

Recommendation 15:

Move budget authority for campus-based staffing to the individual campuses and refine staffing allocation formulas to give principals the flexibility they need to adjust staffing patterns within their budgets.

This recommendation would assist schools in achieving the goals set forth in their CIPs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assigns a task force to review the staffing allocation formulas and current budget system.	June 1999
2.	The task force meets to examine school-based allocations and current budget system.	July - October 1999
3.	The task force submits recommendations to the educational leadership team.	November 1999
4.	The educational leadership team reviews the recommendations and makes necessary modifications.	December 1999
5.	The superintendent submits the recommendations to the board.	January 2000
6.	The board approves the plan to reallocate resources to schools.	March 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Texas Education Code Section 11.061 authorizes school boards to create committees to facilitate their operations. Committees formed by boards must comply with the state's Open Meetings Act.

The board meets with a Budget Review Committee to assist in planning the annual budget. Local Board Policy CE states that "budget planning is an integral part of program planning so that the budget may effectively express and implement all programs and activities of the district." To accomplish this task, the policy requires that the board approve an annual calendar and plan for budget review. The budget calendar coordinates consultation with employees and includes the following components:

- general educational goals
- specific program goals
- alternative ways of achieving program goals
- an evaluation system to determine how effectively the goals are being achieved

Each campus receives a per-student allocation of \$96 for high schools, \$86 for middle schools, and \$76 for elementary schools. The per-student allocations are used to purchase supplies, materials, and equipment needed to operate instructional programs and administer each campus. Principals provide information in developing the budgets for these per student allocations.

At the regional level, executive directors develop regional budgets. Each region is responsible for determining all additional budget allocations for its schools. Regional per-capita allotments include both general funds and special revenues to supplement instructional programs such as Gifted and Talented, Bilingual Education, and Special Education. Special revenues are allocated to the region for these programs based upon the number of students participating in each program in that region. A portion of the regional allocations are retained to operate regional offices and provide technical assistance to schools.

The budget process begins in November with the development of spending priorities, budget initiatives, and program goals centered on specific budget goals and objectives established by the Board of Trustees. The process ends in August with final adoption of the budget by the Board of Trustees.

Guidelines for the budget development process include timelines for actions by the following participants:

- Board of Trustees
- Superintendent

- District Education Improvement Council
- Budget Review Committee
- Executive director, Finance,
- Director, Budget
- Principals
- Executive directors
- Program Directors
- Associate and assistant superintendents
- El Paso Consultation Association

EPISD employees told TSPR that school-based employees and DEIC members have limited opportunities to participate in the budget development process. Although principals provide input on their per-student allocations, other budget decisions that affect schools are made at higher levels of the organization. For example, many employees stated that budget decisions on staffing and districtwide program initiatives are passed down through the administrative ranks without an adequate assessment of the impact on schools and students.

Interviews with central office directors, principals, and program administrators indicate that EPISD's budget development process has been highly centralized and that district and school-level administrators have had limited experience in preparing or working with budgets. As a result, many district administrators said they are unaware of the actual resources available to support their programs.

Recommendation 16:

Ensure participation of principals and District Educational Improvement Committee members in the budget development process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to ensure that the budget calendar includes a detailed schedule for principal and DEIC participation in the budget development process.	March 1999
2.	The superintendent submits a detailed budget calendar that includes opportunities for principal and DEIC participation.	August 1999
3.	The board reviews and approves the budget calendar.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented at no additional cost to the district.

FINDING

According to Board Policy LB, each high school, middle school, and elementary school in EPISD has a Campus Improvement Team (CIT). CITs participate in the development of campus improvement goals and Campus Improvement Plans. The central office and regions monitor the development of these plans through a review committee consisting of regional staff and representatives from the Research and Evaluation Unit.

TSPR's on-site review and its interviews with principals, staff, and community members revealed that site-based decision-making has not been uniformly implemented at all the schools. Interviews with various personnel indicated that an autocratic, top-down approach still exists at the district and regional levels. Furthermore, some schools maintain a similar top-down decision-making model. For example, the review process for CIPs does not include a process for CITs to respond to recommended changes in their plans. Instead, changes from the regional and central office are "passed down" as administrative requirements.

Principals and CIT members report that, although the vast majority of such changes are not substantive, school-based goals and objectives at times are changed to comply with district or regional standards. CIT members report that this process reduces their "ownership" of the final CIP. Finally, principals report that several hours of administrative and clerical time are required to make recommended grammatical and word changes required by the district and the region.

Recommendation 17:

Provide opportunities for Campus Improvement Team members to participate in making any recommended changes to Campus Improvement Plans, and reduce central and regional office editing of CIPs.

This recommendation would assist CITs in maintaining active involvement in any changes to their work. District and regional administrators should hold principals accountable for high quality CIPs that meet the unique needs of each campus.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Research and Evaluation Unit and region associate superintendents meet with schools.	Annually
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2. CITs provide input on changes.	Annually
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FISCAL IMPACT

No costs would be associated with this recommendation.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This chapter reviews EPISD's educational service delivery and support services in seven sections:

- A. Student Performance and Instructional Program Delivery
- B. Gifted and Talented Education
- C. Bilingual Education
- D. Special Education
- E. Compensatory Education/Title I
- F. Regional Day School for the Deaf
- G. Career and Technology Education

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD selected seven Texas school districts to serve as "peer districts" for comparative purposes: Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Socorro, and Ysleta. These districts share a number of similar characteristics. With the exception of Socorro, all are among the state's largest districts and for some years have been grouped for various data comparisons. Socorro was included due to its geographic proximity to EPISD. All of the districts are in urban settings and each has a minority enrollment in excess of 74 percent. In addition, the number of economically disadvantaged students exceeds 68 percent in all but Fort Worth and Corpus Christi ISDs (**Exhibit 2-1**).

Exhibit 2-1
Demographic Characteristics of EPISD
and Peer School Districts
1997-98

District	Student Enrollment	5 Year Enrollment Growth*	Racial/Ethnic Percentage				% Economically Disadvantaged
			% African American	% Hispanic	% Anglo	% Other	
Houston	210,988	6.5	34.0	52.4	10.7	2.9	73.1
Dallas	157,622	12.5	40.7	47.1	10.2	2.0	72.5
Fort Worth	76,901	6.4	32.9	39.5	25.1	2.5	57.6

El Paso	63,909	(0.4)	4.7	76.5	17.5	1.4	68.2
San Antonio	61,112	2.6	10.4	84.2	5.1	0.3	88.6
Ysleta	47,616	(5.3)	2.5	86.1	10.5	.08	68.9
Corpus Christi	40,975	(0.5)	5.9	68.4	24.4	1.3	55.3
Socorro	22,051	36.1	1.2	89.5	8.8	0.5	68.0
State	3,891,877	10.7	14.4	37.9	45.0	2.7	48.5

Source: Texas Education Agency.

*Snapshot '97, Texas Education Agency

EPISD's student scores on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) have improved over the past few years. Although EPISD's property value per student is considerably below the state average, meaning that EPISD is a relatively poor district, its share of students passing the TAAS is only slightly below the statewide average (**Exhibit 2-2**).

Exhibit 2-2
District Property Value per Pupil/ Percent of Students Passing the TAAS
EPISD Versus Peer Districts
1997-98 School Year

District Name	1997-98 Enrollment	1997-98 Property Value per Pupil	Rank by Value	Percent of Students Passing TAAS	Rank by Performance
Ysleta ISD	47,616	\$82,401	8	80.0%	1
Socorro ISD	22,051	\$82,404	7	74.0%	3
San Antonio ISD	61,112	\$96,936	6	56.5%	8
El Paso ISD	63,909	\$125,829	5	70.7%	4
Corpus Christ ISD	40,975	\$142,013	4	76.6 %	2
Fort Worth ISD	76,901	\$150,465	3	63.0%	6

Polk		77	106	139	124	137	153									
Putnam	50	76	109	104	92	90	82								27	
Rivera	40	66	85	79	81	82	82								9	
Roberts	87	159	149	119	110	121	101								26	
Roosevelt					118	122	99								12	
Rusk	87	140	111	129	133	119	86									
Schuster	24	49	43	48	45	39	41									
Stanton	69	117	104	99	92	83	92								17	673
Travis ²	44	72	75	52	57	56	35								14	
Vilas	43	74	69	65	77	60	50								6	
Wainwright	44	102	90	82	82	82	71									
Western Hills		45	63	56	72	54	59								15	
Whitaker	45	104	92	100	87	88	90								26	
White	26	65	116	101	114	124	107								14	
Zavala	38	54	55	55	63	63	51									
Total Elem	2,394	4,495	4,881	4,758	4,814	4,664	4,386	359	169	215					744	
Middle	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Other	Total
Bassett								390	378	350					9	
Canyon Hills								309	338	324					17	
Charles								164	206	212					16	
Cordova								287	239	245						
Guillen								168	375	442					33	
Henderson								347	378	398					29	
Hornedo								462	489	558					30	
Lincoln								340	337	342					18	
Magoffin								290	336	286					46	
Morehead								423	390	338					28	
Richardson								246	211	208					29	
Ross								249	262	265					38	
Terrace Hills								212	237	221					25	
Wiggs								224	262	297					7	

Total Middle									4,111	4,438	4,486					325	
Address												688	493	427	405	109	
Austin												723	444	389	352	8	
Bowie												536	406	269	275	58	
Burges												512	409	299	294	104	
Coronado												748	562	408	442	16	
El Paso												433	310	266	248		
Franklin												736	585	594	523	36	
Irvin												817	540	309	370	56	
Jefferson												389	314	240	223	12	
Total High												5,582	4,063	3,201	3,132	399	16,377
Special	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Other	Total	
Juvenile Center ³																106	
Reg Day Deaf															8	8	
Silva Health											229	219	162	142		752	
School age PC															83	83	
Sunset High											63	40	82	45		230	
Telles Academy								3	11	27	81	35	20	7	8	192	
Total Special								3	11	27	373	294	264	194	99	1,371	
District	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Other	Total	
	2,394	4,495	4,881	4,758	4,814	4,664	4,386	4,474	4,618	4,728	5,955	4,357	3,465	3,326	1,567	63,111	

¹Total includes 5 pupils at AEP not included in totals.

²Total includes 6 pupils at AEP not included in totals.

³EPISD does not indicate grade distribution for students in AEP at

Juvenile Center.

Source: EPISD Membership Report of September 14, 1998

Based on the latest information available from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) publication *Snapshots*, EPISD's total expenditures for instructional purposes in 1996-97 were lower than those of all but one of its peer districts and slightly lower than the state average. The district's percentage of its instructional budget expended on regular education was higher than any of its peer districts, state educational Region 19 (to which EPISD belongs), and the state average. Conversely, EPISD was among the lowest of its peers in the share of its instructional budget devoted to gifted and talented, career and technology, bilingual and English as a Second Language, and compensatory education programs (**Exhibit 2-4**). As indicated in **Exhibit 2-5**, EPISD's total instructional costs per student for 1997-98 were second-lowest among the peers; only Socorro spent less per student. While EPISD was among the highest in expenditures for transportation, it had one of the lowest costs per student for pupil services and plant maintenance and operation.

Exhibit 2-4
Instructional Expenditures in EPISD and Peer School Districts
1996-97

District	Total Expenditures Per Student	Percent Regular Educ.	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Educ.	Percent Career & Tech. Educ.	Percent Bilingual/ESL Educ.	Percent Compensatory Educ.
Houston	\$2,720	59	3	10	3	14	12
Dallas	\$2,888	63	2	9	4	3	19
Fort Worth	\$2,549	56	4	14	4	16	7
El Paso	\$2,516	77	0	11	2	1	8
San Antonio	\$3,049	56	1	19	3	12	9
Ysleta	\$2,693	73	0	12	4	1	9
Corpus Christi	\$2,664	76	0	13	4	0	7
Socorro	\$2,414	61	0	11	5	10	12
Region 19	\$2,579	72	0	10	3	4	9

State of Texas	\$2,733	71	2	12	4	4	8
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Source: Texas Education Agency.

Exhibit 2-5
Percent of Expenditures by Function
EPISD and Peer Districts
1997-98

Expenditure Category	State	El Paso ISD	Houston ISD	Dallas ISD	San Antonio ISD	Corpus Christi ISD	Ysleta ISD	Socorro ISD
Instruction	57.8	56.6	57.3	57.7	58.3	58.7	59.0	55.7
Instructional - Related Services	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.3	4.9	2.5	3.0	2.8
Instructional Leadership	1.4	2.3	0.9	1.5	1.7	2.3	1.6	1.3
School Leadership	5.8	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.2	6.4
Support Services - Student	4.4	4.6	4.9	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.6	6.0
Student Transportation	2.8	2.7	2.5	0.6	1.6	2.4	1.9	2.4
Food Services	5.6	6.1	6.4	5.9	6.8	5.3	5.3	5.8
Cocurricular/Extracurricular Activities	2.5	2.0	0.7	0.9	1.4	2.3	2.3	2.8
Central Administration	4.1	4.0	3.2	2.5	2.6	3.1	3.6	3.1
Plant Maintenance and Operations	11.2	10.0	12.0	13.4	9.5	10.9	10.7	11.1
Security and Monitoring Services	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.4	0.8	1.1	1.6
Data Processing Services	1.0	1.1	1.5	2.4	00.90.9	1.0	0.7	1.0
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$5,597	\$5,186	\$5,692	\$5,567	\$5,837	\$5,314	\$5,149	\$5,574

Source: Texas Education Agency.

During the 1997-98 school year, EPISD employed 4,062 teachers, 234 administrators, 645 professional support employees, 391 educational aides, and 2,509 auxiliary personnel. **Exhibits 2-6** and **2-7** provide additional data on EPISD staffing.

**Exhibit 2-6
Staff Information
EPISD and State
1997-98**

Category	Percent	
	EPISD	State
Staff		
Teachers	51.8	51.7
Professional Support	8.2	6.8
Campus Administration	2.5	2.5
Central Administration	0.4	0.8
Educational Aides	5.0	9.9
Auxiliary Staff	32.0	28.2
Total Minority	62.3	35.9
Turnover Rate (Teachers)	8.2	13.3
Race/Ethnicity (Teachers)		
African-American	3.0	8.2
Hispanic	46.3	15.8
White	50.0	75.2
Other	0.7	0.8
Degree Status (Teachers)		
No Degree	1.4	1.0
Bachelors Degree Only	76.2	73.0
Masters Degree	22.2	25.6
Doctorate Degree	0.1	0.4
Experience (Teachers)		
0 Years Experience	4.5	7.0
1-5 Years Experience	24.0	26.6
6-10 Years Experience	18.6	17.5
11-20 Years Experience	29.6	28.7
20+ Years Experience	23.2	20.1

Source: Texas Education Agency.

**Exhibit 2-7
Staff Information
EPISD and State
1997-98**

Staff Category	EPISD	State
Average Years of Experience (Teachers)	12.8	11.8
Average Years in District (Teachers)	10.5	8.0
Average Salary (Excluding Supplements)		
Beginning Teachers	\$24,150	\$24,736
1-5 Years Experience	\$26,079	\$26,787
6-10 Years Experience	\$28,715	\$30,811
11-20 Years Experience	\$35,457	\$37,240
Over 20 Years Experience	\$43,235	\$42,624
Average Salary (Excluding Supplements)		
Teachers	\$33,246	\$33,537
Professional Support	\$41,724	\$40,713
Campus Administration	\$50,303	\$52,030
Central Administration	\$71,139	\$62,946

Source: Texas Education Agency.

A. Student Performance and Instructional Program Delivery

To achieve effective instruction, a school district must have a sound instructional management system in place. Instructional administrators must be held accountable for ensuring that resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvement in student performance. Adequate planning and evaluation systems must be developed so that instructional program success can be guaranteed.

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills is a test used in Texas to measure student performance. It is administered in reading and mathematics in Grades 3-8 and 10; in reading and mathematics in Spanish in Grades 3 and 4; in writing in Grades 4, 8, and 10; and in science and social studies in Grade 8. End-of-course examinations are administered in Algebra I in grades 7-12 and in Biology I in Grades 8-12.

TEA's 1998 accountability standards for schools include four ratings: exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and low performing. For a school to receive an exemplary rating, at least 90 percent of its students as well as 90 percent of its African American, Hispanic, White, and economically disadvantaged students must pass the TAAS reading, writing, and mathematics subtests; the student attendance rate must be at least 94 percent; and the dropout rate must not be above 1 percent. To receive a rating of recognized or acceptable, the passing rate on each of the three subtests must be 80 percent and 40 percent, respectively, with an attendance rate of at least 90 percent. A school's annual dropout rate cannot exceed 3.5 percent for it to be rated as recognized or 6 percent to be rated as acceptable.

TEA provides information on TAAS results as well as other demographic, staffing, and financial data to school districts and the public annually through the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report. TSPR has used the AEIS report to compare the performance of EPISD students with those in the peer districts, the state as a whole, and in Region 19. The latest AEIS data available is for the 1997-98 school year.

FINDING

EPISD has made positive improvements in student performance as measured by the TAAS. In 1993-94, one EPISD school was rated exemplary, four were rated recognized, and 69 were rated acceptable. Based on the 1997-98 standard accountability ratings, four EPISD schools were exemplary, 19 schools were recognized, and 53 schools were rated acceptable. Only one EPISD school, Bowie High School in 1994-95, was rated low-performing during any of the five years between 1993-94 and 1997-98.

EPISD schools rated exemplary and recognized in 1993-94 and 1997-98 include:

	1993-94		1997-98
Exemplary	Polk Elementary	Guerrero Elementary Kohlberg Elementary Polk Elementary	Silva Health Magnet High
Recognized	Aoy Elementary Clendenin Elementary Lee Elementary Nixon Elementary	Alta Vista Elementary Cielo Vista Elementary Clendenin Elementary Dowell Elementary Fannin Elementary Green Elementary Hawkins Elementary Johnson Elementary Lee Elementary Lindbergh Elementary	Mesita Elementary Rivera Elementary Stanton Elementary Travis Elementary Wainwright Elementary Western Hills Elementary White Elementary MacArthur Elementary Hornedo Middle School

EPISD student performance as measured by TAAS passing rates improved between 1997 and 1998 on all subtests in all grades except math at Grade 3, writing at Grade 4, and reading at Grades 6 and 8. However, the 1998 passing rates for EPISD students remain lower on all subtests than the Region 19 average except the reading test at Grade 5; and lower than the state average except for the reading and math tests at Grade 5 (**Exhibit 2-8**).

Exhibit 2-8
Percentage of Students Passing TAAS
In EPISD, Region, and State
1997-98

	READING		MATH		WRITING		ALL TESTS	
	97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98
Grade 3								
District	78.3	84.1	80.6	79.2			70.4	73.8
Region 19	79.3	85.3	80.8	80.8			71.4	75.5
State	81.5	86.2	81.7	81.0			74.2	76.6
Grade 4								
District	80.7	88.8	80.8	85.5	84.8	84.1	68.0	73.9

Region 19	80.3	89.6	81.5	86.0	85.7	86.9	68.7	76.2
State	82.5	89.7	82.67	86.3	87.1	88.7	72.0	78.6
Grade 5								
District	81.8	89.4	81.3	89.8			73.5	84.3
Region 19	81.0	89.2	82.8	90.1			73.9	84.2
State	84.8	88.4	86.2	89.6			79.2	83.97
Grade 6								
District	77.6	76.9	73.1	75.2			67.1	67.1
Region 19	80.0	79.7	77.6	81.9			71.4	72.6
State	84.6	85.6	81.8	86.1			76.8	76.9
Grade 7								
District	81.0	81.7	73.4	77.5			68.4	72.2
Region 19	81.2	82.9	76.1	79.6			70.5	74.0
State	84.5	85.5	79.7	83.7			75.1	78.5
Grade 8								
District	81.7	81.6	70.3	77.1	77.3	78.7	52.7	55.5
Region 19	81.5	82.3	71.4	80.2	77.1	82.7	49.5	54.5
State	83.9	85.3	76.3	83.8	80.7	84.0	57.3	61.8
Grade 10								
District	78.5	82.6	58.2	66.7	80.0	83.5	52.9	60.8
Region 19	78.9	83.1	59.4	68.8	82.2	85.5	54.2	63.2
State	86.1	88.3	72.6	78.4	88.5	89.9	67.8	73.1
All Grades								
District	79.9	83.2	73.3	78.2	80.4	81.9	65.6	70.7
Region 19	80.4	84.2	75.1	80.6	81.4	84.8	66.9	73.0
State	84.0	87.0	80.1	84.2	85.3	87.4	73.2	77.7

Source: Texas Education Agency.

EPISD students continue to show improvement on the TAAS as they progress through the educational system. The percentage of students passing all sections of the TAAS in Grade 3 who also passed all sections

of the test two years later in Grade 5 rose from 81 percent to 89 percent in reading and 74 percent to 89 percent in math (**Exhibit 2-9**). Of 50 schools with comparable data, eight (16 percent) registered declines between 1996 and 1998 in passing rate in reading and three (6 percent) in math.

Exhibit 2-9
Percentage of Students in Same Class Passing TAAS
Spring 1996/Spring 1998

School	Reading			Math		
	Grade 3 1996	Grade 6 1998	Gain (Loss)	Grade 3 1996	Grade 6 1998	Gain (Loss)
Alamo	48	62	14	36	86	50
Alta Vista	83	90	7	80	100	20
Aoy ¹	69		N/A	83		N/A
Beall	72	79	7	80	80	-
Bliss	80	87	7	61	81	20
Bonham	90	85	(5)	83	82	(1)
Bradley	95	83	12	77	88	11
Burleson	61	74	13	33	88	55
Burnet	72	87	15	68	89	21
Cielo Vista	88	97	9	78	94	16
Clardy	81	89	8	75	95	20
Clendenin	80	97	17	68	94	26
Coldwell	81	93	12	70	93	23
Collins	73	78	5	69	75	6
Cooley	72	80	8	57	72	15
Crockett	70	89	19	73	77	4
Crosby	59	79	20	53	81	28
Douglass	54	96	42	65	96	31
Dowell	91	95	4	82	91	9
Fannin	76	92	16	65	93	28
Green	79	96	17	67	89	22

Guerrero	99	96	(3)	98	96	(2)
Hart	50	88	38	67	79	12
Hawkins	79	95	16	69	100	31
Highland ²						
Hillside	80	96	16	73	97	24
Houston	63	78	15	58	71	13
Hughey	79	82	3	74	87	13
Johnson	72	84	12	77	86	9
Kohlberg ³		96			97	
Lamar	71	94	23	65	92	27
Lee	84	89	5	74	89	15
Lindbergh	93	95	2	84	96	12
Logan	82	80	(2)	56	78	21
MacArthur	84	81	(3)	75	78	3
Mesita	82	98	16	71	97	26
Milam	68	89	21	68	89	21
Newman	81	85	4	77	85	8
Nixon	91	93	2	87	97	10
Polk	91	97	6	85	99	14
Putnam	93	88	(15)	93	92	1
Rivera	86	96	10	76	89	13
Roberts	69	82	13	49	73	24
Roosevelt ⁴		82			96	
Rusk	78	96	18	73	96	23
Schuster	82	85	3	90	90	
Stanton	90	81	(9)	93	89	(4)
Travis	56	80	24	52	83	31
Vilas	72	69	(3)	76	88	12
Wainwright	73	82	9	59	90	31
Western Hills	89	95	6	86	88	2

Whitaker	76	91	15	68	91	23
White	89	96	7	86	99	13
Zavala	88	81	(7)	88	93	5
District	81	89	8	74	89	15

¹ Grades PK-3 only.

² Special Education campus. All pupils exempt.

³ School opened in 1997-98.

⁴ Grades 4-6 only.

Source: EPISD.

EPISD uses a variety of means to improve student performance. Some of the district's schools, for instance, use "student item analysis reports" to identify individual student needs and make appropriate recommendations for tutoring and class groupings. Other programs initiated in various district schools include Time for Learning, Success for All, Reading Initiative, Accelerated Reader, Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS), Lightspan, Reading Recovery, Reading Renaissance, Sharon Wells Math, and TAAS Camps.

Efforts to improve TAAS scores also include training activities for teachers and administrators, such as workshops on balanced literacy, TAAS-taking skills, the writing process, reading and math assessment, and curriculum compacting, as well as teaching strategies for specific content areas, special education, and gifted and talented programs. In addition, individuals from outside the district have worked with district staff in such areas as techniques for motivating students and teaching the children of poverty; analyzing test data; reading and writing in Spanish; developing curriculum between and among the content areas, and coordination of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with TAAS. The district also has attempted to encourage parental involvement in various activities such as science fairs, TAAS reading and math nights, and reading circles.

COMMENDATION

The district continues to make improvements in meeting state-level instructional targets established through TAAS.

FINDING

In an effort to be more responsive to campus needs, EPISD recently reorganized and decentralized its central office administrative operations. A number of functions related to the district's operational aspects previously assigned to "central office" personnel were reassigned to newly

created regional offices. These offices provide instructional support for regular and special programs, coordinate staff training, and serve as both advocate and liaison for individual schools.

Interviews with teachers and school-level administrators and support staff indicate a high level of support for the regional system. Most interviewed felt that the organization has allowed the district to become more responsive to the needs of individual schools. The district's instructional facilitators have been more effective in their roles of providing assistance and training due in part to a reduction from 800 to 200 in the average number of teachers they serve. In addition, each facilitator now serves as the "contact" person for two or three schools. In this role, they provide assistance to schools on a variety of topics involving facilities, safety, payroll, and the like.

Principals feel they receive prompt and effective support. A number of interviewees commented that the response time from regional personnel had greatly improved over that experienced previously. When delays have occurred, most seem to have been the result of the involvement of other personnel in securing information needed or the resolution of a problem.

COMMENDATION

EPISD has created an administrative structure that is more responsive to the needs of its teachers and other school-based staff.

Finding

Well-written board policies regarding curriculum provide a focus for the entire school system by establishing common standards for what is to be written, taught, and evaluated. Such standards ensure the consistency of the district's curriculum and provide a systematic basis for decision-making across all instructional settings. Such policies must be clearly and thoroughly communicated to staff members and the community.

Strong curriculum management policies include statements that provide clear direction for the actions of staff; set a direction for the use of available resources to accomplish the organization's mission; and establish the processes and structures by which decisions will be made. Such policies should provide for greater local control of the curriculum by being responsive to community needs.

The district contracts for its policy development with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). Any policy designated in the policy manual as (Legal) or (Exhibit) has been developed by TASB to comply with various legal sources of authority defining local district

governance. Local policies developed by or for the district to reflect decisions of the local Board of Trustees are designated as (Local). Regular policy updates issued by TASB help ensure that the district's policies remain current.

TSPR examined all instruction-related board policies, exhibits, and administrative regulations in the district's policy manual. Sixty-five seemed relevant to providing an appropriate framework for curriculum management. The policies reviewed are listed in **Exhibit 2-10**.

Exhibit 2-10
Instructional-Related Board
Policies and Administrative Regulation

Policy	Policy Title
AE (Local)	Educational Philosophy/Mission Statement
AF (Exhibit)	Public Education Mission, Goals, and Objectives
BAA (Legal)	Board Legal Status: Powers and Duties
BBD (Legal)	Board Members: Training and Orientation
BBD (Local)	Board Members: Training and Orientation
BBD (Exhibit)	Board Members: Training and Orientation
BJA (Legal)	Superintendent: Qualifications and Duties
BJA (Local)	Superintendent: Qualifications and Duties
BQ (Legal)	Planning and Decision-Making Process
BQ (Local)	Planning and Decision-Making Process
BQA (Legal)	Planning and Decision-Making Process: District-Level
BQA (Local)	Planning and Decision-Making Process: District-Level
BQB (Legal)	Planning and Decision-Making Process: Campus-Level
BQB (Local)	Planning and Decision-Making Process: Campus-Level
BR (Legal)	Performance/AEIS report
CE (Local)	Annual Operating Budget
CE (Reg)	Annual Operating Budget

CMD (Legal)	Equipment and Supplies Management: Instructional Materials Care and Accounting
DAB (Local)	Employment Objectives: Objective Criteria for Personnel Decisions
DC (Legal)	Employment Practices
DC (Local)	Hiring Practices
DC (Reg)	Employment Practices
DMA (Legal)	Professional Development: Staff Development
DMA (Local)	Professional Development: Staff Development
DMB (Legal)	Professional Development: Special Programs Training
DP (Legal)	Personnel Positions
DP (Local)	Personnel Positions
EC (Legal)	School Day
EC (Local)	School Day
EC (Reg)	School Day
EEB (Legal)	Instructional Arrangements: Class Size
EEJA (Local)	Individualized Learning: Credit by Examination
EEP (Reg)	Instructional Arrangements: Lesson Plans
EFA (Local)	Instructional Resources: Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption
EFAA (Legal)	Instructional Materials Selection and Adoptions: Textbook Selection and Adoption
EFAA (Local)	Instructional Materials Selections and Adoption: Textbook Selection and Adoption
EFB (Local)	Instructional Resources: Library Media Programs
EGA (Legal)	Curriculum Development: Innovative and Magnet Programs
EHA (Legal)	Curriculum Design: Basic Instructional Program
EHAA (Legal)	Basic Instructional program: Required Instruction (All Levels)

EHAB (Legal)	Basic Instructional program: Required Instruction (Elementary)
EHAC (Legal)	Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary)
EHAD (Legal)	Basic Instructional Program: Elective Instruction
EHB (Legal)	Curriculum Design: Special Programs
EHBA (Legal)	Special Programs: Special Education Students
EHBB (Legal)	Special Programs: Gifted and Talented Students
EHBB (Local)	Special Programs: Gifted and Talented Students
EHBC (Legal)	Special Programs: Compensatory/Accelerated Services
EHBD (Legal)	Special Programs: Federal Title I Programs
EHBD (Local)	Special Programs: Tutorial, Remedial, and Compensatory Services
EHBE (Legal)	Special Programs: Bilingual Education/ESL
EHBE (Local)	Special Programs: Bilingual Education/ESL
EHBF (Legal)	Special Programs: Career and Technology Education
EHDA (Reg)	Extended Instructional Programs: Summer School
EHDC (Legal)	Extended Instructional Programs: Honors Program
EI (Legal)	Academic Achievement
EI (Local)	Academic Achievement
EIE (Legal)	Academic Achievement: Grading/Progress Reports to Parents
EIE (Local)	Academic Achievement: Promotion, Retention, and Placement
EK (Legal)	Testing Programs
EKB (Legal)	Testing Programs: State Assessment Program

EKB (Local)	Testing Programs: State Assessment Program
FB (Legal)	Equal Educational Opportunities
GNB (Legal)	Relations with Educational Entities: Regional Education Service Centers
GND (Legal)	Relations with Educational Entities: State Education Agency

Source: EPISD.

The Curriculum Management Audit Center, Inc. has identified 20 criteria contributing to good curriculum management policies. **Exhibit 2-11** provides information regarding TSPR's assessment of district policies concerning these criteria.

Exhibit 2-11
Assessment of District Policies
Related to Effective Curriculum Management

Criterion	Assessment
Aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum	Criterion not met. Although references exist in district policy to the provision of curriculum, no requirement exists that the written, taught, and tested curriculum be aligned.
Board adoption of the curriculum	Criterion not met. No policy requires that the curriculum be adopted by the local Board of Trustees.
Accountability for curriculum management through roles and responsibilities	Criterion not met. Existing policies refer to the development of courses of study but do not assign responsibility for management of the curriculum.
Systemwide long -range planning	Criterion not met. References to planning exist, but existing policies make no stated expectation concerning <i>long-range</i> planning.
Written curriculum for all areas	Criterion not met. Policies refer to the development of courses of study but do not specify a <i>written</i> curriculum for all subjects in all grades.
Periodic review of the curriculum	Criterion not met. Policies require the board's periodic review of the district's mission and goals as well as the superintendent's review of

	"the district's educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs." However, no policies specifically require any review of the <i>curriculum</i> .
Textbook/resource adoption by the board of trustees	Criterion met. Policies EFAA (Legal) and EFAA (Local) require board adoption of textbooks used in the district.
Predictability of written curriculum from one level to another	Criterion met. Policy EHAA (Legal) requires that all children participate in a "balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs" in kindergarten through Grade 12.
Curriculum linked from grade to grade within a school and between schools and from school to school within the system	Criterion not met. Policies require time for teaching and learning of the essential elements in specified courses in kindergarten through Grade 12, but no policies require a linkage in the curriculum within and among grades and schools in the district.
Staff training in the delivery of instruction	Criterion met only marginally. No policies refer specifically to training in the delivery of curriculum, but Policy DMA (Legal) refers to activities that "share effective strategies," "reflect on curricular and instructional issues," and "practice new methods."
Delivery of curriculum	Criterion not met. No policies refer to the delivery of curriculum.
Monitoring the delivery of curriculum	Criterion not met. Policy DP (Legal) requires the principal and Policy BJA (Legal) requires the superintendent to regularly consult with the campus- and district-level committees in the supervision of the educational programs. However, no specific requirement relative to monitoring the delivery of the curriculum exists.
Equitable access to the curriculum	Criterion not met. No policies refer to equitable access to curriculum.
Program and student assessment plan	Criterion partially met. Policy EKB (Legal) provides for a state-adopted student assessment plan but no policy addresses program assessment.
Use of assessment data to determine program and	Criterion met although only marginally. Policy BO (Legal) does not specifically address

curriculum effectiveness	the use of data but does require that campus improvement plans "assess the academic achievement for each student in the school using the academic excellence indicator system." Policy DP (Local) requires principals to evaluate the results of the district's testing program "to instruction programs and curriculum."
Reports to the board of trustees about program effectiveness	Criterion not met. The district has no policies in support of this criterion.
Program-centered budget	Criterion met. Policy CE (Local) requires that budget planning "be an integral part of program planning so that the budget may effectively express and implement all programs and activities of the district."
Resources tied to curriculum priorities	Criterion not met. No policies refer to resource allocation.
An environment to support curriculum delivery	Criterion not met. No policies support this criterion.
Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning	Criterion not met. No policies require that decisions intended to increase student learning be data-driven.

Source: Empirical Management Services.

TSPR found that a number of EPISD policies need review and revision. For example, of 78 policies in Section E: Instruction, only 45 (57.7 percent) contain dates indicating they had been issued by TASB and adopted or amended by the EPISD board during or after 1996. A policy with an adoption or revision date earlier than 1996 suggests that two legislative sessions (regular sessions of the Texas Legislature conducted during odd-numbered years) have been held since the policy was reviewed or updated. Only six of 26 policies issued prior to 1995 had dates to indicate any review or action had occurred since the original date of issuance. A clear direction for curriculum development and curriculum delivery will require both revision and the development of new district policies.

Recommendation 18:

Develop and adopt board policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director for Policy, Research, and Evaluation contacts the Policy Services of the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Curriculum Audit Center of the Texas Association of School Administrators and secures policies related to curriculum management.	June 1999
2.	The district contracts with an external consultant to provide direction for the project.	September 1999
3.	The executive director for Policy, Research, and Evaluation assigns the appropriate staff members policies related to curriculum management for review and modification.	September 1999 - March 2000
4.	These staff members submit to the superintendent of schools revised policies on curriculum management for review and recommendation to the Board of Trustees.	April 2000
5.	The Board of Trustees reviews the policies and considers their adoption as required by board policy.	May-June 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

An external consultant to assist with curriculum management policy review and development would cost \$6,000 based on two days in the district for discussions with staff plus six additional days for review and development at \$750 per day (8 days X \$750 per day). In-district expenses are calculated at \$200 per on-site day for a total of \$400. Expenses related to copying, faxing, telephone calls, etc., are estimated at \$500. Staff-associated costs could be handled with available resources.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Develop and adopt board policies to direct curriculum management	(\$6,900)	0	0	0	0

FINDING

Curriculum guides are intended to serve as work plans for teachers to use in their classrooms. These documents provide direction for teachers concerning student objectives, assessment methods, prerequisite skills, instructional materials and resources, and classroom strategies. The guides also should identify basic instructional resources and describe suggested approaches for delivering the content in the classroom To be most

effective, curriculum guides should be "user friendly" and easy to translate into day-to-day lessons.

TSPR requested an inventory of curriculum guides available for use in the district as well as a copy of each guide. The documents provided included eight guides for use in Grades PreK-5; 22 guides designed for grades 6-8; 145 guides written for courses offered in Grades 9-12; and 12 student workbooks, student editions, or "student copies." A complete inventory, however, was not available.

A number of the EPISD curriculum guides reviewed are of excellent quality. They are up to date and contain elements important to a functional guide, including:

- Clear and valid objectives.
- A curriculum relevant to the assessment process.
- Delineation by grade of essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
- Delineation of major instructional resources.
- Clear approaches for classroom use.

Overall, however, EPISD's were inadequate. Most contained few, if any, of the expected elements, and some had not been updated in 10 or more years.

TSPR compared the guides available for review to the courses listed in the EPISD *High School Course Description Booklet 1998-99*. As **Exhibit 2-12** indicates, the course description booklet contains 522 courses offered to EPISD students in Grades 9-12. TSPR received guides for 145 (27.8 percent) of those courses; of that number, 89 (61.4 percent) either were produced before 1995 or had no production date while just 42 (29 percent) had been written or updated in the past two years.

Exhibit 2-12
EPISD Courses Offered and Curriculum
Guides Available Grades 9-12

Subject	Courses Offered*	Guides Reviewed ¹		Date Guide Written					
		#	%	No Date	Prior to 1995	1995	1996	1997	1998
Art	21	0	0						
Drama	2	1	50.0		1				
Music	12	0	0						

Dance	5	0	0						
Science	25	3	12.0	1				2	
English/Language Arts	30	11	36.7	1	10				
H.I.L.T.	10	0	0						
ESOL	45	1	2.2		1				
Speech	20	0	0						
Journalism	18	2	11.1						2
Spanish	18	5	27.5		2	3			
French	12	0	0						
German	11	0	0						
Latin	6	0	0						
Japanese	10	0	0						
Gifted Education	8	0	0						
Math	27	9	33.3		7	2			
Computer Science	2	0	0						
Physical Education	16	12	75.0		4				8
Health	3	2	66.7						
JROTC	16	0	0						
Social Studies	21	8	38.1	3	4			1	
Business Education	36	28	77.8	5	7		1		15
Home Economics	18	8	44.4		7				1
Technology Education	11	7	63.6		3	2			2
CATE	50	29	58.0	2	17	3			7
CATE Home Campus	24	3	12.5		2				1
CATE-Silva	12	5	41.7	2			3		
CATE Occupational	10	1	10.0	1					

Center									
Agricultural Science and Technology	11	5	45.5		5				
CATE-CCT	10	5	50.0	4					1
CATE-Highland	2	0	0						
District	522	145	28.0	19	70	10	4	3	37

¹*In some cases, the number of guides reviewed does not include one or more for which no courses were listed in EPISD's High School Course Description Booklet. Source: EPISD.*

Each of the 522 courses offered in Grades 9-12 in EPISD should be supported by a curriculum guide. Of those reviewed, only 56 were written or revised within the last five years. Assuming that a similar percentage is applicable to all 522 courses in the district, TSPR estimates that well over 300 EPISD courses offered in Grades 9-12 are not supported with current curriculum guides.

Yet to be of maximum use to teachers, curriculum guides must be current. They should be reviewed on a four-to-six year cycle to ensure they remain up to date and continue to contain the elements useful to teachers in the classroom.

According to information provided by EPISD, 30 curriculum guides for use in courses in Grades 9-12 are due to be written or revised during the current school year. Funds to support the curriculum development project are included in the budget. Twenty-two additional guides are proposed for revision during 1999-2000.

If the district is to have a quality instructional program across all grades and content areas, it needs an effective, systematic process for developing curricula and functional, easy-to-use, and comprehensive guides. The development of the curriculum guides should include input from all district stakeholders as well as specialists from outside the district. Oversight of this project should be the responsibility of a single office.

Recommendation 19:

Revise or develop functional curriculum guides to provide direction for all instruction.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assigns responsibilities for curriculum guide development to the executive director of Curriculum and Instruction.	July 1999
2.	The executive director of Curriculum and Instruction with the appropriate input from staff, including principals and teachers, develops and recommends a process for curriculum development and revision including a four-to-six year revision cycle, a uniform format, and evaluation procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness.	August 1999
3.	The executive director of Curriculum and Instruction, with input from regional and campus personnel including teachers and principals, develops a comprehensive matrix for one or two curriculum areas, including a scope and sequence chart showing the major curricular emphasis grade by grade and subject by subject, with a schedule for addressing all K-12 curriculum areas.	September -November 1999
4.	Staff members including teachers and administrators review all EPISD course offerings to determine which guides should be revised and which should be developed and establishes a timetable for completion of all guides.	September -November 1999
5.	Staff selects curriculum writing teams and arranges for training in curriculum alignment, writing skills, and other information relevant to guide-writing project.	December 1999 - May 2000
6.	The curriculum writing teams develop or revise guides according to the timetable for guide completion.	June - July 2000
7.	District teachers field-test the initial guide writing project and provides feedback to the curriculum writing teams.	June-July 2000
8.	The teams modify the guide-writing process based on such feedback.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

All district guides should be scheduled for review or revision over the next four to six years. The most outdated guides, as well as needed guides that do not exist, should be scheduled for action in the next one to three years, while the most up-to-date guides could be scheduled during the next five or six years. The cycle would include a review of 65-75 guides per year.

A curriculum review and revision cycle for 70 guides would require 70 three-person teams for one week per guide. Central and regional office staff could be used at no additional cost to the district. If each team is made up of two teachers and one administrator, costs for 140 teachers for 7 days each at a rate of \$55 per day for an average teacher substitute is

\$53,900. In addition, outside consultants will cost approximately \$4,000 annually and typists or other clerical assistants are estimated at \$6,000 annually. Total costs to update 70 guides per year is estimated at \$63,900. In the first year, the costs are estimated to be approximately one-half, since implementation cannot began until the second half of the year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Develop curriculum and management plan including guide development	(\$31,950)	(\$63,900)	(\$63,900)	(\$63,900)	(\$63,900)

FINDING

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is designed to assess the academic skills determined to be important to a student's college success. As a result, most colleges and universities use either the SAT or the ACT (American College Test) as a requirement for entry. More than two million high school students take the test annually.

The number of EPISD seniors who took the SAT in 1997 rose by 9.3 percent over the 1996 total, from 1,473 to 1,610. Over the same period, the seniors' average score on the verbal portion of the SAT barely increased, from 470 to 471, while the state average fell from 495 to 494. The national average remained unchanged at 505. The average math score remained unchanged for EPISD seniors between 1996 and 1997, at 479. Over the same period, the state average rose from 500 to 501 and the national average increased three points, from 508 to 511 (**Exhibit 2-13**). Peer group information on SAT and ACT scores is provided in **Exhibit 2-14**.

Exhibit 2-13
SAT Score Distributions
of EPISD High Schools
1997

School	Verbal	Math	Total	Tests Taken
Andress	455	466	921	197
Austin	471	460	931	127
Bowie	393	426	819	144
Burges	463	471	934	133
Coronado	488	493	981	147

El Paso	459	470	929	109
Franklin	513	518	1033	364
Irvin	461	467	928	155
Jefferson	433	431	864	97
Silva	505	516	1021	137
District	471	479	950	1,610
State	494	501	995	94,034
Nation	505	511	1,016	1,127,027

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 2-14
SAT/ACT Scores in Peer Districts,
EPISD, State, and Region 19
1997-98

District	Percent Tested	Percent at or above 1000	SAT Average Score	ACT Average Score
Houston	63.0	23.1	938	18.7
Dallas	52.2	13.1	872	17.8
Ft. Worth	56.5	23.3	944	19.4
El Paso	60.2	20.3	951	20.6
San Antonio	62.4	6.3	826	17.3
Ysleta	60.8	9.9	874	19.3
Corpus Christi	63.6	27.5	994	19.9
Socorro	48.9	9.6	865	18.4
Region 19	58.5	14.2	905	19.4
State of Texas	63.6	26.6	992	20.1
Maximum	100.0	100.0	1600	36.0

Source: Texas Education Agency.

EPISD ranked second among its peer districts in its average SAT score and higher than the average for Region 19, but lower than the state

average. The district's average ACT score, however, is highest among the eight peer districts and above both state and Region 19 averages.

The district pretested the sophomore class in 1997-98 for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). The district plans to pretest its sophomore class for the SAT, and has discussed using the NovaNet labs to pretest students on both the SAT and ACT once they become operational at each high school.

Recommendation 20:

Develop and formally document strategies to assist students with improving SAT and ACT scores.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and education leadership team explore best practices related to improving SAT and ACT scores and develop and document strategies for assisting students.	July - September 1999
2.	The superintendent and education leadership team complete planning and develop recommendations for pretesting sophomore class for SAT.	July - September 1999
3.	The superintendent and education leadership team recommends plans to the Board of Trustees for using NovaNet at all high schools to pretest students for SAT and ACT.	July - September 1999
4.	The board and superintendent regularly monitor these strategies and adjust the plan to ensure continued improvements.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with available resources.

B. Gifted and Talented Education

State legislation passed in 1987 requires all school districts to provide services for gifted and talented students. In 1990, the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted a state plan for serving gifted students that was designed to provide guidance to districts on how to meet the requirements of the law as well as to offer assurance that all students have the opportunity to be fairly and accurately assessed for the appropriate services.

In 1995, state legislation required the SBOE to "develop and periodically update a state plan of the education of gifted and talented students." The plan was to be used for accountability purposes "to measure the performance of districts in providing services to students identified as gifted and talented." The SBOE plan, adopted in 1996, provides direction for the refinement of existing services and for the creation of additional curricular options for gifted students.

As indicated in **Exhibit 2-15**, EPISD's percent of total student enrollment served in gifted and talented (G/T) programs was the second-lowest among its peer districts, less than that of the state average, and below the average of its peer districts. Similarly, the percent of teaching staff and percent of budgeted instructional expenditures dedicated to G/T programs both were less than the state and peer district averages. The percent of students enrolled, teachers assigned, and instructional expenditures budgeted for G/T programs in EPISD was among the lowest of the eight peer districts.

Exhibit 2-15
Percent of Students, Teachers, and Budgeted Instructional Expenditures
in Gifted/Talented Programs in EPISD and Peer Districts
1997-98 School Year

District	G/T Student Enrollment	G/T Teachers	G/T / Budgeted Instructional Expenditures
Corpus Christi	4.5	2.8	0.5
Dallas	17.9	2.0	2.2
El Paso	5.2	1.7	0.6
Ft. Worth	7.3	1.8	3.9
Houston	8.7	5.1	3.0

San Antonio	5.6	7.3	0.5
Socorro	7.8	0.4	0.3
Ysleta	6.2	0.3	0.3
Peer District Average	7.9	2.7	1.4
State Average	8.0	2.1	1.8

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Note: Data provided by EPISD indicate expenditures increased from \$960,604 to \$1,204,701 (25.4%) between 1995-96 and 1997-98.

Between the 1995-96 and 1997-98 school years, funds allocated to gifted and talented programs in EPISD declined by 4.5 percent. In 1995-96, \$1,008,495 or \$15.69 per identified student was budgeted for G/T programs; that figure declined to \$963,290 or \$15.07 per student in 1997-98. The allocation per student enrolled in the district declined 7.3 percent over the same two years, from \$314.56 to \$291.64. These data are provided in **Exhibit 2-16**.

Exhibit 2-16
EPISD Expenditures for Gifted and Talented Programs
1995-96/1997-98

	1995-96	1997-98	Percent Increase (Decrease)
Expenditure	\$1,008,495	\$963,290	(4.5)
Student Enrollment	64,260	63,909	(0.5)
Expenditure per Student Enrolled	\$15.69	\$15.07	(4.0)
G/T Enrollment	3,206	3,303	3.0
Expenditure per G/T Student	\$314.56	\$291.64	(7.3)

Source: Texas Education Agency.

FINDING

The first formal gifted and talented programs in EPISD were implemented in Grade 7 and 8 science classes in 1981 and were expanded to Grades 4-6 by 1985. A grade 7 language arts program was piloted in 1987, revised in 1988, and is the current Humanities program offered in Grades 6-8. The

current Science Technology program for Grades 6-8 evolved in 1988 from the original Grades 7 and 8 science program initiated in 1981. The Connections Enrichment program for Grades K-3 began in 1990, the High School Independent Studies program in 1991, and the Schoolwide Enrichment program in 1992.

G/T programming in EPISD is provided through a variety of programs including the following:

Connections K-3, offered at all elementary schools, consists of thematic enrichment packets aimed at developing higher-level thinking skills through an introduction to problem-solving and original product development.

Connection 4-5, offered at selected elementary schools designated as G/T magnet schools, integrates social studies, language arts, and fine arts.

Schoolwide Enrichment, offered in Grades 4-5 in schools which do not offer Connection 4-5, provides services within the regular classroom by means of curriculum compacting and independent study.

Humanities 6-8, offered at all middle schools, integrates the study of history, literature, writing, and fine arts using multimedia technology, allowing students to explore universal themes in greater depth than possible in the regular classroom.

Science Technology 6-8, offered at all middle schools, focuses on research techniques, statistical methods, and emerging technologies to allow students to explore the concepts of life, earth, and physical science.

High School Gifted Independent Study, offered at all high schools, allows students to pursue areas of personal interest under the guidance of an assigned mentor.

the *Advanced Placement (AP) Program*, offered at all high schools, provides advanced, college-level instruction and preparation.

2-Way Dual Language Gifted/Talented Program, offered to students in Grades 1-3 on a pilot basis at one elementary school, provides a curriculum in a multicultural setting with instruction provided equally in Spanish and English.

COMMENDATION

EPISD has demonstrated a long-term commitment to educating its gifted and talented students through a variety of program initiatives.

FINDING

Two program options are available to gifted and talented students in Grades 9-12: the High School Gifted Independent Study Program (HSGISP) and the Advanced Placement Program. HSGISP allows students to pursue individual interests under a mentor's guidance. HSGISP courses are offered in all 10 EPISD high schools. The AP program provides opportunities for students to take college-level course work and earn advanced placement or college credit from participating colleges and universities via examination. EPISD offers 17 AP courses in seven disciplines; all 10 district high schools participate in the program.

Enrollment in HSGISP courses is significantly lower than in AP courses. For six high schools for which TSPR could obtain data, 80 students were enrolled in courses in three different subject areas during the first semester of the current school year. During the first semester of 1997-98, 829 students were enrolled in AP classes in the same six high schools.

Interviews with EPISD staff indicate that the difference in enrollment is due in part to the fact that ISP courses are offered as local credit toward a student's graduation requirements, while AP courses can be counted toward state graduation requirements. The trend toward increasing the number of credits a student must have to graduate has forced students to be more selective with respect to the number of courses they take for local credit.

All students tend to be more creative when they are interested or intrinsically motivated. Research indicates that the individual interests of gifted and talented students can be accommodated more effectively if students are allowed to choose among curriculum options such as assignments and activities, work products, independent studies, and group learning settings. Many researchers recommend such independent study approaches for gifted students.

The AP program, by contrast, is highly structured, requiring the use of a specified curriculum. It provides an excellent option for meeting the curriculum mandates of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. The state plan, however, encourages districts to use "program options [which] enable gifted/talented students to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day as well as during the entire school year." Independent study programs provide such opportunities.

State curriculum standards for Texas school districts are specified in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Districts may offer for state graduation credit a number of independent study courses in subjects

including English, speech, journalism, mathematics, social studies, and health science technology.

Recommendation 21:

Develop independent study courses that fulfill the requirements for state graduation credit as outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director for Curriculum and Instruction recommends to the superintendent teams composed of teachers and support personnel to design independent study curricula in six disciplines.	July 1999
2.	The teams develop the appropriate independent study curricula.	August -October 1999
3.	The superintendent and education leadership team review and recommend approval of the curricula to the Board of Trustees.	November -December 1999
4.	Principals include the independent study courses in course schedules for the 2000-01 school year.	February 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs for teacher participation are estimated at two teachers for five days each for each of six courses at \$55 per day substitute pay, or \$3,300 total. Costs for document preparation, including materials and supplies, can be provided through available resources.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-03	2003-04
Develop independent study course curricula	(\$3,300)	0	0	0	0

FINDING

According to an EPISD report, more than 1,800 students were enrolled in 17 AP courses during the 1997-98 school year. Second semester enrollment in those courses totaled 2,969, with 1,053 (35.5 percent) of those students taking one or more AP examinations. The percent of students who took an AP examination is indicated by course and high

school in **Exhibit 2-17**, with the overall percent by high school indicated in **Exhibit 2-18**. The percent of enrolled students passing each course is provided in **Exhibit 2-19**.

Exhibit 2-17
Percent of Course Enrollment
Taking Advanced Placement Tests By High School, EPISD
May 1998

Course	Andress	Austin	Bowie	Burges	Coronado	El Paso	Franklin	Irvin	Jefferson	Silva	District
US History	17.7	59.5	57.9	77.8	41.1	25.0	62.8	5.2	0	32.1	38.9
Macro Economics	4.5	18.2	44.7	19.0	37.5	0	25.0	0			15.9
US Govt	0	22.7	100.0	35.0	9.4	0	25.0	0			15.5
Studio Art	100.0		20.0	100.0	100.0		83.3				72.2
Music Theory					100.0						100.0
Biology	12.5				33.3		15.4			*	22.6
Chemistry	0	0	61.5	81.8	56.3		18.2	0		*	41.4
Physics B	0	171.4*					20.0			*	42.4
Physics C: Mechanics	0				100.0		0				21.2
Physics C: Elec/Magn	0				100.0		0				21.2
Eng Lang/Comp	8.5	38.7	83.3	59.5	37.4	25.0	35.6	9.5	0	71.1	34.6
Eng Lit/Comp	5.9	24.1	63.6	50.0	15.9	5.6	49.6	7.1	0	46.2	26.1
Spanish	875.0*	100.0	400.0*	271.4*	550.5*	153.3*	50.0			*	212.2
Spanish Lit	*	0	110.0		200*	46.7					66.7
French				20.0	85.7	54.5	50.0		0		53.6
German							100.0				100.0
Calculus AB	111.1*	26.7	94.4	20.0	10.3	8.3	55.3	30.0	0	75.0	40.2

Calculus BC						25.0				5.0	12.5
Computer Science A		0		25.0	8.0		28.1	5.9			14.1
Computer Science AB		0		33.3	33.3			0			13.6

**More students took exam than enrolled in the course. Source: EPISD.*

**Exhibit 2-18
Percent Of AP Enrollment
Taking AP Exams By High School, EPISD
May 1998**

School	Percent
Andress	19.9
Austin	30.0
Bowie	80.1
Burges	43.3
Coronado	38.3
El Paso	30.6
Franklin	39.9
Irvin	7.4
Jefferson	0
Silva	54.6
District	34.3

Source: EPISD.

**Exhibit 2-19
Percent of Students
Passing Advanced Placement Tests By High School, EPISD
May 1998**

Course	Andress	Austin	Bowie	Burges	Coronado	El Paso	Franklin	Irvin	Jefferson	Silva	District
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US History	27.3	59.1	4.5	57.1	37.8	30.0	40.8	33.3		22.2	37.0
Macro Economics	0	75.0	0	25.0	33.3		52.6				41.9
US Govt		80.0	0	42.9	100.0		43.8				39.5
Studio Art	0		0	50.0	100.0		20.0				23.1
Music Theory					0						0
Biology	100.0				100.0		0			100.0	71.4
Chemistry			12.5	11.1	11.1		50.0			0	13.8
Physics B					16.7		100.0			0	21.4
Physics C: Mechanics					85.7						85.7
Physics C: Elec/Magn					71.4						71.4
Eng Lang/Comp	75.0	17.2	10.0	36.0	50.8	52.9	56.3	42.9		62.5	46.4
Eng Lit/Comp	66.7	53.5	28.6	55.0	88.5	33.3	61.7	66.7		61.1	62.8
Spanish	94.3	100.0	93.8	78.9	100.0	95.7	81.8			100.0	93.0
Spanish Lit	0		45.5		75.0	85.7					66.7
French				0	66.7	0	100.0				40.0
German							100.0				100.0
Calculus AB	90.0	25.0	41.2	40.0	100.0	0	85.7	33.3		20.0	57.0
Calculus BC						66.7				100.0	75.0
Computer Science A				42.9	0		66.7	50.0			50.0
Computer Science AB				100.0	50.0						66.7

Source: EPISD.

The number of students taking AP examinations is significantly lower than the number of students enrolled in AP courses. Staff interviews indicate

that some students fail to take the test for financial reasons. The cost of each AP examination is \$72. The sponsor of the program, the College Board, provides a \$22 fee reduction for any student demonstrating financial need. When the student's school forgoes the normal \$7 rebate for test administration, the result is a \$43 fee for each AP examination.

Due to the high percentage of economically disadvantaged students in EPISD, the district should make every effort to increase the number of students taking AP examinations by increasing the level of financial assistance.

Recommendation 22:

Develop and fund programs designed to reduce or eliminate advanced placement examination fees.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director for Curriculum and Instruction reviews fee reduction programs in Ysleta ISD and other school districts.	July 1999
2.	The executive director for Curriculum and Instruction and other appropriate staff members meet with area business and industry leaders to discuss endowing a fee reduction program.	August -December 1999
3.	The executive director for Curriculum and Instruction develops and submits to the superintendent and the education leadership team a proposal for reduced fees to be supported through donations from area business and industry.	January -February 2000
4.	The superintendent submits a proposal to the Board of Trustees for the reduction or elimination of AP examination fees beginning in 2000-01.	March 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

According to a report prepared by the EPISD Office of Research and Evaluation, there are 1,756 students in Grades 9-12 and about 53 percent of Grades 9-12 students in the district are economically disadvantaged.

The annual cost of the program is estimated at \$40,033 (1,756 students enrolled in AP classes x 53 percent economically disadvantaged x \$43 exam fee remaining after College Board and high school reductions).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
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Develop and fund programs designed to reduce or eliminate AP examination fees.	(\$0)	(\$40,033)	(\$40,033)	(\$40,033)	(\$40,033)
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C. Bilingual Education

The Texas Education Code and Texas Administrative Code require all districts with an enrollment of 20 or more students of limited English proficiency (LEP) in the same grade level to offer a bilingual or special language program. Bilingual education must be offered in kindergarten through elementary grades; bilingual instruction in English as a second language or some other transitional language program in post-elementary through grade 8; and instruction in English as a second language in Grades 9-12. The curriculum for bilingual programs requires dual-language instruction, which provides for mastery of English language skills and the learning of basic skills in the student's primary language. English as a second language (ESL) programs offer intensive instruction in English by teachers trained in recognizing and dealing with language differences. The Texas Education Code also outlines criteria for the identification, assessment, and classification of students in LEP programs.

CURRENT SITUATION

According to reports prepared by EPISD, between 1994-95 and 1997-98 the percent of the district's enrollment identified as LEP students by Language Proficiency Assessment Committees (LPAC) increased from 30 percent to 32 percent, or about 1,000 students, to almost 20,500. Of those students identified as LEP, 15,360 were enrolled in EPISD's bilingual and ESL programs.

The percent of students enrolled in bilingual/ESL programs in EPISD was higher than in any of its peer districts except Dallas. A larger percent of teachers were assigned to those programs in EPISD than in any of the other peer districts. However, the percent of instructional expenditures budgeted for bilingual/ESL programs in EPISD was among the lowest of the eight districts (**Exhibit 2-20**).

Exhibit 2-20
Percent of Students, Teachers, and Budgeted Instructional Expenditures
in Bilingual/ESL Programs
EPISD Versus Peer Districts
1997-98

District	Student Enrollment	Teachers	Budgeted Bilingual/ESL Expenditures
Corpus Christi	5.7	9.4	0.2
Dallas	29.5	14.0	3.0

El Paso	23.8	21.8	1.4
Ft. Worth	21.6	9.4	8.4
Houston	23.6	17.2	13.5
San Antonio	13.4	12.3	9.8
Socorro	23.5	17.6	12.3
Ysleta	22.0	15.7	1.0
Peer District Average	20.4	14.7	6.2
State Average	11.9	6.8	3.6

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Part of the district's written philosophy for its bilingual education program states that "The ultimate goal of Bilingual Education is that students will participate successfully in the mainstream curriculum while becoming independent and creative thinkers in an increasingly complex society." To facilitate this goal, EPISD uses programs that build on "the students' native language and English in the learning process."

Instruction through Grade 5 is provided through the Integrated Bilingual Education Program (IBEP), which includes two instructional components, one taught in Spanish and one in English. An Integrated Spanish Instruction component helps to develop problem-solving strategies within a culturally appropriate context. The Integrated English Instruction component provides learning in English.

ESL instruction in Grades 6-12 uses a program that focuses on providing access to math, science, and social studies curricula by developing and using the student's literacy in Spanish. The Language Acquisition for the Middle Schools Program (LAMP) is used with students in Grades 6-8 and the High Intensity Language Training Preparatory Program (HILT) with students at Grades 9-12.

EPISD's bilingual education/ESL programs are designed to comply with the requirements of federal and state legislation and subsequent rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and TEA. Local policy has been adopted by the Board of Trustees, which provides appropriate direction for program development and operation. LPACs have been legally constituted, training for their members developed, and meetings appropriately conducted. An on-site peer review visit from TEA's Division of District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) in May 1997 concluded that the program was in compliance with state and federal regulations.

FINDING

The programs used by EPISD to instruct LEP students have a sound research base. However, a number of comments made at public meetings and in interviews favored eliminating the programs due to their ineffectiveness

EPISD has gathered data on its bilingual programs for a number of years. Between 1984-85 and 1987-88, the major focus of the district's evaluation efforts was process, i.e. how well the programs were being implemented. Beginning in 1986-87 and continuing through the latest report in 1996-97, test score data has been collected in an effort to determine how successful pupils are in becoming proficient in English. Annual reports prepared by the district describe the findings of each year's evaluation.

Two approaches to providing bilingual education were offered in the district between 1984-85 and 1990-91, The Bilingual Immersion Program (BIP) and the state-mandated Transitional Bilingual Education. Campuses with relatively few bilingual students provided instruction through the Special Language Program (SLP), a local effort designed to help those students within the regular classroom.

During the 1992-93 school year, four bilingual programs were in operation in EPISD: BIP, Transitional Bilingual Education, SLP, and a new approach, Accelerated Bilingual Education Program, which uses a two-way bilingual education model of instruction. Although modified as a result of a needs assessment conducted the previous year, SLP was phased out after 1992-93, requiring participating schools to select a bilingual approach for use beginning in 1993-94. Two programs were offered to meet the needs of secondary students: Language Acquisition for the Middle School Program for students in Grades 6-8, and the High Intensity Language Training program for students in Grades 7-12.

No programming changes were made during the 1994-95 or 1995-96 school years. However, beginning in 1996-97, the district modified its program by offering only one approach for providing bilingual instruction, The Integrated Bilingual Education Program.

The district's annual bilingual education evaluations report certain demographic and achievement test data on program participants. Historical data tracking student performance from year to year were collected until 1992-93. After that year, a series of research questions provided the basis for the data to be collected and reported in subsequent annual reports. Because the same set of questions were used, the reporting of the data has been clear and consistent over time.

While a large amount of data exist on the effectiveness of the programs offered in the district, no information is available that indicated how these data are used in making decisions regarding program changes. There is no indication, for example, of why the Special Language Program was ended and the Two-Way Bilingual Program added in 1992-93, or of why the decision was made to offer only one bilingual education approach beginning with the 1996-67 school year. No recommendations for program changes/modifications were included in the evaluation reports and none were provided to the review team as separate documents.

Community concerns about program effectiveness appear to result more from a failure to communicate the reasons for making program changes than from a lack of data with which to make such decisions. Many of the concerns expressed by parents and community members could be addressed if the rationale for making program changes was appropriately documented and communicated to the public.

Recommendation 23:

Document the rationale for making program changes in bilingual and English as a Second Language instruction and communicate the rationale and the results of all program assessments to the public.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The executive directors of Communications and Research and Evaluation and the director of Bilingual and Advanced Academic Services - Program Support develop and submit to the superintendent and education leadership team procedures for communicating to the public all bilingual education evaluation results and recommendations for program changes.	July-August 1999
2.	The superintendent submits the procedures to the board of trustees for approval.	September 1999
3.	The director of Bilingual and Advanced Academic Services - Program Support implements the procedures.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with available resources.

D. Special Education

CURRENT SITUATION

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975 requires school districts to provide free and appropriate education and related health services to students with disabilities between the ages of three and 21, in addition to services from birth for children who are visually or hearing-impaired. Depending on student needs, these services may include occupational, physical, and speech therapy, as well as transportation to and from specialized physicians or other specialists, including diagnosticians, counselors and nurses.

Under federal and state guidelines, students must be evaluated before entering Special Education programs and must be reevaluated every three years while they are in the program. Admissions, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees, composed of parents and professional staff specified in federal law, make decisions concerning eligibility, educational plans, placements into Special Education services, and dismissals. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed by ARDs to identify educational objectives, services, and program activities for each Special Education student.

EPISD Special Education services are designed to comply with federal and state guidelines. As of October 1997, EPISD served 5,932 students with disabilities. **Exhibit 2-21** provides information on the gender and ethnicity of EPISD students in Special Education.

Exhibit 2-21
Gender and Ethnicity
EPISD Students in Special Education
October 1997

Members/ Percent	Male	Female	Am Ind/ Alaskan	Asia/Pacif Island	African American	Hispanic	White, Not Hispanic
5,932	3,888	2,044	12	40	421	4,331	1,128
100%	65.5	34.5	.02	.07	7.1	73.0	19.0

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 2-22 provides information on EPISD Special Education Students by program area.

Exhibit 2-22
EPISD Special Education Student Count
November 1997

Program Area	Students
Learning Disabled	3,188
Speech Impaired	1,316
Autistic	47
Traumatic Brain Injured	6
Orthopedically Handicapped	120
Auditorially Impaired	182
Visually Impaired	43
Deaf/Blind	0
Mentally Retarded	378
Emotionally Disturbed	347
Other Health Impaired	374
Non-Categorical Early Childhood	6
Total	6,007

Source: EPISD.

In 1996-97, 9 percent of EPISD students were enrolled in Special Education, a lower share than the state average and those in all peer districts except Ysleta and Dallas. EPISD expended 11.5 percent of its budget for Special Education services, almost equivalent to the state average of 11.7 percent, despite its lower percent of Special Education enrollment. As indicated by **Exhibit 2-23**, this budget share is slightly less than the average for EPISD's peer districts.

Exhibit 2-23
Percentage of Student Enrollment and
Budgeted Instructional Operating
Expenditures in Special Education
EPISD Versus Peer Districts and State Average
1996-97

	Percent
--	----------------

District	Special Education Student Enrollment	Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures
Corpus Christi	13.7	12.8
San Antonio	11.9	19.4
Fort Worth	11.6	13.6
Socorro	10.1	11.3
Houston	9.8	9.6
El Paso	9.0	11.5
Ysleta	9.0	12.1
Dallas	6.6	8.6
State	11.6	11.7

Source: Texas Education Agency.

As part of EPISD's decentralization efforts of 1996-97, regional Special Education directors were assigned for Region 1 and 2, while one director serves Region 3 and 4 jointly. These directors report to the regional associate superintendents and oversee Special Education programs and implementation of ARD/IEP services. Educational diagnosticians assigned to each region provide comprehensive assessments to test and evaluate each Special Education referral. The assessment determines if the student meets one or more of the definitions of disability in state law, and also is used in making decisions about appropriate placements and services. Regional health practitioners, such as speech therapists, psychologists, and Special Education teachers, provide the health and educational services specified in each student's IEP. A Special Education Curriculum and Instruction facilitator in each region works with Special Education and regular teachers to see that appropriate curriculum modifications are made for Special Education students who are mainstreamed in regular classes. Facilitators also attend ARD meetings when complex or legally significant issues are involved in developing an IEP.

Decentralization has had the desired effect of bringing professional Special Education support staff closer to disabled students. In addition, several improvements have been made in Special Education operations since the reorganization. Principals and teachers report that assistance with ARDs, IEPs, and training is more readily available under the new organization. In interviews with TSPR team members, regional and central office administrators said that prior to the reorganization, many schools were not complying with Special Education guidelines, and one region was seriously out of compliance. At the time of reorganization, an

assessment specialist was assigned to the region with the most compliance problems.

Finding

TEA's Division of District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) conducted a peer review visit to EPISD in February 1997. The resulting report identified deficiencies in Special Education compliance, both in record documentation and in timelines for assessment and review. The peer review team indicated that the district needs to improve or implement:

- consistency and thoroughness in documentation of compliance requirements.
- procedural safeguards including informed consent for placement.
- an annual review of IEPs.

The district has taken several corrective actions to remove these deficiencies and improve operations. In the past, determining compliance was a time-consuming manual tracking process undertaken in the central office. The district recently installed a Special Education Management System that will allow regional clerks to develop a monthly report by campus of ARD/IEP reevaluations due. At least one regional associate superintendent already uses monthly data runs in meetings with principals to improve compliance, and all associate superintendents plan to use the monthly data runs as soon as regional personnel have been trained in the new system.

A task force of regular and special educators was formed to develop criteria for timely referrals and reviews. By September 1997, area assessment directors had developed a new process for monitoring eligibility folders, which is being implemented. The area assessment directors also revised consent forms to ensure that required information and signatures are secured, and conducted training for district employees in both regular and special education.

Recommendation 24:

Devise a plan for compliance with state law to report all referrals, assessments, and activities consistently and regularly monitor the operation of the plan and report results to the public.

EPISD should continue its efforts to improve the efficiency of its data gathering and preparation of standardized reports, and to determine whether or not mandated special education timelines are being met and appropriate referrals are made. Recent procedural changes should be

evaluated to ensure they are adequate to guarantee districtwide compliance and appropriate referrals. The district also should develop customized reports to track service outcomes and report compliance with legislated timelines.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent directs the associate superintendent for Support Services to document compliance with pending TEA-identified deficiencies and to devise an action plan for any newly identified problems.	September 1999
2.	The associate superintendent for Special Services and the executive director of Special Services regularly monitor the plan and report on the timeliness of referral, assessment, and ARD/IEP processes to the public.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Texas and other states encourage districts to move Special Education students into regular education environments for most of their academic instruction. Many educators believe that this strategy, known as inclusion, improves socialization and academic achievement. When students receive Special Education services, they are assigned a specific instructional arrangement code based on the amount of time they spend in general education classes. In Texas, funding for special education students is based in part on these instructional arrangement codes and their relative funding weights. Districts thereby are encouraged to place students in less-restrictive instructional arrangements.

To place students in the least-restrictive instructional arrangement, adequate assessment personnel are a must, as is adequate support for regular teachers by specialists such as speech therapists. EPISD has developed several programs to support students with disabilities in regular education environments. Regional instructional specialists provide a support role for regular and special education teachers who serve students with disabilities. Training is provided at the district and campus levels on appropriate modifications to instructional methods and materials to promote student success. An examination of staffing patterns across regions shows that the district has made progress in increasing the number of assessment personnel and reducing caseloads in every region in the past year (**Exhibit 2-24**).

Exhibit 2-24
EPISD Special Education
Support Personnel by EPISD's Regions, 1997-98 School Year

	Region 1		Region 2		Region 3		Region 4	
	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998
Number Special Ed Students	2,119	2,078	1,423	1,453	1,149	1,058	1,187	1,504
Number Educ. Diagnosticians	13	16	9	11	6.5	8.5	7	9
Diagnostician Caseload		104		98		96		110
Number Speech Therapists	20	20	13.5	15.5	10	12	10	9
Speech Therapists Caseload	83	62	80	57	59	50	78	69

Source: EPISD.

The peer review report issued last year recommended a task force be established to gather data and develop long-range plans related to least-restrictive environments. While the district has submitted a plan to establish the task force and develop long-range plans, it is unclear how these plans will be implemented, evaluated, and enforced. The district must provide the appropriate controls to ensure that its plans will be carried out consistently across regions.

Recommendation 25:

Develop a long -range plan to ensure the placement of special education students in least-restrictive environments consistently across regions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The executive director of Special Services compiles campus data identifying the number of students by disabling condition who participate in least-restrictive environments, to establish a baseline for increasing the number of students with disabilities placed in inclusive environments on their home campuses.	September 1999
2.	The executive director of Special Services analyzes data and develops long-range plan to increase the number of Special	February 2000

	Education students in least-restrictive environments.	
3.	The executive director of Special Services reviews policies, procedures, and operating guidelines and amends them if necessary to ensure consistency in least-restrictive environment placement across regions.	March 2000
4.	Special Education Curriculum and Instruction facilitators and the development coordinator provide training on least-restrictive environments for campus administrators, assessment staff, region administrative staff, and regular and special teachers.	September 2000/ Ongoing
5.	The executive director of Special Services and the regional administrative staffs monitor the developed plan to ensure consistency in placements among middle school and high school feeder patterns and prepare an annual report to the superintendent and board that includes a plan for any necessary improvements.	September 2000/ Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD has made organizational changes and staffing pattern changes to improve the placement and instruction of students in least-restrictive environments. While the efforts in these areas are discernible by internal personnel, comments from Special Education parents at a public forum suggest that many of them feel that the district's plans to assist students in succeeding in less-restrictive environments often are unsatisfactory. Furthermore, interviews with campus staff and parents indicate that transition and inclusion procedures vary across regions. For example, while parents are aware of the peer review report on this issue, they do not perceive that the district responded adequately; in fact, parents complained that they had to contact TEA to get a copy of the plan the district filed in response to the peer report.

Parents also said that requests for IEP adjustments that are handled routinely in one region require a hearing in another and that due-process policies are not enforced consistently throughout the district. They also complain that the district appears to make arbitrary responses to requests for information. A request for a daughter's records by one parent resulted in a long delay; when the district finally complied, it presented the surprised parent a bill for \$480 for copying 2,500 pages. In another region, parents were not charged for similar requests. While the regional personnel in question were following a board policy concerning fees for copies, and the parent did not ultimately pay the \$480 bill, parents in the

public forum suggested the need for a uniform method for providing parents with copies of their children's records.

The district has completed its implementation of a federal requirement for progress reports to provide parents with information on student attainment of goals and objectives. However, parents participating in the public forum said that they do not feel that they receive adequate information about their children's progress. They said that school personnel are very busy and it is difficult to find someone to listen to their concerns. One result of parental frustration may be an increase in Special Education litigation brought against the district.

Exhibit 2-25
Number of Special Education Litigation Suits
And Litigation Fees 1995-98

Year	Suits Filed	Litigation Fees	Won	Lost	Settled	Pending
1995	4	\$59,052	1	1	2	0
1996	1	22,273	0	0	1	0
1997	5	146,532	0	1	4	0
To 10/98	10	90,348	0*	0	5	5
*District won one case at Hearing Officer level; parent has appealed.						

Source: EPISD.

As **Exhibit 2-25** shows, as many suits were filed in the first quarter of the current year as were filed in the preceding three years. Litigation fees have tripled in the past three years and are sure to increase significantly in the current year, since expenditures in the first quarter already equal more than half of the expenditures in fiscal 1997. The most common complaint in the parent focus group was "I can't get anyone to listen to me." This type of complaint was not only voiced by Special Education parents, but was also raised by parents having difficulty resolving problems in other departments as well.

Recommendation 26:

Improve communications between the district and Special Education parents through use of an ombudsman.

EPISD's central administration should ensure that sufficient staff resources and communication channels are available to address Special Education

parent's problems and concerns adequately and timely. Since the communication problem noted above was not limited to Special Education parents, but spanned parents districtwide, an ombudsman position is being recommended in the Community Involvement chapter. One of the ombudsman's responsibilities should be to hold regular meetings with Special Education parents as a means of working through problems and concern before they reach litigation, which often results in excessive demands on administration time and costly legal fees for the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The executive director of Special Services notifies Special Education parents of the new ombudsman position.	August 1999
2.	The executive director of Special Education schedules regular forums for Special Education parents and communicates the dates, times, and locations of the forums to parents.	August 1999
3.	The district publicizes the first forum.	September 1999
4.	The ombudsman holds the first forum.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources. The additional expenditure for an ombudsman is recognized in the Community Involvement chapter.

FINDING

Federal law requires all disabled children to have access to state and district performance assessments. In Texas, this includes the TAAS test. An ARD committee may exempt a student from the TAAS reading, mathematics, or writing tests; the exemption then is specified in the student's IEP. In the last two years, from 40 to 48 percent of the state's special education students were exempted from one or more of the TAAS tests. As indicated in **Exhibit 2-26**, the percentage of students receiving an ARD committee exemption in El Paso and its peer districts ranged from a high of 89 percent to a low of 16 percent. In 1997, EPISD significantly reduced the number of students exempted from TAAS in all subject areas. In addition, EPISD exempted fewer of its students, 23 to 29 percent, than any of its peer districts except Ysleta, and exempted significantly fewer of its students than the state as a whole, which exempted 41 to 46 percent.

Exhibit 2-26
Percentage of Special Education Students
Exempted from TAAS in All Grades Tested
EPISD Versus Peer Districts and State Average
1995-96 and 1996-97 School Years

District	Reading		Writing		Math	
	96	97	96	97	96	97
Ysleta	26.3	18.5	28.3	21.2	22.7	16.1
El Paso	40.9	25.1	41.8	28.9	38.6	23.8
Corpus Christi	34.9	30.0	35.1	31.8	34.0	28.3
San Antonio	51.4	46.9	57.1	52.2	46.6	41.6
Socorro	64.5	57.5	68.5	55.3	61.6	53.2
Houston	51.3	69.6	53.9	73.8	48.0	64.3
Fort Worth	69.6	70.3	71.3	73.8	68.8	69.7
Dallas	89.4	85.4	86.4	80.8	88.8	84.1
State	45.2	43.8	48.1	45.9	42.5	40.5

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Although EPISD exempts fewer Special Education students from TAAS than most of its peer districts, the district ranks as one of the lowest in its percentage of students who pass in all grades. As **Exhibit 2-27** shows, the percent of students passing declined in the past year, and EPISD is ranked seventh of eight peer districts.

Exhibit 2-27
Percentage of Special Education Students
Passing All TAAS Tests in All Grades Tested
EPISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 and 1996-97 School Years

District	Percent Passing			
	1996	Rank	1997	Rank
Corpus Christi	19.0	5	21.3	6
Dallas	26.5	3	24.1	5
El Paso	18.5	6	17.0	7

Fort Worth	25.5	4	32.5	3
Houston	39.2	2	40.2	1
San Antonio	10.1	8	11.2	8
Socorro	42.7	1	37.3	2
Ysleta	17.7	7	25.6	4

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Federal law also requires all disabled children who do not take standardized tests to have an annual alternative assessment. TEA will be developing an alternative assessment tool for the disabled this year for implementation in the year 2000. A representative of EPISD serves on TEA's development committee. In the year 2001 and subsequent years, Special Education will be required to submit to the Board of Trustees an annual report on student improvement. TAAS and other data will be used in this report.

Beginning in 1999, results for Special Education students who take the TAAS at their grade level will be included in their school's accountability rating. Results for Special Education students who take an alternative assessment will not be included in their school's accountability rating. The ARD committee still determines who takes the TAAS, but is required to provide appropriate justifications for exemptions.

Both parents and administrators expressed concerns regarding the new Special Education TAAS reporting requirements. The dilemma to campus administrators is that if they succeed in increasing the number of disabled students who take TAAS, low scores for disabled students may lower the campus accountability rating. Parents are equally concerned about TAAS. While they want assessment for their children so that they can measure improvement, they fear that ARDs will inappropriately certify some disabled students to take TAAS. Failure on TAAS means the students will not graduate with a diploma.

Recommendation 27:

Provide programs of intense remediation for students with disabilities who have not performed well on the TAAS.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The associate superintendent for Support Services directs regional associate superintendents and campus principals to	July 1999
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	ensure that their 1999-2000 district and school action plans include intensive programs of remediation for students with disabilities who are unsuccessful on TAAS.	
2.	The Special Services executive director surveys all principals to determine what sort of TAAS remediation is provided to students with disabilities and compiles a report on these methods.	September 1999
3.	The Special Services executive director, with input from principals, other regional staff, and parents develops procedures to ensure that each school offers intensive programs of remediation and provides central administration with any data needed to determine program success.	November 1999
4.	Principals initiate the procedures as approved and revise programs as needed for the 2000-2001 school year.	January 2000/ Ongoing
5.	The executive director of Research and Evaluation provides the data necessary to help determine the success of the programs implemented.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on the cost of personnel for intensive tutoring. The projected need is for seven tutors (one for each high school campus, including the new northeast campus that will open in 2000) providing 100 hours of intensive tutoring at \$8 per hour. A pool of 700 hours of tutoring would be created; the district and campus improvement committees would make decisions about allocation of the hours and the format, time, and length of tutoring sessions.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Provide intensive tutoring for Special Education students qualified by ARD committee to take TAAS	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)	(\$5,600)

E. Compensatory Education/Title I

CURRENT SITUATION

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was originally enacted in 1965 and serves as the largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. This initiative funnels about \$7 billion for compensatory education to school districts throughout the nation. School districts use compensatory funds to provide supplemental services to improve the educational performance of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools.

Title I of the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 continued federal compensatory education aid. Funds flow through TEA to schools based on the previous year's number of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches as reported by the state's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). According to Texas Education Code Section 29.081, Subchapter c, school districts must evaluate and document the effectiveness of Title I money for enhancing educational experiences for at-risk students, reducing the number of dropouts, and increasing student performance.

FINDING

In 1996-97, 62 percent of EPISD students, or 39,692 students, were identified as eligible for federal funding under Title I. **Exhibit 2-28** provides the gender and ethnicity of EPISD students eligible for Chapter 1.

Exhibit 2-28
Gender and Ethnicity of
EPISD Students in Title 1
As of October 1997

Members/ percent	Male	Female	Am Ind /Alaskan	Asia/Pacific Island	African American	Hispanic	Anglo, Not Hispanic
39,692	20,221	19,471	97	279	1,855	32,982	4,470
%	50.9	49.1	0.2	0.7	4.7	83.1	11.3

Source: EPISD.

The district received \$18.6 million in Title I funds in 1996-97. A portion of these funds was used for administration or indirect costs; each school then received a per-capita allotment for budgetary planning. When at least

50 percent of a school population is economically disadvantaged, the school may be designated as a schoolwide Title I project. This designation allows funds to be used for general school improvement purposes, provided that certain requirements are met. Campuses participating in a schoolwide program do not need to identify individual children as eligible to participate in a schoolwide program; all the children are eligible. Consequently, campuses have great latitude in determining how to spend their funds as long as they engage in reform strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time and help provide a high-quality curriculum for all children.

Two important factors, student academic performance and increasing financial resources, provide a rationale for operating schoolwide programs. This approach provides that the planning and budgeting of Title I dollars is an integral part of the school strategy for raising TAAS scores. These funds are used to provide additional teachers, materials, training, and other services.

All 52 EPISD schools eligible for Title I funding have been designated schoolwide projects including: 40 elementary schools, four elementary-intermediate schools, six middle schools, and two high schools.

Schoolwide program funds are discretionary. EPISD has implemented a site-based budgeting procedure that gives the principal and staff at each school authority to determine how Title I funds are used. Schools determine how the funds will be spent, within the law's requirements, to attain campus and district goals. The campus funds are used to provide additional teachers, materials, training, and other services. **Exhibit 2-29** shows how Title I funds were expended by function in fiscal 1997.

Exhibit 2-29
Title I Budget
Expenditures by Function
Fiscal 1997

Function	Amount	Percent of Budget
Salaries/Wages	\$ 13,625,026	73.2%
General Supplies	1,081,786	5.8
Technology Equipment	915,527	4.9
Other Operating Expenses	568,206	3.1
Consulting Services	303,580	1.6
Instructional Administration	192,153	1.0

Roll Forward to Next fiscal year	1,934,539	10.4
Total	\$18,620,817	100.0%

Source: EPISD.

State law prescribes certain class size limits for elementary schools. In elementary schools, Title I funds cover the costs of implementing reduced class-size projects and technology initiatives. Middle schools, which are not required to implement reduced class sizes, have a larger amount of discretionary funds. Discretionary funds were used at the middle schools to provide additional teachers, materials, and training; to purchase new technology and upgrade existing technology; to purchase TAAS-related instructional materials; to initiate parental involvement programs; and to increase the number of development opportunities for teachers. All schoolwide Title I schools were rated acceptable or higher in the most recent accountability ratings.

COMMENDATION

EPISD offers a quality program to all students in Title I schools.

FINDING

Interviews with building staff and public comments calling for increased technology at some campuses suggest questions regarding the distribution of instructional technology throughout EPISD. One Title I campus has several dedicated computer labs, at least one computer in each classroom, computers available in the volunteer workroom, and networked computers. In addition, the administrator at this campus had purchased a large number of laptop computers that can be checked out to students. A campus not eligible for Title 1 funds has only two computer labs and those have computers that are several years old. In addition, although the building is only six years old, at construction it was not wired for computers and thus could not be networked for faculty e-mail or instructional sharing without a substantial investment in remodeling.

Because Title I funds are intended to supplement, not supplant, local funding, some campuses will have discretionary dollars that other campuses do not have. The perception by EPISD's stakeholders is that Title 1 funds have been used extensively to increase computer capability at Title I campuses. As **Exhibit 2-29** reflects, however, only 5 percent of an \$18 million budget was expended for technology. By far the largest share of Title I funds, 74 percent, was expended for personnel (to reduce class size, provide additional counselors, etc.).

Recommendation 28:

Develop a plan to ensure that research, assessment, and evaluation are used for all technology spending decisions from any source, and that the EPISD technology plan is communicated to internal and external constituencies.

Because the perception of technology inequity is rampant among staff, students, and parents, the district should clearly identify and communicate its technology plan, which should enunciate technology goals based on solid needs assessments and rational goals. The district must clearly communicate its data and the basis for all spending decisions to internal and external constituencies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The director for Curriculum and Instruction, the coordinator for Instructional Technology, and the director of Research review campus-generated information about instructional technology inventory purchased from all funding sources and assess improvements directly related to technology.	June-September 1999
2.	The director for Curriculum and Instruction, the coordinator for Instructional Technology, and the director of Research provide information to Title I Campus Improvement Committees to be use in developing the Campus Improvement Plan.	October 1999
3.	District employees in Instructional Technology and Finance determine the impact of the assessment on expenditures of district resources at non-Title I schools.	November 1999-March 2000
4.	The director for Curriculum and Instruction and the coordinator for Instructional Technology take recommended spending plans for expenditures of district funds to the superintendent for his review and consideration and approval by the Board of Trustees.	November 1999-March 2000
5.	The director for Instructional Technology makes regular reports to the public about the implementation of the technology plan.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with funds in the district's regular budget.

F. Regional Day School for the Deaf

BACKGROUND

Texas students who are deaf or hard of hearing may receive instructional services at the Texas School for the Deaf, a residential placement facility located in Austin; at their home campus, with support from teachers with a deaf education background; or at a Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD).

RDSPDs, created by the 1973 Legislature, are supervised by TEA's Division of Services for the Deaf. As of the 1997-98 school year, 4,411 students from about 500 Texas school districts were served in RDSPDs. Sixty school districts serve as fiscal agents. The fiscal agent for the RDSPD usually is the district where the students attend classes and is the "receiving" district. These districts receive funds from a Foundation School Fund appropriation included in TEA's appropriation, federal Individuals with Disabilities Act funds, and local school district contributions to provide instructional services to eligible students who qualify in their own district as well as to students who are sent from neighboring, or "sending" districts.

Regional day school students are reviewed annually by an ARD committee that writes and revises each student's Individual Education Plan. Students are assisted by teachers specializing in deaf education, although many deaf students also participate in regular classrooms with the aid of interpreters.

RDSPD's Foundation School fund appropriation for fiscal 1998 was about \$33 million. Local districts and fiscal agents expended another \$7.7 million, in addition to \$3.1 million from federal funds. This brings the total cost for this program statewide to slightly less than \$44 million, and the per-pupil expenditures from all funds to \$9,973 for 1997-98. While significantly higher than the cost to educate a regular education student, the regional day school per-pupil expenditure compares favorably to the \$31,000 per year expended on residential students served at the Texas School for the Deaf.

State Deaf Foundation School funds are distributed for every student who received at least 45 minutes of direct services a week based on the student population on December 1 of each year. Federal funds are channeled to the receiving districts through TEA each year based on the number of students enrolled the previous December and the number eligible for various federal programs. Neighboring district contributions to the RDSPD are based on an interlocal agreement signed at the beginning of each school year between the fiscal agent district providing the services

and the sending district. Sending districts' payments ranged from nothing to \$7,500 per student for fiscal 1998, depending on the cost and level of services required. In addition, fiscal agents contribute cash and in-kind support including classroom space, support services, transportation, equipment, and some salaries.

Due to the escalating cost of services, some school districts have chosen to provide some or all services at their home campus. If a student attends the RDSPD for less than half the school day, he or she generates both Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding and RDSPD funding. Whichever district reports the student on its PEIMS reports receives ADA funding for the child if the child is eligible. Special Education funding, however, is generated from the December federal child count, not PEIMS.

CURRENT SITUATION

In 1998-99, EPISD's Regional Day School Program for the Deaf served about 150 children from within EPISD and nine neighboring school districts, including Ysleta, Anthony, Canutillo, San Elizario, Clint, Fabens, Socorro, and Tornillo ISDs and Fort Hancock.

The program has an annual operating budget of about \$1.5 million annually (**Exhibit 2-30**). El Paso does not contribute a cash amount for each child in the program, but does provide facilities and all of the expenses for support services like purchasing, personnel, accounting, and legal services.

**Exhibit 2-30
EPISD Regional Day School Program for the Deaf
Funding Information**

	1998-99**	1997-98	1996-97
Total Student Count Ages 0 -21 Years	150	153	150
State Deaf Funding	\$1,121,132	\$1,155,943*	\$1,177,557*
State Funding per Child	\$7,474	\$7,511	\$7,646
Federal Child Count Ages 3-21	146	137	137
IDEA-B Formula	\$58,400	\$53,971	\$42,642
IDEA-B Discretionary	\$34,955	\$32,949	\$33,440
Federal Funding per Child Ages 3-21	\$639	\$634	\$555
Federal Child Count Ages 3-5	21	21	25
IDEA-B Preschool	\$10,105	\$10,105	\$12,306

Federal Preschool Funding Per Child	\$481	\$481	\$492
Federal Child Count Ages 0-2	5	7	10
Early Childhood Instruction (ECI) Part C	\$1,642	\$2,151	\$2,901
Federal Early Childhood Funding Per Child	\$328	\$307	\$290
Total State and Federal Funding	\$1,226,234	\$1,255,119	\$1,268,846
State and Federal Funding Per Child	\$8,175	\$8,203	\$8,459
Sending District Billings	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000
Billings per Child	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
EPISD's Cash Contribution	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Program Budget from all Sources	\$1,446,234	\$1,475,119	\$1,488,846
Total Program Cost per Child	\$9,641	\$9,641	\$9,926

* *Included critical unmet needs supplement*

** *Projected budget based on estimates Source: Texas Education Agency.*

As of October 31, 1998, 158 students were enrolled in the program, slightly more than originally projected. Serving those students are 18 teachers, 10 instructional aides, 13 interpreter aides, 2.5 speech therapists, one media specialist, one diagnostician, one audiologist, one counselor, one lead teacher, and the administrator. In addition to the RDSPD staff, EPISD employs an additional two teachers of the deaf and one instructional aide to serve an additional student to provide instructional services to students who remain at their home schools rather than going to the RDSPD campus. **Exhibit 2-31** reflects the enrollment and staffing of EPISD's RDSPD.

Exhibit 2-31
Enrollment and Staffing of
EPISD's Regional Day School Program For the Deaf
October 31, 1998

	Students Enrolled	Teachers	Instructional Aides	Interpreter Aides
Infant (ages 0-2)	12	1		
Hillside		10	9	3

Preschool	31			
Grades 1-5	40			
Multihandicapped	7			
Ross				
Grades 6-8	21	3		3
Austin				
Grades 9-12 **	4	1		
Burgess				
Grades 9-12 **	40	3	1	7
Served at Home School ***	1			
Transition (work site and Highland)	1			
Private School	1			
TOTALS	158	18	10	13
Additional Staffing:	1 Administrator	1 Audiologist	1 Media Specialist	1 Lead Teacher
		2.5 Speech Therapists	1 Counselor	1 Diagnostician

***Including eight students at the Center for Career and Technology Education and two at the Occupational Center.*

**** Officially EPISD (not RDSPD).*

Source: EPISD.

The program's administrators are located in the Zuni Cottage, a small house used by the district to house overflow administrative offices. Services are delivered to students at Hillside Elementary, Ross Junior High, Austin High School, and Burgess High School, and some other settings such as a private or home school setting. In addition, the district holds a parent program at Zuni Cottage to assist parents of infant children who are deaf or hard of hearing in learning to work with their children.

The administrator for the Regional Day School for the Deaf reports to the Region II executive director, who reports to the Region II associate superintendent. In the past, the program operated under the central Special Education Department, but its administrative reporting lines were changed during the district's reorganization into four regions. The administrator makes recommendations for services provided to hard-of-hearing students in the district's Special Education program during the ARD process, as well as during the year as needs arise, and supervises and evaluates teachers who provide the services. Teachers assess these children monthly to make sure they are passing. If they are not, RDSPD teachers and counselors provide special tutoring or other assistance. The administrator also handles instructional arrangements for any hard-of-hearing children within the district that are not a part of the Regional Day School. This mostly entails ensuring that all of the special equipment used by these children works properly and that the expenses for auditory trainers are paid for out of the district's Special Education funds.

FINDING

According to EPISD statistics, 97 percent of the students in the RDSPD use total communication, meaning simultaneous use of speech, sign language, finger spelling, and amplification. Seventy-five percent of these students have severe to profound hearing loss and 73 percent come from homes where multiple languages or languages other than English are spoken. In spite of such daunting demographics, students within the RDSPD compare favorably with other students in the state on the Stanford Achievement Test, which has norms for hearing-impaired students (**Exhibit 2-32**).

Exhibit 2-32
EPISD's RDSPD Scores on
Stanford Achievement Test by Age
1997-98

	Below Age 10	Ages 11- 13	Ages 14- 16	Ages 17- 18	All Ages
RDSPD	536	583	606	580	579
State	540	580	604	606	579
Nation	533	578	602	608	586
# of Students Tested	20	21	27	14	82

Source: EPISD.

As shown, EPISD's RDSPD students outperformed the national averages and were within four points of the state average in every category but ages 17-18. The program administrator attributes this success to the wide range of services provided through the program, and to a caring and competent staff that work with the children on a daily basis.

In 1998, RDSPD staff received the following awards:

Outstanding Deaf Educator for the State of Texas from the Association of Parents and Educators of the Deaf (Upper elementary Social Studies and Science) 1998

Elementary Teacher of the Year for the El Paso ISD (Reading Teacher) 1997-98

Outstanding Public School Speech Language Pathologist for the city of El Paso 1997-98

Support Staff Person of the Year for Hillside Elementary (Instructional Aide) 1998-99

There now are more children in EPISD's RDSPD from outside the district than from the district itself. Some have said that the program should be broken up and an additional regional day school established in the Ysleta or Socorro ISDs. However, according to TEA, smaller RDSPDs typically cannot provide the level of services that a larger program like EPISD's can, primarily because of economies of scale.

According to TEA officials, the total program cost per child enrolled in EPISD's RDSPD is approximately \$9,600. This cost is comparable to other RDSPDs in the state, but the services provided by EPISD include exceed most other basic programs. Instruction is based on total communication, an oral, manual, and auditory approach to communication that aims to maximize linguistic growth through the simultaneous use of speech, sign language, finger spelling, and amplification; thus encouraging students to use all sensory channels. Students benefit from exceptionally qualified, certified, and specially trained professionals who have expertise in working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. In EPISD, these professionals include teachers, interpreters, speech therapists, diagnosticians, an audiologist, a media/technology specialist for the deaf, as well as a lead teacher and administrator. Furthermore, because students come from the surrounding area, the EPISD program includes a large "critical mass" of age-appropriate deaf students, a factor that promotes language development and learning. Few smaller RDSPDs could afford to hire the high-quality staff, offer the comprehensive programs, or provide the "critical mass" of EPISD's RDSPD.

COMMENDATION

The EPISD Regional Day School Program for the Deaf provides high-quality services to its children at a cost-effective rate.

FINDING

In the past year, the EPISD RDSPD was named one of only three RDSPDs statewide to participate in the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) Technology in Education Grant, which will allow the school to video-conference with TSD and other member school districts. Training for staff and interactive learning opportunities for students are expected to be a part of the program.

The EPISD RDSPD also received \$4,000 plus a \$1,500 incentive grant from the El Paso Community Foundation for the Eyes of Independence Program to provide community-based instruction for upper elementary-aged deaf students.

COMMENDATION

EPISD has sought and received grants to enhance its Regional Day School Program for the Deaf and expand services available to children in the program.

FINDING

Formerly, the RDSPD administrator reported to the Special Education executive director. Under the new organization, she reports to a regional associate superintendent. In practice, this change has resulted in inadequate accountability and communication, confusion in decision-making, and inefficient operations.

According to the program administrator, she did not have an evaluation this year, and is completely out of the district's information loop. This administrator also said that information forwarded to her supervisor often is often lost. For example, she was not informed of a decision to move the physical location of the program until late in the summer, making preparation for the move nearly impossible, not only for her but for the parents and children in the program. Faulty communication also has caused ongoing transportation problems. Some deaf students attending regular classes at an EPISD home campus frequently are left stranded without bus transportation or classes when their home campus administrator alters the school schedule and dismisses students early so that faculty can participate in planning or professional development without providing advance notice to the RDSPD.

Central administration also assumes some authority for the RDSPD program. The Special Education executive director submits a budget on behalf of the program administrator, and the Special Education Department performs the December 1 count of students required by the government.

Because the RDSPD campus has no access to the district's computer mainframe), the program administrator cannot review the program's budget, unlike administrators in every other school in the district. Frequently, the administrator does not know the details of the program's adopted budget or how much of the budget has been spent. For example, on November 2, 1998, the administrator sent a memo to Accounting asking for information about budgets and amounts expended because the RDSPD still had no budget information although school had been under way for three months.

Human Resources practices also present a problem for RDSPD. The Regional Day School must recruit nationally to hire interpreters and other highly skilled people to work with deaf students. Although EPISD has an automated application tracker system from which a list of applicants can be selected by position, the RDSPD administrator and Human Resources personnel need to work more closely to identify qualified candidates. When personnel for RDSPD are hired, communication between the Human Resources Department and the RDSPD administrator appears to be inadequate.

In one recent incident, for instance, an applicant provided everything requested by Human Resources personnel for her file; the RDSPD administrator assumed the applicant was hired, and the woman reported to work. However, according to district records, the woman was not paid for work for the period from February 1 to March 21, 1997. In February, the RDSPD administrator called Human Resources, informed them of the problem, and was assured it would be taken care of. The woman continued to work through the next month, thinking everything was fixed. Later in February, Human Resources informed the administrator that the woman did not have the required 60 hours on her college transcript on file, and so was never set up on the system as an official permanent employee, but rather as a substitute paraprofessional. The administrator, believing the applicant to be a permanent employee, had not filled out timecards, accounting for the failure of the woman to be paid at all. In mid-March, the administrator completed timecards, and the district eventually paid the woman for her work at the substitute rate. The members of the employee's department took up a collection to help her to make up the difference in lost pay. Better communication could have prevented this from happening.

TSPR also observed apparent inequities in compensation and staffing. Based on the district's pay plan, the RDSPD administrator is paid at the same rate as a program specialist or facilitator at the campus level. Yet program specialists supervise no one and oversee no budget. The RDSPD administrator, on the other hand, controls a \$1.5 million budget and supervises 50 people inside the program, plus two Special Education teachers that work with deaf children outside of RDSPD. Last year the administrator earned less than a RDSPD speech therapist and diagnostician. Because the administrator is not considered to be a director, she is not allowed to have a secretary. One employee works as a clerk III and serves as secretary to seven people on a daily basis, answers the phone for the entire program, and keeps the books.

Such factors may contribute to recent administrative turnover at RDSPD. The current administrator, who has held this position for only a short time, is retiring at the end of November 1998; her predecessor was with the program for only eight months before resigning.

Recommendation 29:

Improve the district's communication with and oversight of the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf, and review and correct compensation, if appropriate.

Because RDSPD is a districtwide program that serves students from across the district as well as those from surrounding districts, the district should establish an oversight committee to ensure its efficient and effective operation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent directs Human Resources to review and draft an administrative organization for RDSPD that takes into account the districtwide and regional responsibilities of the program administrator.	April 1999
2.	Human Resources presents the superintendent with a recommendation for staffing and compensation appropriate to the scope of responsibilities and duties of the RDSPD director.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent directs the Communications executive director to organize an RDSPD oversight committee including a representative from each sending district. The oversight committee would advise the superintendent and the director on program and personnel.	April 1999
4.	The RDSPD oversight committee has its initial meeting and begins to develop recommendations for the superintendent.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

The EPISD RDSPD is funded by federal funds, state funds dispersed by TEA, and local funds from sending districts. The amount of funds that come from the local sending districts is set by contract at the beginning of each year, based upon the actual program costs of the previous year. Any local funds not used in a fiscal year are returned to the EPISD general account, and the next year's sending district assessment is adjusted downward accordingly.

In mid-August of each year, the Board of Trustees adopts the EPISD budget, but no state funds are available until September 1 of that year. Sometimes, the district has not received official notification of the state funds available for the RDSPD program by mid-August, necessitating a budget amendment sometime in September.

Since the operating year (which begins mid-August) starts earlier than the fiscal year during which funds may be expended (September 1), problems arise when supplies or contract services must be purchased before the beginning of the fiscal year. Any supplies or services must be ordered and received prior to August 15 of a fiscal year. If needs become apparent when students arrive in mid-August, additional supplies and services cannot be ordered until after September 1. Some books and supplies were not received until the last day of the first six weeks for the current school year, meaning that a sixth of the school year passed before the RDSPD had necessary supplies. Other school programs experience the same problem, but may have access to federal funds that become available in July.

Furthermore, as already noted, the RDSPD administrator cannot know what funds are available for her program because the RDSPD campus does not have access to EPISD's mainframe, as other campus and program administrators do. On November 2, 1998, the administrator sent a memo to Accounting asking for information about the RDSPD budget and amounts expended because she had received no budget information although school had been under way for three months.

Finally, RDSPD does not have an activity account similar to the accounts of other campuses. These activity accounts hold funds generated from campus fundraisers and campus vending machines. The money in these accounts are discretionary and can be used to pay for additional

instructional supplies, student awards, banquets, faculty training, etc. The principals of the campuses may write a check on the activity accounts.

Recommendation 30:

Review the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf's budgeting and accounting procedures and establish procedures for allocating appropriate startup and activity funds.

The district should consider whether federal funds designated for RDSPD can be used in August, before state funds become available, and should establish appropriate procedures so that the RDSPD administrator and students have access to activity funds as do other district administrators and students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent directs executive director of Finance to review budgeting and accounting procedures for RDSPD and make recommendations for allocation of appropriate startup funds and improved access to budget information.	April 1999
2.	Executive director of Finance presents recommendations to the superintendent for approval.	May 1999
3.	The RPSPD oversight committee considers creating an activity account and presents recommendations to the superintendent for approval.	May 1999
4.	Recommendations are implemented and RDSPD staff is trained in using the software program to gain information about and access to their budget.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

G. Career and Technology Education

CURRENT SITUATION

The economic vitality of the El Paso community depends in large part on how successfully its schools meet the training needs of area business and industry. The 1991 report *Crisis in American Education* reported that 29 percent of American high school graduates lack the skills required to function in today's workplace. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that by 2005, 77 percent of U.S. jobs will require some training beyond high school. The gap in wages between skilled and unskilled workers continues to widen. Business, industry, and the general public have a common interest in promoting education and training.

State law 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 member and wage earner; and gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student's education at the post-secondary level." A TEA rule requires school districts to offer career and technology education courses selected from three of eight educational areas: agriculture science and technology, business, career orientation, health science technology, home economics, industrial technology, marketing, and trade and industrial. Career and Technology Education (CATE) gives students an opportunity to make informed occupational choices and develop marketable skills.

FINDING

During the 1997-98 school year, 9,611 EPISD students were enrolled in CATE programs. Gender and ethnicity (**Exhibit 2-33**) are represented in about the same ratios as the overall enrollment.

Exhibit 2-33
Gender and Ethnicity of
EPISD Students in Career Technology
October 1997

Total Members/ Percent	Male	Female	Am Ind/ Alaskan	Asia/Pacif Island	African American	Hispanic	Anglo, Not Hispanic
9611	4,625	4,886	14	97	410	7,519	1,571
100 %	48.1	51.9	.01	1.0	4.3	78.2	16.3

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 2-34 shows the percentage of student enrollment in CATE and the budgeted expenditures for career and technology programs. Although EPISD enrolled more than 14 percent of its students in CATE courses, its expenditures for CATE are significantly below the expenditures of two peer districts in its region, Ysleta and Socorro.

Exhibit 2-34
Percentage of Student Enrollment
And Budgeted Expenditures in CATE
EPISD versus Peer Districts
1996-97 School Year

District	Student Enrollment		Budgeted CATE Expenditures		
	Number	Percent	Expenditure	Percent	Per Capita
Socorro	3,010	14.3	\$2,686,031	5.3	\$892
Ysleta	5,985	10.8	\$5,232,105	4.1	\$662
El Paso	9,611	14.3	\$3,964,304	2.4	\$412

Source: Texas Education Agency.

EPISD offers three courses-career investigation, life management skills, and technology education-at the middle school level. Some CATE courses are offered at high school campuses and others are offered at the Center for Career and Technology Education (CCT), which originally opened in 1956 as El Paso Technical High School. Career Technology Education for Students with Disabilities (CTED) provides opportunities for students with disabilities who are found eligible through the ARD process for courses in a variety of career fields. CTED courses are modified to meet the individual needs of each Special Education student. **Exhibit 2-35** lists EPISD's CATE and CTED offerings.

Exhibit 2-35
EPISD Career and Technology
Program Offerings
1996-97

Program	Offered at Home School	Offered at Center for CATE
Agriculture Science & Technology	Coronado Only*	

Auto Mechanics	X	
Metal Trades	X	
Technical Education	X	
Production & Manufacturing	X	
Fire Science Technology	Burges Only*	
Criminal Justice	X	
Home Economics Marketing	X	
Cisco System Management	X	X
Advertising Design		X
Air Conditioning & Refrigeration		X
Automotive Collision Repair		X
Automotive Specialization-Automotive Electrician		X
Automotive Specialization-Front End/Brakes		X
Automotive Specialization-Automatic Transmissions		X
Automotive Technician		X
Building Maintenance		X
Building Trades		X
Business Computer Applications	X	X
Cosmetology		X
Diesel Mechanics		X
Electrical Trades		X
Electronics		X
Fashion Design		X
General Mechanical Repair		X
Graphic Arts		X
Health Science Technology	Silva Magnet	X
Horticulture		X
Legal Administrative Systems		X
Medical Administrative Systems		X

Metal Trades		X
Office Administrative Systems		X
Piping Trades/Plumbing		X
Technical Drafting		X
CTED Building Maintenance		X
CTED Furniture Upholstery and Repair		X
CTED Food Production, Management & Services		X
CTED General Marketing		X
CTED Horticulture		X
CTED Home Economics	X	

* *Students interested in Agriculture or Fire Science may transfer to the appropriate home campus, but must provide their own transportation. Source: EPISD.*

EPISD offers School-to-Career programs, also known as Tech Prep. Tech Prep provides a coherent sequence of courses in Career and Technology Education, involving classroom instruction as well as on-site training at a business or industry. Tech Prep is composed of *school based activities*, including integrated curriculum, applied academics, career guidance/counseling, and articulated credit; *connecting activities*, including job shadowing (in which a student visits a work place and observes and/or takes part in activities on site), field trips, interest and aptitude assessment, and portfolios; and *work-based activities* that include non-paid internships, cooperative education, and registered apprenticeships.

EPISD Tech Prep programs offer significant opportunities for job shadowing and work-based training. The CCT maintains active partnerships with 95 businesses and industries. In 1997-98, more than 3,205 students participated in job shadowing, 504 students participated in training site learning, and 75 students had summer job placements in more than 60 off-campus training sites. Transportation and liability insurance have been identified as two factors important to the private sector's decision to partner with School-to-Career programs. EPISD students are transported without charge from their home campuses to the CCT and to various work-based training sites by EPISD buses. The district also

provides liability insurance for all students who participate in the School-to-Career program.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's exemplary School-to-Career program provides students with many opportunities for work-based learning.

FINDING

The Upper Rio Grande Tech Prep/School to Work Consortium's list of top occupations for EPISD's region include auto repair; business services; communications; educational services; electricity, gas, and sanitation services; electronics and electronic services; engineering and accounting services; general building construction; health services; personal services; rubber and plastics; social services; special trade construction; trucking and warehousing; and wholesale durables. EPISD's career and technology program addresses 12 of the 15 top occupations.

In addition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics identified the ten fastest-growing noncollege occupations for the years 1994 to 2005. These are personal and home care; home health aides; physical and corrective therapy aides; electronic system workers; occupational therapy assistants and aides; human services workers; manicurists; medical assistants; amusement and recreation attendants; and correction officers. Demand in these occupations will increase from 50 percent to 119 percent. EPISD's career and technology programs address eight of the ten fastest-growing noncollege occupations.

The district provides ongoing evaluation and modification of CATE programs to meet the training needs of the workplace and of the community. For example, Business Administration offerings were modified to address two local employment needs: medical records administration and legal administrative systems. An International Marketing program was added to address the particular needs of a business community with an international border. The upholstery program and print shop are being phased out to make room for programs like soldering and advertising design, which are demand occupations targeted by the Upper Rio Grand Tech/Prep School to Work Consortium.

In addition, EPISD has many innovative and cutting edge career and technical education programs. The auto body shop operates on the two-day schedule, the current standard for commercial shops. The auto spray-paint bay is the only Environmental Protection Agency-certified facility between Phoenix and San Antonio. The students in CTED General Marketing, a two-year program for students with handicapping learning

disabilities, operate a snack shop. They order the inventory, advertise, sell the products, and manage the physical space. Profits are plowed back into improving the business. A recent purchase is a neon sign for the shop, which looks very much like a corner soda shop.

The district provides two notable career training programs leading to high demand employment within the El Paso business and industrial community. Based upon an identified need for fire fighters in the community, the district has initiated the Fire Science Technology program in partnership with the El Paso Fire Department. The program has been recognized as an innovative program and credit earned in this program transfers to the Associate Degree program at El Paso Community College. Based upon a similarly identified community need for computer technicians, El Paso has initiated a Cisco Networking Technology program. EPISD is one of only two public school districts in Texas to be licensed as a Cisco training site. The district offers a two-year program at ten campuses. At the end of the second year, students are prepared to pass a test as a Level One Technician, qualified to work on Cisco Networks, which comprise about 70 percent of network technology internationally. A program for Windows NT networking is under development.

COMMENDATION

EPISD offers a wide range of career and technology courses designed to meet the needs of the business community as well as to provide options for students who do not choose to pursue higher education.

FINDING

The Career and Technology Center offers an Educational Support Center for students enrolled at the center. The Educational Support Center prepares students to pass the exit-level TAAS exam and tutors students in core academic subjects taken at home campuses. It assists students with remedial and/or academic support to strengthen deficient skill areas, and attempts to introduce students to effective study habits and enhance their self-esteem. Moreover, the Educational Support Center works to increase students' ability to solve complex math problems and to improve reading comprehension and written expression, skills needed not only for TAAS, but also for succeeding in CATE programs. A variety of equipment and materials are available in the center including Macintosh computers; software offering basic skills courses; and TAAS review books.

COMMENDATION

The Career and Technology Education Support Center offers a positive, friendly environment for students who need to strengthen their academic skills.

FINDING

A new facility for the CCT and the School Age Parent Center opened in January 1996. Designed with modern programs in mind, the facility offers state-of-the-art classrooms and technology. Despite its facilities and outstanding programs, however, CCT enrollment is not at capacity. According to information provided by the Career and Technology director, the center could accommodate up to 1,300 students; adjustments in schedules and center offerings could allow this capacity to be further increased. Current enrollment is less than 1,000.

The district participates in the Upper Rio Grande Tech Prep School-to-Work Consortium, which provides some marketing services for EPISD's CATE programs. The consortium also provides generic student brochures about Tech Prep for local campuses and provides advertising in venues likely to be frequented by students (such as local movie theaters). The brochures lack appeal, however, and while the theater slides used are good, they are unlikely to generate the response of campus-based marketing efforts. No data are available to demonstrate the effectiveness of the current marketing strategies.

Descriptions of specific career and technology courses are available in the *High School Course Description Booklet*, and course names are listed the *High School Registration Booklet*. Each home campus has a vocational counselor paid with CATE funds to assist students in planning CATE study programs. However, individual counselors determine counseling activities. On-site direction and supervision of counselors is the responsibility of each principal, with minimal guidance from the Career and Technology director or the principal of the CCT. Consequently, the career components of the guidance and counseling program required by state law are not applied consistently, and TSPR found little evidence of accountability measures for career counseling. In interviews with CATE instructors, students and parents, the respondents suggested that vocational counselors frequently assume duties unrelated to CATE at their local campuses, and that better coordination between the counselors and the center would improve the information flow about CATE programs to both students and parents.

Interviews with administrators suggested CTC recruitment is hampered by its reputation as "dummy" school among students, who are told by teachers that CATE is for students who are not going to college. The district identifies graduates as "estimated college-bound" if they request

that a final transcript be sent to a two-year or four-year college or university. However, students at CCT who request a final transcript would be counted at their home school. Since that data is not provided for CCT, no comparable figure can be prepared for "estimated college bound" at CCT. Nevertheless, TEA program completer follow-up data shows that, of 1996-97 EPISD graduates who took CATE courses, about 17 percent were employed in a related field, while more than 50 percent were enrolled in postsecondary education or advanced training related to the CATE program. These completers compare favorably to the 65 percent of 1996-97 graduates of regular high schools who were estimated to be college-bound.

Recommendation 31:

Provide greater emphasis on student service in career counseling by improving accountability reporting, the connection between support center counselors and the Center for Career and Technology Education, and professional development for vocational counselors.

The district should take action to improve CATE's image. The district should track TAAS scores, SAT/CAT scores, transcript requests, and college admissions by CCT as well as by home campuses. The findings should be distributed widely within the district and to the public at large. Vocational counselors should work closely with the principal of the CCT to improve recruitment and understanding of CATE programs. CATE-funded counselors should be evaluated on professional activities related to career and technology education.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent directs the career and technology director, the principal of the CCT, and appropriate regional personnel to convene a task force to develop accountability measures and an improvement plan for vocational counseling.	August 1999
2.	The superintendent directs appropriate individuals to track and publish TAAS scores, SAT/CAT scores, transcript requests, and college admissions by CATE students, as well as by other classifications and by CCT membership as well as by home campus.	August 1999
3.	The task force submits recommendations for increasing emphasis on student service in career counseling to the associate superintendent for Support Services for review.	October 1999
4.	The associate superintendent's recommendations are submitted to the superintendent's cabinet for approval.	November 1999

5.	Copies of the recommendations are distributed to vocational counselors and principals, who receive orientation and training in the revised approach to vocational counseling.	November 1999 -January 2000
6.	Additional professional development is delivered to vocational counselors as needed.	Ongoing
7.	Accountability measures are reviewed and program improved.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

FINDING

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

"Articulation arrangements" allow for the coordinated delivery of preparatory and training programs and services in secondary, postsecondary, and higher education institutions that could lead to a two-year associate degree, employment, or technical preparation in several fields. Through articulation, a student can complete advanced skills training in several career/occupational areas while earning up to 12 college semester credit hours in high school.

EPISD has developed articulation agreements with seven area postsecondary institutions. These agreements make it possible for students to earn credit for introductory college courses while still in high school; and secondary and postsecondary occupational training is coordinated to eliminate unnecessary duplication of course work. **Exhibit 2-36** provides information on EPISD's articulated courses with the local community college. The district has also established articulation agreements with Texas State Technical College, Sul Ross State University, Western Technology Institute, New Mexico State University at Los Cruces, Phoenix Art Institute, Wyoming Tech, and the University of Texas at El Paso.

Exhibit 2-36
EPISD Career and Technology Courses
Offered in Partnership With
El Paso Community College

Course
Accounting
Automotive Technology

Child Development
Computer Information Systems
Criminal Justice
Dental Assisting
Dental Hygiene
Dietetic Technology
Drafting and Design Technology
Electronics Technology
Food Service
Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
Medical Assisting
Medical Record Technology
Nursing
Office Information Systems
Ophthalmic Technology
Physical Therapist Assistant
Radiological Technology
Surgical Technology

Source: EPISD.

Articulated agreements with postsecondary institutions are a necessary step to creating Early College Start programs. Early College Start, not currently in use at EPISD, is a way for high school juniors and seniors to get ahead in today's highly competitive world. It offers three options for students, depending upon their particular needs:

- Dual credit, a course that earns college credit and also satisfies high school diploma requirements. It is free; no tuition or fees are charged.
- Co-enrollment, a course that earns college credit, but is not needed to satisfy high school diploma requirements. Usual tuition and fees of the post-secondary institution are charged.
- Credit in Escrow, a Tech-Prep course that combines strong academic and workforce skills in a career pathway. After high school graduation, the student continues the program of study at a postsecondary institution and is awarded "credit in escrow" for the

high school courses identified in the agreement. Some community colleges waive tuition and fees for credit in escrow.

The requirements for a college course to be considered for Early College Start at the high school level include the following:

It must provide advanced academic instruction beyond or in greater depth than the essential elements defined by TEA.

- The college offering the course must be accredited.
- The student must have the permission of parents and the principal.
- The student must meet all admission requirements established by the college.

Due to the rigor of the Tech-Prep education plan, Early College Start students are eligible for TEA's advanced high school program and high school honors programs through the 1998-1999 school year. Beginning in 1999-2000, the advanced high school program and the advanced high school program with honors will be replaced by the Distinguished Achievement Program, which will recognize students who demonstrate levels of performance equivalent to college students or work done by professionals in arts, science, business, industry, or community service. The program will focus on demonstrated student performance at the college or professional level, and student performance will be assessed through an external review process. Students can qualify by receiving any combination of the following advanced measures, including:

- Score on an Advanced Placement test of 3 or above
- Original research or project
- PSAT scores qualifying for recognition as a Commended Scholar
- Grade average of 3.0 (on four-point scale) or above on courses that count for college credit

An early college start lowers the cost of higher education. Tuition paid now will most likely be lower than after graduation from high school. If tuition and fees at cooperating community colleges are waived, as they are by El Paso Community College, EPISD students who earn college credit while still in high school would receive those credits free. Furthermore, early starters need less time after high school graduation to complete postsecondary education. Without question, "Early College Start" programs position students for success in postsecondary education and the workplace.

Exhibit 2-37 compares EPISD practices with "best practices" for local school districts that have exemplary Early College Start programs. While

this program is not mandatory and EPISD has successfully implemented some of these practices, the district has opportunities to strengthen a program that provides an enormous benefit to students and considerable financial savings to parents.

Exhibit 2-37
Comparison of EPISD Program
With Early College Start
Best Practices

Best Practices Indicator	EPISD
Outreach/Marketing	
Board policy exists authorizing partnerships.	No written policy.
School district's course catalog includes Early College Start explanations.	Catalog describes tech prep, but does not address dual enrollment or Early College Start.
Early College Start is publicized to students <u>and</u> parents in a variety of ways (posters, meetings, newsletters, orientations, etc.).	No communications with parents or students about Early College Start or dual enrollment.
Early College Start is included in faculty/staff orientation and development activities.	The district does not offer the Early College Start option.
Early College Start is included in the annual planning and student scheduling processes.	The district does not offer this option to students.
Planning/Evaluation	
Early College Start goals are included in the district's annual strategic planning (numbers of students in dual credit, co-enrollment, and credit in escrow).	Not included in strategic planning because it is not offered at this time.
Early College Start implementation is part of the evaluation process for personnel (high school principal, vocational counselor, and others) and for institutional effectiveness.	Not part of the evaluation process because Early College Start is not offered to students.
District receives feedback from local higher education institutions on how students perform in Early College Start	The local community college tracks transfer students, but no formal reporting procedures are in place.

courses and programs.	
Curriculum	
District has matched its course inventory with local higher education course inventories to identify possible "matches" for dual credit/co-enrollment or Tech-Prep credit in escrow.	The district has matched its course inventory to Tech Prep credit in escrow, but has not matched for dual credit or co-enrollment.
District and local higher education institutions have regular communication between their faculties (i.e., the schools keep each other informed about new programs, about changes in existing programs/courses, etc.).	An El Paso Community College coordinator of Tech Prep reviews all articulation contracts and counsels EPISD faculty on an as-needed basis.
Tech-Prep articulation agreements have been negotiated in all district career pathways.	District has articulation agreements with El Paso Community College in all district career pathways.
District has compared district's faculty credentials with higher education accreditation standards to facilitate identification of courses, which can be taught as credit in escrow (Tech Prep), and to identify high school faculty who can teach dual credit courses.	No assessment of faculty eligible to teach dual credit courses has occurred.
District curriculum administrators actively participate in local Tech-Prep consortia, school-to-work partnerships, and local workforce development boards and relate implications to appropriate faculty curriculum supervisors.	EPISD are represented on the Tech-Prep consortia board and on the local workforce development board. They regularly communicate information to counselors and faculty through memos and presentations at faculty meetings.
District has active partnerships with primary employers in the area for input on curriculum, especially career pathway/Tech Prep programs; support in getting equipment and other in-kind services such as summer internships, career days/tours, job shadowing, and mentoring.	District has outstanding record of partnerships with primary employers in the area.
Support Services	
District encourages students to test early for compliance with TASP and/or	No structured program, although Career and Technology counselors

encourages students to do well on 10th Grade TAAS so they can be exempted from testing and eligible to enroll in Early College Start.	are present on each high school campus.
District encourages career and technology students to test early for SAT, ACT, and other improved alternatives.	District does not target Career and Technology students for early testing.
District offers TASP workshops.	TASP workshops at the CATE student support center.
District has established relationships with the local higher education institution(s) and provides multiple opportunities for higher education to be present on campus (parent nights, career fairs, student orientation, college day, etc.).	District provides opportunities for students to interact with college recruiters through regular counseling program.
District works with local higher education institutions to ensure that tuition and fees for early start articulated credit is waived.	El Paso Community College does not charge tuition for credit in escrow.

Source: Austin Community College Resource Manual for Early College Start Programs and EPISD.

Besides the financial savings offered by Early College Start courses, they are a smart choice for students for reasons of quality, expanded options, and student services. The courses are fully accredited and faculty members must meet the same accreditation standards as those required by four-year colleges and universities. The emphasis in Early College Start courses is on teaching and real-world applications of learning, and smaller class sizes enhance faculty/student interaction.

Frequently day, evening, and weekend classes are available, and credit classes may have flexible time lengths. In class, self-paced and technologically delivered instructions are common. Student support services, such as basic skills assessment, career aptitude/interest assessments, and learning labs/tutorial support, help guarantee success.

Recommendation 32:

Institute an Early College Start program to provides benefits to students and financial savings to parents.

The district may replicate best practices used in central Texas by Austin Community College and the local public school districts in its service area.

Austin Community College has excellent publications and additional information sources available of the website for the School Relations Office at <<<http://www.austin.cc.tx.us/highschl/>>>

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The superintendent directs the career and technology director, the principal of the CCT, and appropriate regional personnel to convene a task force to develop a plan to implement best practices for an Early Start College program.	August 1999
2.	The task force submits recommendations for increasing implementing best practices to the associate superintendent for Support Services for review.	October 1999
3.	The associate superintendent's recommendations are submitted to the superintendent's cabinet for approval.	November 1999
4.	Copies of the recommendations are distributed to vocational counselors and principals, who receive orientation and training in the revised approach to vocational counseling.	November 1999 -January 2000
5.	The associate superintendent and the executive director of communications develop a marketing campaign for Early College Start.	January 2000 /Ongoing
6.	Accountability measures are reviewed and program improved.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter discusses EPISD's community relations and internal and external communications efforts in five sections:

- A. Management, Organization, and Program Evaluation
- B. Internal and External Communications
- C. Volunteer and Business Partnership Programs
- D. Community Relations and Fundraising
- E. Support Services

Community involvement activities enable parents, business leaders, and others with a stake in public education to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing the district and become involved in its activities. Since many of these activities are highly visible in the community, they often are coordinated through an organizational unit that reports directly to the superintendent.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the EPISD Communications & Business Partnerships Unit is to inform the El Paso community about the district, its programs, governance, and events; to promote a positive image in the community; to encourage student success through recognition; and to generate support for public education and the district. Major audiences of the EPISD's Communications Unit include students, parents and other community members, local employers, and EPISD personnel.

The Communications Unit has an annual operating budget of \$1.7 million for fiscal 1999. The unit's budget supports districtwide community and media relations activities, parental and community involvement activities, business partnerships, media and graphic productions, and printing and reproduction efforts. **Exhibit 3-1** provides a breakdown of unit's operating budget by organizational unit.

Exhibit 3-1
Communications & Business Partnerships Unit Budget
1997-98

Description	Communications	Community Services VIPS/PIE	Instructional Media	Printing	Total
Number of	5	3	4	32	44

Staff					
Salaries	\$251,715	\$114,224	\$119,358	\$750,034	\$1,235,331
Professional & Contract Services	6,400	60,970	13,700	164,159	245,229
Supplies & Materials	80,150	10,800	6,250	69,021	166,221
Other Operation Expenditures	20,000	43,856	0	0	63,856
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	54,070	54,070
Total	\$358,265	\$229,850	\$139,308	\$1,037,284	\$1,764,707

Source: EPISD.

EPISD budgeted \$6 per student on community involvement functions in the 1997-98 school year, based on expenditures reported to the state's Public Education Information Management System (**Exhibit 3--2**). EPISD had the lowest budgeted expenditure for community involvement activities among its peer districts; its expenditures also were well below the average for the state and the state's educational Region XIV, of which EPISD is a part. .

Exhibit 3-2
Community Involvement Budgeted Expenditures
EPISD Versus Peer Districts and State and Region XIV Averages
1997-98

District	Community Involvement Budgeted Expenditures (\$'s per Student)
San Antonio ISD	\$55
Dallas ISD	\$33
Fort Worth ISD	\$17
Socorro ISD	\$21
Ysleta ISD	\$10
Houston ISD	\$8

EL Paso ISD	\$6
Corpus Christi ISD	Not reported
State Average	\$11
Region XIV	\$16

Source: Texas Association of School Boards.

A. Management, Organization, and Program Evaluation

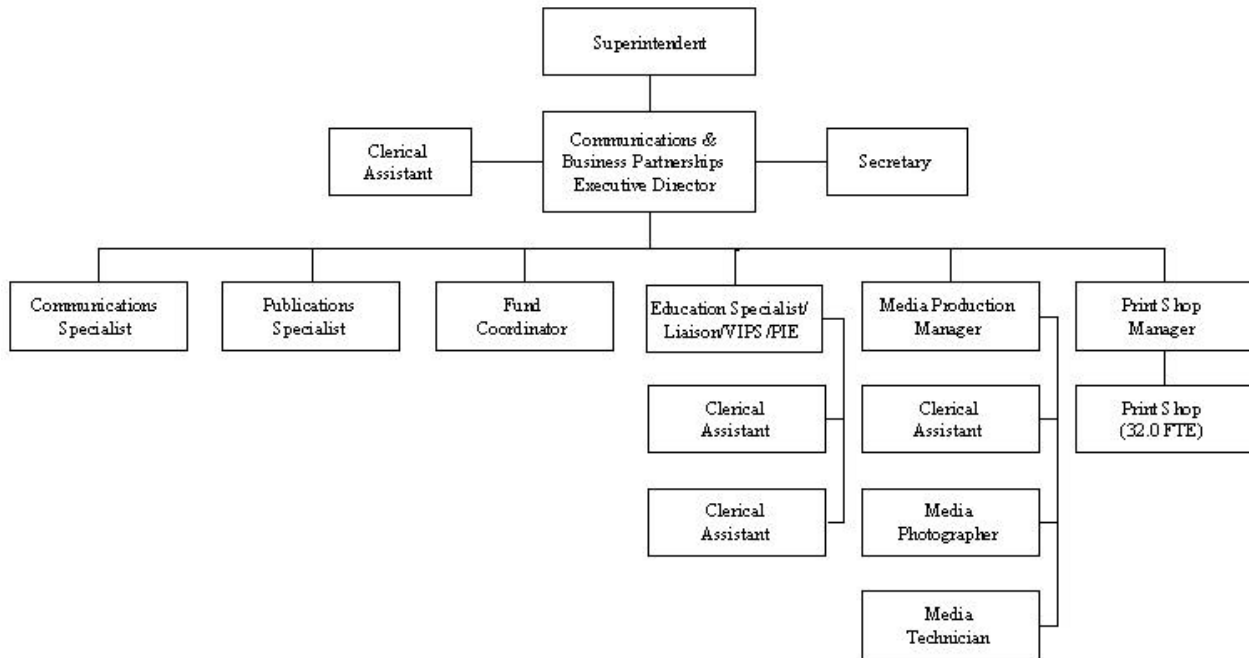
CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Communications & Business Partnerships Unit is managed by an executive director. Other key staff members include the communications and publications specialists, a fund coordinator, educational specialist, media production manager, print shop manager, and two administrative/clerical positions. In all, the unit is staffed by 44 employees.

FINDING

The Communications Unit is organized appropriately and staffed conservatively. The unit has a reasonable span of control and the appropriate functions are assigned to the unit: communications, publications, fundraising, volunteers and business partnerships, media production, and printing. The unit's organizational structure promotes well-coordinated efforts to achieve effective community involvement (**Exhibit 3-3**).

Exhibit 3-3
Communications & Business Partnerships Unit
Current Organizational Chart
Total Staff = 44



Source: EPISD

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Communications & Business Partnerships Unit operates a streamlined management team that promotes community involvement within the district.

Planning and Evaluation

FINDING

The Communications Unit has established a comprehensive set of goals for its operation (**Exhibit 3-4**).

Exhibit 3-4
The EPISD Communications & Business Partnerships Unit
Districtwide Goals
1997-98

Category	Goal(s)
Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support communications efforts on all campuses.
External Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To continue to provide positive, factual information to the community.• To improve the district's outreach and collaboration with the community.• To expand community participation in the schools.
Media Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To continue proactive media relations.
Employee/Student Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To award, encourage, and promote employee and student achievements.• To develop additional recognition programs.
EPISD Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To develop a means of financial support aside from district funding to help improve student performance.• To increase donations through creative fundraising efforts.• To support the foundation through internal and external communications programs.

Special Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase awareness and participation in public education and the EPISD.
Volunteers/Business Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the number of volunteers and business partnerships in the EPISD schools.

Source: EPISD.

From these goals, EPISD's Communications Unit develops an annual operating plan to guide its programs throughout the school year.

A sound community involvement planning process documents:

- Programs and activities to be performed;
- Audiences that will be affected or reached by each program or activity;
- Staff members responsible for implementing programs and activities;
- Communication vehicles required to publicize programs and activities; and,
- Resources required to implement programs and activities.

Once the planning process is complete, self-evaluations allow the service provider to discern how service recipients (i.e., district administrators and El Paso community members) perceive them. EPISD's Communications Unit has incorporated a self-evaluation tool into its annual operating plan. This tool allows the unit to obtain constructive feedback from district employees and community members and monitor the success of all of its programs and activities. Examples of these self-evaluation tools include greater recognition of exemplary employee performance and improved coverage in internal publications of programs and services offered to district employees. Both improvements resulted from suggestions noted in employee morale surveys conducted by the unit.

In addition, the Communications Unit's operating plan is supported by detailed cost summaries for publications, awards and giveaways, and advertising. For example, publication cost summaries outline the total cost, the number of copies produced for a specified time period (i.e., weekly, monthly, quarterly), the cost per piece, and postage and handling charges, if applicable.

The unit's detailed operating plan is shown in **Appendix H**.

COMMENDATION

The Communications Unit's comprehensive operating plan documents program implementation requirements and contains self-evaluation tools to assess the effectiveness of its communications initiatives.

B. Internal and External Communications

CURRENT SITUATION

The Communications Unit disseminates information through newsletters, press releases, brochures, a television show, and public service announcements. Initiatives implemented by the Communications Unit have focused on four essential components:

- Internal Communications (Employee Relations)
- External Communications (Community Relations)
- Media Relations
- Promotions of Special Events

FINDING

The Communications Unit prepares a variety of publications for internal and external constituents. Since the district's student enrollment is 76 percent Hispanic, most external promotional information is published both in English and Spanish. Examples of these publications include:

- *Visions* newsletter, a semiannual publication that promotes the district to the community. The publication is bulk-mailed to 40,000 parent households. EPISD also mails the publication to more than 500 businesses and community organizations.
- Parent/teacher conference brochures, which are sent home to all parents in the district with dates and times for parent conferences.
- Parent flyers and letters, including various routine correspondence sent to all parents regarding school or districtwide activities.

Examples of internal communications publications include:

- "EPISD at a Glance," a 30-minute marketing video that showcases some of the district's programs and activities. The video airs on the Paragon Access Cable Channel and provides information for community members, taxpayers, administrators, and students.
- *AdCom*, a weekly employee newsletter that provides EPISD employees with important information regarding upcoming district events. The newsletter is distributed to more than 7,000 employees.
- *Dimensions*, a quarterly publication, is distributed to Partners in Education participants and Volunteers in Public School chairs to apprise them of volunteer accomplishments and past and upcoming program events.

- *The Board Report*, a biweekly fact sheet distributed to employees, volunteers, and business partners that summarizes regular and special board meetings.
- *District Road Map*, a brochure that was used to explain the region concept to community members and parents.
- School brochures, booklets providing tips for school administrators on marketing their schools to their community.
- *The Crisis Management Manual*, which offers guidelines for communications during a school crisis. The *Crisis Management Manual* is disseminated to school principals and key unit personnel. A "pull-out" card with key telephone numbers and contacts also is published for principals, key unit personnel, and head custodians.

EPISD's Communications Unit also produces an annual "report card" that is distributed throughout the El Paso community. The annual report card includes:

- A shared vision statement for the district
- Membership of the board of trustees
- Educational leadership team membership
- Major district goals
- Explanation of organizational regions
- Student demographic data
- School accountability ratings
- Students' TAAS score accomplishments
- Financial overview of the district
- Overview of school lunch and breakfast programs
- Transportation and personnel facts

COMMENDATION

The Communications Unit publishes a comprehensive set of printed materials to inform district personnel and community members about EPISD activities and accomplishments.

FINDING

Although EPISD's Communications Unit publishes a considerable amount of information for employees and the public, the unit may not be as effective as it should be in establishing two-way communication with taxpayers, parents, and business community members. For example, at community meetings several parents said that when they call or come in person to the central office, they often are routed from department to department before they

can get the information they need. Furthermore, since the district returned to a decentralized structure with four regional offices, many parents and community members feel uncertain as to where to go for information or to have their issues resolved. Special education parents, in addition, often complain that they do not receive adequate information about their children's progress and that responses to request for information are handled unsatisfactorily.

The following public input comments taken from community meetings support this perception:

- Not enough information filters down to parents and not enough parent involvement in their children's education.
- Communication between administration and faculty and between faculty and parents is poor. Communication between principal and faculty and principal and parents is poor also.
- Establish an outreach position to effect clear, continuous community relations, public relations, recruitment of business partners; in short, to keep the mission of each school before the public for purposes of assistance and accountability.
- None of the superintendent's representatives, or school representatives, including assistant superintendent and principal, spoke or understood Spanish. There was no effective communication!
- School board meetings need more parental attendance.
- One method to get parents involved is to mandate community involvement courses (student council, band, and sports). As students sign up for courses the parents support school activities.

A significant number of district employees also indicated that EPISD's community relations function needs improvement (Exhibit 3-5).

**Exhibit 3-5
Employee Opinion Survey Results**

District Perception of the Community Relations Function					
Respondent Category	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Some or Major Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Don't Know

Administrators	1.4%	52.9%	34.3%	7.1%	4.3%
Principals/Assistant Principals	0.9	46.8	37.6	13.8	0.9
Teachers	1.8	52.2	30.9	2.5	12.6

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

EPISD's Communications Unit is headed by an executive director. Most of this position's time is allocated to internal and external publications and media relations. No position within the Communications Unit handles community concerns and complaints.

Corpus Christi ISD (CCISD), by contrast, has established an ombudsman position to facilitate improved communications and to expedite complaint resolution for parents and community members. This ombudsman reports to and operates with direct authority from the superintendent. When the ombudsman attempts to resolve problems between parents or community members and district or school administrators, the superintendent becomes involved only if the issue is not handled to the satisfaction of the parents or community members.

CCISD's ombudsman holds regular monthly forums with the community at various locations around the district including churches, schools, and community centers to allow community members to voice concerns about unresolved problems and issues. The ombudsman follows up on these forums by printing public input and the district's responses in a districtwide publication and by following up with the individuals in question either in person or through a letter.

Recommendation 33:

Create an ombudsman position as a means of establishing better two-way communication between the district and the community.

The ombudsman position would facilitate the district's response to community concerns and issues and seek to resolve complaints with various department heads and campuses. Community members will feel they are being listened to and the district is genuinely concerned about their feelings and input. This position should report directly to the superintendent.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

- | | | |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1. | The superintendent requests board approval to hire an ombudsman. | May 1999 |
| 2. | The superintendent and the executive director of the Communications Unit create a position and a job description for an ombudsman. | June 1999 |
| 3. | The district hires an individual for the position. | August 1999 |
| 4. | The district notifies the community of the new ombudsman through media, newspapers, television, and quarterly publications. | August 1999 |
| 5. | The ombudsman develops a procedure for processing parent complaints. | September 1999 |
| 6. | The ombudsman publicizes these procedures. | September 1999 |
| 7. | The ombudsman develops a plan for holding monthly forums, including dates and locations. | September 1999 |
| 8. | The district publicizes the first forum. | September 1999 |
| 9. | The ombudsman holds the first forum. | October 1999 |

FISCAL IMPACT

The average salary for an EPISD employee with similar responsibilities is about \$35,000 annually. Salary plus a benefits rate of 16 percent would result in a total salary of \$40,600 annually. Clerical or support staff should be transferred from existing positions to support this new position.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Create an ombudsman position in the Communications Unit.	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)	(\$40,600)

FINDING

EPISD does not have an accessible, central point in its administration building where citizens can go to obtain basic information about the district. During public meetings, many community members, including media representatives, complained that the Communications Unit is located on the 16th floor of the downtown education center and is inconvenient to the public. Public access to the downtown education center is somewhat intimidating to many visitors, since the district has to comply with the security guidelines of El Paso Natural Gas, the building's donor, which require security guards to log the names of visitors. Previously this unit was located at the Boeing Education Center and community members complained that the location was too remote despite the fact that there was no security issues or a parking problem.

Many large school districts maintain a public or citizens information office close to the building entrance so that parents and other community members can quickly obtain information about schools and educational programs. For example, Houston ISD has a Citizens Information Unit that provides general information and distributes districtwide publications; the office is staffed by an information specialist who is thoroughly familiar with the district operations and a translator who serves as an interpreter when needed. Ysleta and Socorro ISDs both have comparable public information functions in their respective communications departments.

While visiting the downtown education center, TSPR observed vacant first-floor conference rooms next to security that provide sufficient space to house the Communications Unit. More conveniently located offices would improve public access to these key information providers as well as strengthen district communications and community relations.

Recommendation 34:

Relocate Communications Unit staff members who regularly communicate with the public and the proposed ombudsman position to the first floor of the downtown education center to improve public access and strengthen community relations.

Communications Unit staff members such as the executive director of the Communications Unit, the communications specialist, publications specialist, secretary, and clerical assistant, along with the proposed Ombudsman position, should be relocated to the first floor to improve their accessibility to the public. Although

community members would still be required to sign-in for security reasons, they could be ushered quickly to a location where information can be quickly obtained.

The remainder of the Communications staff, including the Volunteers in Public Schools and Partners in Education staff (located at the Ft. Bliss Army Base); Print Shop employees (located at the Boeing Education Center); and Media Production employees (located in the Old Zach White Building in west El Paso) should remain in their existing locations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of the Communications Unit to relocate to the first floor of the downtown central administration building.	April 1999
2.	The executive director and the ombudsman relocate to the first floor.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented by the Communications Unit with assistance from the Facilities Unit, at a minimal fiscal impact to the district.

Open Records

FINDING

Open records requests from the general public are handled by EPISD's Employee Relations Unit, while the Communications Unit handles only those open records requests initiated by the media. At community meetings, many persons said that the district is slow in processing open records requests. Presently, general open records requests are handled by one employee in the Employee Relations Unit, an area with which most community members would not be familiar. In many school districts, open records requests are processed by the functional area most often contacted by the public, such as a public information officer, the ombudsman should work closely with legal services to ensure that all requests are handled according to the law, since the requests come from the public.

Recommendation 35:

Centralize the open records request function within the office of the ombudsman.

EPISD should centralize all open records requests by reassigning general information requests to the Communications Unit, an area more commonly known for handling this function. The staff members assigned to open records requests in Employee Relations and Communications should be reassigned to the office of the ombudsman so that no staff additions will be required.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent announces the consolidation of open records request processing and gives the responsibility to the ombudsman.	May 1999
2.	The ombudsman prepares a plan to consolidate open records processing currently performed by both the Communications Unit and the Employee Relations Unit.	June 1999
3.	The ombudsman prepares new job descriptions and assigns open records processing responsibilities, as appropriate.	July 1999
4.	Consolidation of the open records function is implemented.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented by the district with existing resources.

FINDING

TSPR conducted a telephone survey of six major media outlets in the El Paso area to determine the effectiveness of EPISD's Communications Unit. Most of the media representatives who responded indicated that accessibility to district administrators in the downtown central administration building and the Boeing administration building is good. All media representatives surveyed said the Communications Unit executive director is particularly helpful in ensuring that all news, positive or negative, is disseminated in a timely manner. Media representatives also said that the executive director is available on nights and weekends when the need arises.

While these media representatives were very complimentary of the Communications Unit in general, three areas emerged in which some felt the unit could improve. These included:

- more direct accessibility to the superintendent;
- more direct accessibility to schools; and
- detailed agenda packages prior to the board meetings (according to media representatives surveyed, Ysleta and Socorro ISD both provide the media with detailed agenda packages prior to board meetings).

One media representative said increased access to the superintendent would provide a more direct link between EPISD leadership and the public, as well as an excellent means for strengthening community relations. Some also noted that detailed board meeting agenda packages would allow them to determine agenda items that may need increased media coverage. At Laredo ISD, the Office of Communications coordinates regular media briefings with the district's superintendent on the morning after most board meetings. These regularly scheduled briefings ensure direct access to executive administration and ensure that issues covered in board meetings receive prompt and accurate responses.

According to the Communications Unit executive director, EPISD's school administrators have received a significant amount of media training and are prepared to interact with the media and handle routine media inquiries. For example, every other year, principals and key department heads receive outside training from professional consultants. This training is reinforced by the Communications Unit, which regularly issues professional literature to schools and departments regarding media protocols in schools and other topics of interest.

Recommendation 36:

Further enhance relations with the media by providing increased communication with the superintendent, more direct access to school personnel, and earlier dissemination of detailed board agenda materials.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Communications Unit executive director arranges a regular forum (such as a briefing session after each board meeting) to give the media more direct access to the superintendent.	April 1999
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2.	The Communications Unit executive director develops and communicates protocols for channeling routine media inquiries to schools and encouraging more direct interaction between school administrations and the media.	May 1999
3.	The Communications Unit executive director works with the superintendent's secretary to ensure that detailed board agenda packages are provided to the media at least three days before each meeting.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished by the Communications Unit with no fiscal impact to the district.

FINDING

EPISD board meetings are not broadcast on television or radio. The Media Production unit does, however, record the meetings on both audio and video tape, and these tapes are available for purchase in the superintendent's office at a cost of \$2 per audiotape and \$3 per videotape. The public also can view videotapes of board meetings by appointment in the superintendent's conference room at no charge.

During public meetings, several community members told TSPR that the lack of public broadcasts is inconvenient, since many meetings last until 11:00 p.m. Many school districts across the state broadcast time-delayed board meetings on local cable television stations. The Communications Unit told TSPR that EPISD board meetings are not broadcast on television because the boardroom is not properly configured. Furthermore, the Communications Unit said that the local cable station requires that all programming be of "television quality" and that the district's Media Production unit does not have the costly equipment required to deliver such product.

Paragon Cable, the local cable television operator, has two channels capable of airing school district board meetings. Paragon's Channel 14 broadcasts educational and instructional programs for local school districts in El Paso. While local school districts such as El Paso, Ysleta, and Socorro ISD regularly air educational programs, no school districts in the El Paso area broadcast board meetings. Paragon's Channel 15 broadcasts government-related programming such as El Paso City Council meetings at no charge. Paragon Cable told TSPR that the station

could provide personnel and the appropriate television camera equipment to tape EPISD board meetings free of charge, providing that board meetings end at a reasonable time. Again, Paragon Cable already provides this service for El Paso City Council meetings.

Talk radio shows are another a popular way for many El Paso residents to exchange ideas and obtain information about community happenings. Some of the public or Spanish-speaking radio stations may offer EPISD a viable, cost-effective means for broadcasting its board meetings.

Recommendation 37:

Contact the local cable television operator and radio stations and negotiate a contract to broadcast monthly district board meetings.

In addition to Paragon Cable, KTEP, a public broadcast radio station located at the University of Texas at El Paso, and KBNA, a Spanish-format radio station, should be contacted as possible sources for broadcasts of district board meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.		
May 1999		
2.	The executive director of the Communications Unit instructs Media Production to tape the monthly board meetings.	June 1999
3.	Media Production tapes board meetings for radio broadcasts.	July 1999
4.	EPISD board meetings are aired on a monthly basis on English and Spanish radio stations.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The local cable station indicated that it would not charge the district to broadcast monthly board meetings. The monthly cost of airing board meetings over the radio should be about \$1,000 per month for each contract. The station should consider airing board meetings on both an English and Spanish station. Therefore, the

total estimated cost would be \$24,000 annually (\$1,000 per month X two stations for 12 months).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Contact local radio stations and negotiate a contract to broadcast monthly district board meetings.	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$24,000)

C. Volunteer and Business Partnership Programs

CURRENT SITUATION

The educational specialist assigned to the Communications Unit oversees the Volunteers in Public Schools Program (VIPS) and Partners in Education (PIE) program. The educational specialist is responsible for developing activities and programs that encourage and maintain participation in EPISD schools by businesses, colleges and universities, social service agencies, parents and volunteers, and the education specialist also coordinates specialized education assistance programs for Fort Bliss, the local army base.

FINDING

The VIPS program provides students, teachers, and administrators with a wide range of supplementary assistance from volunteers, while allowing community members to play an active role in the district's educational process.

EPISD's VIPS program is run by the districtwide coordinator's office and is staffed by three employees. This office:

- works closely with school principals and VIPS chairperson at each school to coordinate community and parent involvement activities.
- manages the VIPS Advisory Board Committee of three administrators and four community representatives;
- provides volunteer recognition services, ranging from formal recognition activities such as the annual VIPS luncheon to informal events such as picnics and receptions;
- provides in-service training sessions, workshops, and orientations to VIPS chairmen, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) presidents, and school principals; and,
- supplies schools with volunteer promotional and operating materials such as buttons, pens and pencils, notebooks, sign-in sheets, operating guideline packets.

VIPS chairpersons at each school are trained by the districtwide VIPS office to perform the following responsibilities:

- work closely with the principal and PTA president to develop individual school programs;
- recruit and screen new volunteers for individual schools;
- designate volunteer work area locations (under the direction of the school principal);

- assist volunteers in identifying useful programs and activities to benefit the school;
- coordinate volunteer training workshops at individual schools throughout the year;
- organize, collect, and compute total school volunteer hours for the districtwide VIPs office on a monthly basis; and,
- arranges volunteer recognition at the school level.

EPISD VIPS volunteers serve as teacher assistants, tutors, mentors, judges for special events, field trip chaperones, and role models. EPISD's Communications Unit estimates that VIPS volunteers save the district about \$16 million annually in personnel costs by reducing the district's need for professional and teacher aides and substitutes. (EPISD arrived at this calculation by multiplying its 1.6 million volunteer hours by \$10 an hour, the average dollar amount many nonprofits use to value in-kind labor).

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Volunteers in Public Schools program provides opportunities for parents and community members to become involved in their schools and results in significant savings for the district.

FINDING

The Partnership in Education Program is a project to bring together schools, businesses, key community leaders, local government, civic organizations, and parents to maintain and improve public education. As with VIPS, PIE is run by the Communications Unit's districtwide coordinator. Major PIE program initiatives include:

- matching businesses' wants and needs with those of the individual schools, and serving as the point of contact between the business and the school;
- working closely with school principals to develop school, business, and community partnerships that raise support for the accomplishment of EPISD's educational mission and objectives;
- meeting with both school and businesses to define their partnership goals and create a plan of action best suited for both parties;
- maintaining ongoing communication with schools, businesses, and community leaders;
- meeting with school administrators regularly to maintain up-to-date records on schools and partnership activities, and provide statistical tracking reports as requested;
- supplying PIE participants with organizational materials and operating guidelines; and,

- coordinating recognition ceremonies, which consist of annual PIE breakfasts and plaque awards. Gift incentives also are provided throughout the year.

In addition, the educational specialist organizes a variety of special community projects. **Exhibit 3-6** provides a sample of PIE projects initiated by the EPISD Communications Unit and shows how some of them involve adjacent school districts as a means of promoting educational improvement.

Exhibit 3-6
PIE-Initiated Community Projects
1997-98

PIE Project	Description
Texas Association of Partners in Education - 19 th Annual Conference	Conference attended by educators, business leaders, and community volunteers. Attendees participated in training sessions, workshops, and learned about effective educational programs throughout the state. The conference was produced through a collaborative effort of the El Paso, Ysleta, Socorro, Clint, Fabens, San Elizario, and Canutillo ISDs.
Executive Shadow Day	Event planned to garner community support for the educational system. One hundred key community leaders and business executives were invited to see educational programs within EPISD. In part, the event consisted of spending a school-day morning visiting with teachers, principals, and students.
Realtor Connection Tours	School tours offered to all realtors in El Paso. This tour provides a reliable source of information on current school happenings, school attendance zones, school calendars, and the characteristics of various school facilities.
Take Our Daughter to Work Day	Program that helps educate girls about career options. The program allows girls to visit businesses to investigate possible career choices and meet positive role models.
Don't Drink and Drive	Contest in which two students are selected from each of EPISD's nine high schools to be chauffeured in a limousine on senior prom night. The program was designed to underline the importance of safe drinking.
Red Ribbon Family Fun	Family-oriented festival to raise funds for educational anti-drug programs.

Source: EPISD Communications Unit.

The PIE program has more than 2,000 participants, including business, government, and community leaders. PIE participants are involved in district planning committees and mentoring programs serve as role models, and donate scholarships to students.

COMMENDATION

EPISD has a successful Partners in Education program that involves all sectors of the community.

FINDING

The Communications Unit act as a liaison between EPISD and Fort Bliss; it also performs this function for Socorro and Ysleta ISDs. This activity involves offering a variety of services for active-duty military families whose children attend any of the three districts. EPISD's PIE coordinator assumes this responsibility for all three districts because the PIE office is physically located on Fort Bliss grounds and most military families reside in EPISD. The Communications Unit's military liaison responsibilities include:

- meeting with new incoming soldiers and briefing them on Texas public school regulations and procedures;
- meeting with school and military officials regularly to address any areas of concern;
- providing all military parents with informational pamphlets about any of the three school districts;
- coordinating an Education Fair at which parents can meet school administrators and acquire information on school-related issues;
- serving as an advocate for military parents whose children are having problems at schools; and,
- serving as representative for the Fort Bliss Education Center, Information Exchange, and Exceptional Family Members Program.

COMMENDATION

The Communications Unit serves as liaison for EPISD and two other El Paso-area school districts, facilitating the transition of military families' children into the educational system.

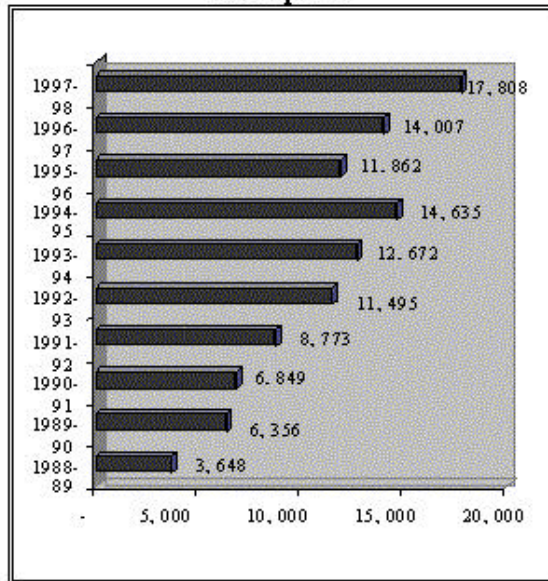
FINDING

The number of VIPS and PIE program volunteers, volunteer hours, monetary donations, and in-kind services are tracked on a monthly basis

by the Communications Unit. The unit compiles volunteer and business partnership statistics into a database and produces a summary of this information at the end of each school year to provide recognition to individual volunteers and schools with the highest participation levels.

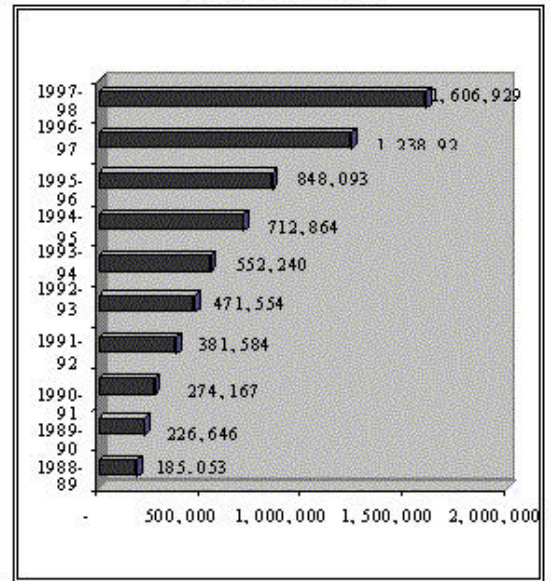
Exhibit 3-7 and **Exhibit 3-8** illustrate the 10-year growth trend for VIPS volunteer participants and volunteer hours.

Exhibit 3-7
Ten-Year Growth Trend for VIPS
Participants



Source: EPISD.

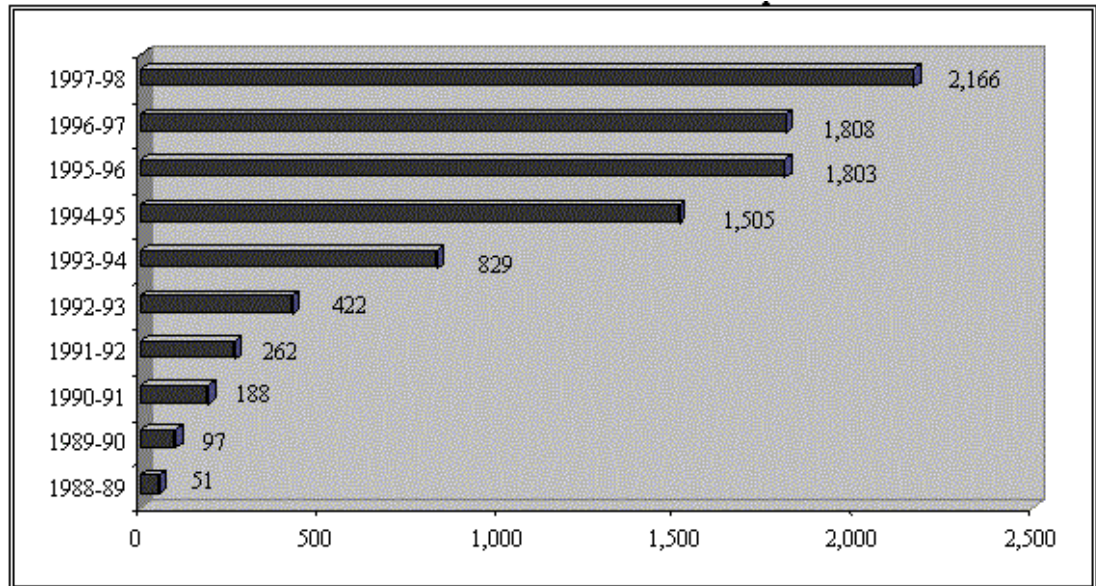
Exhibit 3-8
Ten-Year Growth Trend for VIPS
Volunteer Hours



Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 3-9 presents the 10-year growth trend for PIE participants.

**Exhibit 3-9
Ten-Year Growth Trend for PIE Participants**



Source: EPISD.

Collectively, EPISD's VIPS and PIE programs have the most comprehensive tracking system of any school district ever evaluated by TSPR. EPISD school administrators and volunteers are trained to use and maintain the tracking system at regular intervals. For example, training is provided at principals' meetings, districtwide PTA meetings, and volunteer chairman training sessions.

To track VIPS participants, sign-in sheets are placed in individual school's main offices for volunteers to sign. At the end of the month, the volunteer chairman records each volunteer's total hours for the month on a cover sheet and sends it into the VIPS office by the fifth working day of the following month. Total VIPS hours and the total number of VIPS participants at each school are maintained in a computer database program (the WORKS Database) at the VIPS office. Oral reports of VIPS participation levels are provided each month at general PTA meetings. Elementary, middle, and high schools with the highest participation numbers are promoted in various district publications. Accurate tracking of VIPS participation levels are critical for annual, year-end recognitions of individuals and schools with the highest participation levels. In June of each year, the total number of VIPS and total number of VIPS participants hours at each school are submitted to Research and Evaluation for inclusion in a yearly report called "Campus Profiles."

An effective tracking system also monitors participation levels for the Partnerships in Education program. To maintain accurate records, the

VIPS/PIE administrative assistant visits each of EPISD's 86 schools twice a year. The first visit occurs in the first month of each school year (August). During this visit, the information is obtained regarding the total activity of each active partnership at each school. The VIPS/PIE administrative assistant returns to each school in the late spring to again meet with the school partnership liaison to obtain an accurate count of active partnerships and special school/business committee names for inclusion in the district's final partnership statistics. Records are updated and maintained in the VIPS/PIE office using the same computer database program used to track the VIPS program. In June of each year, the Communications Unit submits the total number and names of each partnership to Research and Evaluation for inclusion in its yearly report, "Campus Profiles."

COMMENDATION

EPISD has a comprehensive database and tracking system for Volunteers in Public Schools and Partners in Education participants that enables the district to recognize individuals and schools for exemplary participation.

D. Community Relations and Fundraising

FINDING

The EPISD Foundation for School Community Enrichment was established in 1995 by a 23-member board of community leaders. This board assisted the district in starting the foundation by planning and conducting fundraising activities and increasing EPISD's support and visibility among local corporations, other foundations, and individual donors. The purpose of the foundation is to provide grants of up to \$1,000 to EPISD teachers who propose an innovative idea for a project or program to be implemented in the classroom during the school year. Grant applications are submitted in May of each year. A selection committee reviews the grant applications and recommends awards based on the creativeness of the proposed project. Grant funds are given to successful applicants at an annual awards banquet in August of each year.

In the first year of the foundation, more than \$30,000 was issued to 36 EPISD classroom teachers. As of September 1998, more than 144 EPISD teachers had received grants from the foundation totaling nearly \$170,000.

Staffing dedicated to operate the EPISD Foundation consists of one full-time fund coordinator and a temporary part-time clerk, both paid by the district. The district holds an employee campaign drive and an annual awards dinner promoted by a locally or statewide-recognized keynote speaker to raise money for the grants.

In addition to raising funds from corporate and individual donors for classroom impact grants, another important role of the foundation is to increase awareness of fine arts through education within EPISD. Some of the fine art activities coordinated by the foundation for the district are presented in **Exhibit 3-10**.

Exhibit 3-10
Foundation for School Community Enrichment
Programs and Activities
1997-98

Program/Activity	Description
EPISD Brings in the Arts	A monthly event featuring talented musicians from the EPISD classrooms performing alongside locally and nationally recognized musicians. Other activities have involved visits to the district from international dance companies such as the Flame Greek Dancers, the African American Dance Troupe, and the Japanese Dance Company.

Kaleidoscope Arts Series	A noontime lecture series for downtown residents and employees that features local artists discussing their talents and careers.
Galeria Maravilla	An art gallery on the first floor of downtown education center that provides a venue for students and other local, upcoming talent to present their artwork.

Source: EPISD.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Foundation has raised more than \$170,000 for grants to enhance instructional programs in classrooms and has developed special programs to increase awareness of fine arts within the district.

FINDING

EPISD allows its facilities to be used for various after-school and civic activities, as a way to bring the public into the schools and promote greater community support. Outside use of its facilities also allows the district to earn additional revenue through fees. Some of the community organizations that used EPISD facilities in the 1997-98 school year included alumni, civic, religious, and neighborhood youth organizations; intramural sports teams; and city agencies.

While EPISD allows many outside groups to use district facilities, some members of the public voiced concern that other community groups cannot use the facilities because they cannot afford building fees. EPISD has no written policy which specifies how permission for facilities use is to be granted. In some cases, community members said that school principals simply would not allow the use of their facility and were not helpful with identifying alternatives.

EPISD's board policy on use of school facilities specifies that the district can fix and collect rentals, rates, and charges from students and other groups for the occupancy or use of any of the district's facilities in such manner as determined by the board. However, the district does not have a specific fee schedule for these uses. Typically, if schools already are being used for after-school functions, community members are not charged for use of a facility. Since there is no written fee schedule, the principal decides if there will be a charge.

Recommendation 38:

Expand the outside use of district facilities as a means of promoting community involvement and positive community relations.

The district should revise its board policy on facility use to include use requirements and a fee schedule for all facilities. The fee schedule should be developed on a cost reimbursement basis for community members or other nonprofit groups. Executive district management should encourage principals to allow community members to use district facilities after hours, whenever possible. The district should also publish a list of all available facilities and disseminate its public in an attempt to expand the use of the outside facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent instructs the associate superintendent of Operations to revise the board policy on facility use to include requirements for use and a fee schedule.	May 1999
2.	The associate superintendent of Operations prepares a plan to expand usage of district facilities and communicates the plan to school principals.	June 1999
3.	School principals review the plan and work closely with community members to identify facility sites, as appropriate.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented at no cost to the district.

E. Support Services

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Communication Unit operates two support services units, Media Production and the Print Shop. These units provide graphic, copying, and typesetting support for the district's four geographic regional offices, schools, and administrative units.

FINDING

Media Production provides a wide range of instructional and motivational tools used to educate EPISD students, including:

- **Graphics** - All art work, motivation, and advertising banners. Media Production creates and designs logos, mascots, leaflets, brochures, maps, bookmarkers, posters, notebook covers, personalized clip boards, three-dimensional art displays, life size displays, and science displays.
- **Photography and Slides** - All 35mm color prints and slides, black and white prints used in district publications, positives and negatives used for reproduction, teacher and staff portraits, employee and student photo-identification badges, and slide programs.
- **Engravables** - Student, employee, and community award plaques, hall signs, desk nameplates, key ring holders, student hall passes, no-smoking signs, safety signs, mission statement and goal signs, directional signs, official signs, name badges, and personalized pen holders.
- **Silk Screen and Printing** - four-color notebook covers, four-color posters and charts, enlarged four-color logos for district trucks, personalized mailroom bags, and outdoor metal signs.
- **Educational Transparencies** - Computerized black and clear, multi-color, color; black and clear thermo copies. All mounted on frames along with carrying case
- **Lamination** - Industrial lamination of educational materials, booklets, maps, posters, school badges.
- **Plastic Binding** - Various sizes and colors of bindings for manuals, booklets, etc.
- **Matting and dry mount** - Framing, mat board, foam core backing, insulation backing, and cold or dry mounting.
- **Button Making** - Design, reproduction, and assembly.
- **Audio tape recordings and duplications** - Sizes available include C30, C60, C45, C90, and C120.
- **Video recordings and duplications** - Taped video recordings with sound and titles of educational, recruitment, and informational

programs, school events, special events, entertainment events, and school board meetings.

Media Production assists district administrators, facilitators, and school principals in developing and implement their ideas. For example, Media Production may assist a school principal in developing a motivational theme for a schoolwide contest to raise state test schools. The principal then would communicate the idea to Media Production, which would develop all the graphics, logos, posters, and banners needed.

Media Production purchases nearly all of the materials used by school employees and volunteers such as clipboards and notebooks. They also design and develop all of the plaques and incentive awards given to students, teachers, and administrators who have demonstrated exemplary performance.

The Print Shop, also assigned to the Communications Unit, provides a valuable support service to EPISD's central administration and its schools. The district's Print Shop produces highly creative, commercial-quality documents without the use of outside commercial print vendors. During the 1997-98 school year, EPISD's Print Shop completed 4,055 printing jobs and made more than 8.1 million copies. Examples of printing jobs produced by the district include posters, student identification cards, name tags, forms, tickets, literary magazines, maps, handbooks, report cards, business cards, and newsletters.

A random telephone survey of regional and school administrators and central office department heads revealed a very high level of satisfaction with the quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of services provided by Media Production and the Print Shop. In fact, nearly all EPISD administrators surveyed told TSPR that their quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness exceeds that of commercial vendors in the El Paso area.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Media Production and Print Shop provide high-quality, prompt, and low-cost service for district users.

FINDING

Media Production has no system in place to recoup the cost of providing graphics design and support services to administrative units and campuses. The unit charges the cost of graphic artist's supplies and materials used for administrative units and individual school projects to its own budget. Because labor and other overhead costs such as building operations, maintenance on capital equipment, and depreciation are not factored into

Media Production cost comparisons, the district does not really know for certain if Media Production operations are more cost-effective than commercial vendors.

For example, supply and material costs for items tracked by Media Production usually are nominal compared to the costs charged by commercial vendors. The average material and supply cost for a 3" x 14" sign produced by a widely used commercial vendor in El Paso typically is \$5.95. Media Production job summary records show a material cost of 84 cents, an apparent savings of \$5.11 - because labor, overhead charges, and profit are not included in the price.

The same holds true for the district's Print Shop. EPISD's Print Shop provided TSPR with operating records showing job quotations from local printing and photocopy companies with significantly higher prices than those of the EPISD Print Shop. The main reason for the large disparity in price, however, is that the Print Shop's price comparisons do not include labor, overhead charges, and profit.

Many school districts use an internal service fund system to recoup the full costs of operations. An internal service fund accounts for the financing of goods or services provided by one department to other departments of the district on a cost-reimbursement basis. Since working capital is required, a contribution transfer of cash or fixed assets from the general fund or a General Fixed Asset Account Group usually is required. Rates charged for services such as graphics design, copying and printing then include all costs for materials and supplies, facility purchase and use, utilities, labor, capital equipment and replacement costs, and all other operating costs.

TEA guidelines for internal service funds suggest that these items be contributed to the fund at fair market value, which approximates the net book value. Since internal service funds are proprietary funds, depreciation of fixed assets must be recorded. Rates charged for the use of internal service equipment and facilities include the current cost of maintenance and operation, a reasonable charge for depreciation, and a surcharge so that equipment can be replaced on a scheduled basis.

Recommendation 39:

Operate Media Production and the Print Shop as internal service funds to recover the full cost of providing graphics design and printing services to schools and administrative units within the district.

Operation as an internal service fund would require the unit to provide graphics design and printing support services on a full cost-reimbursement

basis. Media Production design and support services and Print Shop services should be "sold" to schools and units based on clearly stated prices calculated to cover the full cost of operations, including the replacement cost of supplies and materials, payroll costs, and operating expenses (including allocations for facilities use and utilities). Capital cost recovery in future years through depreciation should be based on the estimated useful life of equipment, maintenance costs, and debt service (if any).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Media Production manager and the Print Shop manager each calculate the cost of each service to be provided, and develop a comprehensive pricing structure to be distributed to schools and units.	May 1999
2.	The Media Production manager, Print Shop manager, and executive director of Accounting draft a procedure for establishing an internal service fund for graphics design and support services.	June 1999
3.	The Media Production manager, Print Shop manager, and director of Accounting analyze the full cost of providing graphics design and support services, including labor, operating expenses (with related overhead allocations for facilities use and utilities costs), and capital costs.	July 1999
4.	The Media Production manager and Print Shop manager communicate the price structure and procedures for using the newly created internal service fund to schools and units.	August 1999
5.	The Media Production manager and the Print Shop manager routinely perform financial and operational analysis to update the fee schedule as necessary.	Quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

Media Production and the Print Shop would benefit from the use of an internal service fund because both functional areas would operate on a full cost-reimbursement basis. The resulting additional funds could be used to replace equipment on a scheduled basis. Schools and organizational units within the district would continue to benefit from Media Production and the Print Shop competitive price structures.

Chapter 4

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews EPISD's management of district personnel in six sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Personnel Policies and Procedures
- C. Job Descriptions
- D. Employment of Personnel
- E. Recruitment of Teachers
- F. Records Management

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Human Resources Unit is responsible for carrying out personnel management policies and procedures for the recruitment, employment, and retention of almost 10,500 employees including 8,000 full-time equivalent workers (FTEs) and 2,500 part-time temporary substitutes. Since personnel costs are the district's largest expenditure by far, accounting for 80 percent of all spending, competent personnel management policies are imperative.

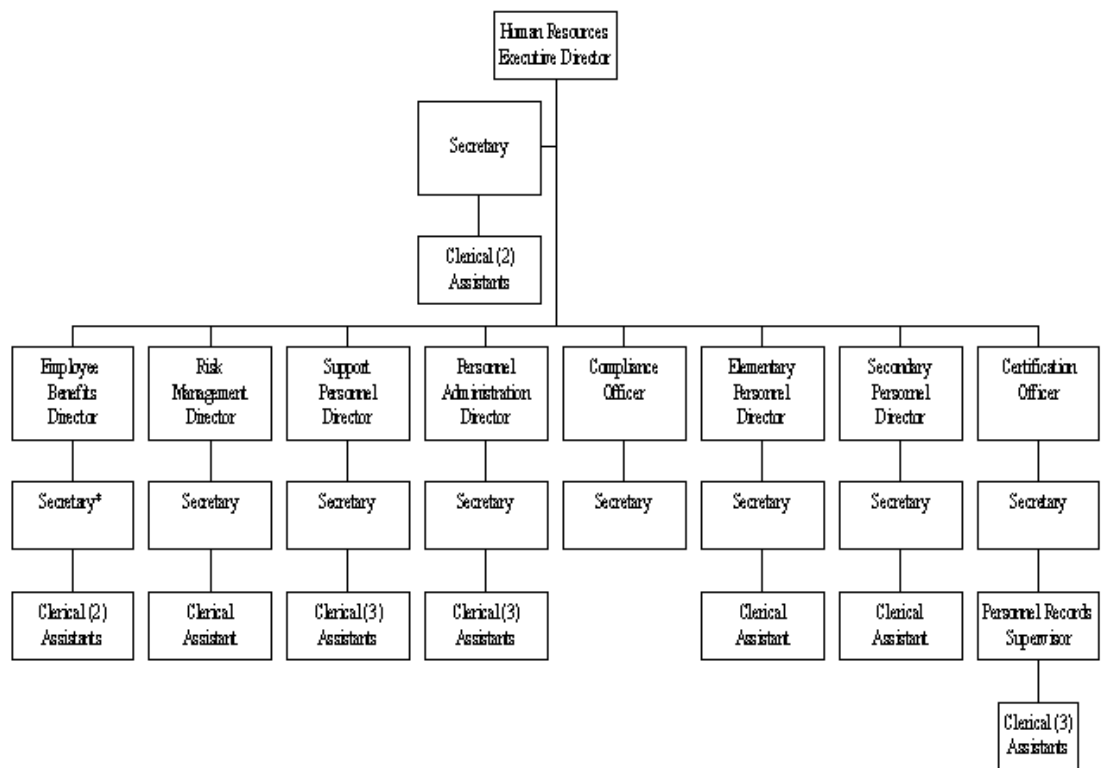
EPISD Human Resources manages functions and activities related to the employment of all district personnel. Personnel functions include:

- interpreting and recommending personnel policy and procedures;
- directing the preparation and revision of job descriptions;
- processing applications for employment;
- initial screening of all applicants;
- conducting recruitment activities;
- tracking all employee qualifications, certifications, verifications, assignments, promotions, transfers, resignations, and retirements;
- processing recommendations for hiring personnel;
- developing and implementing competitive salary schedules;
- executing employee benefits (insurance and savings programs) and workers' compensation programs;
- investigating equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints;
- handling employee complaints and grievances;
- monitoring employee appraisals;
- maintaining personnel records; and
- implementing a districtwide safety program.

The associate superintendent of Support Services oversees the Human Resources Unit. An executive director heads the unit with a staff of 35

administrative and support personnel. Responsibilities are delegated across eight functional areas—Personnel Administration, Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, Support Personnel, Certification, Employee Benefits, Risk Management, and Compliance. One position in the unit was vacant at this writing (the secretary to the director of Employee Benefits). One temporary employee assists with secretarial duties. The organizational structure of the Human Resources Unit is shown in **Exhibit 4-1**.

Exhibit 4-1
Organizational Structure
Human Resources



**Vacant Position Source: EPISD.*

The functions and responsibilities of each of the eight functional areas and the office of the Executive Director are presented in the following paragraphs.

Office of the Executive Director

A secretary and two clerical assistants support the office of the executive director. The major responsibilities undertaken by this office, in addition

to the overall responsibility to effectively manage the unit's resources, include:

- monitoring daily attendance of staff members;
- purchasing and inventorying supplies;
- overseeing salary compensation;
- overseeing unit budget;
- filling administrative personnel vacancies;
- tracking transfers, promotions, terminations, and retirements of employees;
- receiving and assisting employees and the public;
- handling employee grievances and complaints; and
- investigating EEO complaints.

Elementary Personnel and Secondary Personnel

Elementary Personnel and Secondary Personnel are two separate functional areas. Elementary Personnel is responsible for recruiting and hiring elementary teachers; Secondary Personnel is responsible for secondary teachers. In each functional area, a director oversees a staff of one secretary and one clerical assistant. Both areas process teacher applications (which involves entering applications into the human resource management system, initiating a criminal background check, and preparing applicant folders) and interview applicants. The directors also investigate EEO complaints. The sections also initiate annual assignment letters for teaching staff and changes in teacher status while employed including transfers, resignations, terminations, and retirements.

Support Personnel

Support Personnel is headed by a director and staffed by a secretary and three clerical assistants. This office hires and employs support personnel such as transportation, maintenance, custodial, and food service employees. All applications are entered into the unit's electronic system and folders are prepared for each applicant. The director interviews applicants and initiates criminal checks. The office also hires substitutes for administrators, teachers, librarians, clerks, paraprofessionals, custodians, and food service and maintenance workers as needed, through the district's four-year old automated TEAMS (The Employee Assignment Management System). Almost all support personnel begin as substitutes and later are hired as permanent employees. This area also investigates EEO complaints.

Personnel Administration

A director oversees Personnel Administration with assistance from a secretary and three clerical assistants. The major responsibilities of the area include:

- hiring and employing secretarial and clerical personnel, patrol officers, field workers, study hall attendants, students, tutors, and temporary clerical employees;
- ensuring that secretarial and clerical applicants are properly tested and certified;
- processing personnel change forms (transfers, resignations, terminations) for these employees;
- investigating EEO issues;
- serving on the salary compensation committee;
- overseeing and maintaining job descriptions;
- maintaining personnel records and verifying personnel employment;
- maintaining a database of college job fairs for recruitment purposes; and
- serving as a liaison to technology.

Certification

A certification officer oversees the Certification office with the support of a secretary and four clerical assistants, one of whom is classified as a personnel records supervisor. Certification, however, is only one major function of this office. The major responsibilities of this area are:

- Hiring and employing teacher aides (paraprofessionals). Applicants for teacher aide positions are interviewed by the certification officer; the section also initiates criminal background checks for each applicant. Personnel changes for teacher aides also are processed by this section.
- Certifying teachers. Alternative certification, emergency permits, and other teacher certifications are tracked and monitored by this office. Teacher transfers are monitored to determine if the correct certification is in place for a new teaching assignment.
- Maintenance of personnel records. The personnel records supervisor oversees the preparation and distribution of employee contracts, salary notices to employees, and the entry of personnel changes (new hires, transfers, promotions, resignations, terminations, and retirements) to ensure correct, appropriate, and timely pay for employees. New hires are processed through this office. Personnel files for new hires are checked to see that all necessary documents have been received, including verifications of previous employment. Yearly service records for each employee also are prepared and maintained by this office. In addition,

employee cards are prepared for employees who have resigned or retired. The office also prepares a monthly report of personnel issues for board consideration and investigates EEO complaints.

Employee Benefits

Employee Benefits includes a director, secretary, and two clerical assistants. The area oversees employee benefits (insurance, retirement benefits, and savings programs) and coordinating districtwide annual enrollment in insurance, health fairs, wellness fairs, and benefits education training sessions.

Risk Management

Risk Management consists of a director, a secretary, and a clerical assistant. This trio oversees and processes workers' compensation claims; develops, implements, and monitors the district's safety program; and investigates EEO complaints.

Compliance

The Office of Compliance is overseen by a compliance officer who is supported by a secretary. The officer is responsible for ensuring that the district complies with federal rules and regulations governing accommodations for students and adults with disabilities, equal employment opportunities, and sexual and racial discrimination; the officer also investigates EEO complaints.

FINDING

A dedicated, committed, skilled, and experienced staff is essential to accomplish the many functions of the Human Resources Unit. Good team camaraderie exists within this unit. Staff members support each other as necessary to accomplish tasks.

More than half of the unit's staff have served in Human Resources for at least ten years and some have been with the unit for as long as 26 years. These employees' experience and knowledge have qualified them to train and assist new entry-level staff. This assistance, in turn, allows new staff members to more readily adjust to their duties and responsibilities.

Almost all of the unit's clerical assistants were able to provide a comprehensive and reasonably detailed list of individual responsibilities that they could pass on to new staff replacements, if necessary. In addition, many staff members have served in other departments and schools, giving them an excellent knowledge and understanding of district

operations. For example, the executive director has been with the district as a classroom teacher, a principal, and a director within the unit.

Many of the clerical assistants TSPR interviewed have been cross-trained in different functions of the unit. Clerical assistants, for instance, occasionally serve as backup to the switchboard operator and cover the unit's reception counter. One of the staff members in the Certification section who is responsible for employee service records and one of three staff members assigned to answering incoming Human Resources calls previously served as a clerical assistant in Employee Relations for a number of years. The unit's clerical assistants possess an admirable degree of knowledge about the unit's procedures and processes.

The unit has organized itself so that, for instance, Support Personnel performs virtually identical tasks (entering applications, setting up interviews, preparing personnel folders, monitoring paperwork, hiring) to process support employees as are used to process paraprofessionals in the office of Certification. In other districts, personnel units assign particular tasks to one individual only. For example, one clerical employee's major responsibility might be entering applications only. The repetitive nature of the job and the lack of experience in other functions of the department inhibit teamwork among employees and deny employees wider experience of other processes. This has not happened in EPISD.

COMMENDATION

Staff members in EPISD's Human Resources are knowledgeable, skilled, and cross-trained in multiple personnel services.

FINDING

Exhibit 4-2 provides an overview of the number of administrative and support staff in the EPISD Human Resource Unit compared to its peer districts. EPISD's ratio of Human Resources administrative staff members to total employment was second-highest among its peer districts.

**Exhibit 4-2
Human Resources Departments, Administrative and
Support Staff Compared to Peer Districts
1997-98**

Positions	Fort Worth ISD	El Paso ISD	San Antonio ISD	Ysleta ISD	Corpus Christi ISD	Socorro ISD
Departments	7	8	5	3	4	2

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:						
Assistant Superintendent	1	0	0	1	0	1
Executive Director	0	1	1	0	1	0
Director	2	6	0	3	0	4
Assistant Director	0	0	0	0	0	0
Officers	0	2	8	0	2	0
Manager	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coordinator	6	0	0	4	1	0
Supervisor	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total Administrative Staff	9	9	9	9	4	5
Support Staff						
Personnel Assistant/Specialist	1	0	0	5	1	0
Secretarial/Clerical	28	26	19	25	16	18
Total Support Staff	29	26	19	30	17	18
Total Staff	38	35	28	39	21	23
% of Adm Staff to Total Staff	23.6%	25.7%	32.1%	23.1%	19.0%	21.7%
Total Employees	9,300	8,391	8,200	8,096	5,300	4,033
Ratio of Employees to HR Staff	244	240	293	208	252	175
Total Students	78,000	64,000	59,192	47,366	42,000	23,000

Source: Texas School Performance Review

NOTE: Employee Benefits and Risk Management services are located in each of the above Human Resources Departments except for Forth Worth ISD, which places them in the Finance Department.

A 1996 Manpower Efficiency Study conducted by KPMG Peat Marwick resulted in EPISD's current organization, including its division into four regions. That study also proposed certain changes for Human Resources, only some of which were adopted, such as the elimination of an assistant superintendent for Human Resources and the selection of an executive director to head the unit.

EPISD has designated two separate functional areas to oversee employee benefits and workers' compensation and district safety procedures. Each area has its own director and staff. The staff in Employee Benefits consists of a secretary and two clerical assistants; Risk Management has one secretary and one clerical assistant.

Third-party consultants administer the district's self-funded health insurance program and workers' compensation claims. Paperwork for workers' compensation claims is initiated within the Risk Management functional area, but a third-party consultant processes these claims. The Employee Benefits area has three workers assisting employees in selecting insurance and savings programs. The director oversees, monitors, and evaluates these programs.

The cost to the district of maintaining two directors for these areas is simply not warranted, given their limited spans of control.

A number of Texas school districts consolidate these two functional areas under a single director. The consolidation of similar functions allows greater span of control and promotes process efficiency. For instance, three of EPISD's peer districts (Houston, Ysleta, and Socorro) combine employee benefits and workers' compensation functions under one director. In HISD, an assistant superintendent oversees a benefits department that administers both employee benefits and workers' compensation claims. In SISD, a director administers the self-insured workers' compensation program and employee health benefits as well as the employee safety program. In YISD, these areas fall under the department of Risk Management under the Division of Human Resources; one director oversees this department.

Recommendation 40:

Consolidate Employee Benefits and Risk Management into one functional area called Employee Benefits and Risk Management.

Once the two functional areas are merged, one of the director's positions should be eliminated, leaving one director to oversee this functional area. A professional position should be created to assist the director in the

delivery of employee benefits, workers' compensation, and the safety program.

The vacant position of secretary in Employee Benefits should not be filled; the secretary in Risk Management could serve as secretary to this department. The three clerical assistant positions currently assigned to the two areas should be re-assigned to the new department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The associate superintendent for Support Services and executive director for Human Resources reorganize Employee Benefits to include risk management functions and renames the department, Employee Benefits and Risk Management.	May 1999
2.	The associate superintendent for Support Services eliminates the vacant secretary position and one director position, creates a risk management specialist position, and recommends one director to oversees the new department. The recommended reorganization is presented to the superintendent.	May 1999
3.	The executive director for Human Resources and the director of Personnel Administration revise the job description of the director of Employee Benefits and Risk Management to reflect the new role and responsibilities and write a job description for the newly created risk management specialist position.	May 1999
4.	The superintendent presents the reorganization and recommendation to the board.	June 1999
5.	The board approves the superintendent's recommendation, appoints one of the two directors to oversee the newly reorganized department, and reassigns the other director to another position in the district.	June 1999
6.	The Human Resources Unit advertises for a risk management specialist.	July 1999
7.	The risk management specialist position is filled.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

By consolidating Employee Benefits and Risk Management, EPISD can eliminate one of the director's positions. EPISD would realize a savings of \$68,902 beginning in the year 1999-2000. This savings is based on a midpoint director's salary of \$59,398 plus benefits of 16 percent (\$9,504).

The vacant secretary's position should not be filled, creating an annual savings of \$23,011 (\$19,837 plus 16 percent benefits of \$3,174).

A Risk Management specialist should cost the district \$52,553, based on a midpoint specialist's salary of \$45,305 plus benefits of 16 percent (\$7,248).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Consolidate Employee Benefits and Risk Management into one department.	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$39,360	\$39,360

FINDING

Employee relations, the handling and monitoring of employee grievances, is not a functional area within the Human Resources unit but instead exists as a stand-alone unit called Employee Relations. An executive director heads the unit and is supported by a secretary and two clerical assistants. The executive director reports directly to the superintendent. The unit's major responsibilities are handling employee grievances and travel requests. The director also participates in recruitment activities and serves as the superintendent's representative on several district associations and councils.

One of the associations on which the director serves is the El Paso Consultation Association, made up of district employees elected by groups of employees they represent. Many of the members of the association belong to one of the district's four employee labor organizations: the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, the Association for Texas Professional Education, and the Texas Classroom Teachers Association. The association addresses such items as working conditions, the school calendar, and salary issues such as employee pay and benefits. The associate superintendent for Support Services and the executive director for Human Resources also serve as consultants to the committee.

As already stated, Employee Relations handles EPISD employee travel requests such as approvals, and arrangements for travel, negotiations with travel agencies, and the monitoring of employee travel expense reports. Due to an increase in the number of travel requests, the unit added another clerical position, bringing its total to three.

Handling travel vouchers and arrangements is not a function usually associated with Employee Relations. Travel is not even mentioned in the

executive director's job description. The area's main responsibilities are employee negotiations, grievances, complaints, and labor organization issues. The oversight of travel and travel expenses is more typically a function of finance.

Furthermore, Employee Relations is a stand-alone area and not aligned with Human Resources, when its functions are closely associated with human resources. Employee Relations is located in the downtown administrative offices and not in proximity to the Human Resources Unit with which it interfaces.

Within the Human Resources Unit is an Office of Compliance, headed by a compliance officer who ensures that the district complies with federal rules and regulations. This small oversight office consists of only a director and a secretary.

Recommendation 41:

Merge Employee Relations and the Office of Compliance into a single area called Employee Relations and Compliance.

All responsibilities related to employee relations should be transferred to Employee Relations and Compliance within the Human Resources Unit. The current position of executive director of Employee Relations should be reclassified as a director and transferred to oversee the new function. One of the three clerical staff members in Employee Relations also should be transferred to the new functional area. The secretary currently serving in the office of Compliance would now serve as secretary of the area and the Compliance officer would retain his responsibilities but report to the director.

Travel services and the remaining two clerical workers serving in Employee Relations should be transferred to the Finance Department.

The major services of Employee Relations and Compliance should be employee grievances, negotiations, complaints, labor organization, and compliance issues.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The associate superintendent for Support Services recommends to the superintendent that Employee Relations and Compliance be merged into one functional area under the Human Resources Unit titled Employee Relations and Compliance.	May 1999
2.	The associate superintendent for Support Services recommends to the	May

	superintendent that travel responsibilities of Employee Relations, along with two of the three clerical staff, be transferred to the Department of Finance.	1999
3.	The associate superintendent for Support Services recommends to the superintendent that the executive director be reclassified as director and assigned to Employee Relations and Compliance and that the officer of Compliance will report to the director.	May 1999
4.	The superintendent takes the above recommendations to the board for approval.	June 1999
5.	The board approves the recommendations, reclassifies the position of executive director to director, and reassigns two of the three clerical workers to Finance and the remaining one to the functional area of Employee Relations and Compliance.	June 1999
6.	The executive director for Human Resources and the director of Personnel Administration rewrite the job description of the director of Employee Relations and Compliance to reflect the new role and responsibilities.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Elementary Personnel and Secondary Personnel, two separate functional areas each headed by a director, are responsible for hiring and employing teachers. Each director participates in recruitment activities, meets with principals concerning hiring, and interviews and screens teacher applicants. The directors initiate the personnel processing form when any changes are made to teacher status, such as transfers, resignations, and retirements. A secretary and one clerical assistant support each director. The directors' support staff prepare applicant and teacher folders, process personnel change forms, and send letters of employment.

In essence, then, two high-ranking managerial positions are overseeing a staff of four in two areas with basically identical functions.

Certification, yet another functional area in Human Resources, is responsible for the oversight and monitoring of teacher and administrator certification, the hiring and employment of teacher aides, the processing of new employees and payroll changes, contract administration, and monitoring and maintenance of employee service records. The Certification office is one of the largest of Human Resources' eight functional areas. Three entirely different functions are housed under this

area and, while not entirely unrelated, they are distinctly different from one another.

The oversight of teacher certification is a major component of any personnel department. Teacher aides are considered support staff in most districts and as such are hired and employed by a support services unit. The bulk of the remaining services involve the processing of employees and payroll changes, functions more closely aligned with administrative services in a personnel department.

Recommendation 42:

Merge Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, and Certification into one functional area called Elementary and Secondary Personnel.

The responsibilities assigned to Elementary Personnel and Secondary Personnel are closely aligned and could be just effectively managed by merging the two into one functional area headed by a single director. Given each director's low span of control, the cost of hiring two directors simply is not warranted; one manager position for these services is sufficient. The clerical workers now assigned to Elementary and Secondary Personnel would remain and assume basically the same responsibilities.

The certification officer should transfer to the new functional area to assume responsibility for certification. The responsibility for hiring and employing of teacher aides should be moved to Support Personnel.

Administrative functions of the Certification Office such as processing payroll changes, contracts, and employee service records should be transferred to Personnel Administration, along with the personnel records supervisor and three clerical assistants.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The associate superintendent for Support Services, in conjunction with the executive director for Human Resources, develops a new organizational outline of the functions that would result from the merger of Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, and Certification.	May 1999
2.	The executive director for Human Resources and the director of Personnel Administration revise the job description of the director of Elementary and Secondary Personnel, the secretaries, and the clerical assistants to reflect their new role and responsibilities.	May 1999
3.	The associate superintendent for Support Services and the executive	May

	director for Human Resources recommend to the superintendent that the certification officer and certification responsibilities be transferred to Elementary and Secondary Personnel.	1999
4.	The associate superintendent for Support Services and the executive director for Human Resources recommend that one director position be eliminated and present the reorganization plan to the superintendent for approval.	May 1999
5.	The superintendent approves the plan and recommendation, and presents it to the board for approval.	June 1999
6.	The board approves the reorganization plan and eliminates a director's position through reassignment or attrition.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The elimination of one director position will save EPISD \$68,902. This cost savings commencing in the year 1999-2000 is based on a mid-point salary range of directors of \$59,398 plus benefits of 16 percent (\$9,504).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Merge Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, and Certification into one functional area.	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$68,902	\$68,902

FINDING

Three functional areas are responsible for hiring support personnel- Personnel Administration, Certification, and Support Personnel.

Personnel Administration hires and employs secretarial/clerical personnel and such support staff as patrol officers, field workers, study hall attendants, and tutors. Support Personnel hires and employs support personnel for transportation, maintenance, custodial, and food service. The Office of Certification hires paraprofessional employees, such as teacher aides.

The Human Resources unit could more efficiently and effectively handle the hiring of *all* support personnel in one rather than three functional areas.

Recommendation 43:

Transfer the functions of hiring *all* support personnel from Certification and Personnel Administration to Support Personnel.

The hiring of secretarial/clerical personnel and other staff should be moved to Support Personnel so that all support personnel hiring would come out of one functional area-Support Personnel. One clerical assistant should be transferred to Support Personnel from Personnel Administration to cover this function. Likewise, the secretary in the Certification office also should transfer to Support Personnel to assist with this function.

Support Personnel will now oversee all hiring and employing of support personnel for transportation, food service, maintenance and custodial, secretarial/clerical assistants, (including patrol officers, field workers, study hall attendants, and tutors), teacher aides, and substitutes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The associate superintendent for Support Services and the executive director for Human Resources develop a new organizational outline of the functions of the department of Personnel Administration and Support Personnel.	May 1999
2.	The executive director of Human Resources transfers one clerical position from Personnel Administration and the secretary from the Certification office to Support Personnel to handle all hiring functions for support and paraprofessional personnel.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

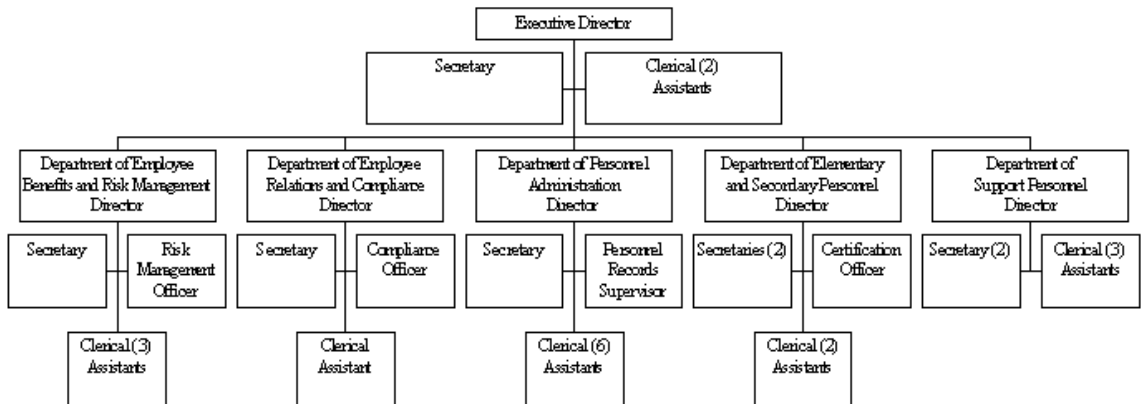
In summary, the recommended reorganization would result in the following:

- consolidating Risk Management and Employee Benefits into one functional area - *Employee Benefits and Risk Management*;
- merging Employee Relations and Compliance into one functional area - *Employee Relations and Compliance*;
- merging Elementary Personnel and Secondary Personnel into one functional area - *Elementary and Secondary Personnel*;
- transferring the travel function and two clerical positions from Employee Relations to Finance;
- transferring the officer of Certification and certification responsibilities to Elementary and Secondary Personnel;

- transferring the responsibility of hiring paraprofessionals and clerical/secretarial staff to the department of Support Personnel;
- moving the secretary in the current office of Certification and a clerical assistant in Personnel Administration to Support Personnel;
- transferring the administrative functions and the personnel records supervisor and three clerical staff in the current office of Certification to the functional area - Personnel Administration.

Exhibit 4-3 shows the proposed reorganization for the Human Resources unit.

Exhibit 4-3
El Paso Independent School District
Human Resources
Proposed Organizational Structure



- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Saving Programs • Workers' Compensation • Safety Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievances • Compliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Descriptions • Data Entry • Salary Administration • Payroll Changes • Contracts • Personnel Records | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Certification • Hiring and Employment of Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring and Employment of Paraprofessionals, Clerical, Maintenance, Custodial Transportation, Food Services, and Others • Substitutes |
|---|--|--|---|---|

Source: Texas School Performance Review

B. Personnel Policies and Procedures

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's *School Board Policy Manual*, Section D, addresses state laws and local policies governing personnel issues. These policies are incorporated into an *EPISD Employee Handbook* provided to each employee.

EPISD provides its employees with an array of publications to clarify and inform district policies concerning personnel vacancies, activities, procedures, and benefits. The district publication *ADCOM*, which is published weekly by Communications and Business Partnerships, provides employees with items of interest, activities, and position vacancies in the district.

FINDING

Human Resources has two types of personnel manuals to guide personnel employees, in particular work processes. A technology procedure manual details all hiring down to a screen-by-screen and step-by-step process. A job duties manual in each of the functional areas outline services and procedures. However, the Human Resources Unit does not have a personnel procedures manual covering all of its activities, bound together, and indexed in a comprehensive manual to guide and direct the unit. No single document was available that outlined services and described procedures and processes to be

performed by staff to clarify personnel policies, procedures for hiring, employee benefits, leave plans, hiring of substitutes, and requirements for personnel file folders. According to district officials, one is in the process of being developed; however, no draft was yet available.

Without a well-organized, indexed, and comprehensive procedural manual, Human Resources does not have a "one-stop" reference book for new employees to quickly check policy and personnel issues or find procedures for any work tasks in the division.

Recommendation 44:

Develop a Human Resources procedures manual for the 1999-2000 school year.

The procedural manual should include unit goals; state and district personnel policies and procedures pertaining to personnel issues; the unit's purpose, staff structure, and organization; detailed descriptions of unit duties and responsibilities; a step-by-step description of procedures for

carrying out various unit functions; and copies of all forms and computer screens used by the unit. The manual should be updated and revised regularly.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director for Human Resources and staff members involved in developing a procedures manual for the unit meet and develop deadlines for completing the manual, review what has been accomplished thus far, and develop tasks needed to be accomplished by the completion date.	April 1999
2.	The executive director for Human Resources and staff review the manual, make edits, and present it to the associate superintendent for Support Services for final review and approval.	May 1999
3.	The associate superintendent provides edits and recommendations, and approval.	July 1999
4.	The executive director makes edits and takes the manual to the board for approval.	July 1999
5.	With board approval, the executive director for Human Resources has the manual printed and assembled.	August 1999
6.	The executive director for Human Resources distributes a manual to each Human Resources staff member.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The *EPISD Employee Handbook* provides district policies as well as other guidelines and regulations pertaining to employees and their employment with the district. Employee Benefits serves as the custodian of the handbook, which is published and updated annually. Each employee receives the handbook at the beginning of the school year and employees leaving the district are required to return their copies to the administrator of their unit or school so that the book can be reissued. The majority of the handbook's contents are taken from the *School Board Policy Manual*. Included in the policies are such items as district goals, information about two educational centers (Live Materials Center and the planetarium) a salary schedule, summer school staffing guidelines, and a school calendar. The book is not divided into sections; policies and other topics are separated by bolded headings. A table of contents lists district policies and topics in alphabetical order.

The handbook is contained in a three-ring binder so that edits to the handbook can be made throughout the year, eliminating the necessity of reprinting the handbook in its entirety each year.

Moreover, dividing the book into six or seven major sections would enhance its readability and allow for easier location of topics. As presently organized, the handbook is simply a list of district policies, not necessarily grouped logically. Determining where a group of related district policies begin and end can be difficult.

TSPR examined a copy of the 1998-99 edition and found that the calendar and salary schedule were from 1997-98. Several typographical errors also were noted.

Recommendation 45:

Revise the *EPISD Employee Handbook* and require employees to sign for the book when distributed.

The *EPISD Employee Handbook* should be reorganized and updated. Typographical errors should be corrected and copies made available to all employees. As revisions are made, a copy of the revision should be distributed to all employees to add to their handbook, replacing the outdated policy or procedure.

All policies pertaining to major sections (appraisals, compensation and benefits, contracts, grievances) should be placed under these particular sections. Current information such as salary schedule, calendars of events, and major policy revisions should be placed in the front of the book rather than in the back as they are now.

The district also should investigate the possibility of eventually putting the handbook on its Internet website to make the book more easily accessible, reduce printing costs, and make updates easier. When the book is distributed, employees also should be asked to sign a form verifying that they have received a copy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Employee Benefits edits, revises, and reorganizes the <i>EPISD Employee Handbook</i> .	May 1999
2.	The associate superintendent of Support Services and the director of Human Resources approve the revised handbook.	June 1999
3.	The reorganized handbook is printed and distributed to employees to place in their three-ring handbook binder: each is required to	August 1999

	sign and return a form to Human Resources acknowledging receipt of the book.	
4.	The signed form is placed in the employee's personnel folder.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

C. Job Descriptions

CURRENT SITUATION

All EPISD employee positions are assigned a six-digit job code for the purpose of setting job standards and assigning pay grades to that position. Job descriptions are generated for each of the district's positions. Human Resources is responsible for maintaining job descriptions. The preparation and revision of job descriptions is the responsibility of each individual district unit. Each job description contains the following information:

- Job code
- Full job title
- Reports to
- Supervises
- Qualifications
- Occupation Goal
- Responsibilities - divided into nine sub-headings for professional staff:
 - Instructional Management
 - School /Organizational Climate
 - School/Organizational Improvement
 - Personnel Management
 - Administration-Fiscal/Facilities Management
 - Student Management
 - School/Community Relations
 - Professional Growth and Development
 - Additional Responsibilities
- Terms of Employment
- Date Approved
- Date Revised

FINDING

Job descriptions are maintained in binders in the Human Resources unit. An examination of a random stack of job descriptions (administrators, teachers, and support personnel) revealed that some job descriptions were missing, such as those for Energy Manager, Accounting Manager, Student Systems Administrators, Telephone Operator, Shipping Clerk, Secretary 6, and Clerical Assistant 2. Five administrative job descriptions for Human Resources alone were missing. Only after TSPR's on-site review, did the Human Resources Unit provide job descriptions for the missing positions.

Administrative workers in Human Resources said job descriptions are being reviewed, revised, and updated. District officials also said that job descriptions for some of the newer positions created during the reorganization of a year ago have not yet been developed.

The importance of job descriptions cannot be overstated. Job descriptions provide employees with information on their specific duties and responsibilities and provide a basis for annual performance evaluations. In addition, job descriptions increasingly figure in workers' compensation and other lawsuits.

The job descriptions reviewed were consistent in format and showed that groups of job descriptions had been updated in 1993, 1995, and 1998. A few descriptions dated back to 1990 and 1991. Physical requirements of various jobs, such as lifting heavy objects, driving large vehicles, working around chemicals, and climbing stairs were not included in any job descriptions. Human Resources told the review team after its on-site visit that a new format will include physical requirements and essential job functions.

Recommendation 46:

Complete the process of revising all job descriptions in the district and develop procedures to require them to be systematically updated every three years.

While the district is in the process of revising, rewriting, and updating job descriptions, Human Resources should set schedules and deadlines to complete the process. Personnel Administration then should establish a policy stating that each department and school will be responsible for reviewing and updating its job descriptions on a three-year cycle, with one third of the job descriptions reviewed each year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources and the director of Personnel Administration meet to determine which job descriptions have not been revised in the past three years and then set schedules and deadlines for completion of this process.	April 1999
2.	Once the deadlines are established, Human Resources notifies and prepares a memorandum to divisions, all units, department heads, principals, and employees of its procedures for updates, editing, time schedules, and deadlines.	April 1999
3.	Once all job descriptions have been returned to Human Resources, edited for consistency, accuracy, and specificity, they are entered	August 1999

into the database for formatting.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

TSPR's review of job descriptions found instances of unacceptably vague descriptions of job responsibilities. Such descriptions would make it difficult for the district to justify to one employee why he or she is paid less than someone else when their job responsibilities apparently are essentially the same.

One noticeable job area with "generically written" responsibilities is clerical positions. For Clerical Assistants 2, 3, and 4 and Secretaries 4 and 5, for instance, written responsibilities often fail to encompass the actual varying responsibilities held by employees in these classifications. The Clerical Assistant 4 position's responsibilities, for instance, include collecting money and keeping accurate books and processing and maintaining records such as transfers of textbooks and purchases of supplies and equipment. While this might be true for Clerical Assistants 4 at a school, however, it does *not* describe the responsibilities of Clerical Assistants 4 in the Human Resources Unit.

Some of the Clerical Assistants 3 and 4 positions in Human Resources had responsibilities that did not seem to differ much in job complexity and those in either position could have taken on the responsibilities of the other. The difference in pay levels could be attributed to seniority.

Recommendation 47:

Review all position classifications and ensure that the job description for each position classification reflects the job's complexity and the experience it requires.

A thorough review of position classifications for hourly, clerical, and teacher aides should be conducted and job descriptions should be revised with responsibilities specific to the complexity of individual jobs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources and the director of Personnel Administration review job descriptions to determine if they accurately reflect the position classification and pay grade.	September 1999
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2.	The executive director of Human Resources and the director of Personnel Administration sends the questionable positions to the Compensation Committee, which consists of the associate superintendent of Support Services and representatives from such units as Finance and Human Resources for review.	September 1999
3.	The Compensation committee rewrites inadequate job descriptions and reclassifies positions where needed and submits these changes to the superintendent for approval.	October 1999
4.	The superintendent reviews the recommendations and sends them the board for approval.	November 1999
5.	The reclassifications are incorporated into the 2000-2001 salary schedules and job descriptions are rewritten as needed.	December 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

D. Employment of Personnel

CURRENT SITUATION

In September 1998, EPISD employed 8,485 FTEs. Of this number, nearly 61 percent were instructional personnel (classroom teachers, teaching aides, librarians, and counselors). Teachers alone comprised 51 percent (4,332) of the total.

Exhibit 4-4 shows the number of employees in the district for school years 1993-94 through 1997-98 by category-professional staff (teachers, professional support staff, campus administrators, and central administrators), educational aides, and auxiliary staff (food service, transportation, custodial, and maintenance workers, and clerical staff).

**Exhibit 4-4
EPISD
Number of Employees
1993-94 through 1997-98**

	1993-94		1994-95		1995-96		1996-97		1997-98	
Classification of Staff	# of Staff	% of Total Staff	# of Staff	% of Total Staff	# of Staff	% of Total Staff	# of Staff	% of Total Staff	# of Staff	% of Total Staff
<i>Professional Staff:</i>										
Teachers	3,920.5	52.0	3,989.8	52.1	4,067.6	52.7	4,044.3	51.6	4,062.3	51.8
Professional Support	586.3	7.8	623.9	8.2	667.6	8.6	676.2	8.6	645.1	8.2
Campus Administrators	174.0	2.3	172.0	2.2	185.0	2.4	199.9	2.5	199.4	2.5
Central Administrators	29.0	0.4	29.0	0.4	29.0	0.4	29.0	0.4	34.5	0.4
<i>Educational Aides:</i>	476.1	6.3	527.6	6.9	512.9	6.6	426.5	5.4	391.2	5.0
<i>Auxiliary Staff:</i>	2,359.3	31.3	2,309.8	30.2	2,258.6	29.3	2,469.3	31.5	2,508.8	32.0
Total Staff	7,545.1	100	7,652.0	100	7,720.7	100	7,845.2	100	8,002.4	100

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for 1993-94 through 1997-98.

Exhibit 4-5 compares the number of administrative/professional personnel for EPISD with its peer districts and Region 19.

**Exhibit 4-5
Administrative/Professional Personnel
EPISD, Peer Districts, and Region 19
1997-98**

District	Student Enrollment	Professional Staff	Central Admin.	CampusAdmin.	Professional Support	Teachers
Fort Worth	76,901	5,366	48	276	729	4,313
Dallas	157,622	11,612	19	477	1,639	9,477
Houston	210,988	14,133	118	561	1,848	11,606
San Antonio	61,112	4,693	58	160	678	3,797
Corpus Christi	40,975	3,088	20	143	440	2,485
Ysleta	47,616	3,593	42	126	454	2,971
Socorro	22,051	1,731	22	58	196	1,455
El Paso	63,909	4,941	35	199	645	4,062
Region 19	153,710	11,877	136	453	1,452	9,838

Source: AEIS

The number of teachers increased by about 4 percent from 1993-94 to 1997-98. In 1996-97, the number of teachers teaching in the district dropped by 23 but most of this trend had reversed by 1997-98 (4,062).

Exhibit 4-6 compares the student-to-staff ratios for EPISD with its peer districts, Region 19, and the state. The district is slightly above the state average of 15:1 for its teacher-to-student ratio.

**Exhibit 4-6
Comparison of Average Student-to-Staff Ratios**

**EPISD, Peer Districts, and the State
1997-98**

District	Student Enrollment	Professional Staff	Central Admin.	Campus Admin.	Professional Support	Teachers
Fort Worth	76,901	14:1	1,602:1	279:1	105:1	18:1
Dallas	157,622	14:1	8,296:1	330:1	96:1	17:1
Houston	210,988	15:1	1,788:1	376:1	114:1	18:1
San Antonio	61,112	13:1	1,053:1	382:1	90:1	16:1
Corpus Christi	40,975	13:1	2,049:1	287:1	93:1	17:1
Ysleta	47,616	13:1	1,134:1	378:1	105:1	16:1
Socorro	22,051	13:1	1,002:1	380:1	113:1	15:1
El Paso	63,909	13:1	1,826:1	321:1	99:1	16:1
State Average	3,891,877	13:1	940:1	317:1	116:1	15:1

Source: AEIS

The number of total employees has increased steadily over the five years, with the largest increase coming in 1997-98, when there were 157 more employees than in 1996-97. The number of employees has increased at an average of about 1.5 percent each year for five years.

Exhibit 4-7 shows EPISD's student enrollment-to-staff ratios for the last five school years. While the decline is slight, EPISD's staff has continuously served fewer students over the past five years.

**Exhibit 4-7
EPISD Total Student Enrollment to Total Ratios
1993-94 through 1997-98**

Fiscal Year	Total Enrollment	Total Staff	Ratio of Total Staff to Enrollment
1993-94	64,141	7,545	1:8.50
1994-95	64,880	7,653	1:8.48
1995-96	64,260	7,721	1:8.32

1996-97	64,444	7,845	1:8.21
1997-98	63,909	8,002	1:7.99

Source: AEIS.

The number of auxiliary staff in the district fell from 1993-94 through 1995-96, but increased in 1996-97 through 1997-98. Central administrators remained steady at 29 up until 1997-98, when the total central administrators stood at 34.5.

Exhibit 4-8 compares the average salaries of EPISD's teachers, professional staff, campus administrators, and central administrators with those of seven school districts, Region 19, and the state. EPISD's average teacher salary is higher than Ysleta, Socorro, and Region 19. Five peer districts have professional support salaries higher than EPISD's-Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Socorro. EPISD campus administrators rank the lowest in average salaries, while central administrators rank near the highest, with an average salary of \$71,139.

Exhibit 4-8
Average Salaries for Professional Staff
EPISD State Region 19, and Peer Districts
1997-98

	Teachers	Professional Support	Campus Administration	Central Administration
Socorro	\$32,315	\$44,494	\$58,591	\$67,836
Ysleta	\$32,630	\$40,499	\$56,526	\$58,073
Region 19	\$32,747	\$41,385	\$53,498	\$63,868
El Paso	\$33,246	\$41,724	\$50,303	\$71,139
Houston	\$35,920	\$43,725	\$57,205	\$67,512
State	\$33,537	\$40,713	\$52,030	\$62,946
Dallas	\$34,309	\$44,589	\$55,356	\$84,536
Corpus Christi	\$35,124	\$43,031	\$51,134	\$75,272
Fort Worth	\$35,468	\$42,400	\$54,622	\$73,392
San Antonio	\$38,034	\$44,269	\$58,099	\$66,915

Source: AEIS.

During its review, TSPR held a public forum and surveyed administrators, principals, and teachers to determine major issues facing EPISD. Many expressed significant concern over the number of administrative positions in the Human Resources Unit, the promotion of school staff to central office positions, hiring practices, and teacher salaries. At community meetings held during the review, many attendees remarked that teacher salaries are too low and that teachers deserve better pay and benefits. About 72 percent of the administrators, 77 percent of the principals, and 68 percent of the teachers stated that EPISD's salary levels are not competitive with other districts.

EPISD participates in several salary surveys: the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), the American Association of School Administrators, Educational Research Services Arlington, Virginia. A review of salaries is conducted each year and the district has had salary studies conducted by outside firms. However, for the past two years they have been working with TASB to review salaries. The district has attempted to stay competitive with local school districts.

FINDING

About 2,500 persons are registered with EPISD as substitute teachers, teacher aides, nurses, librarians, bus drivers, clerks, campus patrol, or food service, custodial and maintenance workers. To become registered as a substitute, a person must complete a data card, information sheet, and provide documentation such as a photograph, an official transcript or high school diploma, tuberculosis test results, an I-9 form, a W-4 form, and a criminal record clearance. The director of Support Personnel interviews each applicant.

Teacher substitutes are paid \$54 a day if non-degreed and \$60.50 if degreed. If a substitute is asked to accept a long-term teaching assignment (10 days or more), he or she receives \$62.50 if non-degreed and \$68.50 if degreed. Substitute nurses are paid \$125 a day; librarians, \$60.50; and clerks, teaching aides, custodians, and food service and maintenance workers, \$5.50 per hour. On average, between 450 and 650 substitutes are required weekly.

As of October 7, 1998, the district had 17 long-term substitutes (a substitute who works 10 or more consecutive days) in full-time vacant positions and seven in half-day vacant positions. The district is expected to fill these vacancies by January 1999 upon recruitment efforts at the University of Texas - El Paso (UTEP).

COMMENDATION

EPISD maintains a pool of substitute teachers, teacher aides, clerical personnel, paraprofessionals, and maintenance workers.

FINDING

All substitute teachers, whether long- or short-term, are required to attend an orientation session if they have not attended one previously or if they have not worked in the district for three or more years. One component of the training session, Modeling and Observing for Substitute Teaching (MOST), is the review of the MOST Substitute Teacher Handbook which presents ideas for planning and presenting a lesson, discipline management, and remaining on task during class time. Another component of the training session allows the substitute teacher to spend time observing and interacting with a master teacher in an actual classroom.

Principals are given the opportunity to evaluate a substitute teacher serving in their school. While this is not required of the principal, it helps to identify unsatisfactory substitute teachers.

COMMENDATION

The support and training provided to substitute teachers is well planned and the training materials are comprehensive and thorough.

FINDING

Four years ago, EPISD purchased an automated substitute calling system called TEAMS (The Employee Assignment Management System) for \$103,000 from a firm (TSSI) in Dallas, Texas. The system is supported by Support Personnel with a clerical assistant overseeing and operating the system. Employees are entered into the system and given a personal identification number (PIN) to use when they dial in to report their absence or change information on their data package. As substitutes register, they too are entered into the system using a PIN. The system is completely automated with ten incoming and ten outgoing lines.

When employees are absent from duty, they call in to TEAMS, which automatically locates a substitute for them. Instructions for using the system are clearly detailed in brochures. Training on the system is provided throughout the year.

Custodial and food service workers do not use TEAMS, but instead call into an answering system that was used before TEAMS was implemented.

A clerical assistant then calls substitutes for the absent employee. The department hopes to bring these employees and substitutes on-line with TEAMS during the current school year.

TEAMS can fill between 450 and 650 vacancies a week. Daily, weekly, and monthly reports are generated to track the number of absent employees and number of substitutes used.

COMMENDATION

The TEAMS system allows EPISD to find substitutes for absent employees efficiently, reducing costs and saving time.

FINDING

Persons seeking employment with EPISD must complete an application and return it to Human Resources. The application and related documents (references, transcripts, licensing) are placed in a folder, a criminal check is initiated, and the application is entered into the electronic human resources management system. Human Resources directors interview each applicant so that a pool of applicants is created for filling vacancies or new positions.

Vacancies at pay level 2 and above are advertised within the district and usually are filled by EPISD employees; these positions generally are considered promotions or at least lateral moves for the employee. Vacancies are posted in the district's weekly publication *ADCOM*.

If there is no available pool within the district, Human Resources advertises the position outside the district. Such positions as programmers, analysts, and police officers often are advertised in this manner. Support personnel often are hired as substitutes and later hired as permanent employees.

Job vacancies also are advertised every Friday afternoon on the district's 24-hour telephone hotline, *Direct Line*. More than 3,000 calls are received on *Direct Line* each month.

During the public forums held by the review team, attendees noted:

- "...Hiring practices in place now have allowed nepotism and certain groups for promotion based on politics and not on educational background."
- "...Keep educated personnel in the classroom or school where they are making a difference rather than transferring them to administration."

- "District promotes teachers into administrative positions; these people are qualified to be teachers not administrators..."

While the district intends to provide opportunities for employee advancement, its strategy may be detrimental to keeping good personnel in the positions in which they are most effective. For instance, does a school suffer when a good teacher or principal moves into an administrative position at the central office? Does the teacher or principal, in turn, have the credentials or expertise to effectively administer a department or unit? On the other hand, the opportunity for a teacher to earn more as an administrator is inviting, as the top pay for a teacher with experience often is lower than that of an administrator.

Recommendation 48:

Establish policies and procedures that will lead to the hiring of the most qualified applicants.

EPISD should review its practices and procedures for promoting personnel and seek to hire the most qualified people for vacant positions throughout the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director for Human Resources and executive staff meet to examine their promotion and hiring practices.	May 1999
2.	The executive director for Human Resources consults with the associate superintendent for Support Services and other associate superintendents and executive directors for input and suggestions.	June 1999
3.	The executive director of Human Resources prepares a report to gather ideas and suggestions of the above staff and provides a report to the superintendent.	July 1999
4.	The report on the district's proposed hiring practices is presented to the superintendent and board.	September 1999
5.	The district's new hiring policy is implemented.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

E. Recruitment of Teachers

CURRENT SITUATION

The number of teachers teaching in EPISD over the past five school years (1994-95 through 1998-99) is shown in **Exhibit 4-9**. The number of teachers rose each year from 1995-96 through 1998-99, with the exception of 1996-97, when there were 23 fewer teachers than the year before. In 1997-98, the number of teachers increased by approximately half a percentage point. The largest percent increase came in the 1998-99 school year, a 6.6 percent increase.

Exhibit 4-9
EPISD Teachers
1994-95 to 1998-99

School Years	Number of Teachers	# Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)
1993-94	3,921	N/A	N/A
1994-95	3,989	68	1.7%
1995-96	4,067	78	2.0%
1996-97	4,044	(23)	(-0.6%)
1997-98	4,062	18	0.5%

Source: AEIS.

Exhibit 4-10 shows the average EPISD teacher salaries by years of experience for 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Exhibit 4-10
EPISD Average Teacher Salaries
1995-96 through 1997-98

Years of Experience	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Beginning	\$22,991	\$28,051	\$24,150
1 - 5 Years	\$25,322	\$25,824	\$26,079
6 - 10 Years	\$28,921	\$28,689	\$28,715
11 - 20 Years	\$34,574	\$34,937	\$35,457
Over 20 Years	\$42,092	\$42,858	\$43,235

Source: AEIS.

Both central administrators and principals were asked if the district's personnel recruitment needs improvement; the majority of administrators (64 percent) and principals (66 percent) said improvements should be made. Almost 50 percent of the teachers agreed.

FINDING

Exhibit 4-11 shows the number of EPISD teachers lost during school years 1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98.

**Exhibit 4-11
Teacher Turnover
1995-96 to 1997-98**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Deceased	4	10	6
Resigned	258	235	286
Retired	40	47	82
Terminated	10	23	6
Total Teachers Lost	312	315	380

Source: EPISD and AEIS.

EPISD's rate of turnover was among the lowest of its peer districts, the state, and Region 19 in 1996-97, at 9.1 percent, and was lowest in 1997-98, at 8.2 percent (**Exhibit 4-12**).

**Exhibit 4-12
Teacher Turnover Rates
EPISD, Peer Districts, State, and Region 19
1996-97 and 1997-98**

	# of Teachers		Turnover Rate	
	1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98
School Districts				
Region 19	9,646	9,838	11.4%	11.2%
El Paso	4,044	4,062	9.1%	8.2%
San Antonio	3,692	3,797	9.1%	8.4%
Corpus Christi	2,464	2,485	9.4%	9.3%
Houston	11,853	11,606	12.5%	14.8%

Ysleta	2,990	2,970	12.6%	13.7%
Socorro	1,302	1,454	12.1%	9.1%
State	247,651	254,558	12.6%	13.3%
Dallas	9,202	9,478	12.3%	13.7%
Fort Worth	4,277	4,316	12.7%	14.0%

Source: AEIS.

COMMENDATION

EPISD has been able to maintain teacher turnover rate that is lower than peer district, regional, and state averages.

FINDING

EPISD's recruitment strategies are planned jointly by the executive director of Human Resources and the directors of Elementary and Secondary Personnel and Personnel Administration. Personnel Administration is in charge of tracking university job fairs held across the country. Once the fairs are selected for attendance and the district representative who will attend is decided by the executive director in consultation with other members of Human Resources, principals and associate superintendents are invited to accompany Human Resources staff to the fairs or schools to recruit teachers.

Contained in the EPISD recruitment package is an application along with instructions and information about teaching in EPISD, general information about the district, the El Paso area, and housing. EPISD's booth at job fairs is well attended, helping to promote the district to prospective candidates.

Exhibit 4-13 shows the number of job fairs EPISD staff visited in the 1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98 school years. EPISD attends an average of 36 fairs each year, most of which are in Texas and New Mexico, but some as far away as New York and Washington State.

Exhibit 4-13
El Paso Independent School District
Recruitment Fairs Attended
1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98

STATE	HOST UNIVERSITY	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
AZ	Arizona State University	X	X	X
AZ	University of Arizona	X	X	
CO	Adams, Mesa & Western	X	X	
CO	University of Northern CO	X	X	X
IA	Iowa Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
IL	Mid-America Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
IN	Indiana Multiple Fairs		X	X
KS	Ft. Hayes State University	X	X	
MA	Mass. Multiple Fairs	X	X	
MI	Michigan Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
MN	Minnesota Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
MO	Missouri Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
MT	University of Montana	X	X	X
NC	University of N. Carolina	X	X	
ND	Minot State University	X	X	X
ND	University of North Dakota	X	X	X
NE	University of Nebraska	X	X	X
NM	New Mexico State University	X	X	X
NM	Eastern New Mexico	X	X	X
NM	Highlands University	X	X	X
NM	Western New Mexico			X
NM	University of New Mexico	X	X	X
NY	Teacher Recruiting Days	X	X	X
OH	Ohio Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
OK	Oklahoma Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
OR	Oregon Personnel	X	X	X
PA	Pittsburgh Education	X	X	X
SD	South Dakota State	X	X	X
TN	Nashville Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
TX	Southwest Texas State	X	X	X
TX	UT Austin		X	X
TX	UT Pan American	X	X	
TX	Sam Houston State University		X	
TX	Our Lady of the Lake			X
TX	Sul Ross State University	X	X	X
TX	Tarleton State		X	
TX	Texas Christian	X	X	
TX	Texas Tech University	X	X	
TX	University of North Texas & TWU	X	X	X
TX	Prairie View A&M	X	X	
TX	West Texas A&M	X	X	
TX	UT El Paso	X	X	X
UT	Utah State University		X	X
WA	Washington Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
WA	Washington Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
WI	Wisconsin Multiple Fairs	X	X	X
TOTAL		39	44	34

Source: EPISD.

EPISD budgeted \$50,000 for attendance at job fairs in the 1998-99 school year. Last year, the same amount was budgeted and \$35,173 was spent.

Expenses included travel, hotel, car rental, graphic exhibits, and registration fees.

During TSPR's public forum, community members expressed concern about the amount of money spent on recruiting out-of-state teachers from places so far away from El Paso. EPISD administrators countered that, with El Paso located where it is, the cost to reach almost *any* destination is high. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) cannot produce enough teachers to meet EPISD's hiring needs.

Human Resources does not maintain a formal recruitment plan or written procedural document for teacher recruitment that would hold the unit accountable for the trips it chooses to take. The unit could not provide TSPR with any analysis as to whether job fairs are worth the money spent or not.

The director of Personnel Administration, however, indicated that administrators assigned to attend fairs complete an assessment of the fair after they attend. This information is compiled and reviewed before establishing a schedule for the following year.

District officials said there was no "grow your own" recruitment effort in the district. However, after the on-site visit, information was provided that a "grow your own" teacher readiness program has been in place for the past nine years to address teacher shortage. The program is part of the Home Economics career preparation and pre-employment laboratory child development programs. Several of the schools have Future Teachers of America clubs.

EPISD's Teacher Associate Program allows UTEP students to be employed as long-term substitutes in district schools during the academic year.

Recommendation 49:

Develop a formal recruitment plan and written procedures that includes expected performance measures and means to evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment efforts.

The Human Resources Unit needs a formal plan to guide its recruitment activities and a needs assessment and analysis of the effectiveness of its efforts to recruit teachers. An evaluation of these yearly efforts should be part of the plan. The unit should review, in depth, what trips to faraway places produce in the way of teachers, and decide whether these teachers might be attracted to El Paso through other means, such as national advertising and mail-outs to prospective graduates.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director Human Resources, the directors for Elementary and Secondary Personnel and Personnel Administration, and the Certification Officer meet to develop a recruitment plan with a mission statement, goals and objectives, activities for the coming year, a needs assessment, and strategies to evaluate efforts.	June 1999
2.	The plan is formalized and presented to the associate superintendent for Support Services for suggestions and approval.	August 1999
3.	The recruitment plan is put into operation and revised annually as necessary.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

F. Records Management

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD board policy requires Human Resources to maintain accurate, up-to-date, and confidential employee personnel files. One of the primary reasons for keeping such records is to document years of service for state retirement and to maintain licensing and certification data.

Employee files in the Human Resources unit contain:

- employee's application
- assignment letter
- certification information (certificates, permits, letters in reference to permits, TEA correspondence)
- official transcripts
- payroll authorization cards
- Tuberculosis test card
- contracts
- salary notices
- annuity information
- personal data sheet - name, address, phone number
- service record card
- criminal record release form
- social security and drivers license
- oath of office
- I-9 form
- correspondence
- copies of personnel change forms
- appraisals

Personnel folders for more than 8,000 district employees and substitutes are stored in metal cabinets in the main office area of Human Resources. Other records maintained by Human Resources include an employee service record form, which is updated annually with a computer-generated label, an employee record card, a job description and an electronic record for each employee.

Only Human Resources staff have unlimited access to the files, although information in personnel records is subject to the requirements of the Texas Open Records Act. Personnel folders for inactive (retired, resigned, or terminated) employees are stored in metal cabinets and maintained in the unit for five years, after which they are microfilmed.

The district has purchased the Human Resources Unit document-imaging equipment (scanners) for use with IBM PCs. Imaging of employee's personnel records will begin as soon as problems with the scanning devices can be solved. At first, newly hired employees' documents will be imaged, as all files will be eventually.

FINDING

All EPISD employees must be evaluated annually using a written evaluation instrument. EPISD has adopted the state-developed Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) to evaluate its teachers. Each Texas school district was given two choices in selecting a method to appraise teachers (beginning with the 1997-98 school year) - a local teacher appraisal system developed by the district and designed to fulfill all legal requirements, or the PDAS system.

An employee's written appraisal must be completed by a specified date in May. The appraisal is signed and dated by the appraiser and the employee and submitted to Human Resources, which places the appraisal into the employee's personnel folder.

Two staff members in Human Resources are responsible for ensuring that each employee has an appraisal on file-the secretary to the director of Support Personnel and the secretary to the certification officer. As appraisals are returned to Human Resources, the employee's name is checked off a list of employees. For those employees that do not have an appraisal returned, a staff member contacts the employee's supervisor or principal by phone or mail with a reminder. During the year, and before appraisals are conducted, the certification officer sends a memo to employees and supervisors alerting them to the requirements and deadlines for appraisals.

When TSPR reviewed randomly selected files of employees in September 1998, all teachers were found to have appraisals up through 1996-97 on file (1997-98 appraisals had not been filed as the Human Resources staff was awaiting the return of some appraisals at the time of the on-site visit.) However, TSPR also found that appraisals for 1996 and 1997 for an associate superintendent and director were missing. State Education Code 21.354 specifically states that *district funds may not be used to pay an administrator who has not been appraised in the preceding 15 months.*

TSPR received a copy of a memo dated October 21, 1998 from EPISD stating that administrator evaluations for the 1995-96 school year through 1997-98 had been temporarily housed in the superintendent's office but now were in Human Resources. The only way the district can effectively monitor its appraisal process is to have all appraisals returned to Human

Resources to be checked off "as completed" for that school year and filed in the employee's personnel folder. The importance of this monitoring cannot be overstated. Every year, some employee appraisals are received very late.

Recommendation 50:

Develop a policy and administrative procedures to ensure that appraisals are returned to Human Resources by a specified deadline.

Timely filing of employee appraisals with Human Resources should be enforced. A policy and procedures memo should be developed that clearly requires appraisers, supervisors, and employees to make sure that employees are appraised on time and a copy of the appraisal is returned to Human Resources on time.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources meets with the certification officer, directors of Personnel Administration, and Support Personnel to develop procedures establishing deadlines for the receipt of appraisals in Human Resources, along with correspondence that will be sent to appraisers indicating deadlines and the importance of meeting them.	April 1999
2.	The executive director presents the procedures to the associate superintendent for Support Services for approval who then prepares a policy for the superintendent and board to approve.	May 1999
3.	The superintendent approves the policy and submits it to the board for approval.	May 1999
4.	The board approves the policy.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND PLANNING

This chapter reviews EPISD's facilities maintenance, planning, and energy management functions in five sections:

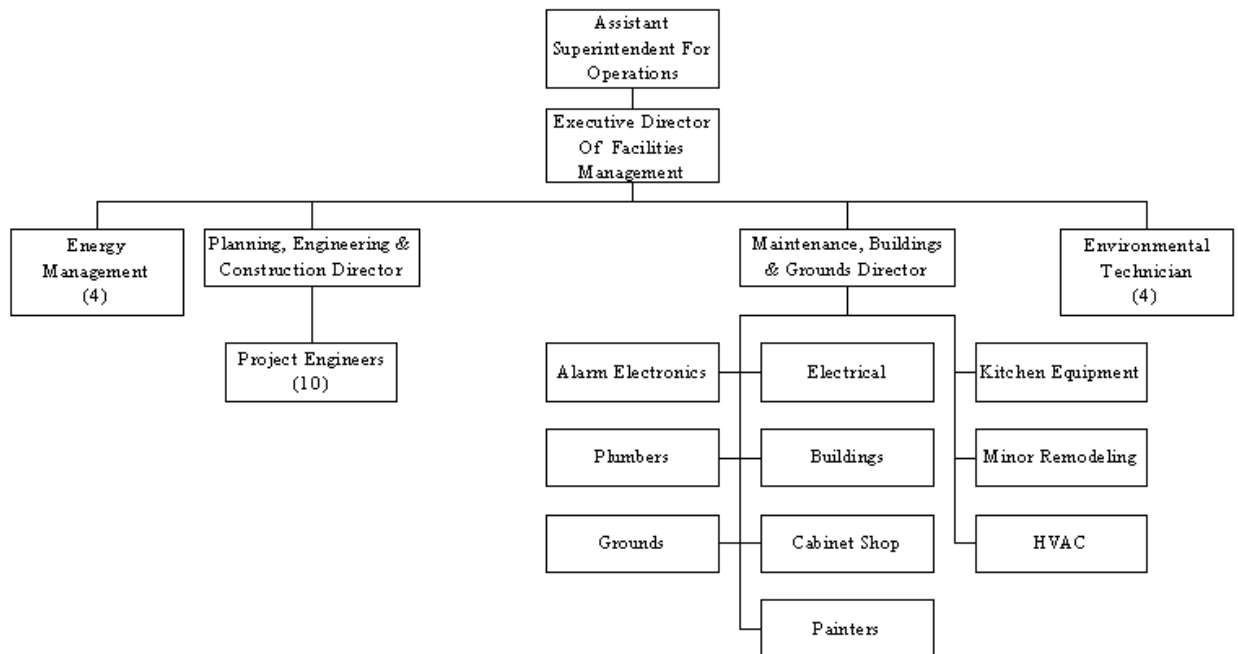
- A. Facilities Maintenance and Planning
- B. Facilities Design and Construction
- C. Attendance Zones
- D. Custodial Services
- E. Energy Management

CURRENT SITUATION

Maintenance

EPISD's facilities maintenance and planning functions are performed by the Facilities Maintenance and Construction Department. **Exhibit 5-1** provides the organization chart for the area.

Exhibit 5-1
Facilities Maintenance and Construction Department Organization Chart
1998-99 School Year



Source: EPISD.

The Facilities Maintenance and Construction Department has a staff of 222 and a budget of \$9,370,333 for fiscal 1998-99. The department is responsible for maintaining 55 elementary schools, 14 middle schools, 13 high schools, eight special use facilities, seven cottage complexes, and six administrative facilities with a total of 8,633,056 gross square feet.

The maintenance function is divided into 10 shops or trade functions, with each shop being led by a foreman. The foremen report directly to the director. **Exhibit 5-2** lists the number of personnel in each shop.

Exhibit 5-2
Number of Personnel by Shop
1997-98

Trade/Shop	Foremen/ Supervisor	Service Personnel
Alarm/Electronics	1	2
Buildings	1	32
Cabinet Shop	1	18
Electrical	1	10
Grounds	1	26
Heating, ventilation, air conditioning	1	27
Kitchen Equipment	1	27
Minor Remodeling	1	23
Painters	1	19
Plumbers	1	16
Total	10	200

Source: EPISD.

School personnel submit work order requests to the Maintenance area. The director of Maintenance, Buildings and Grounds Division reviews each work order request and routes approved requests to a clerk for processing. The clerk enters the work order into the Gateway work order system and assigns it a work order number.

The Gateway work order system is a software package designed to track and manage work orders. It supports both "scheduled" and "requested"

work orders; scheduled work orders are those that handle preventive maintenance and other regularly scheduled tasks, while requested work orders are those that occur during day-to-day operations and are identified by on-site administrative or support staff. Requested work orders are approved by the director and distributed to the appropriate foreman. The director can reject a work order request and return it to the originator, who can resubmit a revised request if needed. Printed work orders contain the following data:

- Date and time printed
- Maintenance location and department
- Work order date
- Work order class (scheduled/requested)
- Work order number
- Location requesting work order
- Unit to be repaired or maintained
- Physical location, model, and serial number of unit
- Estimated completion date
- Work order instructions
- List of components required for completion.

The Gateway system allows the progress of the work order to be tracked by both the director and the requester. This system can be linked to a warehouse management system so that parts can be billed to the appropriate work order and the level of inventory can be tracked.

The foreman assigns the work order to a trades worker, who visits the site to determine the materials needed to complete the job and submits a materials order to a foreman for review and approval. The work order then is routed to the Purchasing Unit.

The Maintenance area is not allowed to warehouse materials in its shops or on its trucks. This policy is the result of an incident in 1995, when 23 maintenance workers were arrested and several pleaded guilty to taking kickbacks on the purchase of materials. As a result, the district placed responsibility for buying all maintenance materials under the Purchasing Unit.

Maintenance staff request materials from a senior Purchasing buyer who requisitions the materials from the warehouse or assigns the request to a junior buyer to obtain a quote for the materials. All purchases are competitively quoted and the lowest price is accepted. A purchase order is produced by entering the request onto the automated purchase order system.

The materials are received from the warehouse or delivered by the supplier to the warehouse. The goal of the Purchasing Unit is to have the materials ready for pickup by the trades worker within 24 hours. Once the materials have been received, the worker can schedule a second trip to the site to complete the work order.

After the job is completed, a school administrator, head custodian, or senior aide signs off on the work order. The trades worker and his foreman then sign the work order as well and a clerk enters all time and materials assigned to the work order into the system. Travel time is not separated from time spent on site.

The director receives work order reports on a quarterly basis. These include a backlog of open work orders and the preventive maintenance work order schedule. Work orders are prioritized in nine classes. **Exhibit 5-3** lists the work order priority codes.

**Exhibit 5-3
Work Order Priority Codes**

Code	Description	Definition
1	EMERGENCY	Danger to life
2	EMERGENCY	Danger to property
3	EMERGENCY	Possible danger
4	ASAP	Political
5	ASAP	Possible damage to property
6	ASAP	Probable danger to property
7	ROUTINE	Hardship or inconvenience
8	ROUTINE	Normal routine
9	ROUTINE	Beautification

Source: EPISD.

Facilities Maintenance and Construction has not conducted any cost-comparison studies to determine if outsourcing its functions could produce savings.

The district has retained a consultant to review all construction and renovation projects for the presence of asbestos. The consultant must clear a project prior to the beginning of work if the presence of asbestos is in question.

EPISD currently houses the majority of its administrative functions in two facilities, the Education Center in downtown and the Education Center at the Boeing site. The building at the Boeing site is leased and at this writing is undergoing remodeling. When this project is complete, the district will have eliminated any need for other leased facilities.

Planning

The key component in school district facilities planning is a facilities master plan that outlines all facilities construction and repair activities for a five- to 10-year period. A comprehensive plan contains an assessment of all existing facilities' condition and capacity, a projection of enrollments by region, school, and grade, and a list of facilities needs.

The needs list identifies new construction, improvements to existing schools, and repairs to existing schools. The plan must prioritize projects and schedule them over the life of the plan, identify their costs, and identify a funding source for each project.

The district is reviewing and revising its Long-Range Plan (LRP-10) to incorporate a facilities master plan. As part of the District Improvement Plan, EPISD has prepared an action plan to develop the master plan. The action plan identifies a schedule for the process, the persons responsible for each step, possible resources, the estimated cost of each task and funding sources. **Exhibit 5-4** lists the activities identified in the action plan.

Exhibit 5-4 Action Plan Activities for Long-Range Plan 1998-99

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Activity 1 | Identify Health Issues districtwide (a) Indoor Air Quality Program (b) Hazardous Materials Program: asbestos abatement. pest control, and underground storage tank review and inspections. |
| Activity 2 | Identify safety issues districtwide (a) boiler inspections (b) PSB back flow preventer inspection (C) kitchen inspections (d) playground equipment inspections (e) annual fire alarm system inspections (f) Gas line testing (every two years). |
| Activity 3 | Provide assessment and evaluation of all district facilities (a) complete list of deferred maintenance items by campus (b) input data into district database (c) provide cost of deferred maintenance items (d) determine if existing facilities are to be renovated or abandoned or new facilities constructed. |
| Activity 4 | Revise enrollment projection based on high school attendance |

zones and project it for next 10 years.

- Activity 5** Coordinate with Technology Information Systems group on revisions and update of the implementation of the district's technology plan.
- Activity 6** Provide information on current districts boundary information in part of LRP-10 (99).
- Activity 7** Revise district building standards and material finishes; identify areas of buildings needing more durable materials to reduce long-term maintenance costs.
- Activity 8** Revise educational specifications to meet district objectives and goals: (a) revise library standards specifications (b) revise science room standards and specifications (c) revise administration area requirements
- Activity 9** Research methods to obtain alternative financing: (a) restructuring of district obligation funds (b) use of lease/purchase of district facilities (c) use of design/build construction of district facilities (d) use of consultant of district facilities by Constructor Management (e) use of grant money.
- Activity 10** Consider possibility of a districtwide bond issue for the next five years concerning facilities and deferred maintenance; develop Bond Review Committee with administration and community involvement.

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

EPISD projects future enrollment by school, grade, and program to determine staffing and classroom needs. The projection process involves district staff and elementary school principals. Historical factors, neighborhood factors, and the affect on birth rate figures due to illegal immigration are all taken into consideration.

EPISD's planning and enrollment projections are the responsibility of the Research and Evaluation Department, which makes these projections to determine staffing and facility needs. A senior researcher is responsible for all projections and for acting as a staff resource for the Boundary Review committee.

Projection estimates are made for the district, each region, each high school attendance zone, and each school. These estimates are broken down by school, grade, and program (such as bilingual or special education).

School principals are interviewed to uncover local or neighborhood factors that might not be apparent to district personnel.

Each April or May, the unit conducts a needs assessment to finalize its projections and resolve any differences between the district's projections and each principal's projection. A staffing review committee, including personnel from external funding, budget, research, and the regional executive directors, meet individually with the elementary principals to determine their staffing needs for the next school year. A detailed staffing form is completed and agreed to by the committee and the principal.

Since the district's space inventory is out of date, each principal brings a current floor plan to the meeting so that accurate room counts can be made. Staffing needs are decided and any deficiency in classroom space results in the addition of portable classrooms. The regional executive director notifies the Facilities Department of the number of portables needed at each school.

COMMENDATION

EPISD uses a thorough method to make annual enrollment projections.

FINDING

In the past, EPISD lacked a facilities master plan that identified necessary facilities repairs and improvements and a corresponding budget for a five-year period. Site visits revealed that the district has a considerable amount of deferred maintenance at its school facilities, including flooring in poor condition, roof leaks, holes in walls, exterior walls in need of painting, doors in poor condition, and poor lighting.

In June 1998, the former school superintendent presented a plan to the board to distribute \$2 million to each region for deferred maintenance items. Each campus administrator was given a copy of the deferred maintenance items identified by Maintenance and was asked to select and prioritize projects for their campus. The selections were reviewed by each regional superintendent and Maintenance and then sent to the board for approval. The list of identified deferred maintenance items is too lengthy to reproduce in this report, but did contain deferred repairs and some capital improvements. The total estimated cost of all the identified items was \$33,614,003.

Although the district initiated a viable long-term planning process in fall 1998, accountability measures have not been put in place to ensure that implementation will take place.

Recommendation 51:

Ensure accountability in the long-range plan by requiring quarterly reporting on the status of key activities to the school board.

The long-range planning process as outlined in **Exhibit 5-4** is a comprehensive planning methodology. However, since this is the first time the district has attempted this procedure, the board should be responsible for ensuring the process is carried out according to the plan and the schedule.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Facilities Maintenance and Construction reports to the board on a quarterly basis the status of the long range planning process.	April 1999 and Ongoing
2.	The board monitors the progress of the planning process and takes any steps necessary to ensure completion of the process and to ensure the final plan is a quality product.	April 1999 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD's 1998-99 budget for maintenance and operations is \$9,370,333, which equates to about \$1.08 per square foot. According to the annual survey conducted by *American School and University* magazine, the national median for maintenance and operations expenditures in 1997-98 was \$1.19 per square foot. **Exhibit 5-5** compares EPISD expenditures to national and regional medians.

**Exhibit 5-5
Comparison of M&O Expenditures to 1997-98 Medians
1998-99 EPISD Budget**

	Costs in Dollars per Square Foot
National Median	\$1.19
Region 6 Median*	\$1.35
EPISD	\$1.08

*Source: American School and University Magazine and EPISD.
 Region 6 includes Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

The fact that EPISD spends almost 20 percent less per foot than the regional median can account for the more than \$33 million in facility needs that the district has identified. Some EPISD employees feel the district's estimate of facility needs is conservative and that the actual figure may be two to three times higher.

Even at the conservative figure of \$33 million in deferred maintenance and facility improvement needs, this amount indicates that EPISD has not funded its facilities maintenance function properly over the years. Underfunded maintenance results in the accumulation of deferred maintenance, which in turn increases the cost of maintaining facilities. For example, failing to paint on an appropriate cycle will allow weather damage to occur to exterior finishes, reducing the life of the finish material. The annual budget for maintenance must be sufficient to keep new deferred maintenance from accumulating.

Recommendation 52:

Complete a comprehensive and accurate assessment of deferred maintenance needs and use the master plan to set priorities.

Maintenance should identify the level of annual funding needed to eliminate the accumulation of deferred maintenance. The district plans to use an outside consultant to conduct a full-scale assessment of its facilities needs; once the district is satisfied that it has accurately identified its long-term needs, the master plan should incorporate strategies for funding these projects on a priority basis. The assessment should include fully estimated costs for a comprehensive preventive maintenance program and an analysis of historical repair needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds Section consult to identifies facilities needs.	May 1999
2.	The director and area supervisors identifies a comprehensive preventive maintenance program and estimates the annual cost.	May 1999
3.	The director circulates the proposed addition to the long-range plan to key individuals in the district and the community for feedback and revision.	July 1999

4.	The superintendent revises the long-range action plan to include deferred maintenance needs and priorities along with funding strategies.	August 1999
5.	The board approves the plan and takes necessary steps to establish accountability for this activity in the long-range plan.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

While EPISD uses a successful means of making one-year enrollment projections, it does not project enrollments beyond the next year. Five-year projections are made by the Texas Education Agency, and the district reviews these, but it does not generate its own projections using the comprehensive process employed for one-year projections.

A senior researcher responsible for making enrollment projections has additional responsibilities that prevent him from making annual long-range projections. These additional responsibilities include:

- developing the salary compensation package for all staff;
- participation on the boundary review committee, including numerical analyses and conducting public meetings;
- chairing the elementary staffing committee that meets with each elementary principal; and
- participating on the secondary staffing committee.

Recommendation 53:

Develop five-year enrollment projections annually.

The executive director of Research and Evaluation should reassign certain responsibilities of the senior researchers so that the senior researcher can spend time producing five-year projections of enrollment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Research and Evaluation determines staffing needs for developing an effective and efficient way to project multi-year enrollment.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Research and Evaluation determines staffing reassignments to allow the senior researcher the time to	April 1999

	develop a five-year forecasting model.	
3.	The executive director of Research and Evaluation and the senior researcher prepare a five-year enrollment forecast.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD's maintenance function lacks an appropriate supervisory staff to oversee its work and to ensure that it is completed in efficiently. Working foremen report directly to the director but are responsible only for the work in their trade. Consequently, the responsibility of coordinating the work of all the trades falls to the director, whose main role should be that of planning, budgeting, and administrating, not overseeing day-to-day activities.

Trades personnel work in all areas of the district, which is not the most efficient way to organize work crews in a district of EPISD's size. To the degree possible, work crews should be assigned to a single geographical area. Regionalization reduces travel time between jobs and allows crews to get to know a more limited number of facilities more intimately. As work crews come to know "their facilities," they often can diagnose problems more effectively and develop better relationships with the customers.

Further efficiencies can be achieved by instituting practices such as "job-site reporting" when a supervisor concludes that it is appropriate. The district already does this for its painting crews. "Job-site reporting" allows workers to report directly to a job-site instead of to the district facility at the beginning of each work day. This eliminates travel time to the job-site and increases efficiency. However, this and other such procedures must be overseen by someone who is responsible for more than just one trade.

Recommendation 54:

Reorganize the maintenance function into regional groups based on the district's existing regions.

A supervisor should be assigned to each region to oversee operations in that region. The supervisors should be responsible for meeting weekly to assign personnel resources where they are most needed. This would mean that some personnel would be crossing over into other regions, depending on priorities set by the supervisors. Some shops do not have enough

personnel to staff four regions and these would need to remain multiregional, such as the alarm/electronics shop.

Regional supervisors also should be responsible for quality control. They should visit school sites to ensure that work is completed to the satisfaction of the customers, or communicate with the school administrators to clarify limiting conditions that may prevent a job from being completed in the time or quality expected.

Regional supervisors also should identify and keep current lists of deferred maintenance items in their region. The supervisors should conduct annual inspections of the facilities to update the list and assure school administrators that their needs are being reported and prioritized.

Regionalizing the maintenance function should not be seen as a rigid structural organization, which would restrict the management of personnel resources. Instead, it should be used to increase the effectiveness of planning efforts and the productivity of personnel. Regional supervisors should work together to meet the needs of the whole district as effectively as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds prepares a job description for the position of maintenance supervisor and submits to the executive director of Facilities and Construction for review.	April 1999
2.	The executive director reviews the job description and prepares a budget proposal and submits to the board for approval.	May 1999
3.	The board reviews and approves four supervisor positions.	June 1999
4.	The executive director and the director review staffing and hire four maintenance supervisors, one per region.	April - June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

EPISD is divided into four regions. The cost of four new supervisor positions at level 7 is \$49,990 each including benefits, for a total of \$199,960 per year (\$43,095 salary x 16 percent benefits x 4 positions).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Reorganize the maintenance	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)	(\$199,960)

function					
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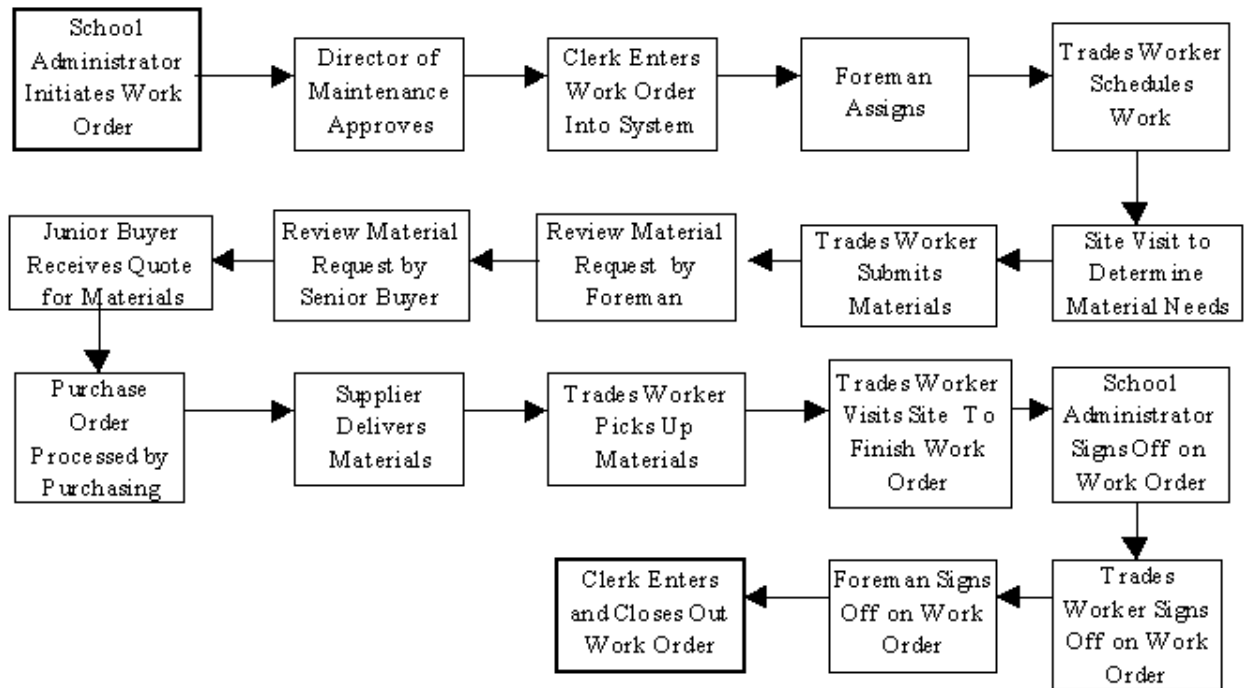
FINDING

Several years ago, the district uncovered criminal activities in its maintenance function that involved maintenance staff receiving "kickbacks" on material purchases. The district reacted by removing the maintenance function's authority to purchase or maintain stocks of materials and equipment. Instead, the district established a team of buyers in the Purchasing Unit to make all maintenance-related material and equipment purchases. Furthermore, all materials are kept in the central warehouse, where they must be requisitioned after a foreman has reviewed and approved a work order.

Furthermore, maintenance workers are not allowed to maintain commonly used materials in their trucks or shops, making two trips necessary for even the most mundane and common work order requests. Foremen said that orders for materials often take longer than the Purchasing Unit's goal of 24 hours, and that materials frequently are ordered incorrectly due to the buyers' lack of technical expertise. Moreover, the district's practice of always taking the lowest bid has in some cases resulted in the purchase of inferior materials that fail prematurely and ultimately cost the district more in subsequent repairs.

Exhibit 5-6 is a flow chart of the work order process involving materials ordered from a supplier.

**Exhibit 5-6
Work Order Flow Chart**



Source: Created by TSPR

Maintenance personnel nearly always make at least two trips to respond to a work order request. Several school administrators said that maintenance workers often do not return for a week or longer after their initial visit, since the trades worker must wait for materials to complete the work.

The district was well-advised to take measures to safeguard its interests in response to the past criminal activity. However, the current process is cumbersome, inefficient, and does not safeguard the system from similar misuses.

Maintenance units in other districts are far more efficient when they allow maintenance workers to maintain an inventory of materials in their shops and on their trucks. This allows workers direct access to needed parts and equipment and increases their efficiency on the job. These materials are charged to a work order and inventoried annually to ensure against loss and theft.

Recommendation 55:

Reauthorize the Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds Section to warehouse commonly used maintenance materials and equipment in shops and on trucks.

The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds should be held accountable for overseeing all purchasing activities and verifying that the pricing and quality of materials selected are in the district's best interests. The director should put in place security measures to safeguard the district from theft and loss. Some security measures used in other districts have included:

- a locked materials warehouse with limited access;
- annual inventory of all materials in warehouse, shops, and trucks;
- linking all materials used to a work order that is approved by the appropriate authority; and
- cost-comparison studies to ensure competitive pricing of materials.

Purchasing and warehousing staff needed by Maintenance, Buildings and Grounds should be transferred from the Purchasing Department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds develops policies and procedures for purchasing, warehousing, and requisitioning materials and equipment.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Facilities and Construction reviews, revises, and submits the policy and procedures to the board.	May 1999
3.	The board reviews, revises, and adopts the policy and procedures.	June 1999
4.	The executive director oversees the implementation of the policies and procedures by the director and supervisors.	June 1999 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Allowing trades workers easier access to supplies should produce increases in efficiency that cannot be quantified.

FINDING

EPISD does not have a formal training program for its maintenance staff. At the discretion of the director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds, employees attend seminars presented by manufacturers or professional organizations as opportunities arise. These training opportunities occur on an irregular basis.

At minimum, a Maintenance training program should include the following subject areas:

- effective work scheduling
- personnel management strategies
- interdepartmental communication skills
- customer communication skills
- professional skill development for each trade
- work habits
- time management
- quality control.

Recommendation 56:

Provide a comprehensive training program for the Maintenance staff to improve its effectiveness and productivity.

The director, should develop a training program for all levels of staff and all trades. The program should have annual goals and objectives and should be budgeted to achieve them.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds, in conjunction with the Personnel Department and with input from the staff, develops a training program curriculum, schedule, and budget.	April 1999
2.	The executive director reviews the training program and submits it to the board for approval.	June 1999
3.	The board reviews and approves the training program and budget.	July 1999
4.	The director initiates the training program.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The planning required to implement this recommendation could be accomplished within the district's existing resources. The training program would involve fees for seminars and trainers. The department should budget about \$200 per staff member or \$44,400 annually (222 staff x \$200 = \$44,400).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Provide a training program for maintenance	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)	(\$44,400)

FINDING

EPISD contracts with 58 private companies to perform maintenance-related services administered by Planning, Engineering, and Construction. However, the district has not conducted any cost-comparison studies for these services or those accomplished in-house to determine the most cost-effective delivery approach.

Exhibit 5-7 lists current services contracted out by the district.

Exhibit 5-7 Contracted Maintenance Services 1998-99 School Year

Contract Description	Contract Amount
D / W CAD Services	\$10,000
Telecommunications Consulting Services	10,000
Kitchen Fire Suppression System	19,686
Grease Trap Maintenance	30,000
Districtwide Elevator Maintenance	76,582
D / W Scoreboards	14,200
Otis Elevator Maintenance	3,123
Miscellaneous Demand Services	30,000
Stadium Lighting System Maintenance	14,000
Water Treatment Systems	132,427
D / W Sound, Bells, Clocks	90,588
Kitchen Exhaust Systems	47,166
Water Softner Systems	38,578
Campus Telephone Systems	85,000
Automatic Fire Sprinkler Maintenance	21,450
Communication Equipment Repair	36,000
Pest Control Program	60,948
D / W Long Dist Contract	60,000
Radio Transmitter Lease	5,501
Education Center Telephone System	65,000

Printing/Reproduction Services-Bond	29,102
Lease/Comanche Peak Transmitters	3,600
Garbage Removal	397,974
Bio-hazardous Waste Disposal (93.807)	10,000
Hazardous Waste Disposal (93.818)	91,033
D / W Portable Building Relocation	52,196
Maintenance / Administrative Pagers	10,000
Education Center DPBX	25,200
Chemical Waste Management Services	3,500
D / W Boiler Heating Systems	121,010
D / W HVAC Systems Repairs	133,490
EMC/FMS Systems (Charge other Cost)	20,000
D / W Electrical Systems Repairs	97,166
D / W Plumbing Systems Repairs	116,200
Portable Fire Extinguisher Maintenance	15,971
D / Week Recycling Program	49,699
D / W Communication/Network Cabling	66,950
Chiller Maintenance-Silva Health Magnet	8,448
Public Address Services	5,000
Warm Blooded Animal Pest Control	5,000
Engineer Copier Maintenance	725
EPHS Ice Plant	Bidding*
Andress / Austin Ice Plant	Bidding*
Security-Education Center Downtown	Bidding*
Custodial Services-Education Center Downtown	Bidding*
Elevator Maintenance-Education Center Downtown	19,200
Irrigation Sprinkler Systems	Bidding*
Miscellaneous Telecommunications MAC	5,000
Chiller Maintenance-Bowie High School	10,208
District Wide CAD Services (Formerly 659.96)	10,000

Antenna Site Rental-800 MHZ Sys. Radios	3,353
Miscellaneous Telecommunication Svcs	5,000

Source: EPISD

*Contract amounts had not been established at the time of the review.

Recommendation 57:

Conduct annual cost-comparison studies of selected services to determine the most cost-effective delivery method.

The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds should select several services performed by the Maintenance function or outsourced to private contractors and conduct a cost comparison study of them each year. The study should determine if the services in question can be provided more cost-effectively by in-house or private resources.

The studies should include all district costs of performing the services to ensure an accurate comparison, including the costs of materials, labor, and overhead.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds selects two or three services to develop cost-comparison studies.	April 1999
2.	Using work order data and input from foremen, the director develops an in-house cost for performing the service and compares this to cost proposals from private contractors.	May 1999
3.	The director prepares a report with recommendations based on his findings and presents it to the board.	July 1999
4.	The board reviews the report and authorizes the director to act on his recommendations in accordance to the best interests of the district.	August 1999
5.	The director repeats this process annually for different services provided by the department.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

The downtown Education Center is a 16-story office building the district received as a donation from El Paso Natural Gas (EPNG), commonly referred to as the "Blue Flame Building." In 1996, the district spent more than \$200,000 per year for leased space and identified a need for an additional 120,000 square feet of administrative space. After investigating several options to buy or lease, the district decided to accept the donation of the Blue Flame Building from EPNG.

The building contains about 209,569 gross square feet, including non-assignable space such as elevators, mechanical rooms, and lobbies. Its replacement value is about \$17 million, based on a construction cost of \$85 per square foot. The EPNG donation included more than 1,000 pieces of furniture for which the district has estimated a replacement value of \$1 million. The building is insured for the following amounts:

Building value	\$22,004,745
Contents	1,515,335
Computer hardware	4,000,000
Computer software	<u>500,000</u>
Total	\$28,020,080

At the time of the donation, EPISD projected that the building would cost about \$1.2 million annually to operate, or about \$6 per square foot. For the 1997-98 school year, the building's actual operating costs were \$637,078, or \$3.03 per square foot. The district also expected to spend about \$460,000 in move-in costs and \$2.1 million in renovation. In a memo to the superintendent dated July 29, 1997, the associate superintendent of Operations documented the following costs for moving into the building:

New telephone system	\$198,000
Installation of telephone equipment	19,600
Architectural/engineering support	32,500
Temporary help - moving	9,000
Hazardous materials survey	<u>11,400</u>
Total costs	\$270,500

In addition to expenses associated with the building, EPISD incurred parking expenses. The district decided to purchase half of the 600 parking spaces in the parking garage next to the building. The district made an initial payment of \$1 million for these spaces and since has made three yearly payments of about \$320,000, for a total of nearly \$2 million.

When the proposed donation of the building was before the board, the local newspaper reported that its costs to the district would exceed \$4 million. This was a misrepresentation of data presented to the board that

showed a cost of about \$4 million to EPNG based on the building's fair market value.

According to documents prepared by the executive director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Construction, EPISD occupies about 86 percent of the building's space, and plans to occupy another 3 percent in the 1998-99 school year with a Copy Center and Media Production Center. The fourth floor, which is about 60 percent unoccupied, is used to store unused furniture that came with the building. The building houses 335 employees, which equates to about 430 net square feet per employee. The calculation used to arrive at 430 net square feet per employee takes into consideration the unoccupied space and nonassignable space such as elevators, mechanical rooms, and lobbies.

The average 430 square feet allotted per staff member is excessive, according to governmental and private guidelines. Typical work spaces offer between 65 square feet for an open office plan to 250 square feet for private executive offices. A factor for circulation, storage, and common spaces is added to these guidelines to achieve an "ideal" average square footage per staff member of about 300 square feet. This allotment varies depending on the nature of the work performed in the office; using a guideline of 300 square feet per employee, however, EPISD would require only about 90,000 square feet or about 10 floors of the building.

The district also houses administrative functions in the Boeing Education Center, a leased space currently undergoing remodeling. Some functions housed in the Boeing Education Center, such as Human Resources and Risk Management, occupy office space and could be moved to the downtown center; however, this would be waste planning and construction funds already dedicated to renovating the Boeing Center.

Many of the functions in the Boeing Center, such as the print center, planetarium, and paper storage facility, are more appropriate to the Boeing location because they do not occupy office-type spaces. Other functions, such as the associate superintendents of regions 1 and 2, are more appropriately located in the Boeing Center due to its greater accessibility to their regions.

Recommendation 58:

Use the downtown Education Center more efficiently and lease out surplus space.

The district should retain a private architectural firm to replan the office layouts in the Education Center, adhering to a planning guideline of about 300 square feet per employee. The unused floors should be leased out to

raise funds for EPISD. If an additional floor is retained for storage and a future copy and media production center, six floors would be available for leasing.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Planning, Engineering, and Construction issues a request for proposals for architectural services to replan the Education Center.	April 1999
2.	The architect prepares plans including a staged reconfiguration of the floors to allow the district to continue to operate during construction and moving.	August 1999
3.	The plans are reviewed by the board and approved.	September 1999
4.	The district issues a call for bids to complete the work and commences the project.	October 1999
5.	The project is completed in phases while the district seeks tenants for the soon-to-be available space.	October 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would require the expenditure of funds for architectural fees and construction costs that are projected at about \$1.4 million (Construction costs @ \$15 per square foot = \$1,350,000; architectural fees @ 3 percent = \$40,500, totaling \$1,390,500).

The district could realize an annual income from the leased space of about \$1.3 million. This revenue is based on leasing six floors or 86,331 gross square feet at \$15 per foot (86,331 square feet x \$15 = \$1,294,965). The estimate assume that lease space will be phased in the second and third years with full occupancy by 2002-03.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
One time architectural construction cost	(\$1,400,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lease office space	\$0	\$400,000	\$800,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000
Net cost/savings	(\$1,400,000)	\$400,000	\$800,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000

B. Facilities Design and Construction

CURRENT SITUATION

Design and construction is the responsibility of the director of Planning, Engineering, and Construction. Ten project engineers oversee the design and construction of new and remodeling projects.

In 1992, the district passed a bond for \$150 million. To date, the district has completed projects totaling over \$151 million and has about \$22 million left in the fund. (The additional \$23 million is a result of interest received on the bond funds.) The projects to be completed with the bond fund were determined and prioritized by the board with input from the 92 Bond Fund Citizens Committee.

The district's attorney reviews construction contracts to ensure they conform with all applicable laws. All contracts for amounts over \$10,000 require three proposals from contractors. Those over \$25,000 require competitive bids.

FINDING

The Council of Educational Facilities Planners International (CEFPI) recommends a budget of 3 to 4 percent for change orders on new construction projects. The district has limited the cost of change orders on construction projects to about 0.5 percent. This level is well below the industry recommendations, and indicates that the district's construction documents clearly and consistently define the scope of work for each project. The documents do not omit items necessary to the completion of the project, which would require a change order. It also indicates that the district is not initiating changes to contracts once construction is under way. While owner-initiated changes during construction can be necessary, they generally are undesirable because they tend to be expensive.

COMMENDATION

EPISD is limiting the cost of change orders to a level below the industry average.

FINDING

The Maintenance staff have raised questions concerning the quality of construction of new school projects. The Maintenance staff contends it has to deal with problems that should have been the responsibility of the contractor. One example of this is the flooring at the new cafeteria at El Paso High School. The vinyl tile flooring has loosened due to moisture

under the structural slab. The cause of this situation seems to be due to poorly analyzed soil conditions, a poorly functioning subsurface drainage system, and a badly installed concrete slab.

The district has failed to resolve this issue through discussions with the general contractor and has retained a law firm to pursue legal remedies.

Another example is the failed ceramic tile at the entry to Whitaker Elementary School. The tile was installed on exterior arches at the entry and has loosened due to poor detailing that allowed water intrusion into the substrate for the tile. A condition like this occurs when the architectural design is poor and not detected by the project manager or the contractor, or when a contractor does a poor installation job.

The procedures EPISD uses meet industry standards and the project managers have the appropriate education and experience to be managing construction projects. However, the fact remains that quality of the final product often does not meet the district's needs, and a quality control procedure is needed.

Recommendation 59:

Institute quality control procedures for all school construction projects.

The district should examine the kinds of construction problems it has experienced and develop a quality control process to address them. The process should include:

- a process for revising design standards based on past experience.
- guidelines for checking design and construction documents.
- a process for input by maintenance personnel during the design phase.
- guidelines for construction administration based on past problems.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Engineering and Construction prepares a quality control process.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds reviews the process and approves its implementation.	May 1999
3.	The director implements the process and monitors its progress through weekly meetings with the project managers and the director of Maintenance.	June 1999 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

C. Attendance Zones

FINDING

EPISD has a Boundary Review Committee that assesses and plans attendance boundary adjustments. The committee is led by the assistant director of Policy and staffed by regional associate superintendents, the executive director of Facilities Maintenance and Construction, the director of Pupil Services, and the executive director of Communications.

The committee meets with local principals for input concerning the communities affected by proposed boundary line adjustments. Community meetings also are held to gather input and educate the public as to the reasons for the adjustment.

The committee has adjusted attendance boundaries for three years in a row to ensure efficient facility use, and is in the process of adjusting boundaries for the new high school, which will be located in the northeast area of the city on property donated by the military base. Some citizens wanted the high school located further north, but after looking at a potential site in that area the district chose the site on the military base. The site further north would cost the district about \$2.5 million for utility development and had possible water pressure problems.

Exhibit 5-8 presents an analysis of facility usage throughout the district. The analysis shows that the district is using portables for just over 10 percent of its classrooms. The use of portables for more than 10 percent of classrooms is generally considered to have a negative impact on common facilities such as cafeterias, libraries, and gyms.

EPISD's districtwide utilization rate average about 103 percent; the utilization rate is defined as a facility's number of students divided by its capacity, or number of student stations. Utilization rates vary among individual schools from 61 percent to 138 percent. This wide variation has not yet been examined by the attendance boundary committee to determine whether further attendance boundary adjustments are warranted.

Exhibit 5-8
Facility Utilization
1998-99

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	CLASSRMS	PORT CLASSRMS	NON HR. CLASSRMS	FTE TEACHERS	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENT RATIO	17 TO 1 CAPACITY	CAPACITY WITH PORTABLES	+/- CAPACITY	UTILIZATION
Trank	34	0	3	32	402	12.56	527	527	125	76.28%
MCA Hitt	62	4	2	67	878	13.10	1020	1088	210	80.70%
Houston	48	6	3	32	533	16.66	765	867	334	61.48%
Mesita	26	16	1	36	583	16.19	306	578	-6	100.87%
Lerner	49	8	3	56	1002	17.89	782	918	-84	109.15%
Condy	43	7	1	44	804	18.27	612	731	-73	109.99%
Aoy	36	5	3	42	688	16.38	544	629	-69	109.38%
Alta Vista	32	7	6	36	554	15.39	442	561	7	98.75%
Douglas	45	3	5	48	770	16.04	680	731	-39	105.34%
Zayata	32	4	5	30	464	15.47	459	527	63	88.05%
Hart	36	6	4	42	623	14.83	527	629	6	99.05%
Roosevelt	24	4	5	25	337	13.48	323	391	54	86.19%
Alamo	36	0	7	31	421	13.58	476	476	56	88.45%
Cookley	55	0	7	48	793	16.52	816	816	23	97.18%
Vilas	37	0	5	31	481	15.52	544	544	63	88.42%
Boell	36	0	8	50	700	14.00	459	459	-241	152.51%
Bethesda	46	0	7	36	467	12.97	663	663	196	70.44%
Pok	27	12	3	38	714	18.79	408	612	-102	116.67%
Gutierrez	33	16	5	41	777	18.95	476	748	-29	103.88%
Ludwig	29	11	6	35	629	17.97	391	578	-51	108.82%
Pittman	28	9	5	38	609	16.03	391	544	-65	111.95%
Ruffs	29	4	4	32	570	17.81	425	493	-77	115.62%
West Hill	21	6	4	24	402	16.75	289	391	-11	102.81%
Robert	48	6	5	48	790	16.46	731	833	43	94.84%
White	43	0	5	38	683	17.97	646	646	-37	105.73%
Kohlberg	38	0	0	38	678	17.84	646	646	-32	104.95%
D.C. Green	37	0	6	34	505	14.85	527	527	22	96.83%
Johnson	42	1	3	43	696	16.19	663	680	-16	102.35%
Total:	1922	262	270	2042.5	32941	16.05	28064	32538	-403	101.24%

MIDDLE SCHOOLS	CLASSRMS	PORT CLASSRMS	NON HR. CLASSRMS	FTE TEACHERS	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENT RATIO	17 TO 1 CAPACITY	CAPACITY WITH PORTABLES	+/- CAPACITY	UTILIZATION
Burrhead	53	10	0	47.3	1142	14.92	99.5	1103	-37	103.33%
Canyon Hills	43	4	0	34.4	930	17.10	745	833	-97	111.44%
H.E. Charles	31	21	0	72.2	1199	14.41	527	884	-315	133.63%
Corona	30	0	0	34.5	804	14.23	850	850	44	94.59%
Gulban	40	7	0	47.2	921	13.71	1020	1139	218	80.84%
Henderson	47	0	0	42.4	1133	18.19	1139	1139	4	99.43%
Honrado	80	1	0	81.4	1343	19.13	1340	1377	-184	113.51%
Lynch	32	3	0	44.7	1101	14.51	884	99.5	-144	117.73%
Magellan	33	0	0	40	99.4	13.00	99.5	99.5	-1	100.11%
Montehead	31	4	0	31.8	1008	19.44	847	99.5	-73	107.81%
Richardson	43	0	0	43	0	0	745	745	745	0.00%
Ross	32	0	0	43.8	809	18.47	884	884	71	91.32%
Texas Hill	33	3	0	32.9	949	17.94	901	984	37	94.23%
Wigg	47	10	0	41.4	924	13.03	799	949	43	93.34%
Total:	743	65	0	798.4	13421	16.81	12631	13736	315	97.71%

HIGH SCHOOLS	CLASSRMS	PORT CLASSRMS	NON HR. CLASSRMS	FTE TEACHERS	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENT RATIO	17 TO 1 CAPACITY	CAPACITY WITH PORTABLES	+/- CAPACITY	UTILIZATION
Arundel	100	8	0	114.8	2228	17.37	1700	1834	-392	121.33%
Austin	94	8	0	110.9	1999	14.53	1432	1748	-231	113.07%
Bovina	80	8	0	104.4	1719	14.13	1540	1494	-223	114.91%
Burgess	102	1	0	89.4	1591	17.74	1734	1731	140	90.84%
Coronado	92	2	0	104.4	2040	19.73	1544	1598	-442	128.91%
El Paso	70	0	0	83.4	1310	13.71	1150	1150	-120	110.08%
Franklin	103	13	0	12.8	2482	19.39	1783	2040	-442	121.67%
Irvine	107	2	0	113.3	2147	19.13	1819	1833	-314	114.93%
Jafferson	88	0	0	79.5	1231	13.48	1494	1494	243	82.29%
Salva Health	42	0	0	33.8	703	19.44	714	714	11	98.44%
Juvonah	1	1	0	3	91	30.33	17	34	-57	247.43%
School Age	10	0	0	6	93	13.50	170	170	77	54.71%
Summit		7	0	6	190	31.67	0	119	-71	159.64%
Tulla			0	17	117	6.88	0	0	-117	
Total:	823	52	0	1020.3	17981	17.62	15181	16065	-4216	111.93%

Source: EPISD.

Schools such as Crockett, Travis, and Houston are examples of facilities that are not being fully used. Schools such as Bradley, Collins, and H.E. Charles, by contrast, are overcrowded.

Recommendation 60:

Examine all schools with a utilization rate of less than 85 percent and more than 105 percent to determine if attendance boundary adjustments are needed.

Schools with utilization rates outside these guidelines should be studied to see if an attendance boundary adjustment would improve their utilization rates. If the Boundary Review Committee concludes that an adjustment would not improve the utilization rate, it should document its reasons for this conclusion to the board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Boundary Review Committee reviews all schools with high and low utilization rates.	April - September 1999
2.	The committee makes recommendations to the board based on its findings.	September 1999
3.	The board reviews the recommendations and takes action.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

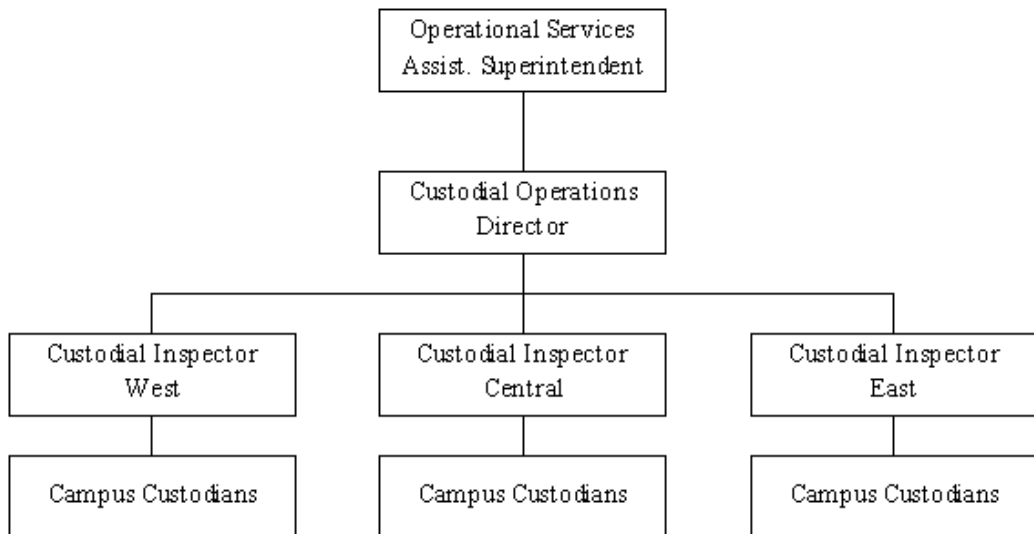
D. Custodial Services

CURRENT SITUATION

The responsibility for custodial services is divided between the Operational Services functional area and the school administrators. Under site-based decision management, the district has placed the responsibility for supervising custodians with school principals. The director of Custodial Operations, however, is responsible for the custodial services budget, the provision of custodial supplies, and training.

Exhibit 5-9 shows the organizational chart for the custodial operations function.

**Exhibit 5-9
Organizational Chart for Custodial Operations
1998-99**



Source: EPISD.

Custodial services at the downtown administration facility are provided by a private contractor. The district has continued the service in use when the facility was given to the district by EPNG.

FINDING

EPISD has instituted a site-based decision management model that places responsibility for supervising custodians under the school administrators, but has not shifted the responsibility for the custodial operations budget from the director of Custodial Operations. Clear guidelines have not been

developed for the administration of custodial services and this has created confusion and frustration among both administrators and staff.

The director is responsible for the budget for cleaning supplies and therefore controls the amount of supplies shipped to the schools. Head custodians complain that their requests are not filled and they are often shorted on supplies.

Recommendation 61:

Establish site-based decision management budgets for custodial services and supplies and clearly define the role of the director of Custodial Operations as a support role.

Since the district has adopted site-based management for the supervision of custodians, it should develop an accompanying site-based custodial budget for staffing and cleaning supplies. A site-based budget would eliminate the confusion and frustration school-based employees experience over their lack of control over the cleaning supplies budget.

The budget should be based on best-practice levels of staffing and use of cleaning supplies. The director of Custodial Operations should provide professional support for the custodial staff, administer training programs for custodians, develop standards for cleaning and conduct inspections to ensure the standards are enforced, and standardize the cleaning supplies used by the district by conducting performance tests to determine the best products. The director and the custodial inspectors also should help in personnel matters, such as counseling on work habits, when requested to do so by school administrators.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The assistant superintendent of Operations develops policies and procedures for operating custodial services with a site-based budget and defining the director of Custodial Operations as a support person to the school staff.	April 1999
2.	The board reviews and approves the policies and procedures.	May 1999
3.	The director of Custodial Operations, in conjunction with the regional assistant superintendents, implements the policies and procedures.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD has continued its contract for private custodial services at the downtown Education Center without conducting a cost study to see whether this contract is cost-effective. Without such a cost study, EPISD cannot know whether retaining the private firm is cost-effective.

Recommendation 62:

Conduct a cost-comparison study for the privatized custodial services used at the downtown Education Center.

The director of Custodial Operations should conduct a cost-comparison study to determine if the district can provide less expensive custodial services than a private company.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Custodial Operations conducts a cost-comparison study of custodial services at the downtown Education Center.	April 1999
2.	Based on the results of the study, the assistant superintendent of Operational Services recommends continuing or discontinuing the private custodial services.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD uses a custodial staffing formula that assigns custodians at the following ratios:

- Elementary: 1 custodian to 15,000 gross square feet
- Middle School: 1 custodian to 16,000 gross square feet
- High School: 1 custodian to 17,000 gross square feet

An example of this type of formula is presented in **Exhibit 5-10**.

**Exhibit 5-10
Sample Custodial Staffing Formula**

Factor	Formula
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Square Footage	one custodian/20,000 square feet of space
Number of Classrooms	one custodian/12 classrooms, four rest rooms, and hallways (excluding portables)
Number of Portable Classrooms	one custodian/10 portables
Age of Facility	5 percent per 10 years, age factor

Source: TSPR.

Industry standards have established a best-practice level of about one custodian per 19,000 gross square feet. **Exhibit 5-11** analyzes EPISD's current staffing levels when compared to industry standards. The analysis contains a factor allowing for the fact that about half of the head custodian's time is used in activities other than cleaning. Therefore, 0.5 FTE has been factored into the best-practice level of 1:19,000.

Exhibit 5-11
Analysis of Custodial Staffing Levels
1998-99 School Year

School Name	Total* Gross S.F.	Current Custodial Positions	S.F. per Custodian	Best Practice (GSF/19,000)	Over (Under) Best Practice
Elementary Schools					
Alamo Elem	54,261	4	13,565	3.00	0.50
Alta Vista Elem	70,357	5	14,071	4.00	0.50
Aoy Elem	61,738	5	12,348	3.00	1.50
Beall Elem	65,964	5	13,193	3.00	1.50
Bliss Elem	72,973	5	14,595	4.00	0.50
Bonham Elem	39,652	4	9,913	2.00	1.50
Bradley Elem	56,593	4	14,148	3.00	0.50
Burleson Elem	62,531	5	12,506	3.00	1.50
Burnet Elem	42,407	4	10,602	2.00	1.50
Cielo Vista Elem	55,782	4	13,946	3.00	0.50
Clardy Elem	62,524	5	12,505	3.00	1.50

Clendenin Elem	59,360	4	14,840	3.00	0.50
Coldwell E/I	66,965	5	13,393	4.00	0.50
Collins Elem	71,332	5	14,266	4.00	0.50
Cooley Elem	89,413	8	11,177	5.00	2.50
Crockett E/I	100,850	7	14,407	5.00	1.50
Crosby Elem	73,976	5	14,795	4.00	0.50
Douglass Elem	86,114	6	14,352	5.00	0.50
Dowell Elem	54,705	4	13,676	3.00	0.50
E-e Moreno Elem	82,704	6	13,784	4.00	1.50
E-6 Kohlberg Elem	80,585	5	16,117	4.00	0.50
Fannin Elem	62,023	5	12,405	3.00	1.50
Green Elem	77,429	5	15,486	4.00	0.50
Guerrero Elem	85,928	6	14,321	5.00	0.50
Hart Elem	61,292	4	15,323	3.00	0.50
Hawkins Elem	51,087	4	12,772	3.00	0.50
Highland Elem	23,159	4	5,790	1.00	2.50
Hillside Elem	62,064	5	12,413	3.00	1.50
Houston E/I	87,996	6	14,666	5.00	0.50
Hughey Elem	61,987	5	12,397	3.00	1.50
Johnson Elem	77,406	6	12,901	4.00	1.50
Lamar Elem	71,508	5	14,302	4.00	0.50
Lee Elem	74,258	5	14,852	4.00	0.50
Lindbergh Elem	61,983	4	15,496	3.00	0.50
Logan Elem	60,374	4	15,094	3.00	0.50
MacArthur E/I	138,950	9	15,439	7.00	1.50
Mesita Elem	52,612	4	13,153	3.00	0.50
Milam Elem	49,457	4	12,364	3.00	0.50
Newman Elem	64,442	5	12,888	3.00	1.50
Nixon Elem	70,145	5	14,029	4.00	0.50
Park Elem	52,361	4	13,090	3.00	0.50

Polk Elem	54,946	4	13,737	3.00	0.50
Putnam Elem	48,689	4	12,172	3.00	0.50
Rivera Elem	72,862	5	14,572	4.00	0.50
Roberts Elem	77,807	5	15,561	4.00	0.50
Roosevelt Elem	40,794	4	10,199	2.00	1.50
Rusk Elem	61,632	5	12,326	3.00	1.50
Schuster Elem	35,787	4	8,947	2.00	1.50
Stanton Elem	61,209	5	12,242	3.00	1.50
Travis Elem	71,188	5	14,238	4.00	0.50
Vilas Elem	56,974	4	14,244	3.00	0.50
Wainwright Elem	47,961	4	11,990	3.00	0.50
Western Hills Elem	26,174	4	6,544	1.00	2.50
Whitaker Elem	79,126	6	13,188	4.00	1.50
Zach white Elem	88,554	6	14,759	5.00	0.50
Zavala Elem	52,602	4	13,151	3.00	0.50
Subtotal	3,633,552	273	739,247	192	53.00
Middle Schools					
Bassett Mid	169,229	11	15,384	9.00	1.50
Canyon Hills Mid	111,066	7	15,867	6.00	0.50
H.E. Charles Mid	126,393	8	15,799	7.00	0.50
Guillen Mid	157,112	10	15,711	8.00	1.50
Henderson Mid	140,180	9	15,576	7.00	1.50
Hornedo Mid	192,627	12	16,052	10.00	1.50
Lincoln Mid	145,266	9	16,141	8.00	0.50
Magoffin Mid	86,668	6	14,445	5.00	0.50
Morehead Mid	112,440	7	16,063	6.00	0.50
Richardson Mid	101,731	7	14,533	5.00	1.50
Cordova Mid	132,435	8	16,554	7.00	0.50
Ross Mid	126,522	8	15,815	7.00	0.50
Terrace Hills Mid	127,109	8	15,889	7.00	0.50

Wiggs Mid	115,017	8	14,377	6.00	1.50
Subtotal	1,843,795	118	218,206	98	13.00
High Schools					
Andress High	249,398	15	16,627	13.00	1.50
Austin High	269,008	16	16,813	14.00	1.50
Bowie High	233,733	14	16,695	12.00	1.50
Burges High	210,241	13	16,172	11.00	1.50
Coronado High	295,836	17	17,402	16.00	0.50
El Paso High	218,726	13	16,825	12.00	0.50
Franklin High	306,780	18	17,043	16.00	1.50
Irvin High	278,072	17	16,357	15.00	1.50
Jefferson High	235,824	14	16,845	12.00	1.50
Maxine Siva Magnet High	80,909	5	16,182	4.00	0.50
Center for Career & Tech High	91,722	11	8,338	5.00	5.50
Telles Academy High	38,000	3	12,667	2.00	0.50
HS-2 High	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Subtotal	2,508,249	156	187,966	132	18.00
GRAND TOTAL	7,985,596	547	1,145,419	422	84.00

Source: EPISD and Texas School Performance Review.

** Includes permanent and portable buildings.*

Recommendation 63:

Develop a custodial staffing formula based on appropriate factors to achieve an industry standard of at least 19,000 square feet per custodian.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-10**, EPISD is staffing its custodial operations with about 84 positions more than called for in a best-practice model of 19,000 square feet per custodian. The staffing level should continue to be adjusted to account for a 0.5 FTE custodian that would not be used in cleaning

activities, so that the head custodian could continue to perform preventive maintenance duties.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Custodial Operations recalculates the staffing levels at each school using a revised formula.	April 1999
2.	The board reviews the staffing formula and staffing levels and approves the adjustments.	May 1999
3.	The director implements the new staffing levels by not filling vacant positions and establishing a hiring freeze until the staffing level is reached.	June 1999 - June 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation will result from the elimination of 84 custodial positions. This reduction in staffing will result in a savings of \$951,326 annually (84 positions @ \$6.78 per hour x 16 percent benefits x 8 hours x 180 days = \$951,326.) The reduction in staff should be achieved by attrition which will take about three years at a turnover rate of 5 percent per year or 28 cumulative positions each year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Develop a custodial staffing formula	\$317,109	\$634,218	\$951,326	\$951,326	\$951,326

FINDING

The amount of custodial cleaning supplies used at each site is controlled by the director of Custodial Operations. Custodians request supplies as needed; the director reviews these requests and authorizes the amount he feels is appropriate. The director often reduces the amount requested by the custodians to control the budget for cleaning supplies.

Exhibit 5-12 compares the amount of custodial supplies used at each site to a best-practice cost of five cents per square foot.

**Exhibit 5-12
Analysis of Custodial Cleaning Supplies
1998-99**

School Name	Total*	Custodial	\$ per	Rest	Cost
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	Gross S.F.	Supplies \$	S.F.	Practice 5 cents per S.F.	Difference
Elementary Schools					
Alamo Elem	54,261	\$6,215	\$0.11	\$2,713	\$3,502
Alta Vista Elem	70,357	6,408	0.09	3,518	2,891
Aoy Elem	61,738	4,882	0.08	3,087	1,795
Beall Elem	65,964	7,001	0.11	3,298	3,703
Bliss Elem	72,973	4,875	0.07	3,649	1,226
Bonham Elem	39,652	3,953	0.10	1,983	1,971
Bradley Elem	56,593	6,050	0.11	2,830	3,220
Burleson Elem	62,531	4,460	0.07	3,127	1,334
Burnet Elem	42,407	4,914	0.12	2,120	2,794
Cielo Vista Elem	55,782	5,453	0.10	2,789	2,664
Clardy Elem	62,524	5,300	0.08	3,126	2,174
Clendenin Elem	59,360	3,336	0.06	2,968	368
Coldwell E/I	66,965	4,589	0.07	3,348	1,241
Collins Elem	71,332	2,973	0.04	3,567	(593)
Cooley Elem	89,413	7,878	0.09	4,471	3,407
Crockett E/I	100,850	4,339	0.04	5,043	(703)
Crosby Elem	73,976	4,134	0.06	3,699	435
Douglass Elem	86,114	5,115	0.06	4,306	810
Dowell Elem	54,705	6,320	0.12	2,735	3,585
E-e Moreno Elem	82,704	Not Available	0.00	0	0
E-6 Kohlberg Elem	80,585	6,261	0.08	4,029	
Fannin Elem	62,023	\$4,784	\$0.08	\$3,101	\$1,683
Green Elem	77,429	4,641	0.06	3,871	770
Guerrero Elem	85,928	8,162	0.09	4,296	3,866
Hart Elem	61,292	5,639	0.09	3,065	2,574

Hawkins Elem	51,087	3,984	0.08	2,554	1,429
Highland Elem	23,159	8,759	0.38	1,158	7,601
Hillside Elem	62,064	3,360	0.05	3,103	257
Houston E/I	87,996	5,116	0.06	4,400	716
Hughey Elem	61,987	5,307	0.09	3,099	2,208
Johnson Elem	77,406	6,868	0.09	3,870	2,997
Lamar Elem	71,508	5,372	0.08	3,575	1,797
Lee Elem	74,258	6,756	0.09	3,713	3,043
Lindbergh Elem	61,983	4,463	0.07	3,099	1,364
Logan Elem	60,374	6,143	0.10	3,019	3,124
MacArthur E/I	138,950	6,454	0.05	6,948	(493)
Mesita Elem	52,612	4,942	0.09	2,631	2,312
Milam Elem	49,457	3,688	0.07	2,473	1,215
Newman Elem	64,442	5,429	0.08	3,222	2,207
Nixon Elem	70,145	5,901	0.08	3,507	2,394
Park Elem	52,361	2,773	0.05	2,618	155
Polk Elem	54,946	4,381	0.08	2,747	1,634
Putnam Elem	48,689	6,453	0.13	2,434	4,019
Rivera Elem	72,862	5,082	0.07	3,643	1,439
Roberts Elem	77,807	6,232	0.08	3,890	2,342
Roosevelt Elem	40,794	2,880	0.07	2,040	841
Rusk Elem	61,632	4,947	0.08	3,082	1,865
Schuster Elem	35,787	3,123	0.09	1,789	1,333
Stanton Elem	61,209	4,455	0.07	3,060	1,395
Travis Elem	71,188	4,590	0.06	3,559	1,030
Vilas Elem	56,974	5,203	0.09	2,849	2,354
Wainwright Elem	47,961	4,876	0.10	2,398	2,478
Western Hills Elem	26,174	5,629	0.22	1,309	4,320
Whitaker Elem	79,126	6,209	0.08	3,956	2,253
Zach white Elem	88,554	5,979	0.07	4,428	1,551

Zavala Elem	52,602	6,367	0.12	2,630	3,737
Subtotal	3,633,552	\$289,410	\$0.08	\$177,542	\$111,867
Middle Schools					
Bassett Mid	169,229	\$9,554	\$0.06	\$8,461	\$1,093
Canyon Hills Mid	111,066	5,004	0.05	5,553	(549)
H.E. Charles Mid	126,393	6,380	0.05	6,320	60
Guillen Mid	157,112	9,568	0.06	7,856	1,712
Henderson Mid	140,180	7,382	0.05	7,009	373
Hornedo Mid	192,627	10,119	0.05	9,631	488
Lincoln Mid	145,266	7,186	0.05	7,263	(77)
Magoffin Mid	86,668	7,276	0.08	4,333	2,943
Morehead Mid	112,440	7,465	0.07	5,622	1,843
Richardson Mid	101,731	4,471	0.04	5,087	(616)
Cordova Mid	132,435	7,120	0.05	6,622	498
Ross Mid	126,522	5,938	0.05	6,326	(389)
Terrace Hills Mid	127,109	7,207	0.06	6,355	851
Wiggs Mid	115,017	7,211	0.06	5,751	1,460
Subtotals	1,843,795	\$101,879	\$0.06	\$92,190	\$9,690
High Schools					
Andress High	249,398	\$13,395	\$0.05	\$12,470	925
Austin High	269,008	14,232	0.05	13,450	781
Bowie High	233,733	6,433	0.03	11,687	(5,254)
Burges High	210,241	10,532	0.05	10,512	19
Coronado High	295,836	11,124	0.04	14,792	(3,668)
El Paso High	218,726	7,413	0.03	10,936	(3,523)
Franklin High	306,780	13,104	0.04	15,339	(2,235)
Irvin High	278,072	11,336	0.04	13,904	(2,568)
Jefferson High	235,824	7,209	0.03	11,791	(4,583)
Maxine Siva Magnet High	80,909	3,300	0.04	4,045	(745)

Center for Career & Tech High	91,722	6,728	0.07	4,586	2,142
Telles Academy High	38,000	2,232	0.06	1,900	332
HS-2 High	0	0	0.00	0	0
Subtotal	2,508,249	107,037	0.04	125,412	(18,376)
GRAND TOTAL/AVERAGE	7,985,596	\$498,326	\$0.06	\$395,145	\$103,181

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

**Includes permanent and portable space.*

As is demonstrated by the analysis, the cost of cleaning supplies in the district ranges from three cents to 22 cents per square foot.

Recommendation 64:

Establish a reasonable level (about 5 cents per square foot) for the cost of cleaning supplies and allocate an amount to each school based on this yardstick.

The director of Custodial Operations should oversee the allocation of custodial supplies and develop guidelines to account for exceptional circumstances.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Custodial Operations prepares a budget for custodial cleaning supplies based on a reasonable level.	April 1999
2.	The director meets with the school principals and head custodians to educate them on the implementation of the budget.	May - August 1999
3.	The director oversees the use of supplies to ensure the budgets are being adhered to and that extraordinary circumstances are accounted for.	September 1999 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

As shown in **Exhibit 5-12**, this recommendation would save the district about \$100,000 annually if the budget is set at 5 cents per square foot.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Establish a reasonable level of cleaning supplies	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

FINDING

Custodians receive erratic training and the district has no standardized training program to improve their work production. The director of Custodial Operations is responsible for providing training to the custodians but has not developed a standard training program. **Exhibit 5-13** lists the type of training offered to custodians and the frequency of each type of training offered.

Exhibit 5-13 Type and Frequency of Custodial Training 1994-98

Type of Training	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Medical Emergencies			X		
Asbestos and Hazardous Communication Awareness			X	X	X
Communication Styles			X		
Sexual Harassment		X			
Hazardous material Disposal		X			
Paperwork Habits	X				
Mandatory/ Training Session				X	
"Being a Good Role Model"			X		
Diversey Chemical Dispensing System		X			
Floor Care Products			X		
Team Work and Team Building	X				
Performance					X

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

Other districts have established a mandatory training program for all workers in the following areas:

- efficient cleaning methods
- proper use of cleaning supplies
- time management
- hazardous materials procedures
- effective communication
- good work habits.

Recommendation 65:

Develop a comprehensive and mandatory training program for custodial staff.

The director of Custodial Operations should develop a comprehensive training program of two training days a year (16 hours annually) for the entire custodial staff so that best-practice levels can be achieved for efficient cleaning methods and the efficient use of cleaning supplies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Custodial Operations develops a comprehensive custodial training program and a budget to implement the program.	April - May 1999
2.	The board reviews and approves the training program and budget.	June 1999
3.	The director, with the assistance of the custodial inspectors, institutes the training program.	Summer 1999 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The training program should be conducted by the director and supervisors so there would be no additional training costs. The fiscal impact of this recommendation would result from hiring substitute custodians to cover for employees attending training sessions. This would cost the district about \$50,000 annually (463 custodians x 16 hours training annually x \$6.50 per hour for substitute = \$48,152). The district's current training budget of \$2,000 can be used to acquire training materials.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Develop a training program for custodial staff	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)	(\$48,152)

E. Energy Management

FINDING

The responsibility for energy management falls under the director of Facilities Maintenance and Construction (**Exhibit 5-1**).

The staff for energy management includes two energy managers, one accounting clerk, and an energy management computer system (EMCS) repair technician. The responsibilities of the energy managers include the following duties:

- checking all utility meters
- checking utility bills for accuracy (900 bills per month)
- conducting education programs for building users
- coordinating with utilities to ensure best rates
- coordinating with water utility on conservation
- monitoring utility use for irregularities which may indicate leaks
- preparing and distributing checklist for facilities during holidays
- checking heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment in portable buildings
- training teachers in thermostat operation
- consulting on design of new schools
- overseeing scheduling of times of operation for HVAC equipment at all schools.

All schools in the district are on a computer-controlled energy management system that controls the levels of heating and cooling and the times of operations. The EMCS uses software to control 84 schools and facilities from computers located at the downtown Education Center, each energy manager's home, and a laptop used by the EMCS technician. School administrators must submit requests to energy management for variations in their operating schedule to accommodate special functions.

The board passed a Recycling Program Implementation Plan in November 1996. The goal of the plan is to reduce the district's solid waste by 30 percent through recycling five types of materials: corrugated cardboard, aluminum, steel, paper, and two types of plastic. The plan involved 86 school sites, eight major administrative locations, 8,000 employees and faculty, and 64,250 students. In its first year of operation, the plan saved the district \$140,421 in landfill fees and cost \$48,006 to operate, for a net savings of \$92,415.

EPISD is considering using reclaimed water in its irrigation systems. The district is working with the El Paso Public Service Board (PSB) to take advantage of PSB's new piping system, which carries reclaimed water to

various large water users. By using reclaimed water in its irrigation systems instead of drinking water, the district could save money and help extend the life of local aquifers.

The district also participates in the state-funded "Watt Watchers" program operated by the energy office of the University of Texas at El Paso. This program educates students and faculty to realize savings through energy-thrifty behaviors.

FINDING

The energy management program has succeeded in saving the district energy dollars through the institution of various programs. All school facilities are under the computer-controlled energy management program. The program has reported a cost avoidance of \$13.5 million since its inception in 1989, while the district has added more than 1 million square feet of space.

Exhibit 5-14 compares the energy consumption with space occupied by the district since 1989.

**Exhibit 5-14
Energy Consumption Versus Increased Space
1989-96**

Year	District Space (S.F.)	Total Energy Consumption (btu)	Cost Avoidance
1989-90	6,992,714	483,369	
1990-91	7,071,798	401,311	\$1,014,492
1991-92	7,331,542	424,851	1,621,426
1992-93	7,423,098	395,231	1,714,985
1993-94	7,683,968	397,434	2,064,736
1994-95	8,032,114	406,551	2,199,598
1995-96	8,204,442	386,592	2,459,653
1996-97	8,633,056	394,998	2,497,029

Source:

EPISD has increased its space by about 23 percent, decreased its energy consumption by about 18 percent, and realized a cost avoidance of about \$13.5 million since 1989.

COMMENDATION

The district has developed an effective energy management program that has realized an eight-year cost-avoidance of \$13.5 million.

FINDING

Both of EPISD's energy managers were former educators who since have returned to that work due to a pay increase that teachers and school administrators recently received; the energy manager positions did not receive an equivalent pay raise. As a result, both positions were vacant until January 1999 and the energy managers' duties were being performed only partially by a clerk. New programs such as relamping of lights and exit signs were not being pursued.

Recommendation 66:

Reassess the salary level of the energy management positions in light of the money this program saves the district.

The district should seek to fill these positions with individuals with credentials or experience in energy management.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds evaluates the pay level of the energy manager position in relation to other districts and the savings realized by the district due to the work of this position.	April 1999
2.	The executive director makes a recommendation to Human Resources Unit.	April 1999
3.	The Human Resources Unit reviews the recommendations and prepares a recommendation to the board.	May 1999
4.	The board reviews the recommendation and approves the revised pay level.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would raise the pay level of the two energy managers by approximately \$7,500 per year per employee plus 16 percent benefits of \$17,400.

Recommendation	1999-	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
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	2000				
Increase salary level of energy managers	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)	(\$17,400)

Chapter 6

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter addresses EPISD's asset and risk management functions in four sections:

- A. Cash and Investment Management
- B. Risk Management
- C. Fixed Assets
- D. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness

BACKGROUND

The goal of asset and risk management is to invest district assets to achieve maximum rates of return; reduce the risk of financial losses from unforeseen events; safeguard assets from loss through damage and theft; and manage debt while minimizing associated interest costs.

A. Cash and Investment Management

Effective cash and investment management involves the establishment of beneficial banking relationships; timely and accurate forecasting of cash requirements, so that funds are available when needed; and maximum returns on assets deposited in appropriate, approved, and safe investment vehicles.

CURRENT SITUATION

Day-to-day responsibilities and activities associated with the district's cash and investment function are the responsibility of the executive director of Finance and Treasury manager. Together these two positions ensure that cash is available to meet the district's obligations and that idle cash is invested safely and legally at the highest rates possible.

FINDING

EPISD maintains its bank accounts at Chase Bank, formerly Texas Commerce Bank. Presently, the district has 15 operating accounts. These accounts are maintained under a "compensating balance" arrangement with the bank that compensates the bank for account maintenance, item processing, and various other services. Excess collected balances are moved daily into overnight investments approved by the district. Interest earned on these balances above a monthly service charge is refunded to the district each month. The district also maintains 87 student and campus accounts, all of which are interest bearing. Campus accounts are administered by each school, in accordance with site-based management, and are reviewed monthly by the central office's Finance, Budget, and Accounting Unit.

The district is in the process of closing two of its operating accounts. Thirteen operating accounts is not unusual for a district of EPISD's size, particularly given the nature and use of each account. For example, the district maintains a separate account to fund expenditures from its flexible benefits plan and another for its self-funded health insurance plan. According to the Treasury manager, it is much easier to reconcile bank statements when specific-purpose funds are not commingled with general operating funds. **Exhibit 6-1** presents EPISD's bank balances as of August 31, 1998.

Exhibit 6-1
EPISD Bank Balances
as of August 31, 1998

Account Name	Purpose	Balance At	Special
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		August 31, 1998	Features**
General operating fund	Fund general operations	\$4,053,039	-
Bond sinking fund	Pay bond principal and interest	\$2,582	-
Lunchroom fund	Food service	\$0	ZBA
Payroll fund	Payroll	\$0	ZBA
Bond construction fund-79	Pay bond principal and interest	\$711	-
Athletic funds	Fund athletic events	\$2,390	
Flexible benefits account	Employee flex benefit payments	\$51,742	
*Health care fund	Pay health care claims	\$0	ZBA
Workers' compensation	Pay workers' compensation claims	\$0	ZBA
Bond construction fund-95	Pay bond principal and interest	\$67	
*Accounts payable	Pay general operating expenditures	0	ZBA
Health care fund	Pay health care claims	\$0	CDA
Accounts payable	Pay general operating expenditures	\$0	CDA
Contractual obligations-98	Pay bond principal and interest	\$0	
School accounts-81	School funds	\$1,220,670	

Source: EPISD.

* These accounts are being closed.

** ZBA = Zero balance account; CDA = Controlled disbursement account.

EPISD receives deposits from various state, local, and federal sources as well as from bonds sales and other financing arrangements. In addition, the district has cafeterias and campuses located throughout the city that

make daily deposits through the use of lock-bags and armored car services. Lock-bags are bags equipped with keyed locks used to secure cash and other valuables for transport to a bank.

The district manages its cash balances using personal computers to access bank account balances, make wire transfers, and originate intrabank and interbank transfers. The health care account and accounts payable account are controlled disbursement accounts (CDA), which are designed to provide disbursement totals early enough each day to accurately project cash needs. Twice each business day, the district downloads information via computer showing what checks will clear the accounts that day. In addition, the district uses zero balance accounts (ZBAs) to maximize its cash available for investment. Only funds needed to honor outstanding checks are kept in ZBA accounts; otherwise, they are maintained at a zero balance. Operating funds are automatically deposited into these accounts as necessary to honor outstanding checks.

COMMENDATION

EPISD maintains an appropriate number of bank accounts and effectively manages its cash using computer-based banking services.

FINDING

Accurate cash-flow projections are critical to an effective treasury function. EPISD prepares cash-flow projections on daily, weekly, monthly, and annual bases using a computer-based program known as MicroLink. MicroLink is a user-friendly information system made available through the district's bank that allows the district to view and download current and historical details of cash transactions including deposits, disbursements, ledger balances, collected balances, and float. The program allows the district to download data directly into a spreadsheet for forecasting, projecting, and trend analysis. **Exhibits 6-2 and 6-3** present examples of the district's cash flow projections for the month of July 1998. **Exhibit 6-2** shows sources of funds, disbursements, and daily operating balances, including invested cash. **Exhibit 6-3** is a daily analysis of cash activity within each of the major accounts.

Exhibit 6-2 Cash Flow Projection Worksheet

	Property Taxes	State/Federal	Other Local	Transfers	Debt Svc./ Investment Transactions			A/P	Balance	General Operating				Total
					Payroll					Cash	TexPool	Lone Star	MBIA	
7/1/98	-	-	22,155	752,555	(8,752,555)	(271,930)	(641,365)	15,397,797	4,173,846	8,915,254	1,191,619	1,113,038	15,397,796	
7/2/98	229,539	-	364	-	-	(265,343)	(284,190)	15,078,166	3,624,677	8,915,254	1,421,158	1,113,038	15,078,166	
7/3/98	-	-	98,703	-	-	(1,305,440)	(255,515)	13,615,914	2,162,425	8,915,254	1,421,158	1,113,038	13,615,913	
7/5/98	-	-	12,521	-	59,100	(756,233)	(234,436)	12,696,866	1,243,376	8,915,254	1,421,158	1,113,038	12,696,865	
7/7/98	-	-	917	-	-	(271,804)	(520,470)	11,905,509	489,019	8,878,254	1,421,158	1,113,038	11,905,508	
7/8/98	-	-	289	420,000	-	(106,573)	(410,646)	11,808,578	992,089	8,878,254	1,421,158	513,038	11,808,577	
7/9/98	-	-	53,838	-	-	(89,515)	(208,674)	11,584,226	767,737	8,878,254	1,421,158	513,038	11,584,226	
7/10/98	161,356	-	565	1,271,588	-	(61,222)	(1,749,477)	11,207,036	307,603	10,149,861	231,514	513,038	11,207,036	
7/13/98	-	-	29,320	-	20,709	(55,062)	(143,580)	11,058,423	158,989	10,149,861	231,514	513,038	11,058,422	
7/14/98	-	-	929	-	-	(48,921)	(1,300,303)	9,710,129	3,810,606	5,149,861	231,514	513,038	9,710,128	
7/15/98	-	-	461	-	-	(20,652)	(2,659,190)	7,030,749	1,131,315	5,149,861	231,514	513,038	7,030,748	
7/16/98	-	-	381	-	-	(27,724)	(516,613)	6,486,793	4,087,360	1,849,861	231,514	513,038	6,486,793	
7/17/98	109,262	-	171,130	-	-	(1,162,472)	(509,136)	5,095,577	2,569,882	1,849,861	341,776	513,038	5,095,576	
7/20/98	-	-	462	-	-	(768,371)	(688,136)	3,639,533	1,053,838	1,686,861	341,776	513,038	3,639,532	
7/21/98	-	154,335	2,226	-	110,794	(145,645)	(254,723)	3,506,519	960,824	1,686,861	341,776	513,038	3,506,518	
7/22/98	-	-	6,424	-	-	(37,119)	(215,767)	3,260,057	714,363	1,686,861	341,776	513,038	3,260,057	
7/23/98	-	8,701	160	-	15,500	(44,906)	(90,743)	3,148,769	603,074	1,686,861	341,776	513,038	3,148,769	
7/24/98	86,841	-	107,273	414,158	-	(15,994)	(54,636)	3,686,223	639,528	2,101,040	431,617	513,038	3,686,222	
7/27/98	-	21,931,857	1,307	-	-	(52,355)	(159,440)	25,407,592	160,898	24,301,040	431,617	513,038	25,407,592	
7/28/98	-	-	145	-	-	(18,590)	(634,235)	24,754,913	158,218	23,651,040	431,617	513,038	24,754,912	
7/29/98	-	46,756	231,344	-	-	(10,653)	(981,559)	24,040,902	344,107	22,751,040	431,617	513,038	24,040,901	
7/30/98	-	16,594	150	-	14,613	(8,993)	(634,005)	23,429,161	8,732,466	13,751,040	431,617	513,038	23,429,160	
7/31/98	192,245	-	183	-	44,087	(8,961,428)	(119,310)	14,584,037	351,911	13,089,113	627,394	516,019	14,584,937	

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 6-3 Cash Flow Projection-Account Analysis

	Pools	Bank Oper.		A/P	Payroll	A/P CDA	HC CDA	Other	Total
7/7/98									
Beginning	11,453,490	1,243,376.48	Prior Day O/S	32,882.15	792,088.66	1,080,996.61	330,734.24		
Incoming (outside source)	-	37,917.25	Written		46,379.45		28,055.18		
Outgoing	(37,000)	(792,274.25)	Actual clearing	-	(271,803.83)	(443,365.98)	(39,961.97)	(37,122.47)	(792,274.25)
Desired remainder	11,416,490	489,019.48	Balance	32,882.15	566,664.28	637,610.63	318,827.45		
Deposit needed	(37,000)	-							
Internal transfer									
To/From Pool	(37,000)	-							
7/8/98									
Beginning	11,416,490	489,019.48	Prior Day O/S	32,882.15	566,664.28	637,610.63	318,827.45		
Incoming (outside source)	-	289.00	Written			287,217.27	187,912.10		
Outgoing	(600,000)	(517,219.69)	Actual clearing	-	(106,573.25)	(250,389.23)	(160,257.21)		(517,219.69)
Desired remainder	10,816,490	992,088.79	Balance	32,882.15	460,091.03	674,438.67	346,482.34		
Deposit needed	(600,000)	1,020,000.00							
Internal transfer		420,000.00	Int. 7/8 Done						
To/From Pool	(600,000)	600,000.00	Wire 7/8 Done		600,000.00				
7/9/98									
Beginning	10,816,490	992,088.79	Prior Day O/S	32,882.15	460,091.03	674,438.67	346,482.34		
Incoming (outside source)	-	53,837.99	Written				54,874.19		
Outgoing	-	(278,189.78)	Actual clearing	-	(69,515.33)	(164,467.25)	(44,193.70)	(13.50)	(278,189.78)
Desired remainder	10,816,490	767,737.00	Balance	32,882.15	390,575.70	509,971.42	357,162.83		
Deposit needed	-	-							
Internal transfer									
To/From Pool	-	-							
7/10/98									
Beginning	10,816,490	767,737.00	Prior Day O/S	32,882.15	390,575.70	509,971.42	357,162.83		
Incoming (outside source)	1,432,944	565.15	Written			5,308,627.65	69,165.62		
Outgoing	(1,350,000)	(1,810,699.03)	Actual clearing	-	(54,454.81)	(170,978.48)	(32,465.23)	(1,552,800.51)	(1,810,699.03)
Desired remainder	10,899,434	307,603.12	Balance	32,882.15	336,120.89	5,647,620.59	393,863.22		
Deposit needed	(1,350,000)	1,350,000.00							
Internal transfer			ACH 4/9 Done		1,350,000.00				
To/From Pool	(1,350,000)	1,350,000.00							

Source: EPISD Treasury.

COMMENDATION

EPISD prepares formal daily, weekly, monthly, and annual cash flow projections using current computer technology.

FINDING

EPISD uses a variety of vehicles to achieve its investment goals of safety, liquidity, and maturity sufficient to meet anticipated cash requirements. As of August 31, 1998, the district had investments totaling \$141,731,682 invested in TexPool and Lone Star investment pools, United States Treasury Notes, Flexible Repurchase Agreements, and U.S. agency obligations. This total does not include campus fund investments, which are the responsibility of each school. **Exhibit 6-4** summarizes the district's portfolio as of August 31, 1998 and provides a brief description of each type of investment. **Exhibit 6-5** provides a summary of the source of these funds.

Exhibit 6-4
Investment Portfolio as of August 31, 1998

Type of Investment	Description	Book Value at August 31, 1998	Percent of Total	Average Yield to Maturity
Agency Obligations	Obligations issued by U.S. governmental agencies such as the Federal National Mortgage Association ("Fannie Mae").	\$61,880,238	44%	5.77%
U.S. Treasury Securities	Treasury bills: Short-term obligations with maturities of one year or less. Treasury notes Medium-term obligations with maturities of one year to ten years. Treasury bonds: Long-term obligations with maturities of more than 10 years.	4,789,699	3	6.17
Investment Pools	Public investment funds that allow governmental entities to pool idle cash with other governmental entities to achieve liquidity, safety of principal, and the highest possible investment return. Participating entities own a pro-rata share of the underlying assets of the fund in which they participate.	32,030,547	23	5.55

Repurchase Agreements (repos)	Agreement between two parties whereby one sells the other a security at a specified price with a commitment to repurchase it at a later date for another specified price. Most repos are overnight transactions.	\$43,031,198	30	5.71
	Total Investment Portfolio (excluding school ffunds)	\$141,731,682	100%	

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 6-5
Source of Investment Portfolio Funds
Outstanding as of August 31, 1998

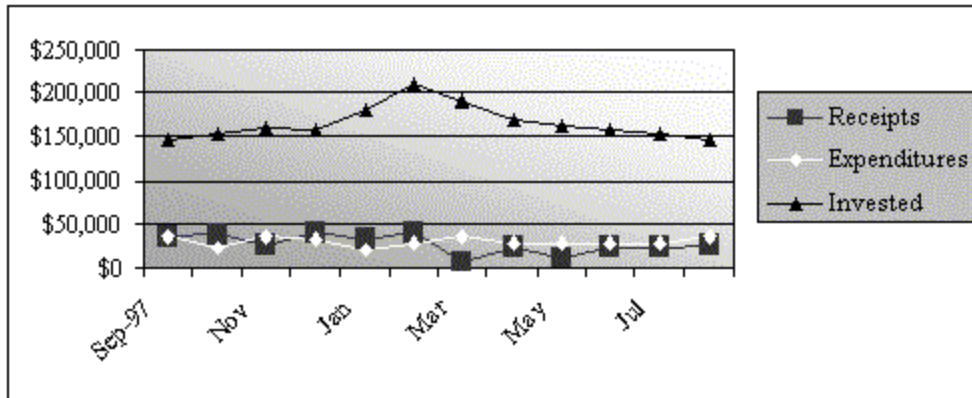
Fund	Source	Amount
Operating Fund	Property taxes, local, state and federal revenues	\$57,618,595
Debt Service Fund	Property taxes, debt service portion	2,870,624
Capital Projects Fund	Bond proceeds	57,294,893
Internal Service Funds	Self-funded health and workers' compensation insurance	23,947,570
Total		\$141,731,682

Source: EPISD.

The district's investment policy limits maturities on these investments to one year for the Operating Fund and more than one year (within legal limits) for the Debt Service, Capital Projects, and Internal Service Funds. Invested funds averaged \$165.6 million per month during fiscal 1998, ranging from a high of \$209.9 million in February 1998 to a low of \$145.4 million in August 1998. As **Exhibit 6-6** shows, fluctuations in invested cash balances correlate to cash receipts from local, state, and federal sources and payroll/accounts payable expenditures. Cash receipts typically peak in February when property tax collections are highest. The exhibit shows that more cash was invested in February than in any other month.

Exhibit 6-6
Comparison of Average Cash Invested, Cash Receipts,

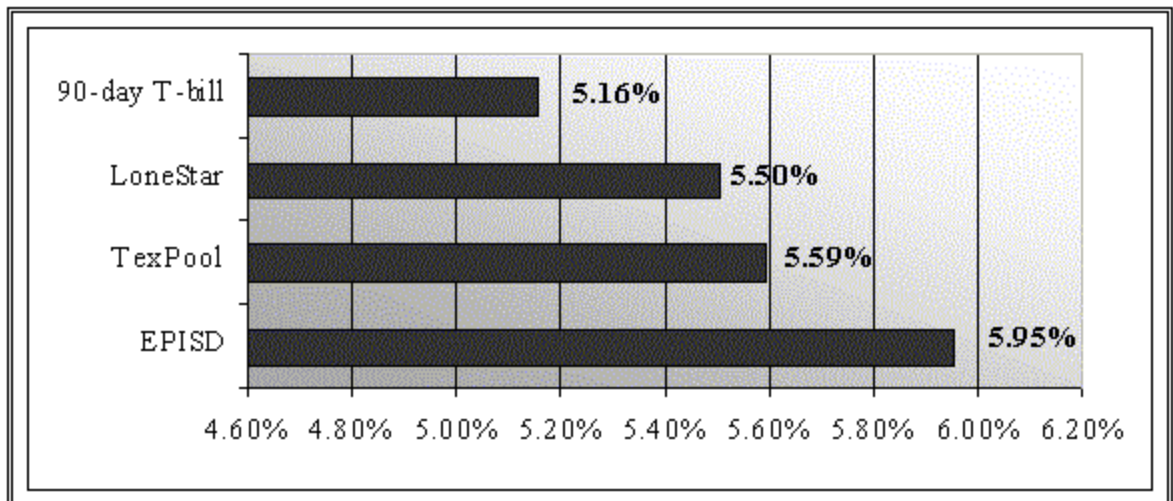
**and Payroll/Accounts Payable Expenditures
(\$ In Thousands)**



Source: EPISD.

District investments earned an average of 5.95 percent during fiscal 1998, and the district collected approximately \$9.9 million in investment income. This performance seems favorable when compared with individual investment benchmarks. As **Exhibit 6-7** shows, the district outperformed various benchmarks during the fiscal year, earning 36 basis points more than the benchmark with the highest return, the TexPool investment fund. (A basis point is equal to .01 percentage points.)

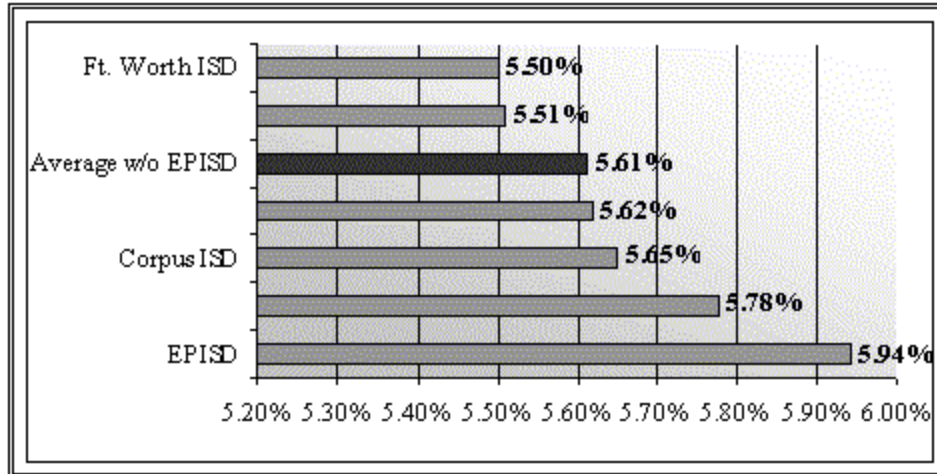
**Exhibit 6-7
Comparisons of Investment Yield
Fiscal 1997-98**



Source: EPISD.

EPISD also outperformed its peer districts (**Exhibit 6-8**). EPISD's average yield was 33 basis points higher than the peer average of 5.61 percent.

Exhibit 6-8
Comparison of Investment Yield, Fiscal 1997-98
EPISD and Peers



Source: EPISD.

COMMENDATION

EPISD maximizes investment returns through a variety of investment vehicles without compromising its investment objectives of safety, liquidity, and appropriate maturity.

B. Risk Management

School districts and their employees face many risks and uncertainties that could lead to catastrophic financial losses. Since the safe, efficient operation of schools is a vital public interest, these risks must be managed effectively to reduce the risk of loss. Effective risk management involves:

- identification of risk;
- classification of identified risks;
- evaluation of identified risks in terms of frequency and severity;
- management of risk through avoidance, reduction, deductibles, or insurance;
- development, maintenance, and monitoring of loss prevention programs and practices.

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's risk management functions are divided between two units. A project engineer in the Planning, Engineering, and Construction Unit is responsible for monitoring property, casualty, liability, and school insurance coverages. Employee health and workers' compensation insurance responsibilities are split within the Human Resources Unit between the director of Employee Benefits and the director of Risk Management. The director of Risk Management is responsible for the workers' compensation function and oversees the district safety program. The director of Risk Management is not involved in other risk management areas such as employee health or property and casualty insurance.

The district accounts for health care and workers' compensation costs in separate internal service funds. These funds account for contributions made from the general fund to cover claims costs, professional and contracted service fees, supplies and materials, and other operating expenses.

Exhibit 6-9 presents actual workers' compensation operating results for fiscal 1996 through 1998 and the budget for 1999 and shows the percentage change between years. **Exhibit 6-10** presents actual health care operating results for fiscal 1996 through 1998 and budgeted operations for fiscal 1999.

Exhibit 6-9
Workers' Compensation Internal Service Fund
Fiscal 1996 through 1998
(\$ In Thousands)

REVENUE	1995-	1996-	Change	1997-	Change	1998-	Change
---------	-------	-------	--------	-------	--------	-------	--------

	96	97	Between Years	98	Between Years	99 Budget	Between Years
Total Revenue	\$3,874	\$3,683	(5%)	\$4,094	11%	\$3,547	(13%)
EXPENSES							
Workers' Compensation claims	3,952	3,284	(17)	3,485	6	3,125	(10)
Purchased Services	464	379	(18)	361	(5)	420	(16)
Supplies and Materials		.7	-	1	43	-	-
Other Operating Expenses	2	.3	(85)	.6	100	2	233
Total Expenses	4,418	3,664	(17)	3,848	5	3,547	(8)
Net Income							
	(544)	19	103%	246	119%	-	-
Ending Fund Balance							
	\$1,497	\$1,516	1%	\$1,763	16%	1,763	-

Source: EPISD.

**Exhibit 6-10
Health Care Internal Service Fund
Fiscal 1996 through 1998
(\$ In Thousands)**

REVENUE	1995- 96	1996-97	Change Between Years	1997- 98	Change Between Years	1998- 99 Budget	Change Between Years
Total Revenue	\$20,030	\$19,318	(4%)	\$24,130	25%	\$21,942	(9%)
EXPENSES							

Health care claims	15,471	21,101	36	20,349	(4)	23,236	14
Purchased Services	1,411	1,399	(1)	1,404	-	1,642	17
Total Expenses	16,882	22,500	33	21,753	(3)	24,878	14
Net Income	\$3,148	\$(3,182)	1%	\$2,377	174%	(2,936)	(224%)
Ending Fund Balance	\$7,358	\$4,176	(43%)	\$6,553	57%	\$3,617	(44%)

Source: EPISD.

Workers' Compensation

EPISD self-funds its workers' compensation program. This means that the district assumes the risk of workers' compensation losses and pays all claims rather than paying an insurance company to assume the risk. Several years ago, the district determined that it was more cost-effective to self-fund rather than to carry workers' compensation insurance with a commercial carrier. The self-funded workers' compensation insurance program provides all the necessary elements of a commercial plan, including program administration, claims processing and review, loss control/risk management consultation, medical bill auditing, and excessive claims coverage. The district also maintains excess workers' compensation insurance, which limits its exposure to worker's compensation claims to \$500,000 per accident, and carries employers' liability of \$1 million.

To assist the district in controlling its claims cost, its third-party administrator (TPA), Lindsey Morden, in addition to providing claims processing services, also provides a monthly report of loss statistics. One section of this report is a multi-year analysis of the district's claims by various indicators such as "Nature of Loss" and "Day of Loss." These reports provide a wealth of useful information to assist the district in managing and monitoring its workers' compensation claims.

***Exhibit 6-11** summarizes these indicators and the occurrences with the highest frequency as a percentage of claims and claims cost.*

Exhibit 6-11

Workers' Compensation Claim Indicators

Accident Years 1995-1998

Indicator	Highest Frequency	Percent of Claims	Percent of Cost
Month of Loss	April	11%	12%
Day of Loss	Tuesday	2	21
Gender	Female	65	63
Nature of Loss	Strain	28	44
Single Body Part	Lower Back	12	18
Single Occupation	Professional & Teachers	26	20
Work Experience	Over 10 Years	39	41
Age	40-49	34	33
Cause	Slips, Falls	13	17

Source: Lindsey Morden.

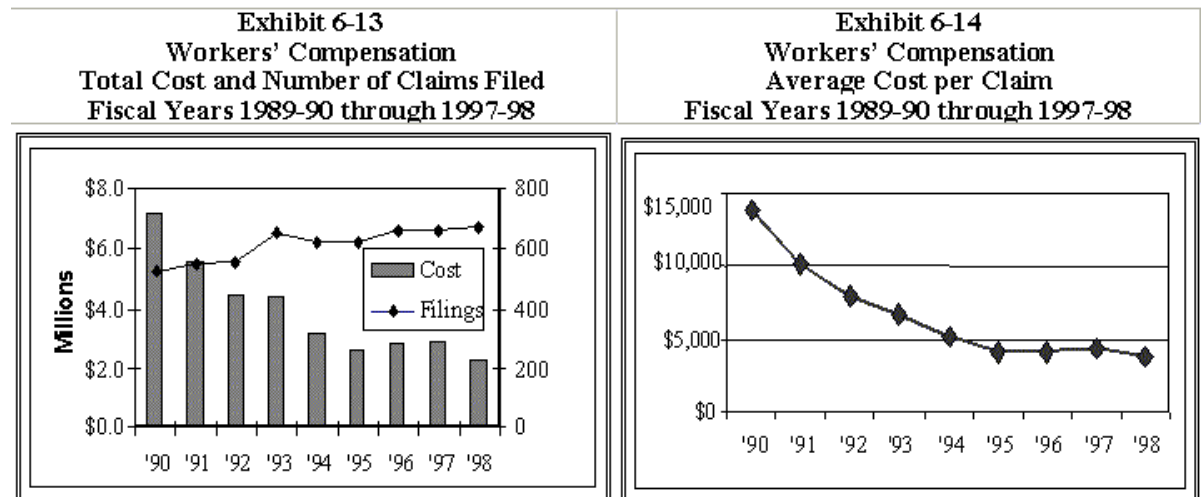
FINDING

*EPISD has significantly reduced its amount of workers' compensation claims payments since the 1989-90 school year. Claim payments have fallen by 81 percent from \$7.2 million in 1989-90 to \$1.3 million in 1997-98. The estimated total cost of these claims fell 64 percent, from \$7.3 million to \$2.6 million, over the same period. The total cost of workers' compensation claims equals actual payments plus an estimated reserve for future payments on open claims. As claims are paid, the claim reserve is reduced accordingly. As expected, reserves are larger for recent years because anticipated expenditures have not yet been incurred as they have for earlier years. Estimated reserves totaled \$2,445,982 at August 31, 1998. **Exhibit 6-12** presents a nine-year history of EPISD's workers' compensation claims, reserves, and payments. **Exhibit 6-13** depicts the decline in claims cost plus a nine-year trend for filed claims. **Exhibit 6-14** shows the decline in average cost per claim since 1989-90.*

Exhibit 6-12
Workers' Compensation Claims, Reserves, and Payments
Fiscal 1990-1998

1989-90 through 1997-98 Fiscal Year	Filed Claims	Amount Paid	Claim Reserves	Total Cost	Average Cost per Claim
1990	523	\$7,209,891	\$60,236	\$7,270,127	\$13,901
1991	553	5,518,072	81,848	5,599,920	10,126
1992	560	4,397,826	89,078	4,486,904	8,012
1993	655	4,350,715	82,210	4,432,925	6,768
1994	619	3,110,886	102,194	3,213,080	5,191
1995	620	2,471,454	118,243	2,589,697	4,177
1996	658	2,616,196	135,342	2,751,538	4,182
1997	657	2,354,333	499,989	2,854,322	4,344
1998	672	1,334,757	1,276,842	2,611,599	3,886
Total	5517	\$33,364,130	\$2,445,982	\$35,810,112	\$6,491

Source: Lindsey Morden.



Source: Lindsey Morden

As **Exhibit 6-13** shows, while claims costs were falling, the number of filed claims rose slightly. This increase in filed claims correlates to increases in the number of employees. Since fiscal 1990, total employees have risen by 16 percent while filed claims have averaged around 8 percent of total employees. However, the decrease in costs was so significant that the average cost per claim declined dramatically, as shown in **Exhibit 6-14**.

The district attributes this success to its self-funded workers' compensation plan and the work of its TPA, which assists the district with monitoring its claims. Moreover, the district's philosophy is that injured workers should receive, on a timely basis, every benefit they are entitled to under the law, "but not one penny more." As such, the district has adopted the following four-pronged strategy for handling workers' compensation claims:

- *Investigation of every accident*
- *Resolution of safety problems*
- *Constant contact with injured workers*
- *Regular review of claim issues*

COMMENDATION

EPISD has significantly reduced the cost of its workers' compensation claims over the past nine years.

FINDING

An El Paso physician was recently indicted in a scheme to defraud the Texas workers' compensation system and insurers of more than \$15 million through fraudulent medical bills. Seventy-two district employees were under this physician's care at some stage of their recoveries from work-related injuries. One of these employees also is under investigation for allegedly defrauding the state workers' compensation fund. The employee, injured in 1997 while working for the district, was receiving simultaneous payments from both the district and a former employer. On September 21, 1998, the district participated in a contested case hearing conducted by the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission (TWCC) to discontinue income benefit payments to this employee. As of October 18, 1998, the district had paid about \$66,800 in income and medical benefits on behalf of this employee. Moreover, from 1996 through 1998, the district had paid some \$117,000 to medical firms owned by the physician. The risk manager told TSPR that since the doctor's arrest, employees who were under the doctor's care either have returned to work or have changed doctors.

Fraud costs the state workers' compensation fund millions of dollars each year, resulting in higher insurance premiums and lost jobs. TWCC has developed fraud indicators that can be used to alert employers of potentially fraudulent claims. These indicators do not guarantee that fraud has occurred, but may indicate that a claim should be reviewed more closely. The following is a list of employee fraud indicators developed by TWCC:

- *Injuries that have no witness other than the worker.*
- *Injuries occurring late Friday or early Monday.*
- *Injuries not reported until a week or more after they occur.*
- *Injuries occurring before a strike or holiday or in anticipation of layoff or termination.*
- *Injuries occurring where the worker would not usually work.*
- *Worker history of workers' compensation claims.*
- *An attorney relationship with a health care provider that appears to be a partnership in handling workers' compensation claims.*

These fraud indicators could easily be incorporated into the district's initial claims review process and in an annual fraud review of all workers' compensation claims. The TPA provides monthly detailed reports presented in a variety of ways that could be used to facilitate such a review. In addition, the TPA provides special reports upon request.

Recommendation 67:

Coordinate with the Internal Audit Unit to conduct comprehensive fraud reviews of workers' compensation claims at least annually.

Texas law prohibits employers from discharging or discriminating against an employee for filing a good faith workers' compensation claim, hiring an attorney, or participating in a workers' compensation proceeding. However, as a matter of prudence, the risk manager, in coordination with the district's Internal Audit Unit and TPA, should review claims at least annually using fraud indicators such as those developed by TWCC. For example, claims could be scored based upon criteria developed from the indicators. Claims that score high should be selected for further scrutiny. The district already performs an annual review of high-dollar claims; a fraudulent claims review could easily be performed with the assistance of the Internal Audit Unit.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Risk Management and the Internal Audit director coordinate to develop a workers' compensation claims fraud model based upon TWCC fraud indicators.	April 1999
2.	The director of Risk Management uses the model to evaluate all new claims and coordinates with Internal Audit to conduct a comprehensive fraud review at least once a year.	April 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Employee Health Insurance

EPISD self-funds three health insurance programs for its employees, meaning that the district assumes the risks of employee medical care and pays all claims rather than paying an insurance company to assume the risk. The programs include a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), an Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO), and a Hospital Indemnity Plan (HIP). The difference in these plans has to do with the cost of health care services and how such services are delivered to plan participants. In general, the PPO requires participants to use health care providers within a specified network; participants incur additional costs if they go outside of the network. The EPO is similar to the PPO in that care is delivered within a specified network, but a primary care physician must coordinate the care. Participants in EPOs may not go outside of the network for care unless it is for a life-threatening emergency. Finally, the HIP provides a stipulated daily benefit of \$75 during hospital confinement up to a maximum of 365 days per plan year. This plan is designed for employees who may have comprehensive coverage under another group plan such as a spouse's health plan. Young Insurance Agency, the health plan's third-party administrator, administers each of these plans.

*In addition to basic health insurance, the district offers a variety of health care and benefit options to its employees (**Exhibit 6-15**).*

Exhibit 6-15 Health Care and Benefit Options Available to EPISD Employees

Description	Features	Cost
Life Insurance	Provides basic coverage of \$3,000 Group Term Life insurance and \$2,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage to each employee. Dependent coverage is also available in limited amounts.	Basic coverage is provided at no cost to employee. Additional coverage equal to 1.5 times the employee's annual salary may be purchased for 21 cents per \$1,000 of coverage. Dependent coverage may be purchased by the employee for 76 cents per \$1,000.
Dental Plan	Provides for discounts on scheduled procedures performed by dentists participating in the network.	Total cost is borne by the employee and varies depending upon the dental procedure performed.
Vision Plan	Provides a yearly eye exam and one pair of covered lenses or	Employee pays \$7.70 per month for employee only. up to

	frames.	\$18.45 per month for an entire family.
Cancer & Hospital Intensive Care Plan	Employees may participate in one of two plans that offer various benefit options depending on need.	Total cost is borne by the employee and varies depending upon the type of coverage chosen.
Disability Insurance	Provides income protection for employees who are unable to work due to a long-term disability.	Total cost is borne by the employee and varies depending upon annual gross salary and timing of benefit payments.
Tax-Sheltered Annuity	An employee retirement plan that allows employees to make tax-favored contributions to a self-directed annuity account.	No cost is associated with this benefit.
Flexible Benefit Plans	Allows employees to make pre-tax contributions to accounts out of which medical premiums and expenses are paid.	No cost is associated with this benefit.
Savings Bonds	Employees may purchase U.S. Savings Bonds through a payroll deduction program.	No cost is associated with this benefit.

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

Young Insurance Agency acts as TPA for four of the largest governmental entities in El Paso: the City of El Paso, El Paso County, El Paso ISD, and Ysleta ISD. All of these entities maintain self-funded health plans. Young currently is under investigation by the District Attorney's Office and the Texas Department of Insurance for allegedly receiving undisclosed prompt-payment fees from local hospitals. Allegations are that Young received percentage fees from hospitals for quickly paying medical bills under arrangements that were never disclosed in agreements with the governmental entities. As TPA, Young is responsible for processing and paying health care claims made under the plans and providing other services such as utilization review. Utilization review seeks to contain health care costs through detailed examinations of the amount, timing, and appropriateness of health care services.

Through interviews with the associate superintendent of Support Services and the executive director of Human Resources the review team learned that EPISD has taken a "wait and see" attitude toward the investigation.

Meanwhile, health care services for district employees are continuing uninterrupted. The Texas Department of Insurance also is reserving judgment in the case until the District Attorney's Office completes its investigation. The executive director of Human Resources stated that the district was not aware of the prompt-pay agreements prior to the allegations. Furthermore, they were not disclosed in the payor agreement between the district and Young.

The district has a payor agreement with Young through an affiliate known as Advantage Care Network, Inc. Advantage and Young are owned and operated by the same individual. Access to various health care providers is made possible through the payor agreement. Under its terms, the district has access to Advantage's preferred and exclusive provider system, which allows the district to offer cost-efficient health care services to district employees and their dependents. Failure to disclose prompt-payment agreements appears to be in violation of payor agreement provisions. Section 10.1.5 of the Payor Agreement states:

Advantage shall not charge its Providers any fee which is prohibited by law and which has not been disclosed to the District.

If the TPA's alleged failure to disclose prompt-payment fees violates this provision, the district must be prepared to consider resultant legal ramifications.

Recommendation 68:

Consult with outside legal counsel regarding the implications of the allegations against the TPA and examine the district's options pending the outcome of the investigation.

The district should obtain a written legal opinion from its attorneys regarding the implications of the investigation and its possible outcome. Several implications must be considered depending on the outcome, including possible breach of contract, the ability of the TPA to continue a satisfactory level of service, and a shift to another TPA if the allegations prove to be true. Moreover, depending on the outcome, the TPA might be required to give the district all or some percentage of the prompt-payment fees the TPA received from health care providers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The interim superintendent directs the associate superintendent of Support Services to arrange a meeting with the district's attorneys to discuss the implications of the TPA investigation.	April 1999
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2.	The superintendent requests that the attorneys outline the legal implications for the district based on possible outcomes of the investigation.	April 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources. Although there could be a fiscal impact depending on the outcome of the investigation, it cannot be estimated before that time.

FINDING

*As part of its payor agreement with Advantage Care Network, Inc., the district pays fees for access to PPO and EPO health care providers with whom Advantage has negotiated discounted rates. The district also has negotiated a risk-sharing arrangement with Advantage. Under the terms of this arrangement, the access fees either are increased or partially reimbursed to the district, depending upon whether actual claims costs fall below or exceed projected targets. **Exhibit 6-16** summarizes target levels and associated penalties and rewards for claims incurred during plan year October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997.*

Exhibit 6-16

Risk Sharing Arrangement Penalties/Rewards

Actual Claims Cost as a Percentage of Target	Penalty/Reward
Greater than or equal to 108%	Advantage pays the district 50% of total fees charged.
Greater than or equal to 106% and less than 108%	Advantage pays the district 30% of total fees charged.
Greater than or equal to 104% and less than 106%	Advantage pays the district 20% of total fees charged.
Greater than 96% and less than 104%	No payment
Greater than 94% and less than or equal to 96%	The district pays Advantage an additional 5% fee.
Greater than 92% and less than or equal to 94%	The district pays Advantage an additional 15% fee.
Less than or equal to 92%	The district pays Advantage an additional 25% fee.

Source: Towers Perrin.

The district's plan actuary calculates the penalty/reward amount based upon data provided by the TPA. The actuary prepared a preliminary calculation for the 1996-97 plan year on July 15, 1998 that showed the district due a refund of \$171,000. Although the risk sharing arrangement provides that payments "shall be made no later than 30 days from the date on which the completed forms shall have been delivered to both the District and Advantage," the district had not received payment as of January 29, 1999. Representatives of Advantage told district personnel that the records required to finalize the calculation had been seized in an investigation of the TPA by the District Attorney's Office and the Texas Department of Insurance.

Recommendation 69:

Aggressively pursue the \$171,000 owed to the district under its risk-sharing arrangement with Advantage Care Network, Inc.

According to the risk-sharing arrangement calendar, the district should have received its 1996-97 plan year payment by July 1998. The district should pursue payment of these funds plus penalties and interest, since they have a legal right to collect them. The fact that the information required to finalize the computation has been seized in an investigation should not preclude the district from receiving its reward. Moreover, the district's actuaries concluded in their report that "it is doubtful that any of the above listed items [information required to finalize their calculation] will reduce the claims cost to a lower penalty level." The district should collect its reward based on the preliminary calculation. Any adjustments to the preliminary calculation can be made after the investigation or after records required to finalize the calculation have been released by the authorities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources instructs the director of Employee Benefits to request immediate payment from Advantage Care Network, Inc.	April 1999
2.	The director of Employee Benefits informs Advantage Care Network, Inc. that the district wishes to collect its reward.	April 1999
3.	The director of Employee Benefits continues to monitor the investigation and requests an adjustment of the reward calculation, if any, based upon the outcome.	April 1999 and thereafter

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation would have a one-year fiscal impact equal to \$171,000, assuming rewards for future plan years are paid in a timely manner.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Aggressively pursue the \$171,000 owed to the district under its risk-sharing arrangement with Advantage Care Network, Inc.	\$171,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

EPISD plans to reduce its health care fund balance by 44 percent during the 1998-99 school year. The fund balance of the health and insurance fund is the excess or shortfall of plan assets over plan liabilities. A positive fund balance indicates that the health plan is solvent; a deficit indicates that the plan is inadequately funded. The fund balance increases or decreases each year by the amount that plan contributions exceed or fall short of claim costs and operating expenses. A key challenge for the district is to maintain an adequate fund balance to pay current and future health care claims. To help meet this challenge, a professional actuary estimates health claim costs and plan contributions each year.

The firm of Towers Perrin provides actuarial services for EPISD's self-funded health insurance fund. The actuary reviews the fund annually and recommends adjustments to district and employee plan contributions based on actual claims experience, market trends, and actuarial assumptions. In their actuarial report for the 1998-99 plan year dated May 1998, the actuaries wrote:

To maintain the plan's fund balance at the September 30, 1998 level, EPISD must increase its medical plan rates by 3.25%.

*The actuaries projected the September 30, 1998 fund balance to be \$4.3 million, net of reserves for claims incurred but not paid of \$2.7 million as of September 30, 1998. At August 31, 1998, the actual fund balance was \$6.6 million (**Exhibit 6-10**).*

The district had been considering changing from a self-funded to a fully insured plan, on the theory that the district could save money by using the entire \$6.6 million fund balance in the health care fund for salaries or other expenditures. The Finance, Budgeting, and Accounting Unit did not favor changing to a fully insured plan and depleting the entire health care fund balance. As an alternative, they recommended, in a memo to the

interim superintendent dated August 17, 1998, to "lower the fund balance by half to approximately one and one half months of expenditures which equates to approximately \$3,000,000."

The Finance, Budgeting, and Accounting Unit cited several risks connected with their alternative approach:

Rate Stabilization - *Rates could significantly increase in future years as there would be no reserves. Even with the above alternative, we believe that rates will have to be increased in 1999-2000.*

Shortfall - *If the fund balance is depleted or dropped by the amount above, then who would be responsible for paying for any excess claims both in fiscal year 1998-99 and beyond if the district remains self-funded? Would the employee share in that shortfall?*

One Time Source of Funds - *Please keep in mind that this is a one time source of funds and will not be available in future years.*

*While it is impossible to predict what the district's 1998-99 health claims experience will be, historical trends indicate that this area is very volatile and unstable. **Exhibit 6-17** shows percentage changes in the district's claims experience compared to national trends for plan years 1993-94 through 1997-98. (The plan year is from October 1 to September 30.) The district's claims experience has fluctuated dramatically compared to national trends. According to the district's actuaries, this is a surprising pattern because "typically, a group of EPISD's size has more stable experience."*

Exhibit 6-18 *shows the correlation between claims experience and fund balance. During the 1994, 1996, and 1998 plan years, favorable claims experience led to large increases in the fund balance. However, increased claims in 1995 and 1997 brought the fund balance down to just about \$4 million at the end of 1997.*

Exhibit 6-17
Comparison of Changes in Health Claims Cost
EPISD and U.S. Trends
Plan Years 1994-1998

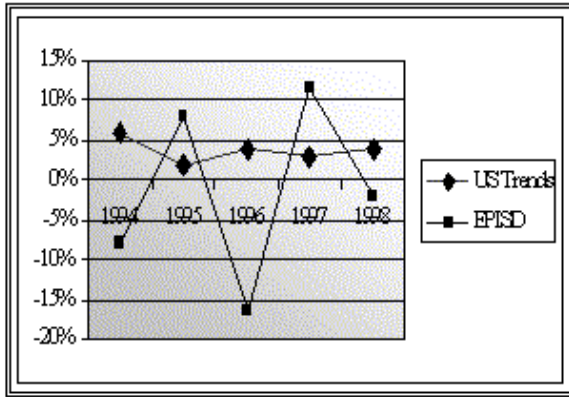
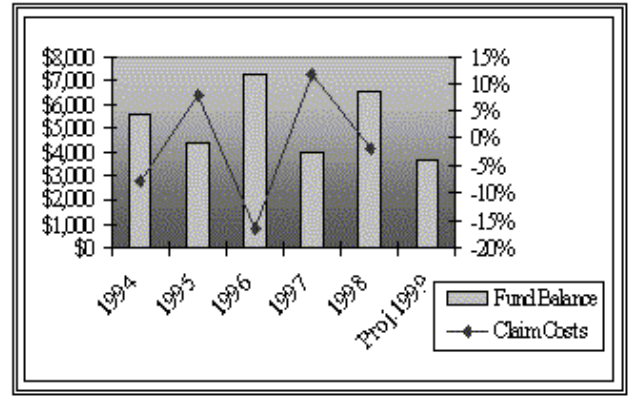


Exhibit 6-18
Comparison of Changes in Health Claims Cost
To Fund Balance (\$In Thousands)
Plan Years 1994-1998



Source: Towers Perrin.

If the above claims trend continues, the district is due to have high claims in 1999 at a time when the fund balance is projected to be at its lowest level in years.

Recommendation 70:

Develop a policy to maintain the health plan fund balance at safe levels and make the budget modifications and health plan contributions needed to maintain a safe fund balance, as projected by the actuaries.

The district should take immediate steps to mitigate the risks of partially depleting the fund balance in the health care fund. Historical trends indicate that claims may be high during the 1999 plan year; the district should not risk reducing the fund balance to dangerously low levels. A policy should be implemented to maintain the fund balance at safe levels for as long as the district operates a self-funded health plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The interim superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to draft a board policy designed to the health care fund balance at safe levels.	April 1999
2.	The interim superintendent reviews and approves the draft.	April 1999
3.	The Board of Trustees reviews and approves the policy.	April and May 1999
4.	The interim superintendent presents the budget modifications to	June 1999

	the board for approval.	
5.	The board implements the policy and appropriate administrators are made aware of the policy by the interim superintendent.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented within the existing budget.

FINDING

*Health care plans are difficult to compare because of their different features as well as the variance in the cost of medical care from one region of the state to the other. Health plan features that can affect comparisons include the type of plan; nature of benefits provided; the manner in which services are delivered; the extent of provider network; and cost-sharing provisions such as deductibles, co-insurance, and copayments. **Exhibit 6-19** provides a comparison of key features of EPISD's health care plans with those of its peer districts. Comparisons are made using in-network costs. **Exhibit 6-20** compares EPISD and peer health plan premiums for employee and dependent care coverage.*

**Exhibit 6-19
Selected Health Plan In-Network Features
EPISD and Peer Districts**

Type of Plan	Deductible	Copayments*	Maximum Annual Out of Pocket	Drugs**
El Paso ISD -Choice Care PPO -Choice Care EPO	None None	\$15-\$50 \$10-\$100	\$1K/person \$3K/family \$1K/person \$3K/family	\$9-\$18 \$5-\$10
Ysleta ISD -Ysleta Health Plan -Prudential HMO	None None	\$15-\$50 \$10-\$200	\$500/person \$1,500/family None	\$5-\$15 \$5-\$10
Dallas ISD -HMO -PPO	None None	\$15-\$100 \$15/10%	\$1K/person \$2K/family \$1K/person \$2K/family	\$5-\$25 \$5-\$15
Cornus ISD				

-Open Access Option	None \$500	\$15-\$50/10%-50%	\$2K/person \$4K/family	\$5-\$25 50%
-Point of Service Option	person/ \$1,000	30% for most services	\$5K/person \$1.5K/family	\$5-\$25
-Gatekeeper Option	family None	\$10-\$50/20%-50%	\$2K/person \$4K/family	
Houston ISD				
-HMO Point of Service	None	\$10-\$25	\$4K/person \$2K/person	\$5-\$10
-HMO 20 Option	None	\$20-\$75	\$4K/family	\$5-\$10
-Option 3 HMOs	None	\$5-\$40	\$650-3.7K/person 1.5K-2K/family	\$5-\$10
MethodistCare MCI 25	None	\$25-\$100	\$2K/person \$5K/family	\$10-\$40

Source: EPISD.

* Varies based upon type of service provided. Amounts and percentages represent minimum and maximum range.

** Costs depend upon whether prescription is generic or brand name; generics costs less. Amounts given represent minimum and maximum ranges.

Exhibit 6-20
Monthly Health Care Premiums
EPISD and Peer Districts

Type of Plan	Monthly	Monthly Employee Cost			
	Employer Contribution	Employee Only	Employee & Spouse	Employee & Children	Employee & Family
El Paso ISD					
-Choice Care PPO	\$204.20	\$0	\$216.98	\$156.05	\$373.05
-Choice Care EPO	\$173.57	\$0	\$184.43	\$132.64	\$317.09
Ysleta ISD					
-Ysleta Health Plan	\$197	\$197	\$171	\$144	\$235
-Prudential HMO	\$197	\$197	\$156	\$124	\$205
Dallas ISD					
-HMO	\$110.00	\$49.00	\$221.00	\$179.00	\$269.00
-PPO	\$110.00	\$124.00	\$323.00	\$275.00	\$379.00
Corpus ISD					
-Open Access Option	\$105.00	\$49.20	\$190.64	\$224.58	\$326.84
-Point of Service Option	\$105.00	\$51.06	\$194.22	\$228.60	\$332.08

-Gatekeeper Option	\$105.00	\$31.52	\$156.78	\$186.88	\$277.42
Fort Worth ISD					
-Exclusive Provider HMO	\$116.00	\$2.68	\$161.56	\$140.97	\$245.86
-Comprehensive Provider HMO	\$116.00	\$12.79	\$185.33	\$160.40	\$278.51
-Point of Service Option	\$116.00	\$56.22	\$268.61	\$244.60	\$402.27
Houston ISD					
-HMO Point of Service	\$86.66	\$24.13	\$72.54	\$118.28	\$182.49
-HMO 20 Option	\$86.66	\$0	\$24.97	\$22.38	\$74.95
-Option 3 HMOs	\$86.66	\$0	\$37.71	\$34.22	\$99.95
-MethodistCare MCI 25	\$86.66	\$0	\$9.99	\$8.96	\$57.44

Source: Texas School Performance Review and EPISD.

EPISD spends more per employee for health insurance than most peer districts and the state and Region 19 averages. For school years 1994-95 through 1996-97, EPISD's annual health insurance expenses averaged \$2,136 per employee, compared to \$1,530, \$1,398, and \$1,900 for the peers, the state, and Region 19, respectively (**Exhibit 6-21** and **6-22**).

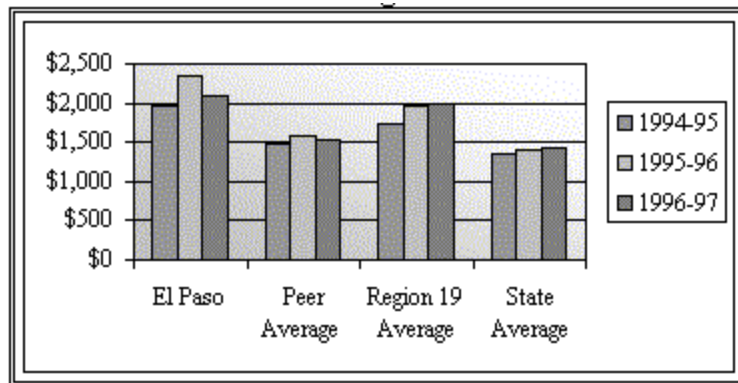
Exhibit 6-21
Annual Health Insurance Costs Per Employee
1994-95 through 1996-97 School Years

District	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	3-year Average
Ysleta ISD	\$2,227	\$2,252	\$2,266	\$2,248
El Paso ISD	1,959	2,355	2,095	2,136
Houston ISD	1,900	2,101	2,256	2,085
Socorro ISD	1,827	2,044	1,681	1,851
San Antonio ISD	1,726	2,094	1,680	1,833
Austin ISD	1,460	1,411	1,504	1,458
FT. Worth ISD	1,086	1,072	1,127	1,095
Dallas ISD	875	851	1,000	909
Corpus Christi ISD	691	785	795	757
Peer Average w/o EPISD	\$1,474	\$1,576	\$1,539	\$1,530
Region 19 Average	\$1,740	\$1,963	\$1,999	\$1,900
State Average	\$1,364	\$1,401	\$1,429	\$1,398

Source: Texas Education Agency and Texas Association of School Boards.

As **Exhibit 6-21** shows, both EPISD and Ysleta, the two largest school districts in El Paso, are experiencing higher-than-average health care costs.

Exhibit 6-22
Annual Health Insurance Contribution Per Employee
EPISD and Peer, Region, and State Averages
1994-95 through 1996-97



Source: Texas Association of School Boards

EPISD's health insurance plan year begins on October 1 of each year. The current contract with the TPA ends on September 30, 1999. The district plans to issue an RFP in early 1999 to determine if it should continue to self-insure or adopt a fully funded health care plan. Ysleta ISD will be issuing an RFP at the same time.

Recommendation 71:

Collaborate with YISD on a joint RFP for health care coverage.

EPISD should consider entering into an interlocal agreement with YISD for health care coverage. The task of providing affordable quality health care options to employees is a difficult challenge for most employers. Combined, EPISD and YISD have about 14,000 employees. This large pool of potential plan participants would give both EPISD and YISD formidable purchasing and bargaining power that neither would have on their own. In addition to negotiating lower costs, both districts should be able to negotiate rates that are guaranteed over a three- or four-year period. If the attempt at a joint RFP with Ysleta is not successful, EPISD should release one on its own or explore options to issue a combined RFP with other large employers in the El Paso area, such as the city or the county.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources contacts the YISD director of Risk Management to propose issuing a joint RFP for health care coverage.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Human Resources forms a health coverage RFP committee consisting of individuals from Human Resources, Finance, and Purchasing to develop RFP specifications.	April 1999
3.	The committee develops bid specifications and publishes the RFP.	April and May 1999
4.	Purchasing receives, reviews, tabulates, and analyzes bids as they are presented.	June 1999
5.	The Board of Trustees awards the bid to administer the health plan.	July 1999
6.	Human Resources begins to prepare employees for the changeover to the new health care administrator if the present administrator is not selected.	July - October 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

*If EPISD is successful in its attempt to issue a joint RFP with YISD, the combined districts would have tremendous bargaining power. If costs per employee were reduced to the Region 19 three-year average of \$1,900, as shown in **Exhibit 6-21** above, EPISD would save \$1,589,445 per year, as follows:*

EPISD three-year average	\$2,136
Region 19 three-year average	<u>1,900</u>
Savings per employee	\$236
1997-98 Employees	<u>8,151</u>
Estimated Savings	\$1,923,636

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Collaborate with YISD on a joint RFP for health care coverage.	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636	\$1,923,636

Property and Casualty Insurance

*Property and casualty insurance includes coverage for facilities, vehicles, equipment, personal injury, professional and general liability and student travel. **Exhibit 6-23** provides a detail of EPISD's property and casualty policies currently in force.*

Exhibit 6-23
EPISD Property Casualty Coverage

Type of Policy	Coverage Description	Limits	Deductible	Annual Premium
Boiler and machinery	Damage due to explosion	\$1M	\$500	\$20,895
Boiler and machinery-equipment breakdown	Mechanical breakdown at 120 N. Stanton	\$23.5M	\$1,000	\$3,500
Texas dwelling policy #3	Fire coverage for 52 custodian dwellings	Replacement value	\$100 wind/hail \$250 all peril	\$12,318
Standard fire policy	Building, contents, and computers	\$816,671,510	\$100K	\$212,398
Warehouse general liability	Dyer St. warehouse leased property	\$500K general; aggregate \$500K per occurrence	None	\$1,424
Commercial crime policy	Employee theft or embezzlement	\$500K	\$2,500	\$5,800
Police officer's bond	Officer liability	\$1K/bond	None	\$50/officer
Auto/bus policy	Fleet/equipment damage/liability	\$100K/\$300/\$100K	\$5,000 liability/\$500 physical damage	\$296,806
School board errors and omissions	School board liability	\$5M each loss and aggregate	None	\$41,063

Student travel insurance	Student, staff, parent accident policy	\$25/visit 5 visits/injury	None	\$850
Health occupations professional liability	Students	\$3M aggregate/\$1M per occurrence	None	\$5,133
School-to-Work program	Where program students are working	\$1M general aggregate	\$250	\$2,597

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

EPISD's Operations Unit oversees the district's property and casualty insurance programs. TSPR was told that property and casualty insurance programs were the responsibility of the Human Resources Unit until about five or six years ago; they were transferred to Operations because the former superintendent was not satisfied with how Human Resources was administering them. The assistant superintendent of Operations retired in July 1998, after which property and casualty insurance became the responsibility of a project engineer in the Operations Unit.

The district has contracted with an outside risk management firm to assist the project engineer with his insurance responsibilities because he lacks insurance expertise. The firm will review the district's Insurance and Bond Review Program. The project engineer told the review team that the firm will evaluate all of the district's property and casualty policies over the next 12 months, including contractor insurance requirements. They will make recommendations regarding insurance specifications; adequacy of coverage; specific policy provisions; cost; contractor compliance; and inadequate, duplicated, or unnecessary coverages. According to the risk management contract, costs to evaluate the programs will not exceed \$25,000 during the evaluation period. After the evaluation period, the district will assess the risk management firm's performance and may enter into a long-term contract with the firm. The district believes that future contracts could be funded out of savings from the firm's recommendations.

Property and casualty insurance is a risk management function that typically resides in the risk management department of most school districts. The director of Employee Benefits has prior experience analyzing risks exposures and preparing insurance specifications and bids for various liability risks in addition to purchasing insurance for errors

and omissions, bonds, employee dishonesty, builder's risk, property, boilers and machinery, and other risks.

Exhibit 6-24 provides a summary of proposed services contained in the risk management firm's contract. These services all are within the scope of the director of Employee Benefits' experience.

Exhibit 6-24
Proposed Services of Risk Management Firm

Service	Frequency
Risk management contract review	Ongoing
Interface with EPISD staff on insurance issues	Ongoing
Design and handle RFPs	On request
Risk management review of current insurance policies.	On request
Review of losses and retention levels	On request
Insurance due diligence on major contracts	Specific projects
Position paper i.e. outside groups using EPISD facilities, admitted versus non-admitted paper, etc.	Specific projects
Technical insurance support at board meetings	As needed
Preparation/review of safety manuals	On request
Management safety training	On request
Environmental consultation	On request

Source: EPISD.

Recommendation 72:

Transfer property and casualty insurance responsibilities and duties from the Operations Unit to the Risk Management Section.

The district should consolidate similar risk management functions under one umbrella. Consolidation of similar functions allows greater control and promotes process efficiency. In addition, grouping develops specialists and allows them to develop their expertise in a given area. Of course, Risk Management should continue to receive support and cooperation from the Operations Unit with respect to issues related to facilities and construction contracts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The associate interim associate superintendent for Operations coordinates with the executive director of Human Resources to transfer property and casualty insurance responsibilities to the Risk Management Unit.	April 1999
2.	The associate interim associate superintendent for Operations and the executive director of Human Resources direct the Personnel Administrator Director to revise the job descriptions of the project engineer after insurance responsibilities have been reassigned.	April 1999
3.	The executive director of Human Resources instructs the Personnel Administrator Director to revise job descriptions within the Risk Management Unit to reflect property and casualty insurance duties and responsibilities.	May 1999
4.	The executive director of Human Resources assigns property and casualty insurance duties and responsibilities to a position within the Risk Management Unit.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The risk management firm should continue to be retained as a consultant under the current \$25,000 contract. However, the cost of future contracts, if any, should be less because the scope of services may be reduced. It is impossible to estimate the savings from future contracts since the contracts have not been negotiated.

C. Fixed Assets

CURRENT SITUATION

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) defines "fixed assets" as purchased or donated items that are tangible in nature, have a useful life longer than one year, have a unit value of \$5,000 or more, and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* requires that assets costing \$5,000 or more be recorded in a fixed-asset group of accounts. Under TEA guidelines, items costing less than \$5,000 are recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund.

EPISD's fixed assets include its land, buildings, furniture, equipment and vehicles (**Exhibit 6-25**).

Exhibit 6-25
EPISD Fixed Assets
As Of August 31, 1997

Description	Balance 8/31/97	Percentage
Land and improvements	\$21,741,173	5%
Buildings and improvements	333,475,304	73
Furniture and equipment		
*Lease-Purchase Assets	618,697	
Furniture	987,907	
Technology equipment	1,197,478	
Vehicles	10,828,055	
Other Assets	41,686,681	
Total Furniture and Equipment	55,318,818	12
Construction in progress	45,280,770	10
Total	\$455,816,065	100%

Source: EPISD.

** Lease-purchase assets include AS/400 computer system and five police vehicles.*

As shown in **Exhibit 6-25**, 12 percent of the district's total fixed assets are furniture and equipment. EPISD's fixed-asset policy follows TEA guidelines requiring that assets costing \$5,000 or more be recorded in a

fixed-asset group of accounts. These guidelines also allow school districts to establish lower thresholds for control and accountability purposes for equipment costing less than \$5,000. For example, computer and audiovisual equipment costing less than \$5,000 does not have to be accounted for in the fixed-asset group of accounts. However, some districts maintain lists of such assets for control and accountability purposes.

FINDING

During 1996, KPMG Peat Marwick LLP conducted a Manpower Efficiency Study that recommended that EPISD place accountants in each of its four regions to be responsible for establishing and maintaining fixed-asset records, accounting systems, and procedures. The study describes the purpose of these positions as follows:

The mission of this position is to establish and maintain accounting records and sound business practices at the region level. The major job responsibilities include: tracking fixed assets through accurate and timely fixed-asset accounting systems and procedures; maintaining subsidiary accounts on various programs and funding sources; and providing general accounting transactions....

The district has not filled these positions and does not have an employee who is primarily responsible for tracking fixed assets. An accounting manager in the Finance Unit and Budget Unit managers are jointly responsible for fixed assets, but their individual activities are not coordinated. The accounting manager performs limited fixed-asset accounting tasks, but because of other responsibilities, cannot effectively perform all the tasks necessary to properly monitor, track, and control fixed assets. For example, the accounting manager has called for physical inventories and reconciliations of physical assets to fixed-asset records, but these tasks have not been performed due to limited staff.

Each unit in the district is responsible for keeping detailed lists of its furniture and equipment. No one, however, performs formal reconciliations between these lists and the district's Fixed Asset System (FAS). Many of the assets on these lists are not recorded on FAS because they are worth less than \$5,000, the threshold for entry on FAS. Again, under TEA guidelines, assets costing less than \$5,000 can be recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund. However, many school districts establish and maintain accountability and control of certain assets costing less than \$5,000 because of their nature and their potential to become damaged, lost, or stolen. Such items include audiovisual, computer, and telecommunications equipment.

The district's FAS manual establishes responsibilities for fixed-asset accounting and contains procedures governing the recognition, movement, and control of fixed assets within the district. However, without a staff position dedicated to implementing and overseeing the fixed-asset accountability process, the district cannot be sure that furniture, equipment, and other assets are properly tracked, controlled, and safeguarded. Inadequate control over physical assets could create an environment in which fixed-asset records are unreliable and physical assets are not properly accounted for.

The district's past experience emphasizes the importance of maintaining accurate, current fixed-asset records. Prior to fiscal 1995, no formal reconciliation was made between detailed fixed-asset listings and the fixed-asset group of accounts. At the end of fiscal 1995, the district conducted a fixed-assets inventory and identified all assets with a value greater than \$5,000. These assets were posted to FAS; then the balance was compared to the balance in the fixed-asset group of accounts. Upon comparison, the district discovered that the fixed-asset group of accounts balance was greater than FAS by \$69.4 million in the furniture, fixtures, & equipment category. To reconcile these figures, the district wrote off \$10 million of the difference and added the remaining \$59.4 million to a FAS category called "Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment prior to 1993-94." Each year, the district writes off \$10 million of the \$59.4 million difference and has reduced the balance by \$30 million since fiscal 1995. As a result, the "Other Assets" category in **Exhibit 6-25** includes about \$29.4 million of furniture, fixtures, & equipment that remains to be written off during fiscal 1999 through 2001.

If the district had not conducted the inventory and reconciled its records in 1995, the fixed-asset balance would still be overstated by at least \$69.4 million. If the district does not establish physical controls and accountability over its fixed assets, a similar situation is likely to occur in the future.

Ysleta ISD, a smaller neighboring district, has a property control officer who tracks and controls fixed assets. The duties and responsibilities of a property control officer include the following:

- Develop and maintain a procedures manual that clearly defines the duties and responsibilities of each organization involved with fixed-asset control and accountability.
- Assist district staff members in the identification and control of the fixed assets assigned to their organization.
- Work closely with Purchasing, Finance, Warehouse, and other district units in identifying and tagging all fixed assets. Supervise,

train, evaluate, and schedule other employees involved in the property control function.

- Assist the district in ensuring compliance with all provisions of the TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* pertaining to fixed-asset control and accountability.
- Assist external auditors in their annual audit of fixed assets.
- Maintain physical control of permanent fixed-asset records.
- Inspect and identify obsolete or damaged equipment prior to its removal from district premises.
- Plan for and conduct fixed-asset physical inventory on a periodic basis.
- Assist in developing automated systems of tracking fixed assets such as bar-coding technology.

Recommendation 73:

Hire a property control officer to establish and maintain a districtwide fixed-asset control and accountability system.

EPISD should hire a property control officer to be responsible for the district's fixed assets. The officer should report to the executive director of Finance and should work with the accounting manager, budget unit managers, and appropriate school personnel to develop, improve, and maintain the district's fixed-asset control and accountability system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Human Resources in conjunction with regional executive directors and the executive director of Finance develop a job description for a property control officer.	May 1999
2.	The superintendent approves the job description and recommends to the board that a position be created for a property control officer.	May 1999
3.	The Personnel Administration director posts the opening for the property control officer outlining the required qualifications and responsibilities.	May 1999
4.	Regional executive directors and the executive director of Finance interview prospective candidates for the property control officer.	June and July 1999
5.	The executive director of Human Resources and the Personnel Administration director fill the property control officer position.	August 1999
6.	The property control officer assumes responsibilities.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Based upon information obtained from a neighboring school district, a property control officer's salary ranges from \$25,000 to \$35,000, based on experience and qualifications. Using a midpoint salary of \$30,000 plus 16 percent benefits, the position would cost the district \$34,800 per year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire a property control officer to establish and maintain a districtwide fixed-asset control and accountability system.	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)	(\$34,800)

FINDING

Internal Audit has had no involvement in the verification of fixed assets in the furniture and equipment category. Furthermore, the issue was not even mentioned in the external auditor's "Letter Relating to Internal Control and Operating Procedures" for fiscal 1995 through 1997. Yet a review of controls designed to safeguard assets is an important internal audit function. The Internal Audit director told the review team that a full-fledged internal audit of the fixed-assets system has never been performed.

Recommendation 74:

Require the Internal Audit Unit to review fixed-asset procedures, controls, and inventory records.

The Finance Unit's fixed-asset accounting manager should ask the Internal Audit Unit to incorporate reviews of fixed-asset accountability in its annual audit plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Finance requests that the Internal Audit director include reviews of fixed-asset accountability in the annual audit plan.	April 1999
2.	The Internal Audit director includes a review of fixed-asset accountability in the audit plan.	July 1999
3.	Internal Audit verifies compliance with FAS policy and procedures.	September 1999 and annually

		thereafter
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

D. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness

CURRENT SITUATION

The executive director of Finance is responsible for the issuance of bonds, debt obligations, and refinancing. Day-to-day responsibilities in these areas have been delegated to the Treasury manager. The district contracts with an investment banking firm in Dallas for financial advice. In the last bond election in 1992, voters approved \$150 million for the construction, renovation, and improvement of school facilities. **Exhibit 6-26** presents a summary of project costs incurred through November 3, 1998 for construction contracts exceeding \$2 million. **Exhibit 6-27** presents outstanding bond indebtedness as of August 31, 1998.

Exhibit 6-26
Major Bond Fund Construction Projects
Costs Incurred As of November 3, 1998

Project	Costs Incurred to Date	Outstanding Commitments	Total Contract	Completion Date
High School #1	\$20,768,081	\$0	\$20,768,081	6/23/97
High School #2	1,718,166	22,903,557	24,618,724	In Progress
White Renovations	4,567,475	0	4,567,475	4/9/98
Health Magnet	6,488,186	0	6,488,186	12/2/94
Guillen Renovations	4,189,380	1,212,385	5,401,765	In Progress
Vocational Education Building	6,002,395	0	6,002,395	5/15/97
Cordova Renovation	7,417,310	360,244	7,777,555	7/98
Kohlberg Elementary	4,963,879	0	4,963,879	4/22/98
Richardson Middle School	9,565,647	6,191	9,571,839	7/98
Central Warehouse	2,246,923	0	2,246,923	2/9/98
Gymnasium	3,305,909	0	3,305,909	4/17/98

Moreno	1,326,143	5,783,660	7,109,803	In Progress
Other Projects	61,260,877	2,738,349	32,853,757	Various
Total	\$118,252,329	\$32,998,195	\$151,250,524	

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 6-27
EPISD Outstanding Indebtedness
As of August 31, 1998

Description	Interest Rate	Amount
Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds-Series 1989	6.25-9.25%	\$1,000,000
Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds-Series 1991	5.625-8.625%	15,200,000
School Building & Refunding Unlimited Tax Bonds-Series 1992-A	3.6- 5.8%	25,288,907
Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds-Series 1993	2.5- 7.99%	28,179,271
School Building Unlimited Tax Bonds-Series 1994	4.5- 7.5%	57,000,000
Unlimited Tax School Building & Refunding Bonds-Series 1995	5.2- 9.0%	66,023,716
Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds-Series 1998	4.9- 5.75%	15,494,499
Total		\$208,186,393

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

Total deferred maintenance costs for district facilities are estimated to be \$33 million. In May 1998, the district used an alternative financing technique to raise cash for deferred maintenance. The technique devised by the district's financial advisors allowed the district to raise funds without immediately increasing debt service requirements.

First, the district issued \$17.5 million of contractual obligation bonds. Contractual obligation bonds are debt instruments that can be used to pay for personal property under the provisions of the Texas Public Property

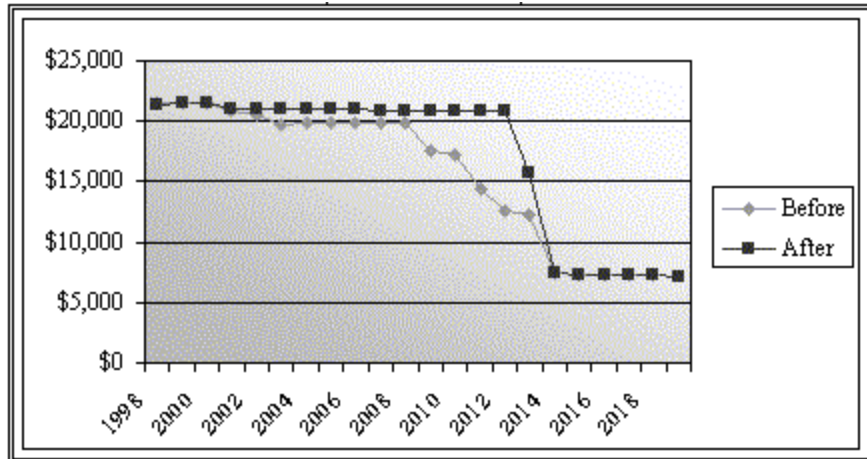
Finance Act. The proceeds of this bond issue will be used to pay for some of the deferred maintenance on district facilities.

Second, the district issued \$14.9 million in refunding bonds. Refunding bonds are issued to repay principal and accrued interest on older outstanding bonds. Normally, the district's debt service requirements would have increased immediately after issuance of the \$17.5 million of contractual obligation bonds. However, the refunding bonds will allow the district to avoid the immediate increase in overall debt service requirements brought about by the contractual obligation bonds.

Third, the district placed the \$14.9 million in refunding proceeds in an irrevocable trust to pay the principal and interest on older bonds. As a result, these older bonds became "defeased," which means that the district is released as the primary obligor on the bonds. Maturities on the defeased bonds are extended for several years and, as a result, the district's annual debt service requirements will remain virtually unchanged through the year 2013.

Finally, the district has \$17.5 million available to pay for deferred maintenance on aging facilities. The district will not need to raise taxes immediately to repay this money because maturities on other debt have been extended.

Exhibit 6-28
Annual Debt Service Requirements
Before and After Debt Restructuring
(\$ In Thousands)



Source: EPISD

COMMENDATION

The district used a combination of refunding bonds and the issuance of contractual obligation bonds to raise \$17.5 million for deferred maintenance without having to increase debt service requirements or immediately raise taxes.

Chapter 7

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter addresses EPISD's financial management functions in four sections:

- A. Budgeting and Planning
- B. Internal and External Auditing
- C. Accounting Operations
- D. Tax Rate and Collections

Financial management concerns a district's ability to effectively plan, manage, and maximize the use of its resources; its ability to perform these tasks significantly affects its relationships with employees, vendors, funding agencies, and the general public. Financial management is most effective when resources are allocated and expended based upon established priorities; internal controls are put in place and operate as intended; financial information is provided in a timely way and in useful formats; and staff resources and technology both are leveraged to achieve maximum results.

School districts must maintain and operate effective financial management systems in a highly regulated environment. Districts must meet various financial management requirements established by federal and state laws, rules, and regulations; the Texas Education Agency (TEA) *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*; internally established policies and procedures; Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; and Governmental Accounting Standards Board guidelines.

BACKGROUND

EPISD's budget is about \$400 million per school year. This revenue is generated from local, state, and federal sources. Local revenues come primarily from property taxes.

State revenues come from grants and appropriations from the state's two-tier funding system. Generally, Tier I funding is designed so that the district and the state share the cost of providing basic educational services. The share for each depends on the district's property tax base. School districts receive state Tier II funds based upon their weighted average daily attendance.

Federal revenues are received through various grants designed to supplement programs already in place. Examples include the National School Lunch Program and the Improving America's Schools Act Title I

program for low-income students. EPISD also receives federal funds from the federal government's Impact Aid program because of Fort Bliss's presence within the district. Impact Aid compensates school districts for a portion of the burdens placed on their resources by federal activity either through the presence of federal property in the district or the addition of "federally connected" children to the student population. (Federally connected children include those who live on federal property and whose parents either live or work on federal property, such as children living on military bases or who have a parent on active duty in the military.) Fort Bliss property values are excluded from district property tax rolls, so the federal government provides a per-student allotment to the district through Impact Aid. During the 1997-98 school year, the district received about \$1.7 million from this program.

Exhibit 7-1 presents a three-year summary of total district revenues.

**Exhibit 7-1
EPISD Revenues
Fiscal 1995-96 through 1997-98**

Source	1995-96		1996-97		1997-98		3-year Growth Rate
Local	\$139,032,919	38%	\$144,040,824	39%	\$136,300,769	37%	(1)%
State	186,565,548	51%	188,673,757	51%	192,189,670	52%	1%
Federal	41,251,279	11%	40,322,729	11%	39,258,232	11%	(2)%
Total	\$366,849,746	100%	\$373,037,310	100%	\$367,748,671	100%	0%

Source: EPISD.

Since fiscal 1996, EPISD's total expenditures have risen about 3 percent annually. The highest increases have been in capital outlays because the district has been expending bond funds to acquire, construct, and repair facilities. In 1992, voters approved a \$150 million bond issue to finance facilities construction, renovation, and repair. **Exhibit 7-2** presents a three-year summary of the district's expenditures by function.

**Exhibit 7-2
EPISD Expenditures By Function
Fiscal 1995-96 through Fiscal 1997-98**

Function	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	3-year Growth
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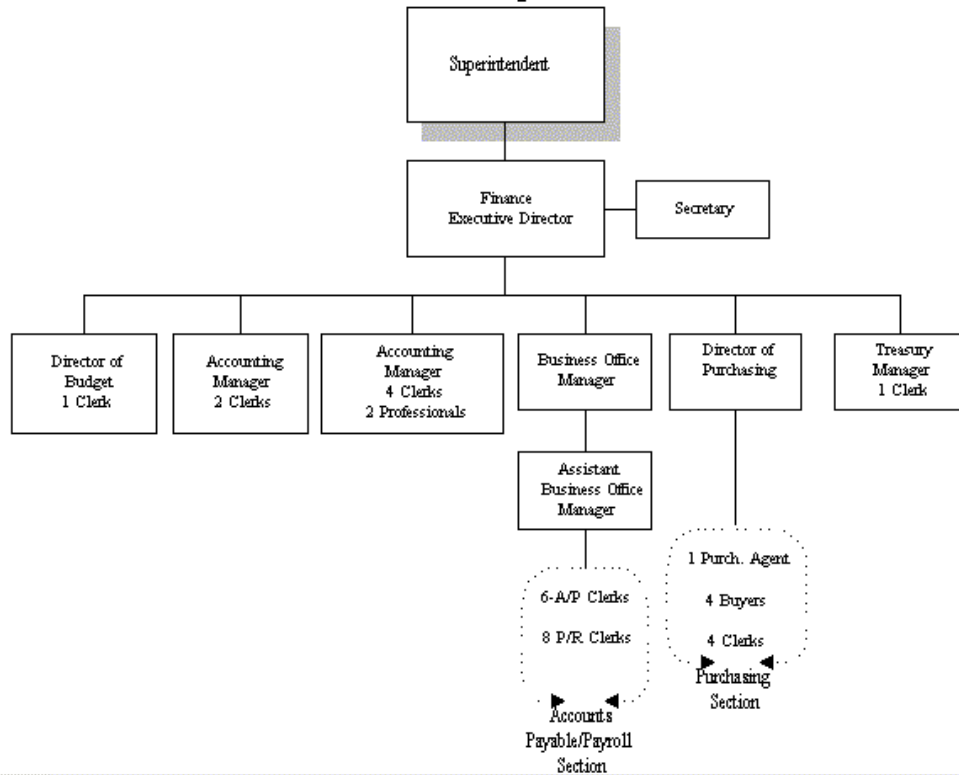
				Rate
Instruction and instructional-related services	\$204,457,052	\$206,434,240	\$214,506,172	5%
Instructional and school leadership	28,053,447	28,028,533	28,384,847	1
Support services-student	44,382,934	47,727,512	47,232,631	6
Administrative support services	11,195,751	11,375,281	12,079,755	8
Support services-non-student	32,128,764	36,717,906	36,464,374	13
Ancillary services	330,426	426,726	377,482	14
Debt service	21,744,362	21,741,563	21,731,272	0
Capital outlay	24,946,479	36,770,623	26,579,059	7
Total	\$367,239,215	\$389,222,384	\$387,355,592	5%

Source: EPISD.

The Finance, Budget, and Accounting Unit controls EPISD's financial management functions. The executive director of Finance is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Finance Unit. Forty-two positions assist the director. The executive director reports directly to the superintendent. **Exhibit 7-3** presents the Finance Unit's organization and **Exhibit 7-4** presents its budget for 1997-98 and 1998-99.

Exhibit 7-3

Finance Unit Organization



Source: Finance Unit

**Exhibit 7-4
Finance Unit Budget
Fiscal 1997-98 and 1998-99**

Description	1997-98 Budget	% of Budget	1998-99 Budget	% of Budget	% Change
Payroll	\$1,182,375	29%	\$1,207,907	30%	2%
Professional & Contracted Services*	2,451,730	61%	2,397,456	59%	(2%)
Supplies & Materials	50,900	1%	50,900	1%	-
Travel - Other	250,000	6%	250,000	6%	-
Insurance & Bonding	90,000	2%	90,000	2%	-
Misc. Operating Costs	3,000	-	3,000	0%	-
Capital Outlay	10,000	-	-	0%	-

Other	9,100	-	9,100	0%	-
Total	\$4,047,105	100.0%	\$4,008,363	100.0%	(1%)

Source: EPISD.

* Consists primarily of tax appraisal fees paid to the Central Appraisal District and collection fees paid to the City of El Paso.

A. Budgeting and Planning

CURRENT SITUATION

The superintendent is EPISD's chief budget officer and ultimately is responsible for ensuring that budgets are prepared and adopted in accordance with state laws and TEA guidelines. The executive director of Finance has been delegated the responsibility of overseeing the budget development process. The director of Budget and one secretary assist the executive director of Finance in monitoring, analyzing, and controlling budget totals on a daily basis.

The development of the district's budget is an intricate process requiring input from various individuals and groups across the organizational spectrum. At the campus level, principals act as budget managers. Each campus receives a per-student allocation from the district of \$85, \$75, and \$65 for high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, respectively. These funds are used for instructional, administrative, and library supplies. Campuses also receive an \$11 per-student allocation for copier equipment and supplies. Under site-based budgeting, principals along with campus staff and Campus Improvement Teams (CITs) decide how these funds are to be used. CITs include elected campus staff members, community members, and parents. Their role is to provide input into the use of campus funds and to assist the principal and campus staff in developing budget priorities and initiatives. CITs take the first step in the campus budget development process by identifying the school's educational needs and establishing goals, objectives, and strategies to address those needs. CITs also assist principals in determining whether or not budgets accurately reflect the goals of campus improvement plans. After campus budget priorities have been set, personnel at the regional level (EPISD has divided its schools among four regions) review them to ensure that they are aligned with regional budget initiatives.

At the regional level, executive directors are responsible for the development of regional budgets. Each region makes budget allocations for its schools. Regions receive per-capita allotments from the district for regular and special instructional programs such as Gifted and Talented, Bilingual Education, and Special Education. These allotments are allocated to each school based upon the number of students participating in each program. In addition, each school receives an allocation from the region to support core disciplines such as mathematics, reading, and social studies. These funds are used to pay for substitutes, stipends, staff development, and general supplies. Although the funds are allocated at the regional level, under site-based budgeting campuses still have discretion over how these funds are used.

At the district level, budget unit heads are responsible for the budgets within their areas. Budget units consist of districtwide functions such as the Superintendent's Office, Human Resources, and Facilities Planning and Operations. These units receive budget allotments based upon their own need assessments, which are reviewed and revised by the Finance, Budgeting, and Accounting Unit.

Certain items are budgeted centrally. For example, the Finance Unit makes revenue projections, budgets salaries, and calculates debt service and interest costs for the district as a whole.

The district also must budget for special revenue and capital projects funds. Special revenues are funds received from local, state and federal grants, the largest of which is the National Lunch Program. During the 1997-98 school year, the district received special revenue funds from more than 70 grants. The External Funding Unit administers most of these funds and is responsible for estimating, for budget purposes, how much will be received during each fiscal year. Capital project funds represent proceeds from the sale of bonds expended primarily for the acquisition and construction of real property as approved by the Board of Trustees. The Facilities Maintenance and Construction Unit provides key input into preparation of the capital projects budget.

Exhibit 7-5 summarizes the various organizations involved in EPISD's budget development and shows the amount and percentage of general operating budget dollars administered by each organization. As the exhibit shows, the regions administer 64.5 percent of the district's total general operating budget.

**Exhibit 7-5
Summary of Budget Development Responsibilities
and Operating Budget Dollars Administered**

Organization	Key Participants	Primary Responsibilities	Funding Sources	Fund Uses	1998-99 Budget (1)
Campuses	Principals, CITs, campus staff.	-Develop campus instructional budgets - Provide input on regional budget priorities and initiatives	Per capita allocation from district	Instructional supplies, materials, and equipment	\$6,470,452 2.2%
Regions	Associate superintendents.	-Develop instructional	Per capita allotments	Salaries for campus and	\$190,217,377 64.5%

	executive directors, program administrators, principals.	programs and core curriculum budgets - Oversee campus allocations for substitute pay, stipends, general supplies, and other funds supporting core disciplines	from district; campus allocations are budgeted at regional level but controlled by campuses	region personnel; regular and special instructional programs; general supplies and other expenditures that support these programs	
Budget Units	Budget Unit heads and their staff.	Develop unit's budget based upon needs assessment.	Allotment received from district after needs are reviewed and revised	Unit operational and administrative needs, including salaries	\$98,004,657 33.3%
District Budget Office	Superintendent, board, executive director of Finance, director of Budget.	Compiles entire budget, reviews and revises budget submissions, conducts budget review workshops and training sessions, oversees budget development, monitors budget totals	Local, state, and federal sources	All district general operations	\$294,692,486 100%

Source: EPISD and Texas School Performance Review.

(1) Represents amount and percent of the 1998-99 general operations budget over which organization exercises control.

The budget process begins each November with the development of spending priorities, budget initiatives, and program goals centered on

specific budget goals and objectives established by the Board of Trustees. The process ends in August with final adoption by the Board of Trustees. Budget compilation is fully automated. Computer training is provided for all campuses and budget units that request it. Budget input begins in January and must be completed by mid-February. The formal budget calendar presented in **Exhibit 7-6** guides the budget development process depicted in **Exhibit 7-7**.

**Exhibit 7-6
Budget Calendar**

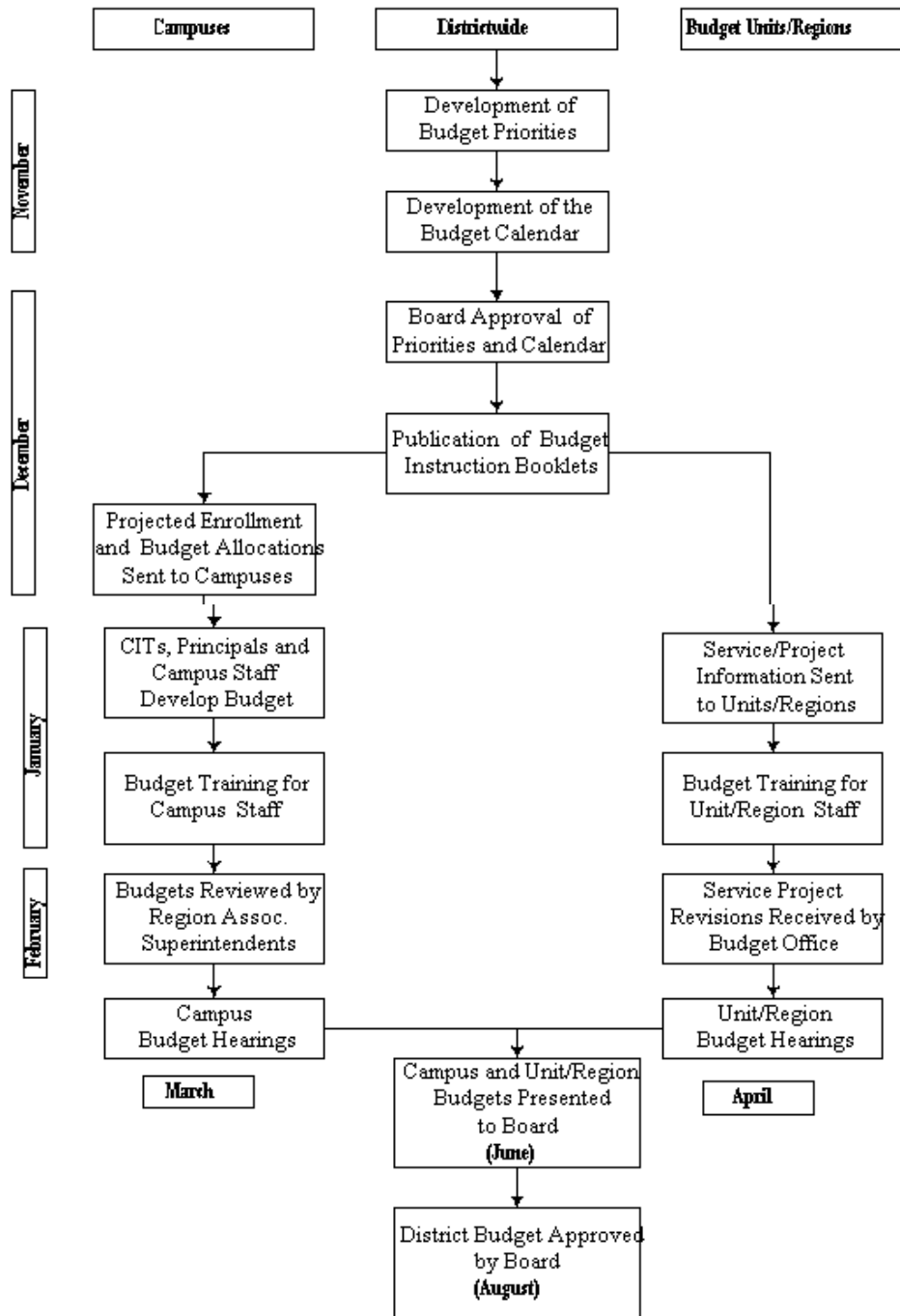
Month	Action	Responsibility
November-December		
Meetings to discuss budget deadlines and priorities	Board of Trustees, superintendent, District Education Improvement Council (DEIC), Budget Review Committee (BRC), executive director of Finance and director of Budget	
December		
Preparation and distribution of budget instructions and guidelines-campus	Superintendent, executive director of Finance and director of Budget	
January		
Preparation and distribution of budget instructions and guidelines-units	Superintendent, executive director of Finance and director of Budget	
January-February		
Preparation of budgets by principals	Principals	
February-March		
Preparation of budgets by unit heads	Executive directors, directors, associate and assistant superintendents	
March		
Administrative review of	Region associate superintendents.	

campus budgets	executive director of Finance and director of Budget
March	
Update Board of Trustees on status of budget process and state funding issues	Superintendent, executive director of Finance and director of Budget
April	
Consultation proposal on salary recommendation is due	El Paso Consultation Association
April	
Consultation salary recommendations presented to board for information	Superintendent
April	
Administrative review of budget units	Superintendent, executive director of Finance, and director of Budget
April	
Discussion of 1998-99 preliminary budget	Board of Trustees, superintendent, DEIC, BRC, executive director of Finance and director of Budget
May	
Meeting to discuss consultation salary recommendations	Board of Trustees, superintendent, executive director of Finance and director of Budget
May	
Discussion of 1998-99 preliminary budget	Board of Trustees, superintendent, executive director of Finance and director of Budget
June	
Update of projected revenues and their affect on budget and salary recommendations	Board of Trustees, superintendent, executive director of Finance, and director of Budget

June	
Presentation of 1998-99 salaries	Board of Trustees, superintendent, and salary steering committee
June	
Approval of 1998-99 salaries	Board of Trustees, superintendent, and salary steering committee
June	
Presentation of preliminary budget to the Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees, superintendent, executive director of Finance, and director of Budget
July	
Additional meetings to discuss budget recommendations	Board of Trustees, superintendent, BRC, executive director of Finance, and director of Budget
August	
Adoption of 1998-99 preliminary budget	Board of Trustees

Source: EPISD.

**Exhibit 7-7
EPISD Budget Development Process**



Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 7-8 presents a three-year picture of EPISD's budget. The largest increase between fiscal 1997-98 and 1998-99 was in capital outlays, which rose by about 61 percent. This reflects costs to be incurred in constructing, renovating, and repairing district facilities during the 1998-99 school year.

Exhibits 7-8
Budgeted Expenditures by Function
Fiscal Years 1996-97 through 1998-99
(In Thousands)

Function	1996-97	1997-98	% Change	1998-99	% Change
Instruction and instructional-related services	\$202,752	\$203,642	0.4	\$205,434	0.9%
Instructional and school leadership	26,659	27,338	2.5	28,509	4.3
Support Services-student	46,499	48,575	4.5	49,554	2.0
Administrative support services	11,331	12,085	6.7	12,492	3.4
Support Services-non-student	34,313	35,477	3.4	35,929	1.3
Ancillary services	611	396	(35.1)	402	1.4
Debt service	21,606	21,762	0.7	21,746	(0.1)
Capital outlay	54,042	36,736	(32.0)	59,051	60.7
Total expenditures	\$397,813	\$386,011	-3.0%	\$413,117	7.0%

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

EPISD's official 1998-99 budget document meets minimum TEA requirements, but could be enhanced to be more informative and descriptive. The first section includes a definition of budgeted funds, a summary of revenues and expenditures by fund, and two graphs one of expenditures by function and the other of expenditures by object. The rest of the document simply compiles all of the campus and unit budgets. The only narrative in the entire document is a definition of budgeted funds at the beginning of the document.

A budget, however, is more than a financial plan; it also is a communications device and an operations guide. Budget documents are most effective when both district staff and the community at large can use them to understand the district's inner workings. Organizations have an opportunity to *tell their story* when their budgets communicate what is behind and beyond the numbers.

EPISD recognizes the limitations of its budget document and is taking steps to improve its form and content by enrolling in the Association of School Business Officials International's (ASBO's) Meritorious Budget Awards Program, which establishes a number of criteria for exemplary budget documents.

ASBO requires districts applying for its award to divide their budget documents into four sections:

- Introductory section
- Organizational section
- Financial section
- Information section

Each section is evaluated against established criteria to determine if the section exceeds, meets, or does not meet ASBO's criteria. **Exhibit 7-9** presents selected samples of criteria from each of the sections listed above.

Exhibit 7-9
ASBO's Meritorious Budget Awards Program Criteria

<p>Introductory Section Contains an executive summary that tells the budget story in narrative, numeric, and graphic form. Includes a listing of board members and first-level administrative personnel.</p>
<p>Organizational Section Provides detailed demographic information about the district including level of education provided, geographic area served, and number of schools and students. Includes an organizational chart, mission statement, and goals and objectives. Discusses forces that drive the budget process, such as policies and regulations.</p>
<p>Financial Section Describes the extent to which capital spending affects current and future operating budgets. Includes data on current debt obligations and describes the relationship between current debt levels and legal debt limits.</p>
<p>Information Section Explains underlying assumptions for each major revenue estimate. Discusses significant trends in major revenue categories. Presents assessed and market property values. Presents property tax and collection rates. Provides performance measures for three years. Presents student enrollment and personnel information.</p>

Source: Association of School Business Officials International.

EPISD's fiscal 1998-99 budget document does not meet any of these criteria. However, the district is incorporating several of them into its fiscal 1999-2000 budget document and plans to enter its fiscal 2000-2001 document into the award program.

The district's budget document will be more useful as a communication tool and operations guide when it meets the requirements of the ASBO Meritorious Budget Awards Program.

COMMENDATION

EPISD is improving the form and content of its 1999-2000 budget document and will enroll its fiscal 2000-2001 document in ASBO's Meritorious Budget Awards Program.

FINDING

Each year, EPISD's Board of Trustees approves goals and objectives for the district. These goals are general but are supported by specific objectives detailed in the District Improvement Plan (DIP). Board goals and objectives affect budget decisions as they filter down through the district and are reflected in regional initiatives and campus improvement plans. As the DIP is being developed, units within the district link their goals and objectives with their budgets.

COMMENDATION

EPISD links budget totals to board goals and objectives in its District Improvement Plan.

FINDING

EPISD's schools are allocated resources each year to support instructional programs. Budgets for these resources are established and controlled at the campus level and include allocations for instructional supplies, materials, and equipment. These allocations were determined from an allocation formula that has not been reviewed since fiscal 1996. As shown in **Exhibit 7-10**, allocations were adjusted each year until fiscal 1998, but were not revised for fiscal 1999. Prior to 1996, campuses received funds based upon unit per-capita allocations. For example, the English Unit received one amount per student while Special Education received another. Departmental allocations focused on program participation.

During fiscal 1996, the allocation formula was revised to provide campuses with a lump-sum amount per student without regard to program participation. Currently, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools each receive \$85, \$75, and \$65 respectively for instructional supplies, materials, and equipment plus an \$11 per student copier allowance. **Exhibit 7-10** shows how the instructional budget allocations originally were developed. Amounts for fiscal 1997 through 1999 are based upon estimated budgets and enrollment. These estimates were made when the allocation formula was first developed in fiscal 1996.

Exhibit 7-10
Calculation of Instructional Budget Allocations
Fiscal 1996 through 1999

Year	High Schools	Middle Schools	Elementary Schools
<u>1996</u> Total Budget Enrollment Allocation			
\$1,417,356 17,463 \$81	\$864,520 13,948 \$62	\$1,840,442 33,274 \$55	
<u>1997</u> Estimated Budget Projected Enrollment Allocation			
\$1,407,016 16,952 \$83	\$934,516 13,948 \$62	\$1,996,440 33,274 \$60	
<u>1998</u> Estimated Budget Projected Enrollment Allocation			
\$1,440,920 16,952 \$85	\$1,046,100 13,948 \$75	\$2,162,810 33,274 \$65	
<u>1999</u> Estimated Budget Projected Enrollment			

Allocation		
\$1,440,920 16,952 \$85	\$1,046,100 13,948 \$75	\$2,162,810 33,274 \$65

Source: EPISD.

According to TSPR's survey results, 41 percent of EPISD teachers feel that their schools lack the materials and supplies needed for basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics. Forty-eight percent of teachers feel the necessary materials and supplies *are* available. Public comments regarding instructional supplies include the following:

- "We just adopted a great new art book this year. Now we need real art supplies in the elementary classroom."
- "Teachers need monies for classrooms. We spend a lot of our own money."
- "My own experience with friends who are teachers is that they will spend more than \$75 of their own money for student needs a semester. More money needs to be devoted to educational and instructional supplies."

An annual review of these allocations and the basis upon which they are determined would help ensure that they remain adequate to meet classroom needs.

Recommendation 75:

Review instructional budget allocation formulas annually to determine if the resulting allocations are reasonable.

EPISD should review and revise its campus allocation amounts as needed and develop a plan to monitor them on an ongoing basis. Allocations should be adjusted periodically to account for changes in the cost of instruction and the quantity of supplies used.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	
The executive director of Finance instructs the director of Budget to review and revise campus allocations based upon current conditions and to develop a plan to monitor these allocations periodically.	April 1999

2.	
The director of Budget reviews the campus allocations for reasonableness in light of current conditions and compares them with those in other districts that use similar allocation methods.	May 1999 through September 1999
3.	
The director of Budget revises campus allocations based upon this assessment and formulates a plan to review the allocations on an ongoing basis.	October 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

B. Internal and External Auditing

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Internal Audit Unit consists of a director, an internal auditor, and two audit assistants. The Board of Trustees and the superintendent created the Internal Audit Unit to review and appraise the reliability and integrity of the district's internal control systems, evaluate the accuracy and reliability of its accounting and reporting systems, and determine the extent to which district resources are employed economically and efficiently. The Internal Audit director reports directly to the superintendent. The Internal Audit Unit's annual budget is about \$175,000 per year and has remained relatively constant over the last three fiscal years (**Exhibit 7-11**).

Exhibit 7-11
Internal Audit Unit Budget

Description	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	Average Growth
Payroll Costs	\$158,510	\$159,274	\$162,268	1%
Supplies and Materials	11,750	13,650	11,250	-1%
Professional & Contract Services		1,100	1,200	9%
Total	\$170,260	\$174,024	\$174,718	1%

Source: EPISD.

On August 26, 1998, the interim superintendent approved Internal Audit's first formal audit plan. According to the plan, 28 percent of the unit's available hours will be allocated to campus audits, while 44 percent will be used for audits of districtwide operations (**Exhibit 7-12**).

Exhibit 7-12
Allocation of Available Audit Hours
Fiscal 1999 Audit Plan

Type of Project	Hours Allocated	Percent
Districtwide programs	2,168	44%
Campus programs	1,376	28
Performance audits	527	11
Unscheduled	320	7

Completion of prior audits	300	6
Assistance to external auditors	184	4
Total Available Audit Hours	4,875	100%

Source: EPISD.

As with all Texas school districts, EPISD must be audited annually by an independent accounting firm. The district consistently has received unqualified ("clean") opinions on its financial statements. However, auditors have included recommendations to strengthen various internal controls and operating procedures. For the 1998-99 school year, the Internal Audit Unit plans to allocate 4 percent of its audit hours to assisting the external auditors. The Finance, Budgeting, and Accounting Unit also provides extensive assistance to the external auditors.

FINDING

In July 1998, the district's Education Leadership Team approved an internal audit charter that describes the purpose, authority, responsibility, and reporting relationships of the Internal Audit Unit. In August 1998, the interim superintendent approved Internal Audit Unit's first formal audit plan for the 1998-99 school year. In addition, the Internal Audit director is developing a quality assurance program that will meet the Institute of Internal Auditors' (IAAs) *Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*. According to this plan, the quality of future audit services will be evaluated by:

- Completing self-assessment questionnaires at the end of each of the three phases of every audit (planning, fieldwork, and reporting).
- Affording audit clients the opportunity to express their level of satisfaction and recommendations for improvement.
- Developing and utilizing standards to measure audit performance and effectiveness.

COMMENDATION

EPISD recently approved a charter and audit plan and is developing a quality assurance program for its Internal Audit Unit.

FINDING

For the past 10 years, EPISD's Internal Audit Unit has partnered with the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in a program designed to assist students in career choices and give them practical work experience before

they graduate. The program is known as Cooperative Education (Co-op). The Internal Audit Unit hires interns through this program to assist with campus activity fund audits in the summer. During the 1996-97 school year, EPISD's Internal Audit Unit was recognized as the Co-op's Local Employer of the Year. Many of the students who worked with Internal Audit have gone on to careers in accounting, business, and finance in the El Paso area. One of them wrote the following in a letter nominating EPISD for the Co-op Employer of the Year award:

The position of internal staff auditor offers the motivated student the ability to gain real world experience... The work experience has helped me to become a better person and a confident accountant.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Internal Audit Unit has received special recognition from UTEP's Cooperative Education program.

FINDING

In 1994-95 and 1995-96, the district's external auditors noted the following in their *Letter Relating to Internal Control and Operating Procedures*:

The District's Internal Audit Department is not properly structured to provide the District with an effective internal audit function. The Department does not have the organizational authority to operate in an independent manner and performs operating duties (primarily campus accounting) which are incompatible with a true internal audit function.

Before the 1997-98 school year, most of Internal Audit's efforts were focused on developing accounting procedures for campus funds and reviewing such funds during the year. Instead of fulfilling the traditional roles of an internal auditing function, EPISD's internal auditors kept detailed records of campus fund activity; reviewed, corrected, and approved campus fund transactions; developed accounting procedures for campus funds; and provided training and technical assistance to campus personnel.

A strong internal audit function can be a valuable management tool. Internal auditors are familiar with their organization's policies, procedures, personnel, and operating practices and are able to provide management with in-depth evaluations of operations and internal controls. Moreover, internal auditors provide insight into the reliability and integrity of

information; review compliance with laws, rules, and regulations; and encourage the efficient and economical use of resources.

An effective internal audit function contains certain key elements (**Exhibit 7-13**). The Institute of Internal Auditors is the primary national professional organization for internal auditors, with more than 54,000 members and 210 chapters throughout the world. The IIA establishes standards, issues pronouncements, and provides resources, support, and training for the internal auditing profession. The IIA defines the internal audit function as follows:

...an independent appraisal function established within an organization to examine and evaluate its activities as a service to the organization. The objective of internal auditing is to assist members of the organization in the effective discharge of their responsibilities. To this end, internal auditing furnishes them with analyses, appraisals, recommendations, counsel, and information concerning the activities reviewed.

The IIA has established standards for the professional practice of internal auditing. These standards serve as the criteria by which the operations of an internal auditing department can be evaluated and measured. The IIA standards include both general and specific standards as well as guidelines suggesting ways to meet the standards. There are five general standards for the professional practice of internal auditing. **Exhibit 7-13** evaluates EPISD's Internal Audit Unit against these five standards and shows that EPISD's internal audit function fails to fully meet three of them.

**Exhibit 7-13
General Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing**

General Standard	Description	EPISD	Explanation
Independence	Internal auditors must be independent of the activities they audit. They must have the support of senior management and the board so that they can gain the cooperation of auditees and perform their work proficiently.	F	The Internal Audit Unit's reporting relationship restricts its independence. Internal Audit reports to the superintendent. The former superintendent and the board did not always agree as to what the Internal Audit function should be. The lack of cooperation between the superintendent and the board put the Internal

			Audit Unit in the middle and made it difficult for them to establish and maintain independence and direction.
Professional Proficiency	Internal auditors must have the technical proficiency and educational background to perform audits with due professional care. They must be able to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill their responsibilities.	P	<p>EPISD's internal audit staff includes one CPA and two MBA candidates. Combined, the staff has 51 years of varied district experience. Most training is provided in-house and includes courses in fraud investigation methods, computer training, effective communications, and managing warehouse operations.</p> <p>When staff resources were committed primarily to campus fund accounting, a campus accounting manual was developed that was recognized as a best practice by the Council of Great City Schools.</p>
Scope of Work	The scope of work should encompass the internal auditor's responsibility to evaluate the adequacy of internal controls as well as compliance with policies, procedures, laws, and regulations. Scope of work also involves reviewing the means of safeguarding assets, appraising the economy and efficiency with which resources are used, and determining whether operation and program results meet established goals and objectives.	F	The scope of work has not been broad. It has not encompassed a wide range of district activities and has not been driven by assessments of risk and the evaluation of internal controls. The focus, instead, has been on auditing campus funds. For example, auditors have never reviewed the fixed assets system, an area where controls require strengthening and improvement.

Performance of Audit Work	Audit work should include planning the audit, examining and evaluating information, communicating results, and following up on findings and recommendations.	F	The review team obtained evidence that this standard was met for campus fund reviews. However, it has not been met for other types of reviews performed over the years. The review team examined a room full of boxes containing audit work papers and other evidentiary materials. The workpapers lacked sufficient evidence of reporting and follow-up reviews for audits other than campus-related audits.
Management of the Internal Audit Unit	The Internal Audit Unit should be properly managed so that its work fulfills the expectations of senior managers and the board, employs resources effectively and efficiently, and ensures that its work conforms to professional standards. These goals are met through Internal Audit's mission statement, audit plan, policies and procedures, staff recruitment and training efforts, and quality assurance program.	P	In recent months, Internal Audit has developed a mission statement and an audit plan as well as a "Quality Assurance Program." The Internal Audit director told TSPR that Internal Audit is steadily moving towards fulfilling its true role under the interim superintendent's administration.

Source: Sawyers' Internal Auditing, 4th edition, and EPISD.

Key: P- meets the standard sufficiently

F-Fails to meet the standard

The Internal Audit Unit's charter establishes a reporting relationship directly with the superintendent, "whose authority is sufficient to assure a broad range of audit coverage and adequate follow-up on

recommendations." One of the most important standards for internal auditors is the requirement of independence. The "Statement of Responsibilities of Internal Auditing" issued by the IIA says that internal auditors should be independent of the activities they audit so that they can carry out their duties freely and objectively. To be effective, auditors must be able to render impartial and unbiased judgments during the course of their work. Moreover, auditing functions are most effective when they are respected and supported throughout the organization and when audit findings are taken seriously and acted upon.

Although the superintendent has sufficient authority to ensure that these standards are met, the reporting relationship has not encouraged independence as it should. To illustrate, the Internal Audit director submits weekly reports to the superintendent to summarize progress made on assigned projects. TSPR's review of these reports revealed a lack of professional independence on the part of the audit function.

To strengthen auditor independence, the IIA encourages governmental bodies to establish audit committees independent of management. Audit committee responsibilities include the following; in EPISD, many of these responsibilities presently are held by the administration:

- Develop a formal internal audit charter setting forth authority, duties, and responsibilities.
- Review audit plans and audit budgets.
- Review audit results and management's responses to audit findings and recommendations.
- Follow up on unresolved audit findings and recommendations.
- Oversee relations with external auditors.
- Review compliance with laws, regulations, and ethics.
- Assist the Board of Trustees in carrying out its responsibilities related to accounting policies, internal control, and financial reporting practices.
- Submit recommendations for hiring and firing the audit director to the Board of Trustees.

In a search for best practices, TSPR found that the Houston Independent School District (HISD) has a Board Audit Committee to assist the Board of Education "in discharging its responsibility for the overall stewardship of District affairs, particularly its financial management...." The committee's responsibilities are outlined in **Exhibit 7-14**.

Exhibit 7-14
HISD Board Audit Committee Responsibilities

General	Internal Audit	External Audit
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Responsibilities	Responsibilities	Responsibilities
Review internal and external audit reports.	Review and approve the annual plan for Internal Audit activities.	Review recommendations related to hiring of external auditing firms when necessary; recommend areas to be emphasized in the external audits.
Review annual financial reports, including independent auditor's opinions, management letter comments, and staff responses.	Review management's implementation of recommendations made by the internal auditors, or reasons recommendations are not being implemented.	Review the annual financial statements and the accountants' reports, including management letters related to improving the accounting and internal control systems.
Recommend to the superintendent audits of activities/areas of the district as needed.	Make recommendations related to the effectiveness of the internal audit effort.	
Submit periodic summary reports on all audits reviewed to the School Board.	Review the adequacy of the internal audit budget in relation to planned activities.	
Perform specific audit committee assignments as requested by vote of the School Board.		

Source: HISD.

Recommendation 76:

Establish an audit committee of the Board of Trustees to serve as an oversight body for the internal auditing function.

To ensure its independence and objectivity, the Internal Audit Unit should report functionally to at least one level above that of the area under audit. In the case of EPISD, the scope of audit work includes all areas under the control of the superintendent; therefore, the internal auditor should report functionally to a committee of the Board of Trustees. The unit should continue to report administratively to the superintendent in matters related to day-to-day operations and management. The committee should develop written policies to provide independent authority to the internal auditor

and to provide an open channel of communication between the auditor and board.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent proposes that the Education Leadership Team amend the Internal Audit Unit's charter so that Internal Audit reports functionally to an audit committee of the Board of Trustees and administratively to the superintendent.	April 1999
2.	The Board of Trustees establishes an audit committee and develops written policies and procedures outlining its relationship with the Internal Audit Unit.	May 1999
3.	The Internal Audit Unit charter is revised and approved by the Education Leadership Team and Board of Trustees.	June 1999
4.	The Board of Trustees reviews and approves the Internal Audit Unit's 1999-2000 audit plan.	September 1999
5.	The Internal Audit Unit begins to report to the audit committee of the Board of Trustees and continues to report administratively to the superintendent.	October 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

During the 1996-97 school year, the Internal Audit Unit initiated an audit prompted by newspaper articles of alleged abuse of overtime within EPISD. The audit, which identified possible abuses of overtime, nevertheless was discontinued before its completion due to a lack of support from district administration. To date, the audit still has not been completed. The review team was told that the audit was not supported because units experiencing problems and abuses in overtime wanted an opportunity to address the problems without an audit.

Recommendation 77:

Authorize the Internal Audit Unit to immediately complete the overtime audit and implement plans to reduce overtime across the district.

The Board of Trustees should require the Internal Audit Unit to complete the overtime audit begun in February 1997. The audit should be expanded to include 1997-98 overtime. The report should include specific

recommendations to reduce and monitor overtime, with implementation strategies and assigned responsibilities. When the audit is completed, the final report should be presented to the Board of Trustees for action. The district also should develop and implement a plan to reduce overtime across the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president directs the internal auditor to complete the overtime audit and issue a detailed report.	April 1999
2.	The internal auditor completes the overtime audit with recommendations to reduce overtime.	April - June 1999
3.	The internal auditor reviews draft report with the superintendent and administrators.	June 1999
4.	The internal auditor presents a final report and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.	July 1999
5.	The Board of Trustees reviews the report and directs the superintendent to implement its recommendations.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources. Savings should result from implementing recommendations in the internal audit report.

FINDING

A well-constructed audit plan spells out audit projects to be performed, justifies budget appropriations, and serves to gain management's cooperation and support of the audit process. It also provides a means of quality control by setting forth clear goals and objectives that management can "buy into" before the audit projects begin.

The interim superintendent approved the Internal Audit Unit's first formal audit plan in August 1998. The plan represents a commendable first step towards the fulfillment of the unit's appropriate audit role. It contains most of the elements of a well-defined audit plan; for example, it was developed with the input of key district administrators and illustrates how Internal Audit's resources will be allocated among various audit projects during the year. However, it can and should be improved to include other elements of a well-defined audit plan. **Exhibit 7-15** compares elements of a well-constructed audit plan to that of EPISD.

Exhibit 7-15
Characteristics of a Best Practice Audit Plan

Characteristic	Description	EPISD	Explanation
Projects are selected based on risk assessment and include a discussion of overall audit objectives.	More resources are allocated to areas of higher risk. The risk assessment and audit objectives for each project are included in the audit plan. Audit objectives provide an explanation of how their accomplishment will benefit the organization.	Weak	Risk assessments are not documented in the plan and the audit objectives for each project are not included.
The plan is subject to modification to meet the organization's needs.	Changes should not be made at the request of audit subjects who simply want the audit postponed for their convenience; however, flexibility should be built into the plan to accommodate the district's overall needs.	Adequate	The plan states in a cover letter that certain factors could result in a change to the plan. Such factors include the hiring of a new superintendent, board input, and results of the TSPR review.
The plan allows for input from senior management regarding their assessment of risk and exposure before the plan is finalized.	Management input in the audit plan is likely to improve cooperation from audit subjects and a shared sense of ownership of the final product.	Adequate	The superintendent, executive director of Finance, and Internal Audit director consider input from the board and district administrators while developing the audit plan. The plan is reviewed and modified as necessary based upon feedback from key district administrators.
The plan shows how staff resources will be allocated to audit projects.	An important standard of audit fieldwork is that staff be assigned to projects that match their skill and experience level.	Adequate	EPISD's plan shows the total allocation of hours to each project but does not show a breakdown of those hours by staff position. The Internal

	Allocation of staff resources in the plan should ensure that audits will be properly staffed and supervised.		Audit director maintains a schedule of staff hours allocated by project, but it is not included in the summary audit plan provided to district management.
The plan has estimated start and completion dates.	Estimated timelines are necessary to prevent projects from being delayed unnecessarily and to keep projects that have started on track.	Weak	The plan contains no discussion of estimated starting or ending times for projects.

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

In its search for best practices, TSPR identified several organizations that have incorporated the various elements of a well-constructed audit plan into their documents. For example, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has a plan that incorporates most of the elements of a well-defined plan, such as explanations of audit objectives and timelines. The Georgia Institute of Technology's audit plan contains predetermined risk factor values that are assigned based upon the type of audit planned. Corpus Christi ISD's audit plan shows the allocation of staff hours by project. Dallas ISD's audit plan lists anticipated benefits of various audit objectives. Finally, the General Services Administration has an excellent audit plan that outlines the focus of each project and sets estimated completion dates.

Recommendation 78:

Enhance the internal audit plan document by incorporating the elements of a well-constructed audit plan.

The IIA's *Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* provides that plans should be established to carry out the Internal Audit Unit's responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Internal Audit director to incorporate elements of a well-constructed audit plan into the unit's plan.	April 1999
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2.	The Internal Audit director obtains examples of audit plans of other organizations to use as a model.	May 1999
3.	The Internal Audit director revises the audit plan format and content to reflect the best practices of audit plans from other organizations.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Texas school districts are required by state and federal law to undergo an annual external audit of their financial statements. EPISD issues a request for proposals (RFP) for auditing services every four or five years. For the last 35 years, the district has selected KPMG Peat Marwick LLP as its independent audit firm.

The fact that the district has not changed auditors for a long period of time does not violate any law. However, this long-standing relationship could create a perception in the public's mind that the auditors lack independence, undermining confidence in the district's audited financial information. Auditor independence is important both to internal and external auditors, and in this area perception is as important as reality. Auditing standards require auditors to maintain independence so that their opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be viewed as impartial by the public.

The auditing profession has engaged in a long-standing debate as to whether auditors should be rotated periodically to ensure their independence. Some argue that a periodic change of auditors brings fresh views and new perspectives. Moreover, a rotation of auditors after a guaranteed maximum engagement period enhances their independence because it removes the auditor's fear of being dismissed during the period. The auditor can be more impartial because the threat of being fired over a dispute with the client is eliminated.

Others contend that a long-term, ongoing relationship with a particular auditor is better because mandatory rotation increases audit costs and reduces audit quality over time. They say that the benefits of audit firm rotation can be achieved through internal rotation of the firm's audit staff. In fact, professional auditing standards require auditors to adopt a staff rotation policy. EPISD's auditors have

adopted the following staff rotation policy for that district's review:

- Partner: may not serve more than 10 years.
- Manager: may not serve more than five years.
- Lead auditor: may not serve more than three years.

TSPR reviewed the auditor rotation policies and practices of EPISD's peer districts. Only one has a formal policy requiring the mandatory rotation of external auditors. The peers, however, have engaged a single external audit firm for an average of six years each, a fairly strong contrast with EPISD's 35- year record (**Exhibit 7-16**).

Exhibit 7-16
External Auditor Rotation Policies
EPISD and Peer Districts

District	Houston	Dallas	El Paso	Ft. Worth	Ysleta	Socorro	San Antonio	Corpus Christi
Does the district have a formal policy on mandatory rotation of its external auditors?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
For how many years has the district engaged its current auditors?	10	2	At least 35	10	2	3	10	5

Source: Peer District Surveys.

As a general practice, auditor rotation is not required and is not widely supported by the profession. In fact, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), in its *Statement of Position Regarding Mandatory Rotation of Audit Firms of Publicly Held Companies*, concludes that mandatory auditor rotation "is not in the public interest":

...some observers of the public accounting profession have suggested that the quality of audits could be improved if audit firm rotation were required after some specified period. This recommendation rests on the premise

that establishing a long-term client relationship can impair the auditor's objectivity....the Institute has concluded that there is no credible evidence that such a requirement would improve the quality of audits. To the contrary, the Institute believes that mandatory audit firm rotation would not be in the public interest. For one thing, it would dramatically increase costs for firms, clients and the public. In addition, it would increase the likelihood of poor audits, by depriving auditors of a most valuable tool: experience with a client and the resulting comprehensive knowledge of its business and operations.

In addition to the annual external audit, KPMG has performed other work for the district including a Manpower Efficiency Study and a review of medical benefit claims paid by the district's health plan third party administrator.

The district prepares a request for proposals for audit services every four years, most recently in April 1998. Four accounting firms responded. Of the four bids submitted, the district concluded that only two were viable. As noted above, the bid was awarded to the same accounting firm the district has used for decades. This firm is likely to continue winning the bid because the field of viable respondents is so narrow. KPMG is the only "Big Six" multinational firm among the respondents.

The district uses the model auditing services RFP prescribed by TEA in its *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*. This model is designed to provide both the district and the auditing firm with the information needed to fully understand and evaluate the services to be performed. TEA's model neither requires nor guarantees a large pool of responses. Local and out-of-town firms have an opportunity to respond and participate in the bid process, but out-of-towners are less likely to do so because the RFP is advertised only in the local newspaper, a common practice among school districts. In this age of free-flowing information, out-of-town firms may obtain a copy of the district's RFP but still feel discouraged from participating in the process; some might perceive that it is not worth the effort since the district has used the same auditors for decades and is unlikely to change.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) is a national organization that seeks to improve the quality of governmental accounting, auditing, and reporting. GFOA has published an *Audit Management Handbook* to assist governments in procuring quality audit services. The handbook suggests 24 steps to preparing an RFP that meets the needs of the governmental entity as well as the proposing firm. EPISD's existing RFP format incorporates most of these essential steps but lacks certain elements that might encourage broader participation in the bid process. For example, the handbook suggests the following elements be included in

an RFP to ensure broad participation; all three are lacking in the district's current RFP document.

- Identify who will be evaluating the proposers' qualifications.
- Describe in detail particular qualifications that will be considered favorably. This gives respondents the opportunity to emphasize important strengths that might otherwise be overlooked.
- Conduct a preproposal conference. This conference gives each respondent an opportunity to ask and answer pertinent questions about the district's operations and the firm's qualifications and experience.

Incorporating these elements into EPISD's RFP could promote broader participation by qualified firms in the bid process.

Recommendation 79:

Aggressively seek to expand the field of qualified CPA firms responding to the district's quadrennial RFP for auditing services.

The district should attempt to expand the field of qualified auditing firms that respond to its RFP. In addition to expanding its existing RFP format to create a sense of fairness, the district also should expand its advertising of the RFP. Notices could be placed in the State Society of Certified Public Accountants' newsletter and on the district's website. Moreover, the district could use a direct mailing to notify qualified accounting firms of the RFP.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to modify the auditing services RFP to incorporate elements of GFOA's broad participation criteria.	September 1999
2.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to develop strategies to encourage more qualified auditing firms to participate in the selection process.	September 1999
3.	The Finance committee incorporates the modified RFP and the strategies developed by the executive director of Finance into the selection process to expand the field of qualified firms responding to the RFP.	April 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

C. Accounting Operations

Payroll

All expenditures except bond and loan payments are considered operating expenditures and payroll is the majority of a school district's operating expenditures. As of August 31, 1998, EPISD employed 7,841 people in various categories and has a total annual payroll of \$255,799,050. The employee categories are:

- Teachers - 4,941
- Educational Aides - 391
- Auxiliary Staff (custodians, transportation drivers, police, food service workers, etc.) - 2,509

Exhibit 7-17 summarizes EPISD's 1997-98 payroll by payroll category.

**Exhibit 7-17
EPISD Payroll by Category
Fiscal 1997-98**

Description	Operating Fund	Special Revenue Fund	Total
Substitute Teachers	\$4,157,867	\$236,935	\$4,394,802
Other Payroll Payments	760,852	148,090	908,942
Extra Duty Prof.	3,859,015	267,825	4,126,840
Salaries-Professional	169,959,475	12,614,917	182,574,392
Extra Duty-Overtime	2,138,461	251,842	2,390,303
Part-time & Temp.	2,515,315	513,040	3,028,355
Salaries-Support Pers.	32,431,675	8,800,831	41,232,506
FICA/MED	2,208,053	256,876	2,464,929
TRS	11,663,000		11,663,000
Unemployment Comp.	134,633	2,799	137,432
TRS Care	894,580	1,164,584	2,059,164
Other Employee Benefits	818,385		818,385
Total	\$231,541,311	\$24,257,739	\$255,799,050

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 7-18 compares EPISD's annual payroll to its peer districts.

**Exhibit 7-18
Comparison of Annual Payroll
EPISD and Peer District**

School Year 1996-97

District	Number Of Employees	Total Payroll	Total Expenditures*	Payroll Expenditures per Student**	% of Payroll to Total Expenditures
Houston ISD	22,461	\$ 825,179,724	\$ 1,094,161,174	\$3,941	75.4%
Dallas ISD	17,343	636,427,528	801,929,350	4,110	79.4
Ft. Worth ISD	8,546	300,792,005	383,112,459	3,968	78.5
Austin ISD	8,544	273,211,713	390,663,435	3,592	69.9
San Antonio ISD	7,782	286,947,187	347,500,911	4,676	82.6
Ysleta ISD	5,601	183,210,857	231,370,086	3,868	79.2
Corpus Christi ISD	4,817	152,221,982	205,599,178	3,659	74.0
Socorro ISD	2,498	76,399,168	115,766,748	3,621	66.0
Average without El Paso ISD	9,699	\$341,798,771	\$446,262,918	\$3,929	76.5%
El Paso ISD	7,845	\$234,607,713	\$323,047,815	\$3,640	72.6%

Source: Texas Education Agency.

* All expenditures including construction and other capital expenditures.

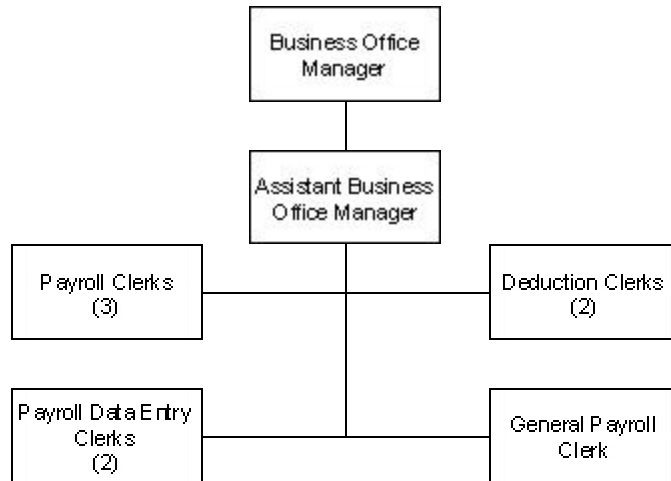
** Calculated by TSPR.

EPISD's ratios of payroll expenditures to total expenditures and payroll expenditures per student ranks slightly below the peer district average.

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's payroll is processed by its Finance Unit. The Business Office manager is responsible for the Payroll sub-unit, which contains 10 full-time equivalent employees including the Business Office manager and assistant manager (**Exhibit 7-19**). KPMG recommended this organizational structure, with the exception of the assistant business manager.

Exhibit 7-19
EPISD Payroll Sub-Unit
Organizational Structure



Source: EPISD.

FINDING

EPISD's payroll process is manual, in that all schools and units are provided weekly sign-in sheets that employees initial each day. According to responses received from peer districts, manual sign-in sheets are common practice. Sign-in sheets are printed and completed for all schools and units. The completed sheets then are forwarded to the Payroll sub-unit each Friday. The payroll clerks look up pay rates on the computer, write

the amounts due on the sheets, and forward the information to data entry clerks in the Payroll sub-unit. Data entry clerks then enter the pay information into the payroll system and payroll checks are issued.

Teacher absences also are recorded from substitute teacher cards. The schools complete these cards when a teacher is absent. The card lists the teacher's name, the substitute teacher's name, the absence date, and the reason for the absence. Two data entry and three payroll clerks are dedicated to reviewing and entering information from the sign-in sheets and substitute teacher cards.

Teacher substitutes, custodians, maintenance workers, warehouse workers, transportation workers, food service workers, and security officers are paid twice per month. Teachers, clerical employees, and administrators are paid monthly.

None of the schools responding to a TSPR survey use an automated time-keeping system; however, most large corporations do. Automated time-keeping systems facilitate payroll processing, are more accurate than paper sign-in sheets, and can generate management reports for use in monitoring employee time and attendance.

Manual processes increase the potential for errors and require more labor hours to reconcile paper to data entered. EPISD has an automated substitute calling system, but it is not interfaced with the payroll system, although it could be. This would allow for automated time and attendance recording and eliminate the need for paper sign-in sheets.

Recommendation 80:

Require full implementation of the automated substitute caller system and create an electronic attendance interface with the automated payroll system.

All district employees should be required to use the automated substitute caller system to record their absences. Once the absence is telephoned in, the information can be electronically imported into the automated payroll system. The district has not implemented this feature because some of its employees have not been trained in how to use the system. Sign-in sheets could still be generated and maintained at the schools for verification purposes for the first year of implementation if the district does not feel comfortable with the electronic process.

EPISD also should consider implementing an automated time-keeping system for employees who are not full-time or whose hours vary by pay period. This would allow for the complete elimination of paper sign-in

sheets. Ideally, employees that would use an automated time-keeping system include drivers, food service workers, custodians, and part-time clerks.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance and the Employee Relations executive director to implement an automated time and attendance system for full-time employees through the automated substitute caller system.	April 1999
2.	The executive directors of Finance and Employee Relations train all employees on the automated substitute caller system.	May - June 1999
3.	The executive directors of Finance and Employee Relations implement the automated substitute caller system throughout the district.	July 1999
4.	The executive director of Finance develops procedures to record absences through the automated substitute caller system.	April - May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with current resources, since the district already has the automated substitute caller system in place. If each clerk were to save 5 minutes per employee time sheet, the district would save more than 485 staff-hours per week. At a rate of \$8 per hour for 46 weeks, the district would realize a cost avoidance of \$178,480 annually. This time savings would allow clerks to devote more energy to their primary duties, but no reduction in staff is anticipated.

FINDING

EPISD does not have a written policies and procedures manual for payroll processing. Such a manual is essential in that it encourages the consistent payroll processing; furthermore, manuals provide written notice to all employees as to approved policies and procedures, provide directions as to how to process a payroll request, and serve as a training tool for new employees.

The business manager stated that the development of a policies and procedures manual is on a list of tasks to be performed. However, this task has received a low priority because it would require modification once the district automates its payroll processing. At present, EPISD has no

established deadline for the completion of its automated payroll processing system.

Considering the size and volume of EPISD's payroll, the lack of clear consistent written processing procedures seems dangerous. It could result in mistakes in employee pay, delays in payroll processing due to errors in the completion of forms, and confusion among new employees about the payroll process. Furthermore, documenting today's procedures might help the district decide what it needs in an automated payroll system.

Recommendation 81:

Develop a formal procedures manual that details district policies and processes related to payroll and require all employees to receive full training on these procedures.

The Payroll sub-unit should develop a detailed policies and procedures manual based upon current procedures and update it once payroll processing is automated. If the manual is developed with automation in mind, the modifications should be minimal once full automation is achieved.

Once the manual is completed, copies should be provided to all employees. The Payroll sub-unit should provide training on these processes to all employees.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Finance Unit to develop a policies and procedures manual for payroll processing.	April 1999
2.	The Finance Unit and Payroll sub-unit develop the manual along with a structured employee training program.	April - May 1999
3.	The Finance Unit presents the draft manual to the superintendent for review and comments.	June 1999
4.	The superintendent presents the manual to Board of Trustees for approval.	July 1999
5.	Copies of the manual are distributed to all EPISD employees.	July 1999 - On-going
6.	The Finance Unit conducts four-hour training sessions for all employees.	August - September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Accounts Payable

CURRENT SITUATION

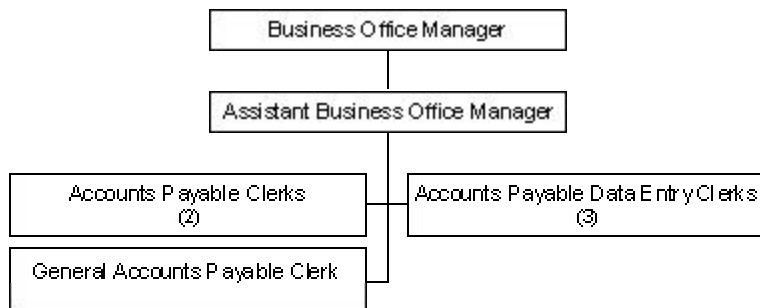
The Finance Unit is responsible for performing the accounts payable function for the district. Finance's Accounts Payable sub-unit pays all invoices; issues payroll advance checks, payments to referees and umpires for athletic events, and travel reimbursements; responds to vendor questions regarding payments; and, when necessary, returns merchandise ordered by schools and other units to vendors.

The district's automated financial system will not allow an accounts payable check to be issued until there is confirmation that totals shown on invoices match those on purchase orders, and that goods or services are delivered as ordered.

A "batch" is a series of entries related to a group of transactions. Most automated financial functions post invoices in small batches. The Food Service, Maintenance, Transportation, and Athletics units prepare their invoices for payment by entering the information into the district's automated accounts payable module by batch and then forwarding the batches with vendor invoices to Accounts Payable. Accounts Payable then reviews the batches to ensure that the total invoice amounts equal what was entered into the automated system. Once the review is completed and the batches are balanced, Accounts Payable then affirms that the batches are approved for payment processing.

Two clerks enter vendor invoices for payment; two clerks research accounts payable questions, and one clerk files documents and answers general inquiries via telephone (**Exhibit 7-20**).

Exhibit 7-20 EPISD Accounts Payable Sub-Unit Organizational Structure



Source: EPISD Finance Unit.

Accounts payable checks are issued twice per week. EPISD issued 107,935 accounts payable checks in 1996-97 and 81,096 in 1997-98.

FINDING

When invoices do not match the purchase order within an established 10 percent tolerance either of price or quantity, the Finance Unit will not pay the invoice. Instead, it is sent to the school or unit to complete a report that requests Purchasing to amend the purchase order. The report then is forwarded to Purchasing along with the invoice. The Purchasing director then must make corrections to the purchase order on-line and forward the report and invoice to the Finance Unit. This process is cumbersome and time consuming. The Purchasing director spends about an hour per day making purchase order corrections on-line. According to the district, this process is in place to keep the payment and purchasing functions separate and to ensure that required bid processes are not circumvented inadvertently.

The internal auditor reviews accounts payable transactions each month and randomly selects a sample of 50 to 60 payments to check for compliance with established procedures. The purchase order, invoice, and receiving reports are reviewed to ensure that the amounts paid are the same as those billed and that all established procedures were followed in making the payment. The internal auditor prepares a standard report that lists the transactions reviewed and the outcomes. This report is provided to the Board of Trustees.

Recommendation 82:

Eliminate the requirement that schools and units complete purchase order reports.

The district should eliminate the step requiring schools or units to complete purchase order reports. When invoices are received that do not match the total indicated on the purchase order, the Finance Unit should forward the invoice copy to Purchasing. The Purchasing agent and not the director then should make the necessary corrections to the purchase order and notify Finance that the changes have been made. Once payment is made, the Finance Unit should send a standard form indicating the purchase order number, original amount, and actual amount paid.

Exhibit 7-21 provides an example that could be used to pay invoices and notify schools and units of changes. This process would allow invoices to

be paid in a timely fashion and provide more time for the Purchasing director to concentrate on core purchasing functions.

<p>Exhibit 7-21 Finance Unit Additional Information Needed and Change Notification</p>	
To:	_____
Date:	_____
From:	_____
Phone:	_____
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receiving report approval is needed. 2. Your account number was changed; please amend your budget. Requested as # _____ Should be # _____ 3. Back up for paid purchase required. P.O. # _____ 4. Credit Memorandum required. 5. An original invoice is required - hotel, registration, car rental, taxi, airline, _____ 6. Invoice on file; if you have received merchandise please approve receiving report and submit for payment immediately. 7. Invoice required/packing list is not sufficient support. 8. Receiving report does not have quantities filled in. 9. Miscellaneous: _____ 	
<p>PLEASE RETURN TO THE FINANCE UNIT</p>	

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to modify the district's current invoice payment and notification procedures.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Finance develops procedures for paying invoices.	April 1999
3.	The executive director of Finance develops a standard notification form.	April 1999
4.	The executive director of Finance implements new procedures for paying invoices.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Activity Funds

School districts must account for student-generated money through separate accounts called activity funds. These activity funds include money that principals are allowed to control and spend as needed and usually are generated from vending machines and interest earned. Districts generally maintain separate bank accounts for these funds. Some centralize activity fund accounting in the district's business office while others allow individual schools to account for these funds. All school districts, however, are required to include activity funds in the annual financial audit conducted by independent auditors.

TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRB) outlines the requirements for student activity fund accounting. Three funds are used to record activity fund money. According to the FASRB, the school district's intent for the use of this money should dictate which fund is used to record the funds (**Exhibit 7-22**).

Exhibit 7-22
Student Activity Fund
Accounting Description

Fund	Purpose
General Fund	If the district's policy allows for excess or unused funds to be recalled into the General Fund for general use.
Special Revenue Fund (Fund 461 - Campus Activity Fund)	If individuals other than students involved in the activity fund can use activity fund money in a manner that does not directly benefit students but will benefit the school.
Agency Fund (Fund 865 - Student Activity Account for Student Clubs and Class Funds)	If activity fund financial decisions rest solely with students.

Source: Texas Education Agency.

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD maintains a decentralized student accounting system for activity funds. The Internal Audit unit is responsible for auditing student activity accounts. Before the current fiscal year, Internal Audit also was responsible for training school personnel in monitoring and assisting with the day-to-day operations of these funds. All of these responsibilities except for auditing have been transferred to the Finance Unit. A campus accountant and two campus accounting clerical assistants positions were

established in the Finance Unit to handle these responsibilities. This transfer of responsibilities was recommended by KPMG.

EPISD's activity funds consist of student club accounts that receive revenues from various fund-raising activities. Money generated from vending machines and interest earned is designated for principal's use and is called the "general fund." This general fund is separate from the district's general operating fund. All activity funds are accounted for at the respective schools.

Students raise money for various projects through fundraisers. Student organizations that conduct fundraisers are allowed to use only approved fundraising vendors to obtain merchandise. Student organizations must complete a fundraising form before commencing. The form lists the proposed vendor, the timing of the fundraiser, what the fundraising intent is, and who will be responsible for ensuring all merchandise and revenues are properly accounted. The form must be reviewed by the principal. Once the fundraiser is completed, a fundraiser summary form must be completed and sent to the appropriate regional assistant superintendent and the Finance Unit for review. If the fundraiser lost money or if money or merchandise was not returned by students, the form must contain an explanation.

FINDING

EPISD has developed a detailed Campus Accounting Manual (CAM). The CAM covers all aspects of school district financial operations, including a multitude of activity fund forms that must be completed. The manual covers procedures for both student and principal funds. This manual was submitted to Great City Schools Council's Management Resource Center and was published on the Internet as an example of best practices.

COMMENDATION

EPISD developed a comprehensive Campus Accounting Manual that has been recognized as a best practice.

FINDING

The Internal Audit Unit conducts campus audits including audits of activity funds. All activity fund transactions are reviewed for compliance with campus accounting policies and procedures. Each deviation is documented and described in a written report along with recommendations to improve and or correct the problem. The written report is provided to the principal and the associate superintendent or executive director for the

school's region. Written responses from the principal are required. The report, however, is not provided to the board or superintendent.

Recommendation 83:

Require written audit reports to be provided to the Board of Trustees and superintendent, and made available free of charge to all interested individuals at the school level.

The distribution of this report to board members and superintendent would reflect the importance of activity funds and serve as an additional monitoring mechanism. Written reports should be provided free of charge to all interested parties upon request. The district should develop a policy that identifies all interested parties and requires that written copies of activity fund audit reports be provided to them.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board president directs the superintendent to develop a policy requiring all activity fund internal audit reports be provided all interested parties.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent develops the policy.	May 1999
3.	The superintendent presents the policy to the board for approval.	June 1999
4.	The superintendent and internal auditor implement the policy.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD has decentralized activity accounts; each principal approves purchases for his or her school, each school has a separate bank account, and each is responsible for maintaining records of transactions and bank reconciliations. **Exhibit 7-23** summarizes each school's activity accounts for the 1997-98 school year.

**Exhibit 7-23
EPISD Student and Principal Activity Accounts
School Year 1997-98**

Region 1			
School	Cash	Investments	Total cash & Investments
Andress	\$37,356	\$25,000	\$62,356
Irvin	118,349	20,000	138,349
Center for Career and Technology	155,233	432,808	588,041
Canyon Hills	26,497	0-	26,497
Charles	76,983	0-	76,983
Magoffin	22,722	-0-	22,722
Richardson	9,300	-0-	9,300
Terrace Hills	3,349	10,000	13,349
Bradley	28,009	-0-	28,009
Burnet	9,880	-0-	9,880
Collins	10,441	-0-	10,441
Crosby	9,691	-0-	9,691
Dowell	18,324	-0-	18,324
Fannin	6,466	-0-	6,466
Lee	11,046	-0-	11,046
Newman	6,219	5,000	11,219
Nixon	12,462	-0-	12,462
Park	8,330	3,000	11,330
Schuster	4,472	-0-	4,472
Stanton	10,348	-0-	10,348
Wainwright	11,697	2,216	13,914
Whitaker	6,446	1,072	7,518
Region 1 Totals	\$603,618	\$499,097	\$1,102,714
Region 2			
Austin	\$88,698	\$40,000	\$128,698
Burges	11,813	156,206	168,019
Bassett	15,263	13,966	29,229

Coldwell	5,248	-0-	5,248
Cordova	4,549	-0-	4,549
Crockett	17,020	-0-	17,020
Houston	13,371	-0-	13,371
MacArthur	26,150	5,000	31,150
Ross	15,482	-0-	15,482
Bliss	25,507	2,500	28,007
Bonham	4,856	-0-	4,856
Cielo Vista	1,798	-0-	1,798
Clendenin	15,725	3,324	19,049
Hawkins	4,652	-0-	4,652
Highland	8,682	-0-	8,682
Hillside	19,632	-0-	19,632
Hughey	7,714	2,333	10,047
Logan	5,378	-0-	5,378
Milam	6,402	-0-	6,402
Rusk	15,026	7,500	22,526
Travis	5,209	-0-	5,209
Region 2 Totals	\$318,176	\$230,829	\$549,005
Region 3			
Bowie	\$111,278	-0-	\$111,278
El Paso	118,920	90,479	209,399
Jefferson	60,299	28,796	89,095
Guillen	14,342	-0-	14,342
Henderson	55,219	15,032	70,252
Wiggs	17,202	-0-	17,202
Alamo	9,407	6,602	16,009
Alta Vista	6,072	-0-	6,072
Aoy	4,380	1,018	5,398
Beall	10,589	-0-	10,589

Burleson	3,242	-0-	3,242
Clardy	11,516	\$5,909	17,426
Cooley	11,970	\$8,079	20,049
Douglass	6,680	-0-	6,680
Hart	9,242	-0-	9,242
Lamar	12,187	-0-	12,187
Mesita	17,144	-0-	17,144
Roosevelt	2,866	-0-	2,866
Vilas	1,977	-0-	1,977
Zavala	11,418	-0-	11,418
Region 3 Totals	\$495,948	\$155,916	\$651,865
Region 4			
Coronado	\$43,704	\$116,883	\$160,587
Franklin	61,826	85,179	147,005
Hornedo	129,644	34,043	163,687
Lincoln	57,419	30,000	87,419
Morehead	72,456	57,871	130,327
Occupational Center	5,832	-0-	5,832
Green	4,336	-0-	4,336
Guerrero	6,619	-0-	6,619
Johnson	8,058	-0-	8,058
Kohlberg	18,489	49	18,538
Lindbergh	23,200	-0-	23,200
Polk	7,560	-0-	7,560
Putnam	3,241	-0-	3,241
Rivera	11,555	-0-	11,555
Roberts	8,299	2,000	10,299
Western Hills	9,010	-0-	9,010
White	13,709	8,803	22,512
Region 4 Totals	\$484,957	\$334,828	\$819,785

GRAND TOTALS	\$1,902,699	\$1,220,670	\$3,123,369
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Source: EPISD.

Decentralized activity fund systems often lead to misuses of funds and do not offer the desired level of internal control for financial transactions. However, EPISD has implemented procedures to improve its internal controls over activity fund accounts, including the Campus Activity Fund Manual (CAM), which details all procedures that must be followed and provides forms that must be completed, central monitoring of all activity fund balances through the Finance Unit, and detailed annual audits of all activity funds by the Internal Audit Unit.

Activity fund monthly bank reconciliations are forwarded by the schools to the Finance Unit for review and tracking of revenues and expenditures. Three employees in the Finance Unit (a Campus Accounting sub-unit) are dedicated to monitoring activity funds and assisting with training. They also will substitute for school bookkeepers who are absent or during temporary job vacancies.

Most EPISD schools maintain manual records. They complete a series of forms concerning activity funds and send them to the Campus Accounting sub-unit each month. An automated activity fund accounting system maintained on the district's central computer system would allow for consistency in posting transactions, the generation of standard reports, and the ability to review postings and transactions on-line. One high school has developed and is testing an in-house accounting system of this kind. The manager in charge of Campus Accounting indicated that the pilot is going well and that he would like all schools to convert to the system within the next few years. However, the district has no implementation plan for this transition.

The Campus Accounting Unit reviews monthly bank reconciliations and financial statements prepared by each school. The financial statements are electronic spreadsheets prepared from manual records that summarize the beginning balance, revenues and expenditures by month and year to date, and ending balance for each account within the activity fund. They also list investments, amounts due to the district for various revenues collected at the school, and amounts due to the school from the district for reimbursable purchases made from activity funds. However, canceled checks and deposit slips are not forwarded for review.

All activity fund investments are made and monitored by the district's treasury manager.

Recommendation 84:

Implement the automated activity fund accounting system at all schools and require all transactions to be recorded on the automated system.

Because the district has some 80 individual activity fund bank accounts, it could not implement a centralized activity fund system with the Finance Unit responsible for issuing activity fund checks, posting transactions, and reconciling the bank accounts. However, the in-house developed automated activity fund system that resides on the district's central computer should be implemented at all schools and all activity fund transactions should be entered on the system.

The district also should require that all bank statements be mailed directly to the Finance Unit from the bank. Once these statements are received, the Finance Unit should keep the statement and contents on file, then mail a copy of the statement to the school. The canceled checks and deposit slips should be reviewed each month for propriety.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to implement the automated activity accounting system at all schools and require that all bank statements be mailed directly to the Finance Unit from the banks.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Finance develops an implementation plan and timeline and contacts the bank to have bank statements mailed directly to the Finance Unit.	May 1999
3.	The executive director of Finance presents plan and timeline to superintendent.	June 1999
4.	The executive director of Finance implements the automated activity fund system in phases.	June - September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources. EPISD has developed an automated student activity fund accounting system that some schools already use; this system should be made available to all schools. TIS and campus accounting clerical assistants should conduct all associated training.

D. Tax Rate and Collections

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Board of Trustees sets the district's tax rate. State law requires the rate to be set after the board adopts the district budget. EPISD's budget must be prepared by August 20 and adopted no later than August 31. The appraisal district usually has initial value estimates available in May. However, because certified property tax rolls are not available until the end of July, the district must forecast its property tax revenue for budget purposes. These projections must be monitored throughout the process to ensure that they are as accurate as possible before they are finalized.

Truth-in-taxation laws require school districts to calculate three tax rates after receiving their certified property values from the appraisal district: the effective rate, the rollback rate, and the proposed rate. The *effective rate* is the rate needed to generate the same amount of revenue as the previous year, based upon the current value of properties taxed the previous year. The effective rate allows taxpayers to understand the relationship between last year's tax revenue and current-year property values. Tax rates consist of a maintenance and operations component (M&O) and a debt service component. The M&O component is used to pay the general operating expenses of the district. The debt service component is used to pay principal and interest on the district's debt obligations. The *rollback rate* is the effective rate plus 8 cents (as established by law). The *proposed rate* is the rate needed to raise the amount of money the district estimates it needs for the coming year. The proposed rate becomes the adopted rate if it is not contested by voters and is approved by the Board of Trustees. Voters may contest the proposed rate (if it exceeds the rollback rate) by petitioning for an election to roll back the adopted rate.

The district recently increased its adopted tax rate by 9 percent, from \$1.51 in fiscal 1997-98 to \$1.65 in 1998-99. This increase was necessary to offset decreases in property values and state funding and to finance pay raises of about \$8 million. Property values fell by 4 percent between fiscal 1997-98 and 1998-99, while state funding fell by \$3.7 million. Moreover, the fiscal 1998-99 effective tax rate increased 10 cents or 7 percent over the previous year. This means that, to raise the same amount of revenue as the previous year, an additional 10 cents per \$100 of property value must be assessed on the current value of properties taxed in the previous year. **Exhibit 7-24** presents a three-year history of EPISD's projected tax revenue.

Exhibit 7-24
Property Tax Revenue Projections
(\$ Amounts in Thousands)

Description	1996-97	1997-98	Percent Change	1998-99	Percent Change
M&O component	1.27	1.27	-	1.39	9
Debt service component	0.24	0.24	-	0.26	8
*Adopted rate	1.51	1.51	-	1.65	9
*Effective rate	1.51	1.47	(3%)	1.57	7
Property value	\$8,344,901	\$8,298,940	(1)	\$7,992,788	(4)
Projected Revenue	\$126,008	\$125,314	(1%)	\$131,881	5%

Source: EPISD.

**Quoted per \$100 of property value and carried to only two decimal places.*

Revenues from property taxes make up about 32 percent of total district revenues, with the remainder coming from other local, state, and federal sources. Most of the district's revenue, 42 percent, comes from state sources. Revenues from property taxes rose by \$6.6 million, or 5 percent, between fiscal 1998 and 1999, while revenues from state sources decreased by \$3.7 million or 2 percent. Construction funds and deferred maintenance funds represent proceeds from the district's bond sales that have been made available for current year construction and facilities maintenance. They are not revenues in the strictest sense because they represent obligations. Overall, for fiscal 1999, the district projects a 7 percent, or \$27 million, increase in revenues and other proceeds over the previous year. Twenty-four percent of this increase will come from local property taxes. **Exhibit 7-25** compares the increase in property tax revenues with that of other categories.

Exhibit 7-25
Comparison of Property Tax Revenues with Budgeted
Revenues from Other Sources Projections
(\$ Amounts in Thousands)

Description	1996-97	1997-98	Percent Change	1998-99	Percent Change
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Property Taxes	\$126,008	\$125,304	(.6%)	\$131,881	5%
Other Local Sources	6,800	6,860	-	7,380	8
State Revenues	170,701	177,122	4	173,406	(2)
Federal Revenues	3,542	3,542	-	3,622	2
Special Revenues	43,761	42,184	4	41,528	2
*Construction Funds	47,000	31,000	(34)	40,800	32
*Deferred Maintenance	-	-	-	14,500	-
Total Revenues	\$397,812	\$386,012	3%	\$413,117	7%

Source: EPISD.

* Represents bond funds to be used for the construction and maintenance of district facilities.

When construction and deferred maintenance funds (bond funds) are excluded, the increase in total revenues between years is only \$2.8 million. With bond funds excluded, property taxes represent 235 percent of the increase in budgeted revenues between fiscal 1997-98 and 1998-99. However, property tax increases were partially offset by reductions in state and special revenues.

Instruction, school leadership, and student support services accounted for 82 percent of additional expenditures between fiscal 1998 and 1999 when bond funds are not included. When bond funds *are* included, capital outlays account for 81 percent of the district's additional expenditures between fiscal 1998 and 1999. **Exhibit 7-26** shows how revenue increases will be spent both with and without bond funds.

Exhibit 7-26
Analysis of Sources and Uses of Budget Increases
Between Fiscal 1998 and 1999
(\$ Amounts in Thousands)

Description	Increase (Decrease)	Percent Excluding Bond Funds	Percent Including Bond Funds
Sources			
Property Taxes	\$6,577	235%	24%

Other Local Sources	520	19	2
State Revenues	(3,716)	(134)	(14)
Federal Revenues	80	3	-
Special Revenues	(656)	(23)	(2)
Revenue Increase Excluding Bond Funds	\$2,805	100%	
*Construction Funds	9,800		36
*Deferred Maintenance	14,500		54
Revenue Increase Including Bond Funds	\$27,105		100%
Uses			
Instruction and instructional-related services	\$1,792	37%	7%
Instructional and school leadership	1,170	24	4
Support Services-student	979	21	4
Administrative support services	407	9	2
Support Services-non-student	452	9	2
Ancillary services	6	-	-
Debt service	(16)	-	-
Expenditure Increase Excluding Bond Funds	\$4,790	100%	
*Capital outlay	22,315		81%
Expenditure Increase Including Bond Funds	\$27,105		100%

Source: EPISD.

* Represents bond funds to be used for the construction and maintenance of district facilities.

The General and Capital Projects funds experienced the greatest increases between fiscal 1997-98 and 1998-99. General Fund expenditures increased by about \$18 million or 6 percent, while the Capital Projects Fund grew

about \$10 million or 32 percent. When these funds are analyzed by object code, it becomes clear that the greatest dollar increases occurred in payroll and capital improvements. Payroll and capital outlays in the general fund increased by about \$8 million and \$12 million, respectively. These increases will be used for pay increases and to finance deferred maintenance on aging district facilities. Building construction outlays in the Capital Projects Fund increased by about \$9 million between fiscal 1997-98 and 1998-99 years; these are bond funds that will be used to construct new facilities. **Exhibit 7-27** presents the district's budget by fund. **Exhibits 7-28 and 7-29** present the General Operating and Capital Projects funds by object.

**Exhibit 7-27
EPISD Budget By Fund
Fiscal 1998 and 1999**

Fund	1997-98	1998-99	Percentage Change
General Fund	\$291,216	\$309,192**	6%
Special Revenue	42,184	41,528	(2)
Debt Service	21,612	21,596	0
Capital Projects	31,000*	40,800	32
Total	\$386,012	\$413,116	7%

Source: EPISD.

**Reclassifications made after budget adoption increased this amount by about \$1,844,000.*

***Increase due primarily to \$14.5 million in contractual obligation bonds.*

**Exhibit 7-28
General Operating Fund Budget-By Object
Fiscal 1998 and 1999
(Amounts In Thousands)**

Object Description	1997-98	1998-99	Percentage Change
Payroll Costs	\$237,197	\$245,583	4%
Professional & Contracted Services	20,038	20,753	4

General Supplies	23,451	19,416	(17)
Other Operating Expenses	3,564	4,255	19
Capital Outlay	6,966	19,186*	175
Total	\$291,216	\$309,193	6%

Source: EPISD.

*Increase due primarily to \$14.5 million in contractual obligation bonds.

Exhibit 7-29
Capital Projects Fund Budget-By Object
Fiscal 1998 and 1999
(\$ In Thousands)

Object Description	1997-98	1998-99	Percentage Change
General Supplies	\$4,125	\$3,750	(9%)
Building Construction	25,068	33,800	35
Fees	3,650	3,250	(11)
Total	\$32,843	\$40,800	24%

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

The City of El Paso collects property taxes for EPISD through an interlocal contract. The Treasury manager, assisted by a cash receipts clerk, is responsible for monitoring the collection of these taxes. The city wires funds directly into the district's investment pools at least once a week, depending on how much revenue has accumulated, and daily during the peak collection period. Each day that funds are deposited, the investment pool sends the district confirmation that the funds have been received. The city follows up with a confirmation a few days after the wire transfer. The heavy tax collection season usually begins in early December.

Each month, the district receives a tax collection report from the city. Tax collections as a percentage of the total levy have averaged 97 percent over the last five years. Delinquent taxes outstanding as of August 31, 1998 were about 8 percent of the fiscal 1997-98 tax levy. EPISD's tax collections are in line with peer averages, while delinquencies are lower

than average. **Exhibit 7-30** presents the percentage of the current-year levy collected through August 31 for fiscal 1995-96 through 1997-98 for EPISD and the peers. **Exhibit 7-31** presents taxes, penalties, and interest collected for the current and prior years as a percentage of the current-year levy. **Exhibit 7-32** presents cumulative delinquent taxes outstanding as of August 31, 1998 as a percentage of the current-year levy.

Exhibit 7-30
Percentage of Fiscal Year Levy Collected
As of August 31

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
El Paso ISD	98%	97%	97%
Houston ISD	96	97	97
Corpus Christi ISD	NA	98	97
Fort Worth ISD	98	98	97
Ysleta ISD	98	96	96
San Antonio ISD	97	96	96
Average without EPISD	97%	97%	97%

Source: EPISD and Texas School Performance Review.
NA-Not Available

Exhibit 7-31
Current and Prior Year Tax, Interest, and Penalty Collections
As a Percentage of Current Fiscal Year Levy

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Houston ISD	100%	101%	101%
Corpus Christi ISD	NA	100	101
Fort Worth ISD	99	99	101
Ysleta ISD	100	99	100
El Paso ISD	99	99	99
San Antonio ISD	99	99	98
Average without EPISD	100%	100%	100%

Source: EPISD and Texas School Performance Review.
 NA= Not Available

Exhibit 7-32

Cumulative Delinquent Taxes

Outstanding as of August 31, 1998

District	Fiscal 1997-98 Levy	Delinquent Taxes As of August 31, 1998	Percentage Delinquencies To Levy
Houston ISD	\$619,348,015	\$104,492,524	17%
San Antonio ISD	\$106,045,747	\$14,648,895	14%
Ysleta ISD	\$57,383,159	\$6,894,937	12%
El Paso ISD	\$122,548,099	\$9,779,529	8%
Corpus Christi ISD	\$87,589,536	\$6,301,520	7%
Without EPISD	\$870,366,457	\$132,337,876	15%

Source: Tax Collection Reports from Peers and EPISD

COMMENDATION

EPISD has achieved a high overall tax collection rate through its interlocal agreement with the City of El Paso.

FINDING

EPISD removed about \$59 million worth of property from its 1998 tax rolls pending the resolution of a property appraisal dispute between a large oil company and the El Paso Central Appraisal District. The oil company claimed the appraisal district counted unused and obsolete equipment that was worth only about 23 percent of its appraised value. On September 30, 1998, while TSPR's review team was on site, the court ruled in the appraisal district's favor. The oil company appealed the decision.

EPISD could receive an additional \$976,000 if the oil company loses the case on appeal. However, this additional revenue would be partially offset by decreases in state funding that would occur once the property is put back on the tax rolls.

Recommendation 85:

Assess the impact on district local and state revenues of returning \$59 million to the property tax rolls and develop a strategy to mitigate any negative effect of such action.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to coordinate with the Research and Evaluation Unit to assess the impact on the district's state revenues of returning this property to the tax rolls.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent directs the executive director of Finance to assess whether the impact could affect the district negatively.	April 1999
3.	The executive director of Finance in coordination with the Research and Evaluation Unit assesses the impact of returning the property to the tax roll.	June 1999
4.	The executive director of Finance develops a strategy to reduce any negative effect returning the property to the tax rolls might have on state revenues.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 8

PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSE SERVICES

This chapter reviews EPISD's purchasing and warehousing functions in three sections:

- A. Purchasing
- B. Warehouse Services
- C. Textbooks

Purchasing functions within a school district ensure that the highest quality supplies, equipment, and services are purchased at the best price and in accordance with Texas purchasing guidelines. These criteria are met for each purchase without sacrificing quality and timeliness.

Warehousing operations include the receipt, storage, and distribution of a wide variety of goods, including school supplies, textbooks, and vehicle parts. Textbook operations ensure that textbooks are available for each student.

A. Purchasing

In 1995, the Texas Education Code (Education Code) was revised to include changes in state purchasing regulations designed to provide the best value to school districts through a competitive bidding process. This change allows districts to obtain goods and services through a variety of competitive purchasing practices. With the exception of procurements for professional services (i.e., services provided by accountants, architects, engineers, consultants) and contracts for produce or vehicle fuel, all school district contracts valued at \$25,000 or more in the aggregate, for each 12-month period, must be competitively bid, solicited through competitive sealed proposals, requests for proposals, purchased from the state catalog, procured through an interlocal contract, or through a design/build contract (e.g., turnkey construction).

Exhibit 8-1 summarizes competitive purchasing methods outlined in the Education Code:

Exhibit 8-1 Competitive Purchasing Methods

Purchasing Method	Description
Competitive bidding	Requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms and conditions, and bid prices.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding, but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after proposal opening.
Request for proposals	Furnishes a mechanism for the competitive sealed proposal process that generates the receipt of competitive sealed proposals and contains several key elements, including newspaper advertisement, notice to proposers, standard terms and conditions, special terms and conditions, scope of work, acknowledgment form/response sheet, felony conviction notice, and contract clause.
Catalogue purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software, and services only.
Interlocal contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state, or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity to take responsibility for

	both the design and construction of a project.
Job order contracts	Provides for the use of job order contracts for minor repairs and alternations.
Construction management contracts	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter, or repair facilities using a construction manager.

Source: Texas Education Agency.

The Education Code also provides guidelines for districts on providing notice of bidding opportunities and giving a sufficient amount of time for prospective bidders to respond. Districts must advertise contracts in excess of \$25,000 at least once a week, for two weeks, in any newspaper published in the county in which the school district is located. For contracts less than \$25,000, the notice requirement is satisfied by advertising in two successive issues of any newspaper published in the county in which the school district is located.

Purchases of personal property totaling between \$10,000 and \$25,000 in the aggregate, over a 12-month period, must be advertised in two successive issues of any newspaper during each 12-month period in the county in which the school district is located. The advertisement must specify the categories of personal property to be purchased, and solicit vendors that are interested in supplying items in any of the categories to the district. Before a purchase is made from a category, the district must obtain written or telephone price quotations from at least three vendors from the list for that particular category. The purchase must be made from the lowest *responsible* bidder.

The Education Code also allows school district trustees to purchase items that are available from only one source ("sole-source" purchases) if the item being purchased is:

- An item for which competition is precluded because of the existence of a patent, copyright, secret process, or monopoly;
- A film, manuscript, or book;
- A utility service including electricity, gas, or water;
- A captive replacement part or component for equipment (those that are specific to a particular piece of equipment and are not available from more than one vendor).

Exhibit 8-2 summarizes effective purchase and bid approval processes based on purchasing guidelines included in the Education Code.

**Exhibit 8-2
Bid and Purchasing
Recommended Approval Process**

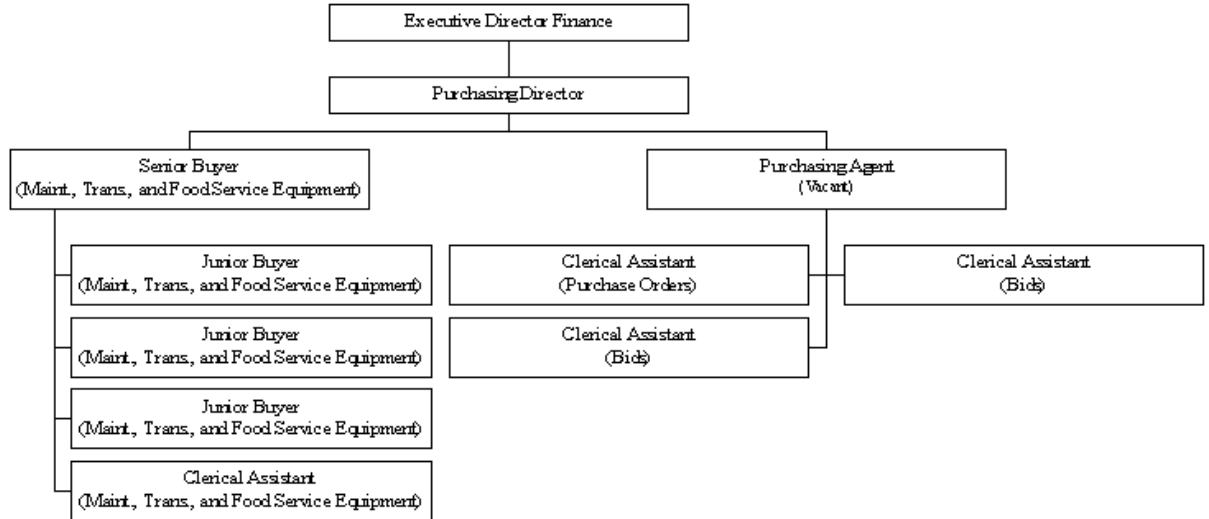
Purchase Levels	Bid Requirements (if no bid or contract exists)	Approval Requirements
Greater than \$25,000	Formal sealed bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Unit/School approvals and • Director of Purchasing and • Superintendent or designee and • Board of Trustees
\$10,000 - \$25,000	Formal quotations from 3 vendors (written and sealed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Unit/School approvals and • Director of Purchasing and • Superintendent or designee
\$5,000 - \$10,000	Quotations from 3 vendors (telephone, fax or written)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Unit/School approvals and • Purchasing agent
\$0-\$5,000	Quotations from 1 - 3 vendors (telephone, fax or written)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Unit/School approvals and • Purchasing clerk

Source: Education Code.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Purchasing Unit (Purchasing) is overseen by the executive director of Finance and managed on a day-to-day basis by the Purchasing Director who reports directly to the executive director of Finance. The current Purchasing Director was recently promoted to the position. Purchasing has 10 full-time-equivalent positions (FTEs) including the director (**Exhibit 8-3**).

**Exhibit 8-3
EPISD Purchasing Unit
Organizational Structure**



Source: EPISD Purchasing Unit.

Exhibit 8-4 summarizes Purchasing's operating budget.

**Exhibit 8-4
EPISD Purchasing Unit Operating Budget
1996-97 through 1998-99**

Category	1996-97 Budget	% of Budget	1997-98 Budget	% of Budget	1998-99 Budget	% of Budget
Payroll - General Administration	\$209,654	52.1%	\$213,550	50.1%	\$200,518	50.1%
Payroll Costs - Plant Maint. & Operations	\$132,907	33.0%	\$138,978	32.6%	\$144,448	36.1%
Misc. Operating Costs - Instruction	\$17,000	4.2%	\$20,872	4.9%	\$17,000	4.2%
Professional & Contracted Services	\$16,000	4.0%	\$11,000	2.6%	\$12,000	3.0%
Data Processing Services	\$0	0.0%	\$16,000	3.8%	\$0	0.0%

Supplies & Materials	\$21,107	5.2%	\$26,028	6.1%	\$26,100	6.5%
Capital Outlay	\$5,895	1.5%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Total	\$402,563	100.0%	\$426,428	100.0%	\$400,066	100.0%

Source: EPISD Adopted Budgets.

According to EPISD's *Purchasing Procedures Manual, January 1999*, the goal of the purchasing function is to "ensure that the person(s) requesting materials, services, or equipment receives whatever was ordered at the proper time, in the proper amount, at the accepted price, and delivered to the designated location." The manual further states that "the primary objectives of the district's purchasing function are cost reduction, service, and control."

EPISD Local Policy CH authorizes all purchase commitments to be made by the superintendent or designee on a properly drawn and issued purchase order. Accordingly, EPISD's Purchasing Unit is responsible for purchasing most materials, supplies, equipment, and services for the district and for maintaining the overall integrity of the district's competitive bidding process. Purchasing primarily is responsible for processing:

- Purchase requisitions: requests for purchases that are initiated by schools or units and electronically forwarded to Purchasing for processing.
- Competitive sealed bids: when vendors propose written prices through sealed documentation.
- Competitive solicitations: when vendors are contacted to request written prices for specific items (mainly used for the Maintenance and Transportation units).
- Quotations: when vendors are contacted to get verbal prices for specific items (mainly used for the Maintenance and Transportation units).

EPISD has an automated purchasing system that allows each school or unit to enter requisitions electronically at remote sites. All purchase requisitions from schools and units are initially approved by school principals or unit directors and a report of "approved, unprinted purchase orders" is printed by the Purchasing Unit. Requisitions for amounts up to \$10,000 are approved by the Purchasing Director and purchase orders are issued.

The Purchasing Unit runs a special report showing purchase requisitions greater than \$10,000. From this report, the Purchasing Director identifies

amounts between \$10,000 and \$25,000 that require three telephone or written quotations. Once these requisitions are identified, the Purchasing Director reviews related quote sheets, sole source letters, or special exception letters (e.g., for emergency repairs that comply with Education Code guidelines), approves the requisition, and issues the purchase orders. For major purchases over \$25,000, and spot purchases from Qualified Information Systems Vendors (QISV) over \$250,000, the Purchasing Director works with the issuing school or unit to solicit competitive sealed bids that must be approved by EPISD's board.

The Purchasing Unit also solicits annual catalog bids from vendors for school supplies, maintenance materials and supplies, and food service equipment. In this catalog bidding process, the Purchasing Unit works with schools and units to determine estimated annual expenditures for specific materials, supplies, or equipment purchases. Vendors are requested to submit catalogs with percentage discounts from catalog list prices. The Purchasing Unit selects catalog vendors based on discount pricing that provides the best value to the district and obtains the appropriate approval from the board. Upon approval by the board, schools and units may purchase items valued up to \$10,000 from catalog vendors.

EPISD also participates in cooperative purchasing efforts with the General Services Commission (GSC), the Department of Information Resources (DIR), and Region 19 Education Service Center (Region 19). The district routinely leases photocopying machines and purchases tires for its school buses from GSC. Computer software purchases are made from DIR and janitorial supplies and equipment are purchased from Region 19.

FINDING

EPISD's financial management software, Comprehensive Information Management Systems for Schools (CIMS), contains a purchasing module that allows the district to enter purchase requisitions electronically at schools and unit sites. The system has thirteen different purchase requisition message codes to guide Purchasing's staff in processing the purchase requisitions (**Exhibit 8-5**). The system also determines the availability of funds by budget code and provides for multiple on-line approvals. All schools and units initiate requisitions through the automated system.

Exhibit 8-5 EPISD Purchase Requisition Message Codes

Code	Message
------	---------

001	Any information regarding this bid/purchase order - call purchasing (915) 759-2700
002	This is a prepaid purchase (purchase order is printed and returned to the school/unit to forward to the finance unit for issuance of an accounts payable check and is then forward to the vendor with the purchase order)
003	Purchase order to be hand carried (purchase order is printed and returned to the school/unit to personally deliver to the vendor)
004	See attachments (purchase order is printed and then returned to the school/unit to attach paperwork)
005	Reimbursement (purchase order is printed and returned to the school/unit to forward to the finance department)
006	Please send copy of invoice to ship to address for librarian
007	Internal note: return yellow copy (receiving) of purchase order to originator
008	Purchase order for bid
009	See internal note for quotes
010	Several purchase orders for a bid
011	Contract/services rendered/send check (purchase order is (purchase order is printed and returned to the school/unit to forward to the finance unit for issuance of an accounts payable check and is then forward to the vendor with the purchase order)
012	Send invoice to library learning resources at the indicated address
013	Maintenance order do not duplicate (purchase order has been provided to vendor via telephone)

Source: EPISD Purchasing Unit.

As shown in the above list, there are many minor details involved in processing purchase orders. These internal codes assist Purchasing with ensuring that purchase order processes are followed. After a purchase requisition is processed and approved by Purchasing, it becomes a purchase order through an electronic conversion process. The purchase order then is mailed to the vendor. **Exhibit 8-6** presents a comparison of purchase orders issued for EPISD and peer districts.

Exhibit 8-6
Comparison of Purchase Orders Issued
EPISD and Peers
September 1, 1997 through August 31, 1998

District	Number of Students	Number of Purchase Orders Issued
Houston ISD	209,375	N/R
Dallas ISD	154,847	N/R
Ft. Worth ISD	75,813	N/R
Austin ISD	76,054	22,000
San Antonio ISD	61,361	17,452
Ysleta ISD	47,366	36,772
Corpus Christi ISD	41,606	25,736
Socorro ISD	21,098	11,420
Average Without El Paso	85,940	22,676
El Paso	64,444	25,298

Source: Survey response from peer districts indicated.

N/R = No response

Purchasing's procedures manual does not include detailed timelines or processes for bids. The manual also does not detail what is expected from units and schools needing to have a bid processed. As a result, units and schools within EPISD often do not include Purchasing in the planning phase of major purchases that would require a bid to be processed. Inclusion during the planning phase allows everyone the opportunity to better understand and comply with bid requirements and processes and provides Purchasing the flexibility to schedule its resources where and when needed. Furthermore, engineers in the Planning, Engineering, and Construction Unit process all bids for construction related activities and annual maintenance contracts while the Technology & Information Systems Unit (TIS) handles the presentation of technology-related bids to the board.

Exhibit 8-7 is a listing of the 58 annual maintenance contracts processed by engineers.

Exhibit 8-7
EPISD Annual Bids
Processed by Engineers

Contract Description	Contract Amount
-----------------------------	------------------------

District-Wide CAD Services	\$10,000
Telecommunications Consulting Services	\$10,000
Kitchen Fire Suppression Services	\$19,686
Grease Trap Maintenance	\$30,000
District-Wide Elevator Maintenance	\$76,528
District-Wide Scoreboards	\$14,200
Otis Elevator Maintenance	\$3,123
Miscellaneous Demand Services	\$30,000
Stadium Lighting Systems Maintenance	\$14,000
Water Treatment Systems	\$132,427
District-Wide Sound, Bells, Clocks	\$90,538
Kitchen Exhaust Systems	\$47,166
Water Softener Systems	\$38,578
Campus Telephone Systems Repairs	\$85,000
Automatic Fire Sprinkler Maintenance	\$21,450
Communication Equipment Repair	\$36,000
Pest Control Program	\$60,948
District-Wide Long Distance Contract	\$60,000
Radio Transmitter Lease	\$5,501
Education Center Boeing - Telephone Repairs	\$65,000
Printing/Reproduction Services - Bond Fund	\$29,102
Cellular Phone Line Lease (\$3,000 per month)	No Contract
Lease/Comanche Peak Transmitters	\$3,600
Garbage Removal	\$397,974
Biohazards waste Disposal (93.807)	\$10,000
Hazardous Waste Disposal	\$91,033
District-Wide Portable Building Relocation	\$52,196
Maintenance/Administrative Pagers (\$676 per month)	\$10,000
Printing/Reprographics Operating Fund	No Contract
Education Center Downtown - DPBX	\$25,200

Theatrical Lighting/Sound	No Contract
Chemical Waste Management Services	\$3,500
District-Wide Boiler Heating Systems	\$121,010
District-Wide HVAC Systems Repairs	\$133,490
EMC/FMS Systems	\$20,000
District-Wide Electrical Systems Repairs	\$97,166
District-Wide Plumbing Systems Repairs	\$116,200
Portable Fire Extinguisher Maintenance	\$15,971
District-Wide Recycling Program	\$49,699
District-Wide Communication/Network Cabling	\$66,950
Chiller Maintenance-Silva Health Magnet	\$8,448
Public Address Services - D/W	\$5,000
Warm Blooded Animal Pest Control	\$5,000
Recycling Program/Paper	N/A
Engineer Copier Maintenance	\$725
El Paso High School Ice Plant	Bidding Now
Andress/Austin Ice Plant	Bidding Now
Security-Education Center Downtown	Bidding Now
Custodial Services - Education Center Downtown	Bidding Now
Elevator Maintenance - Education Center Downtown	\$19,200
District-Wide Grounds Maintenance	No Contract
Irrigation Sprinkler Systems	Bidding Now
Miscellaneous Telecommunications MAC	\$5,000
Chiller maintenance - Bowie High School	\$10,208
District-Wide CAD Services (Formerly 659.96)	\$10,000
Antenna Site Rental - 800 MHz Systems Radios	\$3,353
Miscellaneous Telecommunications Services	\$5,000

Source: EPISD Maintenance Unit.

These bids are processed without Purchasing's involvement. The Planning, Engineering, and Construction Director has assumed responsibility for

processing these annual bids because (1) engineers in the department are responsible for monitoring the contracts and (2) engineers write the specifications.

TIS develops specifications, terms, and conditions for all technology-related bids but specifications are then sent to Purchasing for processing. TIS does not process these bids. Once the vendors have responded, TIS receives the responses from Purchasing for evaluation and, once evaluated, Purchasing presents recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval. According to the TIS project administrator, TIS assists in presenting the bid recommendations to the board due to the complexity of technology.

However, this process has caused some confusion as to which unit has responsibility for processing requests for proposals (RFP). Specifically, RFP #8-98 (Computer Hardware Lease & or Purchase) was originally developed by TIS and processed by Purchasing. TIS processed an addendum to the RFP without full support from the former Purchasing Director, and later contacted vendors to request "best and final offer" once all RFPs were submitted and opened. Although proper for an RFP process, Purchasing was not involved in this contact. Once TIS evaluated the final vendor responses, a presentation was made to the board for approval.

There is a perception among community members that purchasing practices within EPISD are questionable. Specifically, some community members commented that "kick-backs" and "good old boy" systems are strongly in place with the EPISD board.

RFP #8-98 (Computer Hardware Lease & or Purchase) shows a need for better communication and control in the purchasing function. The recommended vendor was chosen by an evaluation committee based upon meeting RFP specifications. When the recommendation was presented to the board, a member questioned the availability of a certified computer repairperson by the proposed vendor. This was not part of the RFP specifications, and at the time of the question, the recommended vendor was not certified. The board rejected the proposed vendor and immediately voted for a vendor that had not responded to the computer configuration specification contained in the original RFP.

While the board has every right to question bids and vote their desires, this situation may have been avoided if Purchasing and TIF had worked together to develop the original specifications. Further, if board members had a better understanding of technology needs and constraints, they may have made a different decision. In many districts Purchasing processes all bids and handles all vendor contact during the bid and proposal process to ensure consistency and integrity, but the unit that is requesting materials or

supplies to be bid coordinates the specification development and vendor response analysis with Purchasing.

Recommendation 86:

Revise purchasing policies to require all competitive sealed bids to be tabulated and processed through Purchasing, and with those requiring board approval, to be reviewed by the appropriate standing committee of the board.

The board should revise purchasing policies to require that all bids are processed through Purchasing to increase internal control, provide consistency, and decrease the likelihood of Education Code violations. Purchasing should incorporate comprehensive written procedures into the procedures manual to describe the processes for all competitive sealed bids based upon the Education Code and board policy.

All units needing to acquire merchandise that requires bids, including the TIS and Planning, Engineering, and Construction Units should develop the specifications and then provide them to Purchasing for bid processing. Once vendors have responded to the bid requests, Purchasing should log the responses and provide the information to the respective units for evaluation. The units should then prepare and forward a written analysis of the bids and recommended vendor to Purchasing.

Once the evaluation is reviewed by Purchasing, the Purchasing Director should present it to the appropriate standing committee of the board for review and discussion. All competitive sealed bids will fall within the oversight of either the instruction and technology committee, facilities committee, or finance committee. The standing committees will include one or two board members, the superintendent or designee, and one or more community advisors with specific expertise in the operational and administrative functions covered by the committee. The respective units that developed the bid specifications should be present at committee meetings to answer technical questions raised by committee members. Once the standing committee is satisfied that the Education Code and board policy have been complied with, the bids will be approved in committee and presented to the full board for ratification or approval.

Exhibit 8-8 summarizes the recommended bid process.

Exhibit 8-8
Recommended Bidding Procedures

Bids require at least eight weeks of preparation. The following steps should be followed when bids are taken:

Action	Responsibility	Approval Requirements
<i>Bid Procedure</i>		
Obtain approval to purchase the item.	User Unit or School	Unit Director or School Principal
Verify that the item requested is budgeted.	Unit Director or School Principal	None
Contact the Purchasing Director to establish a bid schedule for placement on the board agenda.	Unit Director or School Principal	None
Prepare specifications for the approved item and reviews bid specifications with Purchasing Director. Bring a copy of the bid documentation on a 3.5" diskette.	Unit Director or School Principal	None
<i>Time frame for bidding</i>		
1st Week - Coordinate bid with Purchasing Unit and write bid specifications.	Unit Director or School Principal	None
2nd Week and 3rd Week - Bid ad to run 14 days prior to bid opening.	Purchasing Agent	Purchasing Director
4th Week - Open bid and complete tabulation sheet.	Purchasing Agent and User Unit	None
5th Week - Analyze bid.	Purchasing Agent and User Unit	None
6th Week - Present recommendation to Purchasing Director.	User Unit	Unit Director or School Principal
7th Week - Board presentation by Purchasing Director for approval.	Purchasing Director	Board
8th Week - Purchase orders submitted to vendors.	Unit Director or School Principal	Purchasing Agent

Source: TSPR Management Review Team.

Exhibit 8-9
Recommended Responsibilities for Competitive

**Sealed Invitations For Bid (IFB)
Bid Requester (User)**

<i>User responsibilities in the bid process</i>
User will comply with the approved bid schedule.
User prepares specifications for the approved item and reviews bid specifications with director of Purchasing. Bring a copy of the bid documentation on a 3.5" diskette. Do not change specifications once submitted to vendors. If a change is required, you must notify and coordinate through the director of Purchasing.
User prepares a list of three or more local vendors and includes established vendor list in Purchasing. Review the vendor list with the director of Purchasing.
User unit director or principal will assist in opening bids, evaluation, and recommendation of bids. Bids are accepted on lowest responsible bid meeting IFB specifications.
User unit director prepares letter of recommendation for the board in the approved format and submits to the Purchasing Director for review.
An item that is recommended as the result of an IFB, other than low bid, requires a written justification. The justifications and the recommendations are reviewed by the Purchasing Director before final decision is made to submit bid for board consideration.
User unit types completed tabulation of bids to be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration. In some cases, it may be necessary for the Unit director to attend the board meeting to justify the recommendation.

Source: TSPR Management Review Team.

The bid process for IFBs should include the following analysis and verification steps:

Analyze bid for best value to the district from the lowest responsible bidder based on the following:

- bid award recommendation is considered on a low bid basis meeting specifications;
- when low bid is not considered, justification for not recommending low bid is required; and
- when a bidder does not submit a sample with their low bid and the recommendation is to reject on that basis, the user unit and Purchasing Unit should make every effort to obtain a sample from that vendor to determine if the item meets the specifications by the time the bid is submitted again.

Analyze bid submitted by vendor with:

- compliance with the conditions and instructions to bidder;
- compliance with the bid specifications;
- vendor responsiveness, quality and previous performance, and best value to EPISD;

- have Purchasing verify with the vendor any questions concerning bid description;
- type bid tabulation information from the recorded tabulation sheet as read at the bid opening; and
- verify unit cost and total extensions to vendor documentation submitted with the bid.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board, with input from the executive director of Finance, revises the purchasing policies to require all bids be processed through Purchasing.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Finance and the Purchasing Director revise purchasing manual to include comprehensive purchasing and bidding processes in line with Education Code and board policy requirements.	May 1999
3.	The executive director of Finance implements approved purchasing manual.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Purchasing's senior buyer processes annual catalog bids for routine maintenance materials and food service equipment. Notices are placed in local newspapers indicating that vendors are being solicited for maintenance materials and automotive supplies. All vendors that respond are placed on the vendor list. Three vendors are then contacted for quotations each time a part costing greater than \$100 is needed. The lowest price vendor then receives the order. According to the senior buyer, this process has recognized savings. Until two years ago, the senior buyer reported to the Operations Unit, at which time he presented a report to the Maintenance supervisor, but did not keep a copy and no longer tracks savings.

If vendors placed on the vendor list are unable to provide quality merchandise, the senior buyer contacts them in an attempt to resolve the

problem. If the problem cannot be resolved or the merchandise continues to be of poor quality, additional purchases are not placed with the vendor and the vendor is not placed on the approved vendor list for future bids.

EPISD is not using the catalog bid process to the full extent possible. The majority of bids processed are for specific merchandise or types of merchandise; this process is not only time consuming, but in many instances does not allow the district to obtain the best prices. For example, when vendors bid on specific merchandise or types of merchandise and are required to hold their prices for one year, the vendor often is forced to project future cost increases and increase the price for the specific merchandise requested by the district. By including projected cost increases in pricing for specific items, vendors potentially could not be providing the district with the lowest prices for some portion of the school year.

Catalog bids allow vendors to offer a discount percentage from prices listed in a manufacturers' catalog. Users contact the vendor through the Purchasing Unit for the most current discounted price when ordering merchandise. This allows the vendor to maintain its margins based on discounted list pricing and the district to pick from a variety of items in the catalog to obtain the best value. The majority of bids can be processed as catalog bids with specific items identified for comparison pricing purposes.

Examples of products that school districts in Texas currently are processing as catalog purchases are:

- General school supplies
- Science supplies
- Maintenance materials and supplies
- Wood
- Automotive parts for buses and Career and Technology classes
- Office supplies
- Computers and computer supplies
- Band uniforms, equipment and sheet music
- Art supplies
- Paper supplies
- Plumbing supplies
- Electrical supplies
- Beauty supplies for Career and Technology classes
- Office and school furniture
- Athletic uniforms and equipment

Bid packages can include the specific ranking system that will be used to evaluate vendors so that they are informed how their bid will be evaluated and ranked. Effective evaluation systems include: (1) the ability to provide quality merchandise at a reasonable price, (2) delivery of merchandise

must be made in a timely manner, and (3) complaints must be resolved satisfactorily in order to remain on the qualified vendor list. An internal documentation process also can be included to document all vendor disputes and merchandise dissatisfaction.

Recommendation 87:

Implement catalog bid policies and related procedures and develop a vendor qualification system.

Catalog bids should be requested for as many common school materials, supplies, furniture, and equipment as practical. EPISD's policy and procedures should be revised to specify the types of materials, supplies, furniture, and equipment that should be purchased using catalog bids. Moreover, the procedures should outline in considerable detail how catalog bids should be solicited. For instance, the procedures should specify that vendors should provide discounts from an approved manufacturers' catalog so there will be no confusion as to the basis for determining successful vendors.

A vendor qualification system should include such factors as quality of merchandise, timeliness of delivery, and resolution of complaints. A weighted scoring system should be used to rank the performance of vendors that have conducted business with EPISD in the past. This ranking system should be incorporated into the evaluation process, along with the percentage discount from list prices, to determine successful catalog vendors.

When catalog bids are processed and once vendors respond with initial prices, those vendors that do not meet the guidelines should not be placed on the qualified vendor list. The ranked list should then be provided to all schools and units on a monthly basis, or when new vendors are added. When schools and units are ready to purchase items, they should call the vendors directly to determine exact price and then process their purchase order.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the Purchasing Director to process bids that are not for specific items through open catalog process.	April 1999
2.	The Purchasing Director develops procedures to obtain most bids through an annual catalogue bid where vendors are notified of district bidding categories and respondents are placed on approved catalog bids.	June 1999
3.	The Purchasing Director develops vendor qualification process and	June

	procedures.	1999
4	The Purchasing Unit implements new bidding and vendor qualification procedures.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, some savings should be recognized as a result of obtaining lower prices.

FINDING

The 1996 KPMG Peat Marwick Manpower Efficiency Study recommended the current Purchasing Unit organization structure. At the time of the study, the recommended organization structure included one senior buyer, three junior buyers, and one clerk to process maintenance and transportation purchase orders.

In the current Purchasing Unit organization structure, however, one clerk is assigned to processing and monitoring automated purchase orders rather than maintenance and transportation purchase orders as originally recommended by KPMG Peat Marwick. This clerk is responsible for printing daily reports of purchase orders entered into the automated system that are awaiting the approval of Purchasing. The clerk conducts a cursory review of this report to determine that the purchase orders meet purchasing guidelines. The clerk makes specific reviews to determine that bidding requirements are not being circumvented, such as generating two consecutive purchase orders to the same vendor that total more than \$10,000. All purchase orders that appear to be in possible violation of purchasing regulations are forwarded to the Purchasing Director. The purchase order report is filed by date once purchase orders have been approved and printed. A second report that lists purchases greater than \$10,000 is generated and provided to the Purchasing Director for review and approval. The Purchasing Director reviews this report to determine if three written or telephone quotations were obtained for purchases between \$10,000 and \$25,000, and that competitive sealed bids will be used for purchases exceeding \$25,000.

Once both daily purchase order reports are reviewed, the Purchasing Director approves the printing of the purchase orders. The purchase orders then are printed, sorted, and mailed to the vendor by the same purchasing clerk.

Copies of purchase orders for specific bids are placed in the bid folder and a tabulation sheet is updated manually to ensure that purchase orders are

not generated for more than the amount specified by the approved bid. The purchase order clerk completes this process prior to mailing the purchase order to the vendor.

Technology-related purchase orders are faxed to TIS for review and approval by the director. Purchase orders that are using federal funds are faxed to the respective unit for review and approval by the director. Once the respective unit reviews and approves the purchase, the unit prepares a memo and faxes it back to Purchasing indicating the purchase order is approved. The purchase order clerk then releases the purchase order. This process adds an additional one to three days onto the purchase order processing time.

The automated purchase order system has the capability of allowing multiple levels of automated approvals at multiple sites. EPISD administrators elected not to use this option because once the approval is received from the budget authority a purchase order number is created.

Electronic approval of these purchase orders would shorten processing time without adding staff because employees that are currently approving the faxed hard copy purchase order would electronically approve all purchase orders on-line.

Exhibit 8-10 summarizes the number of purchase orders processed by peer districts and EPISD.

Exhibit 8-10
Purchase Orders Processed per Purchasing Unit Employee
EPISD versus Peer Districts

Variable	Austin ISD	San Antonio ISD	Ysleta ISD	Corpus Christi ISD	Socorro ISD	Average Without El Paso	El Paso ISD
Number of purchase orders processed in 1 fiscal year	22,000	17,482	36,772	25,736	11,420	22,682	25,298
Total employees in Purchasing Unit (including Director)	9	18	12	9	3	10	10
Number of employees dedicated to	N/R	5	5	N/R	N/R	5	1

processing purchase orders							
Number of purchase orders processed per employee, per month (10 months)	N/R	350	735	N/R	N/R	543	2,530
Average number of business days to process purchase orders (once received in Purchasing)	4	2	2	7	N/R	3	1
District uses an automated purchase order system	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		Yes
Purchase orders are entered on-line at the school/department	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		Yes

Source: Surveys with district Purchasing Directors indicated.

N/R = No response

Even with the manual steps performed by TIS for technology-related purchase orders, EPISD's purchasing clerk processes almost five times as many purchase orders per month than the peer district average. Requiring that all units approve purchase requisitions on line will reduce fax paper volume and provide additional time for the purchasing clerk to adequately review every purchase order to ensure compliance with purchasing and bid requirements. This requirement also decreases the potential for errors failing to recognize potential purchasing violations.

Recommendation 88:

Require all purchase requisition approvals to be made on-line.

EPISD should require all purchase requisitions to be approved on-line at each stage of the approval process (e.g., school principals, unit directors, etc.). This strengthens internal control and monitoring by maintaining all approvals on the purchase order database. On-line approvals also facilitate

the purchase order process. This would allow the clerk more time to review purchase orders for compliance with purchasing and bidding requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent develops a policy requiring all purchase order approvals to be made on-line.	May 1999
2.	The Purchasing Director implements the policy and school principals and unit managers begin approving purchase requisitions on line.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD does not use a commodity code system that identifies the type of merchandise ordered. Management reports instead list the dollar amount and number of purchase orders processed by vendor. When orders are not tracked by type of merchandise, it is possible to violate education code purchasing rules that require like purchases of \$25,000 or more to be bid. For example, several individual purchase orders could be processed with similar items like paper goods for amounts under the \$25,000 limit, but collectively the purchase orders exceed the \$25,000 threshold.

As noted in the external auditor's Letter Relating to Internal Control and Operating Procedures, the management report that accompanies the annual financial statements, dated November 25, 1998: "The District relies principally on manual internal control activities to detect and prevent the splitting of purchases to circumvent District competitive bidding policies." The same finding was noted in the previous year's management report. Split purchases are two or more sequential purchase orders processed for the same items that accumulate to more than the bid thresholds.

The clerk in Purchasing generates daily purchase order reports to review for the possibility of split-purchases. However, it is left up to the clerk's memory to determine if this occurs over a period of a few days. Added to this problem, schools are allowed to use their school-generated fund-raising profits (i.e., activity fund accounts that are placed in the campus' general fund) to make purchases of \$100 or less and then complete a reimbursement purchase order for the campus general fund. Schools are not required to purchase from "approved vendors" when making purchases

with their activity funds. The master vendor file contains all vendors that the district has purchased from during previous years. As long as the vendor is on the master vendor file, schools and units are allowed to purchase from them, even though they may not have been awarded a catalog bid for that year.

Standardized commodity codes like those produced by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. (NIGP) can be purchased and used by any entity. The commodity codes are a set of numbers that identifies the commodities and services purchased. The code contains four series of digits to denote class, item, group and detail, plus a check digit. The check digit (optional) is a computer formula to verify the code number. The code quickly identifies the commodity or service purchased and the purchase history for each for various time periods. This is important information for management and aids in making better purchasing decisions.

The NIGP system also can provide periodic reports on the status of requisitions, the percentage of bids that were received as "no-bid", the number of bids received for each request, aging of requisitions, length of time from receipt of bids to date of award, and the frequency of one-time or open market requisitions using the same 5-digit code number. The code is available in two versions, one 5-digit version, and one 11-digit version.

Exhibit 8-11 provides an example of how the code can identify file folders, a commonly purchased commodity.

**Exhibit 8-11
NIGP Code Example
File Folders**

Description	Class	Item	Group	Detail	Digit
5 Digit Level: 615-45					
File folders, regular, legal and letter size	615	45			
11 Digit Level: Broken down in to 4 groups.					
File folders, regular, legal and letter size	615	45	29	061	3
The descriptions change when the last few digits change					
File folders, double tab, legal size, manila, standard height	615	45	29		
File folders, straight cut, 11 point, 100/box	615	45	29	040	7
File folders, half cut, 11 point, 100/box	615	45	29	040	2
File folders, third cut, 11 point, 100/box	615	45	29	054	8

Source: NIGP Example.

The automated purchasing system used by EPISD has the capability to integrate a commodity code system and produce management reports that identify purchases by commodity type and vendor. However, the district's automated purchase order system vendor does not offer commodity codes. Instead, the system is set up so that a private commodity code system can be purchased and installed as a system enhancement.

Recommendation 89:

Implement a commodity code system to monitor all purchases and ensure compliance with purchasing regulations.

The district should purchase and implement a commodity code system. The purchase of NIGP commodity codes ensures compatibility with vendors and other purchasing entities. While commodity code usage will not prevent intentional circumvention of purchasing rules, it will facilitate monitoring for compliance with bidding requirements.

Commodity codes should be entered for all district purchases. A simplified list should be provided to schools and units in order to facilitate entry. Once commodity codes are entered, the Purchasing Director should review management reports on a weekly basis to ensure that all items reaching the bid limit are bid properly.

Furthermore, all purchases should be made from approved vendor lists that are updated annually.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Purchasing Director to purchase and implement the NIGP commodity code system.	April 1999
2.	The Purchasing Director purchases NIGP commodity codes.	May 1999
3.	TIS installs NIGP commodity code onto automated purchase order system.	June 1999
4.	The Purchasing Director trains all schools and units on commodity codes.	August 1999
5.	The Purchasing Director implements commodity code ordering and tracking.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation will have a one-time cost of \$10,000 plus a four-year maintenance cost of \$500 per year. Savings from gained efficiencies in monitoring purchases and processing bids may be realized, but they cannot be estimated.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Implement commodity code system.	(\$10,000)	(\$500)	(\$500)	(\$500)	(\$500)

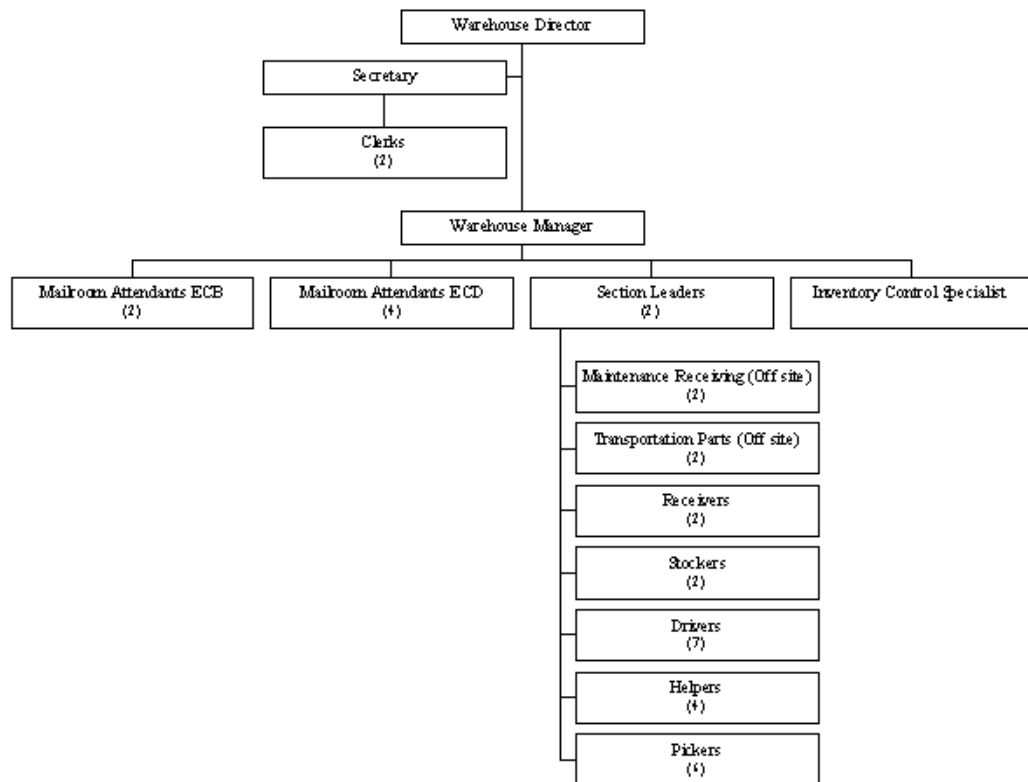
B. Warehouse Services

An efficient warehouse operation should ensure that all purchases and deliveries to schools and units are complete and timely; inventory levels are sufficient to meet requests for supplies from individual schools and units; property and equipment are accounted for properly and controlled; and surplus or obsolete property is disposed of properly and removed from district records.

CURRENT SITUATION

The director of the Warehouse Unit (Warehouse) is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the unit and reports to the assistant superintendent of Operations. Warehouse operates with 32 FTE positions including the director. An additional six FTEs are assigned to mail room operations. **Exhibit 8-12** depicts Warehouse's organizational structure.

Exhibit 8-12
EPISD Warehouse Organization



Source: EPISD Warehouse Unit.

EPISD's central warehouse is located at the Gamble facility, which was built in 1997 and spans 48,000 square feet. Warehouse administrative

personnel and Purchasing personnel are housed in this facility. Most materials, supplies, and textbooks are delivered to the Gamble facility and then verified to purchase orders and delivered to the schools and units by EPISD warehouse delivery people. The warehouse inventories textbooks, instructional materials and supplies, janitorial supplies, athletic supplies, nursing supplies, and auto parts.

The Warehouse Director also oversees mail delivery functions. There are two mailrooms within EPISD, located at the Education Center Boeing (ECB) and the Education Center Downtown (ECD).

Exhibit 8-13 shows operating statistics for the Gamble facility.

Exhibit 8-13
EPISD Warehouse Operating Measures
1996-97 and 1997-98

Operating Measures	1996-97	1997-98
Instructional Supplies (Average Inventory)	\$ 866,765	\$755,650
Automotive Supplies	\$111,446	\$109,667
Maintenance, Lunchroom and Custodial Supplies	\$714,511	\$594,675
Print Shop Supplies	\$190,630	\$174,345
Media Supplies	\$99,015	\$126,707
Fuel (Gas & Propane)	\$92,221	\$10,196
Total Average Inventory	\$2,074,588	\$1,771,240
Total Stock Items Maintained	4,898	4,845
Requisitions for Stock Items Processed Per Year	28,158	36,161
Trucks Utilized for Delivery	19	15
Average Miles Traveled for Warehouse Delivery	129,400	133,326
Personnel Assigned to Warehouse	37	39
State Textbooks		
New Titles Adopted	40	28
Total Books in District	493,055	532,974
Value of Books in District	\$21,337,226	\$22,915,441
Total Amount Paid to Texas Education Agency for Fines and Lost Books	\$123,600	\$188,678

Total Titles in District	322	319
Schools Self-Audited for Certification of State Textbooks on Hand	All	All

Source: EPISD Warehouse Unit.

Exhibit 8-14 summarizes the Warehouse Unit's budget.

Exhibit 8-14
EPISD Warehouse Unit Budgeted Expenditures
1996-97 through 1998-99

Category	1996-97 Budget	% of Budget	1997-98 Budget	% of Budget	1998-99 Budget	% of Budget
Payroll	\$888,043	68.4%	\$913,912	70.6%	\$869,555	73.0%
Professional & Contracted Services	\$32,500	2.5%	\$70,500	5.4%	\$58,000	4.9%
Supplies & Materials	\$242,000	18.6%	\$245,500	19.0%	\$245,500	20.6%
Misc. Operating Costs	\$115,000	8.9%	\$37,475	2.9%	\$17,475	1.5%
Capital Outlay	\$21,000	1.6%	\$27,000	2.1%	-0-	0.0%
Total	\$1,298,543	100.0%	\$1,294,387	100.0%	\$1,190,530	100.0%

Source: EPISD Adopted Budgets.

Deliveries from vendors are received at the Gamble facility shipping dock if they cannot be delivered directly to the school or unit via United Parcel Service (UPS). Receiving clerks check all boxes received to ensure that the contents are not damaged; log the delivery as received and enter the date of receipt on the automated purchasing/receiving system; and check each box against receiving reports for content and quantity. Items that must be shipped to schools and units are transferred to the distribution area where delivery schedules are prepared. The delivery staff delivers the items to schools and units, obtains the authorized receiving party's signature on delivery receipts, and brings the receipts back to the warehouse where they are filed.

Warehouse conducts a complete physical inventory on August 31 of each year. Spot inventories are taken periodically. In addition, the district's independent auditing firm audits the warehouse inventory each year.

FINDING

Warehouse's operations are state-of-the-art. The Gamble facility was built in 1997 for approximately \$2.2 million, including all equipment such as shelving and forklifts. The Gamble facility provided EPISD with enough space to accommodate warehouse operations and enabled them to consolidate warehouses that had been leased for a total of \$5,500 per month.

The Gamble facility is climate controlled and water from the heating and cooling system is captured and recycled through the system. The unit uses a pallet system for storing merchandise that makes full use of the warehouse's space and aids the efficient preparation of requisitions. All readily stolen items such as electronic equipment are maintained in locked cages. Each loading dock at the warehouse is equipped with a connecting ramp that raises up and down electronically to the level of the delivery truck to facilitate loading and unloading. There is a sealed room that is equipped to handle all chemicals, and a conveyor belt runs from the second floor down to the first floor so that items do not have to be carried down steps. All storage racks are built with an inward slope so that supplies are loaded on one side of the aisle and removed from the opposite side to promote inventory turnover and easy access to supplies.

All delivery trucks have been modified to accommodate delivery carts, which are metal pallets with wheels and a handle. These carts can be rolled into the delivery truck and pushed into the delivery site, saving multiple trips to the delivery truck. Items on the cart are wrapped in plastic so that they do not shift during transport. According to the Warehouse Director, these features have enabled the warehouse operations to serve all schools with six less employees.

All warehouse items are bar coded and the unit soon will be able to electronically forward requisitions to a hand held scanner. Once the system is fully implemented, the scanner will inform warehouse pickers-staff that pull requested items-of the exact location of each item on the requisition. This enables the pickers to complete the order efficiently. Once all items on the requisition are pulled, the picker enters "order complete" into the scanner and then takes the items to the shipping area. The items then are wrapped together with plastic and loaded onto a delivery cart. A shipping report is produced from the scanner.

The bar code system being implemented at EPISD cost approximately \$85,000. The system saves time stocking materials and filling orders by displaying the exact location of materials and supplies and reduces shipping errors because the next order item is not displayed until the correct bar code has been scanned.

Although many private companies use bar code systems for warehousing operations, the Warehouse Director said this hand-held scanning system is the first in Texas school districts

COMMENDATION

EPISD built a state-of-the art warehouse facility and is implementing a bar code system to improve warehouse operations.

FINDING

EPISD stocks some Maintenance and Transportation parts and supplies in its main warehouse. The remaining parts and supplies must be ordered from vendors as needed to complete work requests. Warehouse employs two FTEs to receive Maintenance and Transportation orders and two FTEs to assist Transportation with ordering parts. These employees are located off-site at the Education Center Boeing Avenue complex (ECB). The Maintenance and Transportation employees submit work orders to buyers located at the ECB. The buyers then process purchase orders or warehouse orders, depending on whether the needed items are in stock at the warehouse. The orders then are delivered to the ECB where they are received and issued to Maintenance and Transportation. This process adds additional time to receive needed materials, but EPISD feels that this process ensures a check and balance system. As a result, not all orders are available for pick-up by employees when needed.

Recommendation 90:

Establish a pick-up counter at the Gamble facility for all Maintenance and Transportation materials.

The district should stock additional types of routine maintenance and transportation parts at Gamble facility. All purchase and warehouse orders should be entered on-line by the Maintenance and Transportation units. All orders should be available to Maintenance and Transportation employees through a pick-up counter at the Gamble facility. Moving all maintenance and transportation purchasing activities to the Gamble facility will enhance Maintenance and Transportation operations by having more parts readily available for pick-up by employees when needed. By consolidating all inventory pickup at the Gamble facility it will

allow the district to remove the unnecessary step in the process of moving merchandise to the ECB. It also will allow the district to shift and reduce inventory-receiving staff because of a more efficient receiving function.

Two employees should be transferred to the Gamble facility to accommodate the increase in orders for stocking Maintenance and Transportation parts and to operate a pick-up counter at the warehouse for Maintenance and Transportation employees. The remaining two positions should be eliminated.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent of Operations to increase the quantity and type of parts maintained in stock at the Gamble facility and implement procedures to allow parts to be picked up at the Gamble facility.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent directs the Warehouse Director to implement a pick-up counter for maintenance and transportation employees.	May 1999
3.	The assistant superintendent of Operations and the Warehouse Director develop procedures to maintain additional parts in stock and implement a pick-up counter.	May - June 1999
4.	The assistant superintendent of Operations and the Warehouse Director implement pick-up counter process.	July 1999
5.	The Warehouse Director transfers two positions from ECB to the Gamble facility and eliminates two ECB positions.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

One warehouseman salary, plus 16 percent fringe benefits totals \$13,905 (\$11,987 x 1.16). Therefore, the annual savings from eliminating two positions total \$27,810 (\$13,905 x 2).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Establish a pick-up counter at the Gamble facility.	\$27,810	\$27,810	\$27,810	\$27,810	\$27,810

FINDING

The automated warehouse requisitioning system is separate from the automated purchasing system and is not interfaced. Because of the nature of the two systems, they do not need to be interfaced. The purchase order

system is for purchases to vendors and the warehouse order system is for requisitioning of materials and supplies that are inventoried in the EPISD Gamble facility. Both systems interface with the automated financial system so that school and unit budgets are updated as supplies and materials are purchased or requisitioned from the Gamble facility. Schools and units forward paper warehouse requisitions to the Warehouse Unit. A Warehouse clerk then enters the requisitions on-line before filling the orders.

The district does have an automated warehouse requisitioning system that would allow schools and units to enter warehouse requisitions on-line at their location. The automated warehouse system is a component of the financial and purchasing system that the district and schools currently use. The system is relatively easy to use because it follows the same basic principals as the automated purchase order system. Schools also have the necessary computers to enter warehouse orders on-line. The review team was told that the schools are not using the automated warehouse order system because they have not been trained. Entering warehouse orders on-line saves processing time and eliminates the lag time in processing orders. It also provides instant inventory information and provides schools and units with better budget information because all purchasing activities are deducted from available funds when orders are filled.

The automated warehouse requisitioning system maintains a perpetual inventory because the overall inventory is updated constantly according to purchases and distribution of supplies and materials. And, it automatically informs the user when an item needs to be reordered, and how many are needed based on the historical use of that item.

Recommendation 91:

Require all schools and units to enter warehouse requisitions on-line.

The automated warehouse requisitioning system should be implemented at all schools and units. Because the automated warehouse requisitioning system is a component of the district's financial system, the only required action is to add it to the system's options menu. This addition to the menu has no associated costs.

Staff that complete the paper requisitions and automated purchase orders should be trained to enter automated warehouse orders. Training also should be provided for the clerk that enters warehouse requisitions to manage warehouse records, assists in placing warehouse orders, and serves as the contact source for schools.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Warehouse Director to implement on-line warehouse requisitions at all schools and units.	April 1999
2.	The Warehouse Director and TIS conduct training on automated warehouse requisition entry.	April - June 1999
3.	The Warehouse Director implements on-line warehouse requisitions at all schools and units.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and in-house staff.

FINDING

The warehouse does not have a procedures manual. The Warehouse Director stated that one has not been prepared because procedures will be changing as soon as the bar code system and on-line warehouse order system are fully implemented. The bar code system will be fully implemented in January 1999.

Written procedures manuals: (1) provide written notice to all employees as to the approved policies and procedures; (2) provide directions on the correct way to process purchase orders; (3) serve as reference materials for employees; and (4) serve as training tools for new employees.

The Ysleta Independent School District's Warehouse Department has an excellent procedures manual that contains procedures on all warehouse operations such as ordering, receiving, stocking, order filling, absenteeism, vehicle maintenance, and vehicle repairs.

Recommendation 92:

Develop a written procedures manual for Warehouse operations.

A formal, written procedures manual should be developed that addresses the warehouse function. Ysleta's manual could provide a model for EPISD personnel. The manual should be developed based upon proposed changes with the bar code system. The manual then can be updated once the bar code system is implemented fully. The manual should include internal procedures for schools and units, receiving and shipping, safety related issues, and time and attendance reporting.

Once the manual is developed and approved by the board, all procedures should be followed consistently.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Warehouse Director to develop a policy and procedures manual for the warehouse function.	April 1999
2.	The Warehouse Director develops the policies and procedures manual.	April - May 1999
3.	The Warehouse Director distributes and implements the procedures manual after the superintendent has approved it.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. Textbooks

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is responsible for selecting and purchasing most of the textbooks used by Texas school districts. TEA buys textbooks from publishers and lends them to districts. TEA provides districts with a listing of recommended textbooks each year. A district's established textbook adoption committee then selects the textbooks that the district will adopt and order. The number of books allowed per subject and grade level is based upon student enrollment information submitted to TEA through Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data.

Each district is responsible for returning these "borrowed" textbooks to TEA. If textbooks are lost during the school year, the district either recovers its cost from the student or the student's parent or custodian, or compensates the state for the loss.

CURRENT SITUATION

The assistant director for Instructional Materials primarily is responsible for textbook operations. Textbooks are delivered and stored at the Gamble facility. The Textbook Unit is staffed with an assistant director and two textbook clerks. The primary functions performed by the Textbook Unit include assisting with the textbook adoption process, estimating the number of textbooks needed by the district each year; preparing supplemental orders of additional textbooks from TEA; inventorying textbooks; distributing books to individual schools; tracking lost books; and returning surplus books to TEA.

FINDING

Replacement textbooks generally are ordered through discount textbook companies such as Fowlett, Budget, and Academic Book Services, rather than TEA. Discount textbook companies purchase slightly used textbooks from school districts in other states. Because the textbooks are used, districts can purchase replacement textbooks through the discount textbook companies at lower prices than TEA charges.

TEA conducted a textbook audit at EPISD in 1995-96. The audit identified \$308,666 in lost textbooks. The district replaced all the missing textbooks by purchasing all available textbooks from used textbook companies and the remainder from TEA. EPISD was able to save approximately \$76,000 by purchasing most of the replacement textbooks from discounted textbook vendors.

COMMENDATION

The district purchases replacement textbooks from discount textbook vendors at a significantly lower rate than the rates charged by TEA.

FINDING

EPISD's textbook inventory is stored in the central warehouse on pallets; all volumes are readily located and inventoried. All textbooks are bar coded with the textbook number and the warehouse location.

COMMENDATION

The Textbook Unit maintains a clean and organized textbook storage area within the Gamble facility.

FINDING

Many complaints were received from parents that the district does not provide students with textbooks to take home. They also stated that textbooks often arrive late in the semester. Parents expressed concerns about the damaged condition of textbooks provided to students. The following is a sample of comments made at the public forums:

- There should be a complete audit of how many children don't have textbooks. Something is wrong when students can't take textbooks home. They can at some schools and not at others.
- I'm tired of textbooks with missing pages!
- My child spent three years in special education without a single textbook - these are also the citizens of tomorrow.
- Why don't the schools have enough books?
- Children should have a book issued to them, not shared.
- Why are there not enough books for all students?

Although EPISD's regional associate superintendents indicated that there were enough textbooks in the district for each student, they often are not at the schools where they are needed. The assistant director for Instructional Materials stated that there are five reasons for not always having textbooks available to all students. They are:

1. schools do not always get their orders in to the Textbook Unit in a timely manner;
2. schools are provided an opportunity to locate missing textbooks and the money must be available prior to ordering replacement books;

3. books often must be transferred between schools because of shifting populations;
4. some school principals have chosen to issue only enough books for a classroom instead of a book for each individual student because they must pay for lost books from their activity fund money when students do not pay for lost books; and
5. student enrollment information submitted to PEIMS is not always accurate, thus the number of textbooks that the district is allotted is not the same as the number of students in the course and the additional books cannot be ordered until an actual attendance report is submitted to TEA.

Textbooks are the main educational resource provided in any school district. Furthermore, most students benefit from having the flexibility of taking textbooks home to read for homework and to reinforce class teaching and discussions. Without this flexibility, a major component of the learning process is missing.

Board policy CMD (Legal) addresses responsibility for textbooks. It states:

"at the request of a parent or guardian of a student, the District shall permit a student to take home any **textbook**, other than an electronic **textbook**. The student must return the **textbook** to school at the beginning of the next school day. Each student, or his or her parent or guardian, shall be responsible for all **textbooks** not returned by the student, and any student failing to return all **books** shall forfeit the right to free **textbooks** until the books previously issued but not returned are paid for by the student, parent, or guardian."

"Under circumstances determined by the Board, the District may waive or reduce the payment requirement if the student is from a low-income family. The district or school shall allow the student to use **textbooks** at school during each school day."

"If a **textbook** is not returned or paid for, the district or school may withhold the student's records but shall not prevent a student from graduating, participating in a graduation ceremony, or receiving a diploma. However, in accordance with policies FL (Legal) and GBA (Legal), students have a right to copies of any and all District records that pertain to them."

The district requires students to pay for lost and damaged textbooks. Once a textbook is identified as missing, the textbook clerk at the school completes a missing textbook form that indicates the student's name, the textbook name, and the amount due. The amount due is determined from a

listing of books in adoption and the price. A copy of the form is given to the student and the second copy is maintained on file. Once the student pays for the book, the records are updated and the money is deposited into a textbook account within the school's activity fund. All money that is collected is forwarded to the Textbook Unit twice a year along with an accounting of missing textbooks. If students fail to pay for textbooks by the end of each school year, the principal has two sources available to pay the amount due: allocated general revenue funds and the principal's activity fund revenues. If the principal does not have enough money available through these sources, the district pays for the replacement books from money that is budgeted at the district level for lost textbooks.

Recommendation 93:

Provide textbooks for all students to take home at the beginning of each semester.

Board policy requires that all students be allowed to take textbooks home when the parent requests. Parents should be informed of this policy. When textbooks are not available to students at the beginning of the school year because of being located at another school, parents should be able to obtain the book from the prior location. Under all circumstances, students should be provided textbooks within one week of each new class or semester. Schools that are concerned about students losing the textbooks should require parents to sign a statement indicating that they understand their responsibilities to pay for lost textbooks.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to enforce board policy stating that all students are allowed to take textbooks home if the parent requests.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent directs all principals to follow board policy.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent directs all principals to implement procedures to provide textbooks to all students to take home.	April 1999
4.	The district implements new textbook procedures.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources because TEA provides the district with enough textbooks for all students.

FINDING

EPISD tracks and determines lost and damaged textbooks through a manual system maintained at each school by a clerk and an automated system maintained at the district level by the assistant director for Instructional Materials.

Each high school and middle school has a textbook clerk. The textbook clerks are assigned to the school and report to the assistant principal in charge of textbooks. The clerks are responsible for issuing textbooks to teachers and students and collecting fines for damaged and lost textbooks. The tracking of textbooks at all schools is done by manual reports. The textbook clerks are required to complete a physical inventory in February and June of each year. The textbook clerk then completes a report and forwards it to the assistant director for Instructional Materials. The report indicates the number of textbooks on hand and the amount collected for damaged and lost textbooks. Payment for missing books is sent with the reports.

The reports are used to update the districtwide inventory on the Hayes automated textbook system. Once the inventory is updated, the number of replacement textbooks needed is determined. Over the past three years, EPISD has averaged \$222,202 in lost textbooks. **Exhibit 8-15** summarizes these losses.

Exhibit 8-15
EPISD State Textbook Losses
1995-96 through 1997-98 School Years

School Year	Total Losses
1995-96 (1)	\$308,666
1996-97 (2)	\$158,759
1997-98 (2)	\$198,880
Average	\$222,202

Source: EPISD Textbook Unit.

Schools are required to pay for lost textbooks. EPISD requires each principal to maintain a textbook account in his or her activity fund designated solely for paying for lost and damaged textbooks. All revenues collected from students for damaged and lost textbooks must be deposited into this account.

Exhibit 8-16 summarizes lost textbooks by school for the previous two years. EPISD has an informal policy to allocate general fund money to pay the difference between lost textbooks and actual collections by the school (reconciled, district paid column in the exhibit).

**Exhibit 8-16
Lost Textbooks by School
1996-97 and 1997-98**

School	1996-97			1997-98		
	Total Lost	Total Paid	Reconciled (District Paid)	Total Lost	Total Paid	Balance Due as of 10/1/98
Andress HS	5,105	5,105	-	20,210	3,000	17,210
Austin HS	21,244	13,593	7,650	12,376	12,376	-
Bowie HS	22,637	2,003	20,634	15,389	2,761	12,628
Burges HS	5,704	5,704	-	8,075	8,075	-
Coronado HS	9,618	8,031	1,587	21,148	12,085	9,063
El Paso HS	3,994	3,994	-	3,760	-	3,760
Franklin HS	17,434	17,290	144	15,830	15,830	-
Health Magnet	2,742	2,742	-	2,252	2,252	-
Irvin HS	16,518	16,518	-	3,787	3,787	-
Jefferson HS	9,745	7,997	1,749	2,663	552	2,111
Sunset	6,884	6,884	-	4,542	4,542	-
Telles Academy	-	-	-	1,903	1,903	-
Center for Career & Technology	274	274	-	403	403	-
Juvenile Detention Center (Juvenile Justice)	206	206	-	2,613	-	2,613
School Age Parent Center	3,980	1,076	2,904	491	491	-
Bassett MS	2,873	2,873	-	5,780	5,780	-

Canyon Hills MS	1,798	1,798	-	4,050	4,050	-
Charles MS	1,031	1,031	-	1,981	1,981	-
Coldwell MS	218	218	-	1,947	1,947	-
Crockett MS	2,813	2,813	-	1,171	441	731
Guillen MS	101	101	-	16,290	116	16,173
Henderson MS	487	487	-	1,230	585	645
Hornedo MS	929	895	35	1,333	1,333	-
Houston MS	458	458	-	3,033	2,856	177
Lincoln MS	1,094	1,094	-	2,860	2,860	-
MacArthur MS	728	728	-	859	859	-
Magoffin MS	1,971	1,971	-	3,332	3,326	6
Morehead MS	1,776	1,776	-	5,458	5,458	-
Ross MS	1,061	1,061	-	6,774	6,774	-
Terrace Hills MS	4,753	2,298	2,455	5,946	5,946	-
Wiggs MS	1,770	1,770	-	4,184	1,461	2,723
Alamo Elem	469	469	-	943	922	21
Alta Vista Elem	229	229	-	681	681	-
Aoy Elem	50	50	-	1,129	1,129	-
Beall Elem	-	-	-	3,968	3,968	-
Bliss Elem	102	102	-	2,283	2,283	-
Bonham Elem	21	21	-	53	53	-
Bradley Elem	14	14	-	34	34	-
Burleson Elem	1,179	1,179	-	-	-	-
Burnet Elem	99	99	-	131	131	-
Cielo Vista Elem	51	51	-	27	27	-
Clardy Elem	40	40	-	655	655	-
Clendenin Elem	49	49	-	92	92	-

Collins Elem	173	173	-	36	36	-
Cooley Elem	17	17	-	69	69	-
Crosby Elem	207	207	-	330	330	-
Douglass Elem	331	38	93	194	50	144
Dowell Elem	211	211	-	40	40	-
Fannin Elem	47	47	-	109	109	-
Green Elem	9	9	-	164	164	-
Guerrero Elem	31	31	-	35	35	-
Hart Elem	71	71	-	116	116	-
Hawkins Elem	-	-	-	27	27	-
Hillside Elem	200	200	-	167	167	-
Hughey Elem	76	76	-	147	147	-
Johnson Elem	-	-	-	33	33	-
Lamar Elem	271	271	-	249	249	-
Lee Elem	24	24	-	4	4	-
Lindbergh Elem	211	211	-	318	318	-
Logan Elem	533	52	482	226	226	-
Mesita Elem	214	214	-	286	286	-
Milam Elem	63	63	-	87	87	-
Newman Elem	211	211	-	144	144	-
Nixon Elem	338	338	-	440	440	-
Park Elem	107	107	-	67	67	-
Polk Elem	9	9	-	135	135	-
Putnam Elem	375	375	-	323	323	-
Rivera Elem	11	11	-	96	96	-
Roberts Elem	105	105	-	176	176	-
Roosevelt Elem	39	39	-	1,041	1,041	-
Rusk Elem	210	210	-	-	-	-
Schuster Elem	87	87	-			-

Stanton Elem	1,415	1,415	-			-
Travis Elem	77	77	-			-
Vilas Elem	480	480	-			-
Wainwright Elem	-	-	-	7	7	-
Western Hills Elem	56	56	-	30	30	-
Whitaker Elem	75	75	-	1,912	1,912	-
Zach White Elem	-	-	-	205	205	-
Zavala Elem	17	17	-	-	-	-
Juvenile Probation Department	206	206	-	-	-	-
Total	158,759	120,826	37,933	198,880	130,875	68,005

Source: EPISD Textbook Unit.

The district budgets money to replace lost textbooks. This allocation is used when schools do not have enough money collected or available budget money to pay for the lost textbooks. **Exhibit 8-17** summarizes district level allocations for additional textbooks including lost textbooks, and electronic and hard copy reading materials.

Exhibit 8-17
EPISD General Revenue Budgeted Allocation
Textbooks (Class Object 6321)
1997-98 and 1998-99

Budget Unit	1997-98	1998-99
Curriculum and Instruction	N/A	\$185,000
Region I	\$118,000	\$95,000
Region 2	\$57,500	\$47,000
Region 3	\$33,000	\$28,250
Region 4	\$37,000	\$32,500
Total	\$245,500	\$387,750

Source: EPISD Budgets Adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Exhibit 8-18 summarizes budget allocations for reading and testing materials within the general fund.

Exhibit 8-18
Budget Allocations for Reading and Testing Materials
Textbooks (Class Object 6321)
1997-98 and 1998-99

Budget Unit	Student Reading (Function 11)	Student Testing (Function 11)	Teacher Reading (Function 21)	Total
1997-98				
Curriculum and Instruction	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Region I	81,810	6,500	1,000	89,310
Region 2	75,147	3,500	500	79,147
Region 3	57,651	3,500	1,200	62,351
Region 4	98,392	3,500	700	102,592
Total	313,000	17,000	3,400	333,400
1998-99				
Curriculum and Instruction	13,300		850	14,150
Region I	70,532	3,875	200	74,607
Region 2	57,623	3,500	1,100	62,223
Region 3	41,000	-	1,900	42,900
Region 4	73,030	500	4,140	77,670
Total	\$255,485	\$7,875	\$8,190	\$271,550

Source: EPISD Budgets Adopted by the Board of Trustees.

The schools must submit textbook reports to the Textbook Unit that list textbooks accounted for and missing. They also are required to submit activity fund reports to the Financial Unit. Since collections for lost textbooks are deposited into activity funds, an accounting for textbook revenues and disbursements is included in this report. When the review team compared the two reports, total school payments in the activity fund

report did not match those in the textbook report. Furthermore, it appears that some schools do not submit all revenues collected to the Textbook Unit. **Exhibit 8-19** summarizes the two reports.

Exhibit 8-19
Revenues Collected by Schools for Lost Textbooks
1996-97 and 1997-98

Description	1996-97	1997-98
Total School Collections (1)	\$ 114,789	\$ 119,603
Total School Payments (1)	\$ 110,746	\$ 126,497
Total Paid per Textbook Report	\$ 120,826	\$ 130,875

Source: EPISD Internal Audit and Textbook Unit.
(1) As per activity fund reports submitted to the Financial Unit

Recommendation 94:

Require schools to remit the full amount collected for lost textbooks and enforce board policy on collecting fines and replacing costs for lost or damaged textbooks.

The district should enforce board policy and state law that requires payment for lost and damaged textbooks. However, because many EPISD students are considered low income, an equitable system should be established to provide general fund money to all schools to cover lost textbooks that cannot be paid for by the students. For example, McAllen ISD adds \$1 per student to each school's allocated general fund budget to cover lost textbooks. This allocation can be used to offset the money not collected from students, and there is surplus, it can be used to purchase additional classroom books.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board directs the superintendent to develop an equitable system to provide all schools general fund money to cover lost textbooks that cannot be paid for by the students.	April 1999
2.	The board directs the superintendent to enforce board policy regarding collection of fines for lost textbooks.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent develops policy.	May 1999

4.	The superintendent presents policy to the board for approval.	June 1999
5.	The superintendent implements policy.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

There should be no overall fiscal impact from implementing this recommendation. The money is being shifted from the district-level budget to the schools.

FINDING

EPISD uses an automated textbook inventory system developed by Hayes Associates. However, the system only is used at the district level. The Hayes Associates system can be configured to connect the Textbook Unit with schools throughout the district. This allows schools to place and verify orders and track textbooks assigned to students by location. Other districts that have installed the Hayes Associates textbook inventory system districtwide have reduced their costs for replacing lost or damaged books by an average of 50 percent. These districts have attributed the cost reductions to improved tracking.

Additionally, an automated system can facilitate the annual physical inventory. Management reports are generated and provided to employees who verify textbooks at each school to the report. Any discrepancies are noted on the automated system and charged to the respective school. The Textbook Unit hired temporary employees to conduct a complete physical audit of all textbooks in the summer of 1998.

EPISD is in the process of obtaining and implementing a new student accounting system. This system includes a textbook tracking module. The module determines the number of textbooks needed and issued based upon course curriculum. The system also allows textbooks to be assigned and tracked through bar codes in the textbooks and student identification cards.

Recommendation 95:

Implement campus-level textbook systems that are integrated with the districtwide program and require all schools to use the textbook accounting system to track all textbooks and to facilitate efficient ordering and delivery of textbooks throughout the district.

Once a campus-level automated textbook tracking system is in place, all schools should be required to order, issue, and track textbooks through the automated system. This will improve internal control of textbooks, facilitate identification and location of textbooks within the district, and decrease the amount of time spent tracking textbooks manually. It also should eliminate the need to hire temporary workers each summer to conduct physical audits. Random spot audits could be conducted throughout the year by requiring all students in designated classes and schools to bring their books to school for verification by the respective teacher. The teacher then would submit the results to the school's textbook clerk. At the end of each school year, a textbook clerk could be assigned to conduct a textbook audit at a school other than the one they are responsible for.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, with assistance from the TIS Director, evaluates whether the Hayes Associates system, or the new textbook system will best meet district needs.	April 1999
2.	The board directs TIS to install the automated textbook accounting system or the Hayes Associates system at all schools.	April 1999
3.	The superintendent directs TIS to train all schools on the textbook system.	May 1999
4.	TIS trains all schools on textbook tracking system.	May - July 1999
5.	The assistant director of Instructional Materials implements the campus-level textbook tracking system districtwide.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Nineteen temporary summer employees are used for eight hours a day, two weeks each summer to conduct the textbook inventory. At \$5.25 per hour, the total annual cost for temporary employees is \$7,980 (19 employees x 10 days x 8 hours per day x \$5.25 per hour).

The automated textbook system is a module of the new student accounting system; therefore, there is no additional cost to implement this recommendation. However, indirect savings should be realized as a result of the elimination of manual records.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
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Implement campus-level textbook systems that are integrated with the districtwide program.	\$7,980	\$7,980	\$7,980	\$7,980	\$7,980
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Chapter 9

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter reviews EPISD's administrative and instructional technology functions in eight sections:

- A. Organizational Structure
- B. Technology Plan
- C. Technology Committee
- D. Infrastructure
- E. Hardware
- F. Software
- G. Technical Support
- H. Staff Development

BACKGROUND

The responsibilities of the management information services (MIS) units of Texas public school districts vary. Some MIS units support administrative functions only, while others, such as EPISD's, support both administration and instruction. Generally, MIS offices are responsible for the district's information technology infrastructure, including the implementation, support, and administration of the district's wide area network; support for local area networks in schools and administrative offices; and, in some cases, the district telephone system. MIS units that support instruction as well usually administer the district's state technology allotment funds. In addition, they often assist in the development of grant applications for technology-related projects and provide technology-related staff training.

This chapter provides recommendations that could improve a variety of EPISD's technological functions.

A. Organizational Structure

To achieve its technology-related goals, a school district must have an organizational structure that creates the best possible environment for using and supporting new technologies.

A well-managed administrative technology and information services department is guided by a clearly defined mission plan based on appropriate goals and organization; clear assignments of responsibility for each database; well-defined development procedures for new applications; and a customer-service orientation that continually seeks to meet and anticipate user needs.

An instructional technology support department must be familiar with school operations and the technologies used for instructional purposes; technology-oriented instructional materials; networks used for instructional purposes; and technology-related training, particularly training that seeks to integrate new technologies into the curriculum. It should be very closely associated with the curriculum and instruction department to ensure that its initiatives support the learning process.

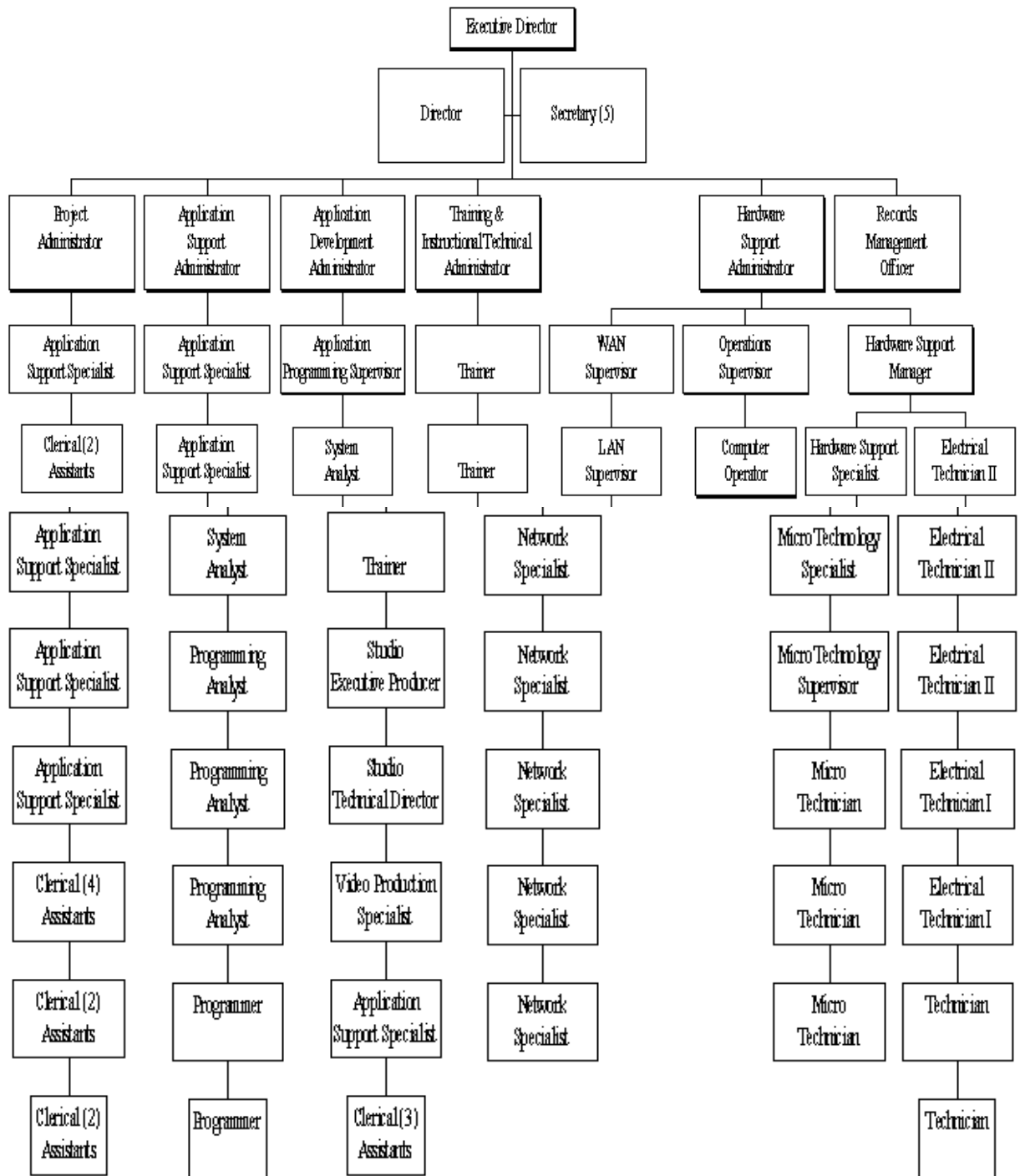
CURRENT SITUATION

In EPISD, the Technology and Information Systems Unit (TIS) provides both administrative and instructional support. This unit resides within the area of the associate superintendent for Support Services and reports to the executive director of Research and Evaluation. The TIS budget for 1998-99 is \$4,622,051. The unit has a total of 56 employees organized into six different sections, which include:

- Project Administration - administers special projects such as the acquisition and installation of administrative computers and software and the acquisition of a new student records package.
- Application Support - responsible for the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting and the Help Desk.
- Applications Development - programs new applications.
- Training and Instructional Technology - trains administrative and instructional personnel and leads instructional technology efforts.
- Hardware Support - provides network support and hardware maintenance services.
- Records Management - supports TEA's records management requirement and imaging efforts.

Exhibit 9-1 illustrates the current organizational structure.

**Exhibit 9-1
Technology and Information Systems**



Source: EPISD.

FINDING

The executive director of TIS reports to the executive director of Research and Evaluation. This is an unconventional arrangement since because or as it calls for one administrator to report to another of equal rank; moreover, it places an additional and probably unnecessary level of management between TIS and the associate superintendent for Support Services.

Nevertheless, TIS and Research and Evaluation have developed a good working relationship. Research and Evaluation is one of the primary users of the data TIS gathers, and the two units often support and assist one other. For example, Research and Evaluation sometimes responds to questions and concerns raised by other users concerning data to be collected for TIS.

Many private companies have found that information technology functions can be more constructive if given a high level of influence within the organization. As a result, many firms have arranged for their chief information officers to report either to the chief executive officer or the number-two executive. Through such restructuring, corporations help ensure that their technology efforts support the organization's overall goals effectively and in turn receive the necessary resources, influence, and "profile" to succeed.

Recommendation 96:

Revise the reporting structure so that the executive director of TIS reports directly to the associate superintendent for Support Services.

TIS's existing close ties with Research and Evaluation should be maintained by frequent meetings between the personnel of these units.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent issues a directive specifying that the executive director of TIS reports to the associate superintendent for Support Services.	April 1999
2.	This new reporting structure takes effect.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Many district employees told TSPR that TIS frequently initiates promising projects only to be forced to delay or even abandon them. Apparently, this is because TIS personnel assigned to such projects often are pulled off to work on "emergency situations" that sometimes turn into lengthy tasks.

The district does not use project plans that include specific projections for training, technical support, hardware and software upgrades, staff time for various administrative support functions, timelines for each activity, and other relevant information. Such planning provides an excellent way to monitor and measure performance and progress.

Recommendation 97:

Adopt work policies requiring that each technology project begin with a plan that shows how it will be sustained over time.

When appropriate, the plan also should specify funding sources that will allow the project to be continued after grant funds expire.

Project plans should be approved by the TIS executive director, who then should specify a date for project completion, allocate resources to the project, and establish periodic review dates to assess its progress. This progress should be further tracked and monitored with monthly status reports on each project to the Technology Committee (see Section C below).

This approach would establish clear priorities so that critical projects are not unduly delayed because key personnel are sidetracked to "emergency" situations. While emergencies undoubtedly will arise that require some workers to be pulled from a project, the executive director must ensure that these occurrences are infrequent and of limited duration.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of TIS adopts a policy that requires each project to have a plan that will facilitate its completion on schedule and within budget.	May 1999
2.	The project administrator provides a progress report on each project at monthly meetings of the Technology Committee.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Training and Instructional Technology section within TIS coordinates technology-related training across the district and provides guidance and support for the instructional use of technology in EPISD schools. Its role includes:

- assisting schools in the selection of instructional software;
- devising strategies for the delivery of effective staff development to teachers;
- advising schools on how to use technology effectively in the classroom;
- providing information on Internet sites that contain valuable instructional materials;
- administering state technology allotment funds;
- assisting with the development and submission of technology-oriented grant applications;
- serving as a resource to the administration on instructional technology use; and
- ensuring TIS's efforts support EPISD's instructional goals.

Because the section has been quite busy providing support to individual schools, its administrator has been unable to maintain close contact with the district's Curriculum and Instruction Department. This is troublesome since a primary function of Training and Instructional Technology is to support instruction, and it seems doubtful that the section can do so effectively without a good working relationship with those responsible for guiding the district's instructional efforts.

Recommendation 98:

Develop strategies to establish and maintain a close working relationship between the Training and Instructional Technology section and the Curriculum and Instruction Department.

Employees providing support to schools in their use of instructional technology must be well-informed on programs and directions initiated by the Curriculum and Instruction Department. To build the close relationship needed in this area, the Training and Instructional Technology administrator should:

- meet regularly with appropriate Curriculum and Instruction staff members;
- participate in planning sessions that design ways for TIS to support programs initiated by Curriculum and Instruction; and
- routinely share information on activities in progress with Curriculum and Instruction.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Training and Instructional Technology administrator arranges a meeting with the executive director of Curriculum and Instruction to develop strategies for collaboration.	April 1999
2.	The TIS Training and Instructional Technology staff works closely with Curriculum and Instruction staff.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

B. Technology Plan

Adequate planning is of course critical to the success of any venture. No company would devise corporate strategies without carefully planning how it will use its resources to achieve its goals and objectives, and school districts should be no different.

Planning for the use of new technologies is particularly important to education because of the following factors:

- **Equity.** Despite the best intentions, the level of technological resources available to each school in a district can vary unacceptably. Unfortunately, poorly planned introductions of new technology can serve to further widen the gap between the "haves" and "have nots." Careful planning at the district level can ensure that all schools receive adequate support; at the school level, it helps to guarantee that no child is excluded from the benefits of new technology.
- **Rapid Change.** The pace of technological change continues to accelerate. If planning for the implementation of new technology does not cover an adequate span of time (such as 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 whether and how projects will be funded, limited funding can have a greater impact than it should.
- **Credibility.** The public is anxious to see that its tax dollars are spent effectively, and rightly so. 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 school district must have an extensive computer network connecting modern computers; comprehensive administrative and instructional software and up-to-date operating systems; effective, ongoing training; adequate technical support; and an ample professional staff capable of implementing and administering a technology-rich environment. Each of these components should be addressed by the district's technology plan.

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD received a technology planning grant from the Texas Education Agency in 1996 entitled "Revisiting Roads to the Future." To take advantage of this grant, EPISD instituted a new technology plan in October 1997 that is intended to address student achievement, teacher and administrative management, and community involvement.

FINDING

The process EPISD used to develop its technology plan was thorough and inclusive. It included a systematic process designed to ensure that all stakeholders were involved in crafting the plan through "Technology Planning Circles." These groups were asked what they wanted from technology for the district and the community at large. A Technology Planning Council of 27 persons, representing all areas of the school district as well as key elements of the community, gathered and organized the information produced by the Technology Planning Circles. The council then provided the information to a subcommittee that wrote the final plan. Once the plan was written, the Technology Planning Council and Technology Planning Circles were given an opportunity to review it. In addition, other members of the district administration were given opportunities for review and input. Following refinements springing from the various reviews, the Board of Trustees adopted the plan in October 1997.

COMMENDATION

EPISD created and used a systematic and inclusive technology planning process for developing its *Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education*.

FINDING

The *Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education* contains most of the necessary elements of a good action plan, including:

- vision statement
- expected benefits/outcomes
- goals
- objectives for each goal
- activities for each objective
- a timeline for each activity
- responsible party for each activity
- resources for each activity
- evaluation measures for each activity

- links to EPISD district goals
- links to the state's Long-range Plan for Technology

However, while most of the critical elements are included, a most important part-budget-is not; moreover, some of the elements that were included are inadequate in terms of detail. Finally, no true accountability is assigned for carrying out the plan.

The lack of a budget, although not required in TEA's technology planning guides, is a significant problem. Without a budget, district officials obviously will not know the true cost of implementing their plan, or be able to determine whether the timeline is appropriate. Virtually every activity related to the plan will have some cost, either in dollars or staff time. Some, such as hardware procurement, are obvious costs, but others such as inventory creation will require significant commitments of staff time. Without a budget, the plan is little more than a collection of good ideas.

The timeline for the Technology Plan is divided into short- (1997-1998), medium- (1999-2002), and long-range (2003-2010) periods. While it is wise to look to the longer term, the short- and medium-range periods need significantly more detail. It is unclear, for instance, whether activities slated in the plan for long-range completion (as signified by an arrow ending in that box) are ongoing or only to be conducted for that period. Similarly, when an arrow ends in the short-term box, it is unclear whether this means the task is completed or is ongoing but needs to have a first iteration completed in the short term.

The "Responsible Party" component also needs additional detail. In some cases, as many as four responsible parties are listed for a single activity. It is unclear which party has responsibility for which component of the activity. Without clearer delineation of responsibilities, *no one* will be responsible.

The plan is also unclear as to who has final responsibility for its success. No one district office "owns" the plan and is responsible its completion.

The "Resources" component also lacks detail. The operating budget is cited, but without reference to amounts or even to what section of the budget is involved, making the citations of little value.

On the other hand, the "Evaluation Measures" component is an excellent concept. Good evaluation measures will make it clear to district officials and when-and how well- an activity is completed. The goals, objectives, and activities of the plan should be written so that an evaluation measure can be tied directly to each of them.

Finally, TSPR was disturbed to find that many EPISD principals and teachers involved with technology had not read or even heard of the *Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education*. For its part, TIS said it had presented the plan at a principals' meeting, advertised the plan in two separate EPISD publications, and sent a copy to every campus. If teachers, administrators, and parents are unaware of the district's vision for the use of new technology, they are unlikely to participate effectively in making that vision a reality.

Recommendation 99:

Redesign and recreate the EPISD Technology Plan to make it a more useful document.

This process should include the following steps at minimum:

- The superintendent should assign responsibility for implementing the plan to an office within TIS (or create a new office to assume this responsibility).
- The Technology Committee should review the plan to determine:
 - what, if any, progress has been made in accomplishing its goals, objectives, and activities,
 - whether all the goals, objectives, and activities are still necessary,
 - whether new goals, objectives, or activities should be added, and
 - whether the plan should express priorities among objectives or activities.
- The Technology Committee should add detail to each of the short-term activities and the mid- and long-range activities as appropriate.
- The Technology Committee should add a budget figure to each activity and aggregate the budget by objective and goal.
- The Technology Committee should revisit the priorities established earlier.
- The Technology Committee should submit the revised plan to the Technology Planning Circles or establish some other mechanism to receive feedback on the changes.
- The Technology Committee should make changes as appropriate based upon the feedback.
- The Technology Committee should submit the plan to the superintendent and board.
- The Technology Committee should create an awareness campaign that ensures that all EPISD staff and the community are well of the contents and costs of the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIME LINE

1.	The superintendent assigns responsibility for implementing the plan to an office in TIS.	May 1999
2.	The superintendent assigns the Technology Committee the responsibility for reviewing and revising the plan.	June 1999
3.	The Technology Committee reviews and revises the plan.	June - August 1999
4.	The revised plan is submitted to the Technology Planning Circles.	August - October 1999
5.	The TIS office makes changes as appropriate based on the feedback.	October - November 1999
6.	The revised plan is submitted to the superintendent and board.	December 1999
7.	An awareness campaign is conducted.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

C. Technology Committee

Technology can be a powerful resource for many educational endeavors. However, if powerful new technologies are to achieve their full potential, the district needs an effective method for involving stakeholders, addressing equity issues, establishing technology-related standards, and coordinating initiatives. The best way to accomplish these objectives and many others is to establish a committee composed of members knowledgeable in technology and representative of all stakeholders.

FINDING

EPISD's technology plan was created by a Technology Planning Council that was representative of the district as a whole and, through regional Technology Planning Circles, obtained input from many EPISD employees that were not on the planning council. The planning council, however, was disbanded after the creation of the Technology Plan in late 1997. At least one TIS staff member indicated that the council would be reconvened in a short while to assess the extent of the district's progress in implementing the plan. Whether the council has been "disbanded" or simply has not been convened for a year makes little difference. The fact is that, for a whole year, EPISD has had no districtwide entity to provide input on technology-related issues to TIS, the administration, and the board.

Recommendation 100:

Establish an EPISD Technology Committee and authorize it to monitor and provide advice regarding all district technology operations.

This committee should continually monitor the district's various technology endeavors and should meet on a regular monthly basis. To be effective, the committee should not be too large, yet it must include representatives of the various constituencies of the school system. The group should number between 14 and 20 members and include teachers, principals, one or two local higher education representatives, and school system administrative employees from the instructional, finance, and TIS areas. Committee members should have a working knowledge of technology and its uses, at least within their respective areas of expertise.

In creating this committee, the superintendent should appoint a mix of persons who were members of the previous Technology Planning Council and some who were not. The holdovers from the earlier committee should provide some continuity that could be valuable as the new committee assists with the implementation of the Technology Plan. The new

members, in turn, should impart a greater sense of objectivity since they were not a part of the earlier deliberations. To ensure continuity and an annual infusion of new ideas and perspectives, members should be appointed to staggered three-year terms (when established, one-third of the members should have one-year terms, one-third should have two-year terms, and the final third should have three-year terms). Each year a third of the committee's members would be appointed or reappointed.

The committee may choose to facilitate its efforts by creating an Executive Committee to act on behalf of the full committee when the next meeting is a few weeks away. The composition of such a committee should be decided by the full committee.

This group could assume numerous responsibilities, including these:

- review and update the Technology Plan annually.
- establish recommended lists of instructional courseware.
- monitor the level of technology support available to schools and devise strategies for improving it as necessary.
- assist in the establishment of technology budgets.
- oversee the distribution of state technology allotment funds.
- provide advice on and help set priorities for administrative technology development efforts.
- devise a policy governing the acceptance of donated equipment.
- provide advice and guidance on the types and amount of training needed.
- develop hardware, software and network standards.
- monitor the progress of all technology projects.
- monitor the equity of technology in schools.
- offer advice on technology grant applications and proposals.
- recommend revisions in policies and procedures that affect technology use.

The Technology Committee should address most if not all of these areas through subcommittees. For example, if the district chooses to develop recommended lists of instructional software, a group of teachers could be selected to perform the review necessary to develop an initial list. The subcommittee could then present its recommended list to the full committee for adoption, which would in turn seek superintendent and board approval. In this way, the Technology Committee could become a key resource for the superintendent and board.

Moreover, the subcommittee approach should in fact reduce the time each committee member must devote to its functions and spread the responsibility for contributing to the system's technology strategies among a large number of knowledgeable people.

Other than to address some urgent issue, the full Technology Committee should meet only once per month. At this regular meeting, the committee should accept or amend subcommittee recommendations and take steps to implement the desired action. Using this strategy, Technology Committee members normally should be able to discharge their responsibilities in three or fewer hours per month.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints appropriate representatives from the school district to serve as members of the Technology Committee.	April 1999
2.	The committee holds an organizational meeting and begins its work as a more substantive technology resource to the district and the board.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Over the last three years, the EPISD board frequently has rejected the recommendations of Technology and Information Systems when awarding contracts for technological resources. In fact, the relationship between the board and TIS has occasionally been described by some EPISD staff as confrontational. Generally, board members rely upon others to advise them on technology-related decisions. Often they receive their advice from outside sources, rather than TIS.

In one recent situation, TIS presented a recommendation to the board for a large purchase of computers. After spending several months conducting a competitive selection process, TIS selected a vendor who not only had the best price but the best bid from a technical standpoint as well. At the subsequent board meeting, however, the board awarded the contract to another vendor after only a brief discussion.

This second contractor had submitted a higher bid than the company selected by TIS. Of greater concern, however, was the fact that this second contractor's bid provided equipment from three different companies, rather than just one. Thus, the expenses associated with maintaining the contracts will be considerably more costly in terms of staff time than if TIS had to deal with only one company.

The expressed reason for awarding this contract to a higher bidder was that the board preferred to do business "with a local company." Apparently

the fact that the company recommended by TIS was Texas-based was not sufficient; the board wanted a firm from El Paso.

This story illustrates a need to better educate the board on technology in general and better prepare them for technology-related recommendations. Some school boards have created a subcommittee from within their own ranks to study technological issues and help the full board address them more effectively. Many school districts provide periodic workshops for their board members to enable them to better understand specific technology initiatives.

Recommendation 101:

Establish a technology subcommittee of the board to study technology issues.

The board should select two or three of its members to serve on this subcommittee, which should assume responsibility for studying and analyzing any technology issues put before the board and recommend a course of action.

Preferably, the members of this subcommittee should have experience with technology; however, whether they do or not, the members should make it a priority to become well versed. They do not need to become experts, but do need to become conversant in the field and acquire a sound understanding of the costs and benefits of technology and an appreciation for the factors that contribute to its effective use.

This subcommittee should work with the administration to arrange workshops for the full board on specific technology issues or initiatives. One of these subcommittee members should serve on the district Technology Committee, to help establish better communications between the board and the administration with respect to technology.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Board of Trustees appoints two or three of its members to form a Technology Subcommittee.	April 1999
2.	The board's Technology Subcommittee works with the district Technology Committee and the administration to strengthen the board's understanding of technology issues.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

D. Infrastructure

Technology infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, phone lines, hubs, switches, routers, and other devices that connects the various parts of an organization together through a wide area network (WAN). A sound infrastructure allows most users to access people and information throughout their organization and beyond, aiding their ability to accomplish their responsibilities. Without an infrastructure, such capabilities are available only on a piecemeal basis.

Given these capabilities and benefits, many organizations have found that they must invest adequately in a technology infrastructure to achieve their desired level of success. This is particularly true in a school system, which typically has a central office and multiple school sites spread over a wide area.

A WAN generally provides its users with tools such as electronic mail systems as well as links to the Internet. WANs usually are "closed," meaning that security measures prevent persons outside the WAN from accessing information housed within the WAN without a password and/or personal identification number.

A key function of a WAN is to connect local area networks (LANs) throughout the enterprise. A LAN typically connect all the users within a single building to one local network. By connecting the LAN to a WAN, all LAN users gain access to others in the enterprise as well as to the electronic world beyond. An enterprise that has every user connected through a LAN to a WAN has established the infrastructure necessary to take full advantage of the present telecommunications capabilities and those that will be available tomorrow.

CURRENT SITUATION

Goal 1 of EPISD's technology plan reads as follows:

Build a solid technological foundation for learning by providing an infrastructure which gives voice, video, and data access to district information and universal access to global information.

To accomplish this goal, EPISD is developing a WAN to connect all schools and administrative buildings in the district.

FINDING

To use a WAN, schools and administrative offices must be outfitted with network cabling. This allows every workstation in the building or on the campus to be connected to a LAN and thereby to the WAN.

EPISD's plan specifies that its first priority for its WAN implementation is to install cabling in the high schools, thereby focusing on students who will shortly enter the workforce or postsecondary education. When the high school cabling has been completed, efforts will begin on connecting the middle schools to the WAN. Third in line for connections are the elementary schools.

The wiring of the high schools was originally scheduled for completion by June 30, 1998. However, because of a multitude of problems, wiring at two high schools had not been completed at the time of TSPR's on-site visit in early October. Moreover, the technology plan contains no specific plan or schedule for wiring the middle and elementary schools after the high schools are finished.

Recommendation 102:

Develop a formal schedule to implement the WAN as called for in the *Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education* that includes milestones and target dates for the completion of the middle and elementary school connections.

The WAN implementation is an important endeavor that requires understanding and support from all administrative offices and schools. The plan should enumerate the various objectives to be accomplished and a schedule for their completion. Target dates should be developed for completing critical components of the WAN so that implementation will proceed as rapidly as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The WAN supervisor and members of his staff study the issues related to WAN connections in the middle and elementary schools and develop a schedule for completing those connections.	April - May 1999
2.	The WAN implementation effort continues until all schools are connected.	April 1999 - July 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

A schedule for implementing WAN connections in individual schools could be developed with existing resources.

FINDING

Before purchasing network equipment such as routers, hubs, switches, and network servers, EPISD's schools must obtain the approval of the WAN supervisor. This is intended to ensure that schools install LANs that will be compatible with the district WAN. However, it is possible that an individual school could receive a grant from an outside source and implement a LAN without consulting TIS, and in this way introduce network hardware and software into the district mix that is not supported by TIS. Such an event would complicate the process of completing the WAN.

Although EPISD has no written rules specifying how schools will be connected to its WAN, technical standards do exist. Schools learn these network standards informally in their working relationship with TIS.

Recommendation 103:

Establish and publicize network standards for the district that provide clear guidance to schools installing local area networks.

To ensure that all parties adhere to the standards, the EPISD Board of Trustees should adopt a policy requiring compliance by all EPISD personnel with network standards established by the Technology Committee. This would facilitate the WAN process and provide schools with a clearer understanding of the steps they should take to implement a LAN.

When these standards are finalized, they should be posted on a web page so that they can be easily accessed by school personnel throughout EPISD. TIS should ensure that the posted standards are updated regularly.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	TIS presents the current network specifications to the Technology Committee for its review.	April 1999
2.	The Technology Committee amends and/or endorses the network specifications.	May 1999
3.	The Technology Committee takes the necessary steps to have the EPISD Board of Trustees adopt these specifications as policy.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

E. Hardware

Any analysis of a school district's technology would be incomplete without an analysis of the type of hardware available to staff, teachers, and students. While computers are the predominant resource, other relevant technologies include videodisk players, televisions, scanners, and digital cameras.

Computers used for instruction should have sufficient power and speed to support the use of recently developed multimedia courseware and provide effective access to the Internet. These computers should be networked or at least capable of being networked. Similarly, computers used for administrative purposes need sufficient power and speed to use the more advanced software tools available for data storage, manipulation, and analysis. They, too, should be networked.

CURRENT SITUATION

The main computers that support EPISD's administrative functions consist of three IBM AS/400 systems and a Sun Ultra2 system. Specific information on each of these processors is as follows:

- IBM AS/400 Model 510-2143 (Installed fall 1991)
 - 1 GB main memory
 - 104 GB DASD
 - 92 GB optical storage
 - primary computer for business and finance applications
- IBM AS/400 Model F10 (Installed fall 1993)
 - GB main memory
 - 8 GB DASD
 - primary computer for maintenance work order application
- IBM AS/400 Model S20-2161 (Installed Jan 1999)
 - 1 GB main memory
 - 103 GB DASD
 - primary computer for application development and disaster recovery
- Sun Ultra2 Enterprise (Installed fall 1997)
 - 128 MB main memory
 - 8.4 GB DASD
 - district e-mail server
 - proxy filter

In addition, several EPISD staff members estimated that the district has about 30,000 personal computers in use for both administrative and instructional purposes.

These computers include a roughly equivalent number of Apple and IBM-compatible computers. In elementary schools, the predominant system is the Macintosh. In middle schools, computers are evenly divided between Macintoshes and IBM-compatibles, while "Wintel" units (computers with Intel processors operating the Windows operating system) are the most common in the high schools.

FINDING

While most schools seek informal advice and guidance from TIS regarding the type of computers they should buy, EPISD has no published standards for such acquisitions.

All technology-related purchase requisitions are routed to the interim director of TIS for examination and approval. This offers the schools knowledgeable guidance on their planned acquisitions. As noted above, however, schools sometimes receive funds or hardware donations directly from outside sources, raising a real possibility that incompatible or inappropriate equipment may be installed. Problems that could occur in the absence of standards include equipment that does not conform to EPISD's implementation plan, preventing computers from being attached to the school LAN, or personal computers that cannot match minimum power and speed standards and therefore cannot run district software packages.

Because change in the technology industry is so rapid, even the most seasoned technology veterans find it difficult to keep up with developments. This pace makes it practically impossible for even the most knowledgeable school-based personnel to keep abreast of developments unless they forego all other teaching or administrative responsibilities. Consequently, schools should receive guidance from outside sources to help them avoid serious mistakes in acquiring technological resources.

Recommendation 104:

Establish technology acquisition standards to ensure that EPISD schools and administrative offices acquire appropriate and compatible equipment.

These standards should be published on a district web page, so that schools may obtain valuable information about technological resources. This should reduce the TIS workload; shorten the time needed to acquire

and install technological resources; and guard against the introduction of incompatible hardware in schools. Of course, for this strategy to be effective, the hardware standards should be revisited at least every six months to make sure that they remain current.

To ensure that all parties adhere to the standards, the EPISD Board of Trustees should enact a policy requiring compliance by all EPISD personnel with equipment standards established by the Technology Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	TIS presents recommended computer equipment standards to the Technology Committee for review.	April 1999
2.	The Technology Committee amends and/or endorses the computer standards.	May 1999
3.	The Technology Committee takes the necessary steps to have the EPISD Board of Trustees adopt these specifications as policy.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Many parents and community members who attended TSPR's public forums were concerned that the computers at their children's schools are obsolete. The presence of a large number of old computers was confirmed through interviews of district and school personnel.

Objective Six of Goal 1 in the district's technology plan states that the district will "develop a plan to replace or reposition obsolescent technology on a scheduled basis." Activities that would further this objective include:

- creating a database of technology hardware that would describe such factors as platform, speed, RAM, Ethernet capability, year of acquisition, etc.
- budgeting to replace or upgrade technological resources.

Although the technology plan spells out a good strategy for addressing computer obsolescence, this element of the plan has not been fully implemented.

An equipment replacement policy is an important component of any carefully planned and implemented technology program. Such a policy tells district personnel when to replace existing hardware, how to conduct new acquisitions, and what should be done with the equipment being replaced.

Recommendation 105:

Develop a plan to annually replace and reposition computers as specified in EPISD's *Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education*.

New workstations should be allocated to employees who require more powerful systems. Such allocations should improve productivity and make older models available for use by employees who have lesser computing requirements.

To ensure that all parties benefit from the replacement plan, the board should require compliance by all EPISD personnel with standards established by the Technology Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Technology Committee establishes a subcommittee to develop an equipment replacement policy.	May 1999
2.	The subcommittee analyzes the issues related to equipment replacement and develops a proposed policy for presentation to the full committee.	July 1999
3.	The Technology Committee reviews and refines the proposed policy and presents it to the Board of Trustees for review.	August 1999
4.	The board adopts the policy and takes steps to budget and plan for the replacement and redistribution of obsolete technology.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Since the technology plan already specifies that EPISD should annually replace and reposition computers, the fiscal impact is a result of the plan, not this recommendation, and should be absorbed by existing district resources.

FINDING

Parents and community members also criticized the district for inequities in the technology available to schools, claiming that some schools have

substantial funding for equipment while others have relatively little. This situation was confirmed through interviews with district, regional and school-based staff.

TSPR found several reasons for these disparities. First, a large number of schools have high percentages of students from low-income families and therefore are eligible to receive compensatory and Title I funds from the federal government, much of which is used for technology purchases. Second, a few schools have parent organizations that provide financial assistance for technology. Moreover, several schools have received grants for technological resources.

Yet another reason for these inequities relates directly to decisions made by the board over the last few years. In 1995, the board undertook initiatives to enhance technology use in its elementary schools by providing funding for wiring about half of the elementary schools, as part of a distance learning initiative. This initiative also funded purchases of laptop computers for teachers in the remaining elementary schools. This initiative called for wiring the remaining elementaries a year later and providing laptop computers to the elementary teachers who had not received them in the first year.

Instead of continuing with the plan in the second year, however, the board canceled a wiring request for proposals (RFP) and retained another consultant who developed an implementation plan for the second phase of the distance learning initiative. The board did not pursue this plan further. As a result only about half of EPISD's elementary schools are wired, causing a significant inequity among the elementary schools in Internet access and network resources.

Three elementary schools that *were* wired have acquired ISDN lines to provide Internet access throughout their facilities. This provides a very powerful learning resource in every classroom, something not possible without a LAN. Since elementary schools have been placed in the lowest priority for connection to the WAN, those schools not wired will continue to be unable to have full electronic access to resources available through a district wide-area network for many more months.

Recommendation 106:

Establish a baseline standard of technology for each school to ensure that all students have adequate access to technology.

EPISD should set a basic required level of technology for each school to give principals an indication of what technology their schools need.

EPISD could lessen the disparities between its schools by allocating technology funds directly to schools at the low end of the technology scale. This could be accomplished by:

- establishing the baseline standard (minimum level) of technology every school should implement;
- emphasizing to school principals that the baseline standard is a *minimum* level and encouraging them to exceed it;
- annually evaluating the schools to determine the extent to which they exceed, meet, or fall below the baseline standard; and
- allocating additional technology funding to those schools that fall below the baseline standard by the greatest margin. (For instance, the district might choose to provide \$30,000 directly to each of the five schools with the lowest rating.)

A specific strategy for addressing equity should be developed by the Technology Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assigns the Technology Committee responsibility for addressing technological equity among EPISD schools.	April 1999
2.	The Technology Committee, through a subcommittee, develops a plan for addressing equity.	July 1999
3.	The EPISD Board of Trustees reviews and approves the plan with adjustments as necessary.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

If the suggested strategy for addressing the equity issue is adopted, the district could allocate technology funds to campuses based on established baseline standards. In considering equity issues, the Technology Committee should not overlook funds received by schools from grants and federal sources.

F. Software

While the infrastructure provides the connections that permit communications, and hardware provides the capability to retrieve, process, and disseminate information, software makes these tools truly powerful resources. Software is a critical technology resource that requires close attention if it is to serve the organization effectively. Productivity tools such as spreadsheets and databases make it possible for people with limited technical capabilities to perform the sort of sophisticated data manipulation on a personal computer that once could be performed only on a mainframe.

CURRENT SITUATION

The software applications that support EPISD's administrative functions, as well as the vendors that supplied them, are as follows:

National Computer System (NCS) CIMS Modules

- Application Control System
Menus, Security
- Financial Management System
Purchasing, Receiving, Payables, Disbursements
- Employee Management System
Profiles, Payroll
- Human Resource Management System
Applicant Tracking, Position Inventory, Substitutes, Retirees, Professional Development, PEIMS
- Warehouse Management System
Issues, Receiving
- Fixed Assets Management System
Asset Tracking
- Student Demographic System (EPISD developed)
At-risk, LEP, TAAS, PL894, PEIMS
- Budget Development System (EPISD developed)
Project Based, Comparative

Gateway Software Corporation - Distributed Management System

- Work Order, Warehouse, Vehicle Tracking

NCS/McGraw Hill - The School System, The Elementary School System

- Attendance, Grade Reporting, Scheduling, PEIMS

Significant instructional software initiatives at district campuses include:

- Nova Net (self-paced, interactive curriculum)
Sunset High School
El Paso Juvenile Justice Center
Andress High School
Coronado High School
Jefferson High School

- Raymond Telles Academy
- Jostens Learning Company (grades K-8; lessons in core subjects)
- K-1 Project for 23 elementary schools (four workstations per classroom)
- Carlos Rivera (lab)
- Basset Middle School (throughout the school)
- Dr. Green Elementary School (lab)
- Aoy Elementary School (lab)
- Nixon Elementary School (lab)
- Lightspan (elementary students; core curriculum)
- Dowell Elementary School
- Lamar Elementary School
- Vilas Elementary School
- Messita Elementary School
- Wiggs Elementary School
- Computer Curriculum Corporation (grades K-8; core curriculum)
- Guillen Middle School
- Bassett Middle School
- Douglass Middle School
- IBM Writing to Read (WTR)/Writing to Write (WTW) being phased out (grades K-1; reading and writing skills)
- WTR was installed in Kindergarten and first-grade classes at 30 campuses
- (nine computers per classroom)
- WTW was installed in second-grade classes at 30 campuses
- (six computers per classroom)

FINDING

Although spreadsheets, databases, word processors, and other software packages are widely used in EPISD, the district has no standards for its campuses regarding which packages should be acquired. The district administrative offices have made an to standardize its software, settling on one common suite of packages. No corresponding effort has been made among schools, however; consequently, schools are left to choose the packages they like best.

Recommendation 107:

Establish districtwide software standards and inform schools and administrators that only those software packages will be supported by TIS.

Considerable advantages would accrue from standardizing the software packages to be used on EPISD's PCs.

- Support and assistance for users could be provided much more effectively and economically for a limited set of software packages.
- Economies of scale would make software purchases more economical, since one or two packages could be bought in bulk.
- Training would become more manageable and economical, because since training efforts could be focused on a limited set of software packages.
- As people move from one job in the district to another, they would be able to adapt more easily to each new environment since they already would be familiar with the software in use at their new locations.

The board should enact a policy requiring compliance with software standards established by the Technology Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	TIS presents recommended software packages to the Technology Committee for their review.	May 1999
2.	The Technology Committee amends and/or endorses the software packages.	July 1999
3.	The Technology Committee takes the steps necessary to incorporate the standards in policy.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources if it is phased in over time. Once implemented, savings would result from increased efficiencies in employee support and training and the bulk purchasing of software packages. These savings cannot be quantified, however.

G. Technical Support

Technical support, like training, significantly influences how effectively technology is used in the classroom. Teachers, even those who are experienced computer users, often encounter technology-related difficulties that interrupt their planning or classroom activities. Unless they receive quick responses to questions like these below, their effectiveness will be diminished.

- Why does one of the computers in my classroom malfunction so often?
- Why does my connection to the Internet keep disappearing?
- How do I direct a document to another printer in the building?
- How do I transfer this file to Address High School?
- Why can't I import this Excel chart into my Word document?

When solutions to such problems are not provided promptly, teachers sometimes are forced to abandon the use of computers in the classroom, and may be reluctant to resume even after the problems are resolved.

Schools that can resolve such difficulties quickly are best able to prepare their students effectively. An on-site technology specialist is by far the best way of satisfying such needs.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Hardware Support unit within TIS maintains and repairs the district's computer hardware. This unit employs four microcomputer technicians to maintain and repair both administrative and instructional computers. The unit also contains five electronics technicians who, in addition to working on videotape recorders and televisions, also assist with computer maintenance and repair. The unit also employs two copier technicians; because almost all of the district's copiers now are leased and serviced by the leasing company, these technicians are available to service school audiovisual equipment and help with computer repair.

The Hardware Support unit also administers and supports district computer networks; this function is performed by a network supervisor, a WAN supervisor, and five network specialists.

FINDING

EPISD suffers from a common instructional technology problem: it provides inadequate instructional support for teachers who are learning to incorporate technology into their teaching. In TSPR's school interviews, technological training was a frequently cited problem. It is clear that

teachers need and want more learning opportunities. While the TIS Hardware Support staff has worked hard and appears capable, it has been unable to keep up with the demand for its services.

Often, teachers indicated that the most effective computer training they receive is provided personally, in a one-on-one setting, by a veteran teacher with extensive experience in technology. These concerns were mirrored by school employees. Some school personnel claimed that they no longer expect equipment to be repaired, and are pleasantly surprised when it is. More than one principal indicated that the lack of support has drained teacher enthusiasm for computers in the classroom.

To address these support problems, the board recently approved the hiring of four additional microcomputer technicians for the Hardware Support staff. TIS's manager believes that, when these positions are filled, the unit's technical support for schools will be adequate.

EPISD's five network specialist positions report to two supervisors: the network supervisor and the WAN supervisor. Although these specialists' skills vary significantly, they are all classified at the same pay grade. This prevents the district from paying higher salaries for more advanced skills and gives the specialists no career path that will allow them to move up in the organization.

Other positions in TIS, such as the clerical assistants and electronic technicians, do have multiple classifications, thereby providing them with the ability to move upward. Given the high demand for network support personnel, it is important to structure these positions to be as attractive as possible.

Recommendation 108:

Establish a three-level classification scale for network specialists.

A new classification schedule should help EPISD attract and retain highly qualified network specialists.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	TIS recommends a network specialist classification schedule to the superintendent.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent seeks approval of the board for the new classification schedule.	May 1999
3.	The board approves the superintendent's recommendation.	June 1999

4.	TIS implements the classification schedule and encourages incumbent network specialists to apply for higher positions for which they are qualified.	August 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

The costs reflected below assume annual salary increases of \$5,000 for each individual promoted to a higher classification. The totals assume three promotions the first year, a fourth in the second year, and a fifth in the third year. After the third year, this cost would level off, since promotions would be offset by new hires at lower salary levels.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Establish a new network specialist classification schedule	(\$15,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)

FINDING

EPISD is in the early stages of networking. LANs were installed in the ten high schools only recently, and as noted above only about half of the elementary schools are networked. Much more work will be needed to complete a WAN connecting all campuses and administrative buildings. As the process of building the WAN continues, more staff support will be required to administer and maintain the network. The existing staff already finds it hard to keep up with network support demands that will only increase.

Recommendation 109:

Add a new network specialist position.

By the time the 1999-2000 school year starts, EPISD will need at least one more network specialist to assist with the design, implementation, and administration of the WAN and the school LANs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	With the concurrence of the EPISD Board of Trustees, the district creates a new network specialist position.	April 1999
2.	The network director prepares a job description for the network specialist position. advertises the availability of the position.	May 1999

	interviews the top candidates, and selects the most qualified individual.	
3.	The selected individual is hired and begins work.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual cost for the new network specialist position is estimated at \$44,660, annually, based on a salary of \$38,500 plus benefits of 16 percent.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Create and fill network specialist positions	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)	(\$44,660)

FINDING

EPISD has a number of web pages that provide information to school personnel and others. Other than one web page that provides information on training, little effort has been made to use the web as a communications resource for sharing technology-related information with teachers and administrators.

In addition to the training information already disseminated via the web, other information that would be beneficial includes:

- recommended instructional software packages for use at all grade levels.
- hardware, software, and network standards.
- web addresses that support EPISD instructional programs.
- recommended vendors of technological resources and their contact information.
- answers to frequently asked questions about technology-related issues.

At present, three or four people perform various "webmaster" services for the district. The board recently approved a new position specifically to serve as webmaster and provide support for the various EPISD web pages. This new position should allow the district to make better use of a vital resource.

Recommendation 110:

Expand the district's use of the Internet as a means of providing useful information to schools, teachers, parents, and the community.

The Internet is a highly effective communications tool. TIS should make more extensive use of this resource for providing technology-related information to administrative and instructional personnel. It also can be an excellent means of providing useful information to parents and the community as well. With the addition of a new webmaster position, the district should have the resources it needs to implement this recommendation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of TIS assigns the new webmaster to work with the Instructional Technology administrator to determine how the district's use of the Internet can be expanded to provide more effective instructional information to school-based personnel.	April 1999
2.	The Technology Committee provides guidance and input on how the district's website can be a better resource for schools.	Ongoing
3.	The webmaster takes the steps necessary to make the district's website a more valuable communications and instructional resource.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

H. Staff Development

Training is one of the most critical factors in determining whether technology is used effectively. Teachers must be comfortable with instructional technology and must know not only how to operate it, but also how to integrate it effectively into their teaching. Studies indicate that it may take three to five years for a teacher to acquire the appropriate level of expertise. Planning and support for technology-related training must take this into account.

Technology-related training must be ongoing. Teachers need continuous opportunities to expand their technological skills and to interact with other teachers so that they may share new strategies and techniques. Access to electronic mail has proven to be a very valuable way for teachers to share ideas on classroom uses of technology.

Ongoing training, moreover, is just as critical for technical support staff. Rapid technological change makes it easy for network specialists and microcomputer repair technicians to fall behind. Sufficient time and funding for continuing training is essential if technical support is to remain effective.

CURRENT SITUATION

The movement to school-based management has given schools a much greater responsibility for technology-related faculty training. Some schools are carrying out this responsibility effectively; others are not.

Training for district technical support staff is the responsibility of the executive director of TIS. Some staff members told TSPR that their training is inadequate.

FINDING

Some school personnel told TSPR that technology-related staff development deteriorated when the district reorganized into four regions. One principal noted that EPISD and Region XIX do not coordinate their respective training programs. Scheduling staff development classes at the downtown Education Center only adds inconvenience to the task.

Recommendation 111:

Provide technology-related training at campus sites if at all possible.

Teachers already have a busy day. Asking them to take time to leave their campus to drive to the downtown Education Center and back simply gives them another reason for declining to participate.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The instructional technology facilitator and regional instructional technology coordinators develop a strategy for providing training at campus sites to the extent possible.	April 1999
2.	Training is provided on school campuses whenever possible.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Traditional approaches to training involve pulling teachers from classes to attend or asking them to attend after school or on weekends. This approach can be costly due to the price of substitutes; if teachers are paid for their time after school or on weekends, the approach becomes even more costly.

Another approach to training has emerged in business and is rapidly being adapted to education. This new approach uses technology as a delivery mechanism for training. Teachers with home computers, or with computers they can check out for home use, sign on to the Internet to take courses offered by both public and private entities. Some are primitive, consisting of little more than lecture notes placed on line. Others, however, are relatively sophisticated, with on-line mentors to help students, interactive activities, chat rooms for course participants, and other efforts to build a sense of community among participants. Because the courses are on-line, teachers can approach the material whenever it is convenient for them, whether on a Sunday afternoon or at 1:00 in the morning. If teachers are already comfortable with the technology, this can be a low-cost, high-impact approach to staff development.

Several people told TSPR that training and technical support are by far the biggest technology-related problems EPISD faces. They also reinforced a point heard from many other school-based personnel: Teachers have so little time that it is hard to schedule training for them. Clearly, the district needs to find new strategies for delivering training.

Recommendation 112:

Develop a comprehensive Internet-based staff development program.

Because since or as the instructional technology administrator also is responsible for training, it is appropriate for this unit to assume the responsibility for developing an Internet-based training program. Working with a staff development subcommittee of the Technology Committee, this unit should take the lead in developing a plan for such a program, identifying action items that must be performed and specific training programs to be offered. One of the first steps should be to explore training already available from other sources on-line. Very likely, some of these programs can be used almost immediately.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIME LINE

1.	The Technology Committee creates a staff development committee to work with the instructional technology administrator on the development of a comprehensive Internet-based training program.	April 1999
2.	The staff development committee holds a planning session to specify exactly what must be done and who will be responsible for each activity.	May 1999
3.	The staff development committee conducts an assessment of currently available training to determine what additional training EPISD might need to add.	May - June 1999
4.	The staff development committee conducts research to determine if training courses available on-line can satisfy some or all of EPISD's staff development needs.	June - July 1999
5.	The staff development committee develops information for schools identifying available Internet-based training and instructions on how to take advantage of it.	August - Sept. 1999
6.	EPISD teachers and others participate in training provided via the Internet.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The planning activities and the assessment of current training needs could be accomplished with existing resources. On-line courses provided by outside sources could present new costs if it is determined that such courses are needed or desirable.

Currently available on-line courses range in cost from as low as \$30 per person to around \$500 per person. Typically, these are 10-16 hour courses. The lower-cost courses are text-based and provide little or no interactivity. The high-cost courses have a moderator, include interactive features, and usually incorporate significant amounts of video materials.

Nevertheless, some high-quality courses are available for \$150 per person or less. If EPISD wanted 500 teachers to take one of these courses, the cost would be \$75,000. In such a case, the district probably could arrange for discounts on the per-person cost by contracting to enroll a large number of teachers.

FINDING

TIS's Hardware Support section comprises seven network support staff members, including two supervisors, eight microcomputer technicians, and seven other technicians. The total amount budgeted for training for these 22 technical staff members for fiscal 1999 is \$11,000, or only \$500 per staff member.

Districts with considerable experience in networking typically allocate \$2,500-3,000 annually for training each network support specialist. For other technicians, they budget \$1,000-2,000. Thus, if the low end of these ranges is used-\$2,500 for network staff and \$1,000 for the other technicians-the TIS annual budget for technical staff training should be around \$32,000. The actual amount budgeted, therefore, is about one-third the amount required to keep the technical support staff current.

Recommendation 113:

Increase the training budget for both hardware and network support technicians.

The rapid development of computer technology makes it imperative that support personnel be given the opportunity to stay abreast of changes in the industry, if the district is to make the most effective and efficient use of its technological resources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIME LINE

1.	The executive director of TIS develops a training plan for the technical staff.	April 1999
2.	The technical staff participates in training opportunities	Ongoing

throughout the year.	
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FISCAL IMPACT

The annual costs estimated below would allocate \$2,500 per year for each of 7 network support specialists and \$1,000 annually for each of the 15 hardware and electrical technician.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Implement a regular training program for technical personnel	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)	(\$32,500)

Chapter 10

TRANSPORTATION

This chapter discusses EPISD's Transportation and Vehicle Maintenance Units in three sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Routing and Scheduling
- C. Vehicle Maintenance and Bus Fleet Management

BACKGROUND

EPISD's Transportation Unit transports an average of 6,975 students per day to school and home on regular runs, and 2,027 students on special education runs. EPISD owns, operates, and maintains a fleet of 296 school buses to cover an average of 236 routes per day.

The Texas Education Code 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 activities and extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires districts to provide transportation for students with disabilities if they also transport the general student population, or if disabled students require transportation to receive special education services.

The Education Code states that a school district is eligible to receive state funding for transporting regular and special program students between home and school, and career and technology students to and from vocational training locations. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) sets funding rules in accordance with the Education Code's requirements and state appropriations. Local funds must pay for any transportation costs the state does not cover.

For regular home-to-school transportation, TEA reimburses districts for qualifying expenses according to a formula specified by the Education Code. This formula is based on "linear density"-the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily to the number of miles operated daily. TEA uses this ratio to assign each school district to one of seven groups, each receiving a different per-mile reimbursement (**Exhibit 10-1**).

Exhibit 10-1

Categories of State Linear Density Reimbursement for Regular Bus Runs

Category	Reimbursement per Mile	Linear Density Range
1	\$0.68	.000 - .399
2	\$0.79	.400 - .649
3	\$0.88	.650 - .899
4	\$0.97	.900 - 1.149
5	\$1.11	1.150 - 1.649
6	\$1.25	1.650 - 2.399
7	\$1.43	2.400 - 9.999

Source: Texas Education Agency.

TEA reevaluates group assignments each biennium based upon the number of students and mileage reported to TEA by each school district. According to TEA rules, the linear density calculation in the first year of each biennium determines the funding reimbursement districts will receive for the next biennium.

State transportation funding for regular program transportation is limited to transportation for students who live two or more miles from the school they attend. The state does not fund transportation of regular program students living within two miles of their schools unless the students face hazardous walking conditions on the way to school. The state also will not pay for summer school transportation or for co-curricular routes that run between schools during the day.

CURRENT SITUATION

Extracurricular transportation, including transportation to and from field trips and after-school and weekend events, is not funded by the state. In EPISD, most extracurricular transportation consists of transportation to and from athletic events, and individual schools must reimburse the Transportation Unit for these services. EPISD publishes a cost schedule for extracurricular transportation.

The state reimburses all transportation for special education students except for certain field trips. The Legislature has capped reimbursement for special program transportation at \$1.08 per mile. EPISD's actual cost for transporting special program students in 1996-97 was \$2.81 per mile. The special program, unlike the regular program, is not able to achieve efficiency by clustering students at bus stops. Each special program bus picks up students at their houses; therefore these routes are inherently more expensive.

Career and technology education transportation costs are reimbursed based upon the previous year's actual cost per mile for that type of transportation. EPISD received \$2.45 per mile for the program in the 1996-97 school year.

Each school district is responsible for the capital cost of purchasing school buses. Districts may purchase school buses independently or through the Texas General Services Commission (GSC) under a state contract. Districts also may acquire buses through a lease-purchase process. EPISD has not purchased new buses since 1993, when it purchased 100 new buses with bond money to replace pre-1977 buses that did not meet federal safety requirements.

Exhibit 10-2 compares EPISD's transportation operating statistics and costs for the 1997-98 school year with those of a peer group of Texas school districts. The peer groups are in linear density groups V, VI, or VII. Two of the districts are in linear density group VI, the same as EPISD.

Exhibit 10-2
Ridership and Cost Statistics, EPISD Versus Peer Districts
1997-98 School Year

		Regular Education		Special Education	
Peer District	Density Group	Cost/Mile	Cost/Rider	Cost/Mile	Cost/Rider
Houston	VII	\$1.95	\$3.65	\$1.80	\$7.27
Ft. Worth	V	\$1.97	\$2.90	\$1.98	\$11.32
San Antonio	VI	\$3.46	\$2.71	\$3.89	\$13.63
Corpus Christi	V	\$2.47	\$4.35	\$1.87	\$6.23
Ysleta	VII	\$2.48	\$2.57	\$2.57	\$12.01
Socorro	VI	\$1.89	\$1.53	\$2.37	\$8.85
Peer Average		\$2.43	\$2.95	\$2.41	\$9.88
El Paso	VI	\$2.26	\$2.78	\$2.62	\$13.84

Source: Texas Education Agency.

EPISD is slightly lower than the peer average for regular education costs per mile and costs per rider. It is slightly higher than the peer group average for special education costs per mile and considerably higher than the peer group for special education costs per rider.

EPISD improved its costs per mile and per rider between the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. Regular education costs dropped from \$2.56 per mile to \$2.45 per mile, while special education costs dropped from \$2.81 to \$2.62 per mile. However, regular education costs rose to \$2.78 per rider from \$2.60 per rider, while special education costs rose to \$13.84 per rider from \$11.75 per rider.

Enrollment and ridership data comparisons are shown in **Exhibit 10-3**. EPISD ridership for regular education students is 4 percent below the peer group average of 18 percent. Ridership for special education students, at 34 percent, also is lower than the peer group average of 37 percent.

Exhibit 10-3
Enrollment and Ridership Comparison
1997-98 School Year

Peer District	Regular Education			Special Education		
	School Enrollment	Riders	Percent Riders	School Enrollment	Riders	Percent Riders
Houston	189,309	35,784	19%	21,679	11,755	54%
Ft. Worth	67,856	13,064	19%	9,045	2,231	25%
San Antonio	53,623	6,188	12%	7,489	1,637	22%
Corpus Christi	34,954	4,607	13%	6,021	1,738	29%
Ysleta	42,933	6,704	16%	4,683	1,010	22%
Socorro	19,821	6,638	33%	2,230	731	33%
Peer Average	68,083	12,164	18%	8,524	3,184	37%
El Paso	58,033	7,923	14%	5,876	2,027	34%

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Exhibit 10-4 displays EPISD's transportation costs, mileage, and ridership changes for a three-year period. The largest categorical change over the three-year period was a 33 percent decrease in the cost of transporting special education students. The number of miles driven in transporting regular education students increased 14 percent and annual ridership for regular education students increased 13 percent. While the number of miles driven in transporting special education students increased 7 percent, annual ridership for special education students decreased 13 percent.

Exhibit 10-4
EPISD Transportation Costs, Mileage, and Ridership
1995-1998

Category	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	% Change
Total Operating and Capital Costs				
Regular Education	\$3,767,710	\$4,271,782	\$3,966,565	+5%
Special Education	\$7,524,631	\$5,105,343	\$5,048,353	-33%
Total	\$11,292,341	\$9,377,125	\$9,014,918	-20%
Annual Miles				
Regular Education	1,539,596	1,671,084	1,752,436	+14%
Special Education	1,809,066	1,819,476	1,929,639	+6%
Total	3,348,662	3,490,560	3,682,075	+10%
Annual Riders				
Regular Education	1,266,480	1,643,040	1,426,140	+13%
Special Education	420,840	434,520	364,860	-13%
Total	1,687,320	2,077,560	1,791,000	+6%

Source: Texas Education Agency.

A. Organization and Management

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Transportation Unit provides student transportation and bus maintenance services. The Transportation employs 412 people, including 239 permanent bus drivers, 120 bus monitors for special education buses, 16 supervisory and support staff, and 37 maintenance staff.

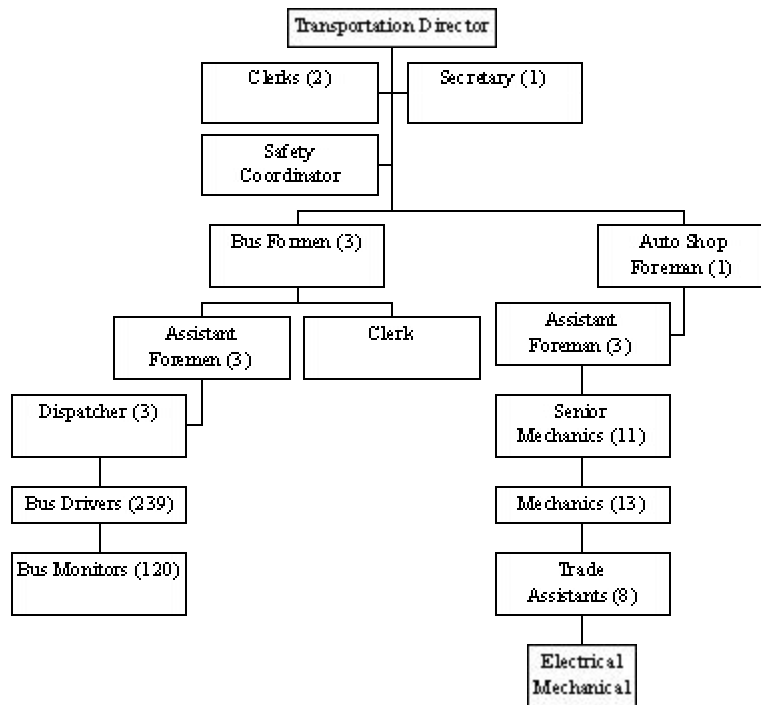
The Transportation director reports to the assistant superintendent for Operational Services. The assistant superintendent has been in this position for one-and-a-half years, while the Transportation director has been with EPISD for seven years. The Transportation director is responsible for the planning and operation of EPISD's transportation services, as well as the maintenance of all school buses and other school vehicles and equipment, such as security cars, dump trucks, mowers, and trailers.

Three transportation foremen in regional offices supervise bus drivers. The three regional offices are the Northeast Area, the Central Area, and the West Area offices. The staff in each regional office includes a clerk that handles time cards, payroll, and other reporting activity, and a dispatcher to handle communication with the drivers and assist in adjusting schedules for absent drivers. Bus drivers, bus monitors, and maintenance workers also report to the area offices, and all buses are garaged there.

EPISD has five automated information systems that assist the Transportation Unit in managing its workload. The Kronos Timekeeper Computer System provides automated time and attendance information for payroll preparation. The district uses two vehicle maintenance information systems (VMISs)-the Gateway Automotive Repair Order System and the Gateway Automotive Parts Purchasing System. The two systems are capable of tracking parts usage and cost, recording labor hours for each work order, scheduling the preventive maintenance (PM), and determining if PM is conducted on time. A Megatronics Computer Vehicle Fueling System provides inventory management and reporting functions for all fuel activities. The Micro Analytic Student Transportation Management Computer System allows the district to automate bus routes and scheduling. A Gecko Microsolutions Transportation Operation Manager System can be used to automate field trips and other extracurricular transportation activities.

Exhibit 10-5 illustrates the unit's organization with the number of positions shown in parentheses by each job title.

**Exhibit 10-5
Transportation and Maintenance
Organization Chart**



Source: EPISD.

FINDING

The Transportation Unit has an absenteeism rate of about 30 percent of bus drivers per day, or 70 out of 239 drivers, based upon interviews with the Transportation director, the secretary who processes time sheets, the three bus foremen, and analysis of absentee data. In addition, TSPR requested a computer run of absentee data for the entire unit. The computer data, however, only account for absences when an employee takes the entire day off. Full-day absences account for only about 50 percent of all absences, while the other half are for employees who take only a morning or an afternoon off.

According to EPISD's personnel rules, full-time bus drivers and monitors with fewer than three years of creditable service earn five personal leave days a year plus one sick day. Three or more years of creditable service earn full-time bus drivers and monitors five personal days and 5.5 sick days. Half-time employees with fewer than three years of creditable service earn three personal days and no sick days. After three years, half-time employees earn five personal days and no sick days. For purposes of

this discussion, TSPR assumed that most bus drivers and monitors earn five personal and 5.5 sick leave days a year.

Exhibit 10-6 shows the absentee rates of EPISD's bus drivers and monitors. The average number of full-day absences for a 180-day school year for 1997-98 was 15 bus drivers per day. The average number of absences for school bus monitors was 17 per day. Based upon 18 days of absentee data provided for the 1998-99 school year, TSPR made a projection for the entire 1998-99 school year. If the absentee rate continues at the same pace as in the first month of school, the average number of drivers that can be expected to be absent on a daily basis will be 22, or an average of seven more per day than the 1997-98 school year. The expected absence rate for monitors is 26.5 per day.

Exhibit 10-6
Absentee Rates
1997-98 (actual) and 1998-99 (projected)

Days per Year	Percent Out	Number of Bus Drivers	Number of Monitors
0-10	5%	121	51
11-20	11%	73	41
21-30	17%	25	7
31-40	22%	5	4
41-50	28%	7	4
51-60	33%	0	2
61+	34+%	8	7
Total		239	119
Total full-day absences in 1997-98		3,604	2,000
Total full-day absences prorated for 1998-99		5,168	3,148

Source: EPISD.

EPISD paid \$614,307 in overtime in 1996-97 and \$557,787 in 1997-98.

School bus driver absenteeism causes buses to run late, since bus drivers must double up on runs, and forced the Transportation Unit to use all available resources to drive buses. Some of those resources include

foremen and assistant foremen who have regional supervisory responsibilities, as well as the transportation mechanics who repair and maintain the buses. While they are fully trained and properly licensed to drive school buses, pulling these people from their regular jobs weakens supervision and increases the district's backlog of mechanical repairs.

EPISD's 30 percent absentee rate for bus drivers appears high when compared to neighboring districts. Ysleta and Socorro ISDs report absentee rates of 10 to 15 percent.

Although Ysleta previously had a monetary incentive program to reduce absenteeism, the district eliminated it due to budgetary constraints. Other districts, such as Pasadena and Cypress-Fairbanks ISDs, provide monetary rewards to lessen absenteeism.

One approach is to give year-end bonus awards or savings bonds to employees who have used no sick leave or met low absenteeism levels. This is an effective way to reduce overtime and improve operational efficiencies while allowing mechanics to focus on their primary jobs, improve productivity, and reduce the maintenance backlog.

A best-practices model of rewards provides bonuses of \$200 per year for sick leave users who maintain a balance of more than 50 percent of their accrued sick leave. Another option is to award certificates and plaques to the driver, monitor, and mechanic of the month and year, coupled with timely media coverage to improve employee self-esteem.

Recommendation 114:

Establish a comprehensive awards program that provides tangible recognition to Transportation employees with low absentee rates.

The district should establish an awards program as a tool to motivate drivers, monitors, and mechanics. Certificates and plaques, along with written correspondence awards from the superintendent or board, can assist in team-building and enhance morale.

A bonus should be awarded to drivers and monitors who use half or less of the days they accrued in a year. The expected measurable benefits of this program would be a reduction in the number of mechanics forced to drive. This also would provide additional support to a later recommendation to establish an industry standard for the number of vehicles per mechanic.

More than 120 bus drivers now use 10 days or fewer per year of leave. This group should be targeted as an example for the department.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation prepares a comprehensive awards program.	April 1999
2.	The director of Transportation coordinates an awards program proposal with the executive director of Human Resources.	May 1999
3.	The director of Transportation obtains approval from the superintendent and the board.	June 1999
4.	The director of Transportation implements the awards program.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

If all drivers and monitors qualified for the bonus, the cost of the program would be \$71,600 (358 X \$200 bonus). Expectations are in the first two years that the 172 bus drivers and monitors now in a low leave status would improve their attendance. The cost for the first two years of the program would be \$34,400 (172 driver/monitors X \$200). Expectations are that in the subsequent three years another 25 percent of the drivers and monitors would qualify for the bonus award. This adds another 90 drivers and monitors to the program for a total of 262, or a cost of \$52,400.

There also is expected to be a benefit in the reduction of overtime hours for bus drivers and monitors. The average salary of other school districts providing overtime usage averaged approximately 2 percent of bus driver salary. The district is not expected to reduce its overtime rate appreciably until recommendations associated with the awards program and recruitment program are in place. Expectations are that EPISD could reduce its overtime costs to 10 percent of salary by 2000-01, and to 5 percent of salary by 2002-03. Estimates are based upon the 1997-98 salary figure of \$3,093,491 and overtime figure of \$557,787. The expected cost reduction for 5 percent of salary is \$403,112 (\$557,787 - \$154,675) and for 10 percent of salary is \$248,438 (\$557,787 - \$309,349).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Overtime reduction	\$0	\$248,438	\$248,438	\$403,112	\$403,112
Establish a comprehensive awards program	(\$34,400)	(\$34,400)	(\$52,400)	(\$52,400)	(\$52,400)
Total	(\$34,400)	\$214,038	\$196,038	\$350,712	\$350,712

FINDING

The Transportation Unit has found it difficult to recruit and maintain substitute bus drivers. Although some substitute bus drivers are used to supplement the permanent bus driver pool, the district does not have a large pool of substitute drivers. Transportation claims it cannot keep an adequate pool of substitutes on call, so it focuses on meeting its staffing needs with permanent employees. This decision is supported by the district's low turnover rate for bus drivers, which is five or six drivers a year, or less than 3 percent. However, the high absentee rate and the dependence upon supervisors and mechanics for reserve drivers creates a problem for the district, as noted above. The current bus driver staffing philosophy of using full-time drivers with few part-time or substitute drivers is not working.

EPISD's minimum wage rate for entry level bus drivers is 7 percent below the average for a sample group of Texas independent school districts (**Exhibit 10-7**). EPISD's midpoint and maximum wage rates, however, exceed the average rates of the sample group.

**Exhibit 10-7
Driver Wage Rates
1997-98**

School District	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
Canutillo	\$7.83	\$9.16	\$10.49
Clint	\$6.61	\$8.60	\$10.56
Ysleta	\$8.22	\$10.28	\$12.33
Fabens	\$6.30	\$7.40	\$8.54
San Elizario	\$7.52	\$9.19	\$10.82
Socorro	\$6.57	\$8.22	\$9.87
Peer Average	\$7.18	\$8.81	\$10.43
El Paso	\$6.65	\$9.16	\$11.65

Source: TSPR Analysis.

Competition is intense for qualified bus drivers in the El Paso area. Although Socorro ISD pays about the same minimum wage rate as El Paso ISD, Socorro provides medical and life insurance benefits to all new hires after 30 days of employment. Socorro ISD continues to pay benefits for 30

days after an employee's job is terminated. Ysleta's entry level pay is \$1.57 more per hour than EPISD.

Some districts have established lead driver positions to provide flexible, well-trained, and motivated employees, capable of driving any route in the district. Lead driver positions also can improve the upward mobility of drivers, increase opportunities for advancement, improve morale, and reduce absenteeism. A lead driver classification and the awards program recommended above should help to reduce the absentee rate from 30 to 15 percent, well within the range of comparable peer group districts.

Recommendation 115:

Designate 10 percent of the peak service drivers as lead drivers and use them as substitute drivers as needed.

Lead drivers should be guaranteed an eight hour day, pay rates commensurate with duties and responsibilities, and assignments to routes currently driven by substitute or reserve drivers.

The qualifications for a lead driver should include demonstrated bus driving proficiency, a driving record with no chargeable accidents, and an intimate knowledge of all EPISD bus routes. Lead drivers should be the district's most experienced bus drivers and be capable of driving every route in the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation, with assistance from the director of Human Resources, develops a lead driver classification.	June 1999
2.	The director of Transportation obtains approval of lead driver classification from the superintendent.	July 1999
3.	The director of Transportation designates the lead drivers.	August 1999
4.	The director of Transportation recruits and hires 24 regular drivers to replace the drivers designated as leads.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

To replace the 24 drivers designated as leads with starting drivers will cost the district \$296,856 (\$6.65 per hour X 8 hours per day X 186 days X 24 drivers plus 25 percent benefits). Permanent lead drivers would be guaranteed 186 days of work per year at EPISD and would work an average of eight hours per day for an average wage \$2 above the starting

rate. They would receive about 25 percent in benefits. This would cost the district \$89,280 per year (8 hours X 24 drivers 186 day X \$2.00 more per hour wage plus 25 percent benefits).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Designate lead drivers.	(\$89,280)	(\$89,280)	(\$89,280)	(\$89,280)	(\$89,280)
Hire 24 replacement drivers	(\$296,856)	(\$296,856)	(\$296,856)	(\$296,856)	(\$296,856)
Total	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)	(\$386,136)

FINDING

The Transportation Unit has three transportation foremen, three assistant transportation foremen, one auto shop foreman, and three assistant auto shop foremen. These positions are paid overtime for work exceeding 40 hours per week. Overtime pay for all transportation employees, less administrative staff, was \$679,371 in 1996-97, or 17 percent of the \$4,114,720 for their salaries. The percentage of salaries earned through overtime pay of transportation foremen and assistant foremen ranged from 16 to 29 percent, while the automotive foreman's and assistant automotive foremen's overtime percentage of salary was 1 to 4 percent. Bus drivers, monitors, and dispatchers received overtime pay of \$614,307 or 19 percent of their total salaries. Bus drivers, monitors, and dispatchers received 90 percent of the overtime paid in 1996-97. Overtime pay for EPISD Transportation Unit for fiscal 1997 is shown in **Exhibit 10-8**.

Exhibit 10-8
Transportation Unit Overtime Pay for Fiscal 1997

Positions	Salaries	Overtime	% of Salaries
Transportation Foremen (2)*	\$70,582	\$11,270	16%
Assistant Transportation Foremen	\$68,630	\$19,972	29%
Automotive Foremen	\$38,511	\$551	1%
Automotive Assistant Foremen	\$65,564	\$2,713	4%
Mechanics	\$544,469	\$30,558	6%
Drivers/ Monitors/Dispatcher	\$3,326,964	\$614,307	19%
Total	\$4,114,720	\$679,371	17%

Source: EPISD.

*Overtime data for only 2 of 3 foremen available.

Overtime pay dropped in fiscal 1998 from \$679,371 for all transportation employees to \$633,316. This amounted to 16 percent of all salaries (\$3,917,095). The percentage of salaries earned through overtime pay of transportation foremen and assistant foremen ranged from 12 to 22 percent, while the automotive foreman's and assistant automotive foremen's overtime percentage of salaries was 1 percent. Bus drivers, monitors, and dispatchers received overtime pay of \$557,787, or 18 percent of their total salaries. Bus drivers, monitors, and dispatchers again received nearly 90 percent of the overtime paid in 1997-98. Overtime pay for EPISD Transportation Unit for 1997-98 is shown in **Exhibit 10-9**.

Exhibit 10-9
Transportation Unit Overtime Pay for 1997-98

Positions	Salaries	Overtime	% of Salaries
Transportation Foremen (3)	\$118,058	\$14,397	12%
Assistant Transportation Foremen (3)	\$92,648	\$20,856	22%
Automotive Foremen (1)	\$39,611	\$605	1%
Automotive Assistant Foremen (3)	\$72,670	\$1,318	1%
Mechanics (33)	\$500,617	\$38,353	7%
Drivers/ Monitors/Dispatcher (462)	\$3,093,491	\$557,787	18%
Total	\$3,917,095	\$633,316	16%

Source: EPISD.

Recommendation 116:

Reclassify foremen and assistant foremen to exempt status and eliminate overtime pay.

Foremen and assistant foremen are managers and supervisors and should be classified as salaried employees and exempt from provisions of fair labor standards.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation with assistance from the executive	Mav
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	director of Human Resources, rewrites position descriptions, establishes new salary schedules, and reclassifies foreman and assistant foremen to exempt status.	1999
2.	The superintendent approves reclassification action.	August 1999
3.	The director of Transportation implements the reclassification action.	January 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

The reclassification of foremen and assistant foremen positions may require adjustments to the existing salary schedule based upon an audit of their functions and responsibilities. Eliminating overtime in total for those positions would generate a savings of about \$37,000 based upon the 1997-98 cost figures. Since reclassification of the positions might result in a salary increase for some positions only half of the reduction in overtime is shown as savings. Moreover, the first year savings in 1999-2000 assumes that reclassification would not occur until midyear.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Reclassify foremen and assistant foremen to exempt status	\$9,250	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$18,500

FINDING

The Transportation Unit has no formal performance-monitoring program to ensure service quality, effectiveness, and efficiency.

During on-site visits, TSPR noted that the Gateway Vehicle Repair and Vehicle Parts Ordering Computer System was centralized at the department director level and not fully available to the three maintenance facilities. The Gecko Microsolutions Transportation Operation Manager System was not fully operational at the time of TSPR's visit, but was in the process of being brought on-line.

The Transportation Department collects most vehicle maintenance operating data manually and stores them in paper files. Few data are summarized for planning and analysis purposes. During TSPR's review, the unit manually gathered and transcribed data to respond to the review

team's data requests. Few staff members have computers to generate ad hoc reports. Administrators and employees who have been assigned computers use them primarily for completing routine administrative reports.

The director of Transportation requires bus drivers to collect key data on ridership and bus use. These data are reviewed for completeness and checked against printouts from the school administration, but TSPR saw no evidence that the reported data are periodically audited or monitored for accuracy. Moreover, it appears that maintenance information is not available for management decisions at the shop level. The district has acquired a Gateway cost tracking system, but shop personnel are not trained in its use and have no access to it. Such information would allow the shop supervisors to track expenses by bus and identify expenses associated with the aging bus fleet. This information is critical to certain operational decisions that would help management allocate scarce funds to the most appropriate activities.

Many districts use indicators to assess ongoing performance in key management areas. Performance indicators allow departments of transportation to track service quality and make adjustments where required. Improvements in performance can be documented to demonstrate progress. Accurate and timely performance indicators help management allocate scarce funds to the most critical needs. Performance indicators typically used by school districts are shown in **Exhibit 10-10**; these could help the Transportation Unit consistently track and monitor its performance over time.

Exhibit 10-10
Overview of Standard Performance Indicators

Performance Area	Performance Indicator
Safety	Accidents per 100,000 miles Incidents per 100,000 miles
Cost-Efficiency	Operation cost per mile Annual operation costs per route
Cost-Effectiveness	On-time performance Open routes due to unfilled positions Driver absentee rate Average rider trip time in minutes
Maintenance Performance	Miles between road calls Percent of preventative maintenance completed on time Turnover time per bus repair

	Operational rate for regular buses
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Source: MGT of America, Inc.

Possible target performance measures for cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness are based upon peer averages as shown in **Exhibit 10-11**.

**Exhibit 10-11
Peer Average Cost Targets**

District	Regular Education Cost/Mile	Regular Education Cost/Rider	Special Education Cost/Mile	Special Education Cost/Rider
Peer Average	\$2.38	\$2.75	\$2.27	\$10.37

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Recommendation 117:

Collect data on key performance indicators to measure and monitor the performance of the district's transportation operations.

The indicators shown in **Exhibit 10-12** should be established and monitored monthly. The resulting information should be summarized and shared with department personnel and school principals.

**Exhibit 10-12
Recommended EPISD Performance Measures**

Performance Indicator	EPISD 1997-98 Actual	Target
Safety		
Accidents per 100,000 miles	1.5	1.5
Incidents per 100,000 miles	Not available	2.6
Cost-Efficiency (Regular Program)		
Operation cost per mile	\$2.44	\$2.42
Annual operation costs per bus	\$27,048	\$25,371
Cost-Effectiveness		
Annual costs per rider	\$663	\$630
Percent state reimbursement Texas Education Agency	38%	40%
Service-Effectiveness		

Riders per mile	1.3	2.0
Riders per route	30	40
Service Quality		
On-time performance	Not available	95%
Open routes due to unfilled positions	Not available	0%
Driver absentee rate	Not available	15%
Average rider trip time in minutes	Not available	45 minutes
Maintenance Performance		
Miles between road calls	Not available	9,500
Percent PM's completed on time	Not available	95% 6 hours
Turnover time per bus repair	Not available	95%
Operational rate for regular buses	Not available	

Source: Actual figures from EPISD Transportation Unit; target figures from peer districts or a 5-10 percent performance improvement; and estimated achievable rates.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation appoints a team to develop key indicators to assess the performance of the Transportation Unit.	May 1999
2.	The director of Transportation establishes a procedure for collecting and monitoring the collection of indicator data and disseminates the procedures, with indicators and targets, to the Transportation staff.	July 1999
3.	The director of Transportation monitors the performance data and provides summary reports to the Transportation staff.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of instituting performance measures could be included in the administrative costs of managing the maintenance program.

B. Routing and Scheduling

CURRENT SITUATION

Although EPISD has no written policy or procedure for school bus routing and scheduling, these functions are the responsibility of the bus foremen.

Each school semester, school principals and EPISD special education staff send special education transportation requests to the Transportation Unit. The headquarters clerk inputs the requests into the computer using "BUSTOPS" software, an automated routing and scheduling system by MicroAnalytics. BUSTOPS places all of the special education students on new routes and makes any necessary changes to existing routes. The bus foremen review the routing and make the appropriate assignments for bus drivers and bus monitors.

For regular education routing, the bus foremen review the regular routes of the previous year. Changes are made manually for any new housing construction that occurred in the previous year. Transportation does not use the BUSTOPS software to review and analyze regular routing, although it is considering doing so. At present, however, routing for regular education students is accomplished simply by assigning buses to zones around the schools. Thus, unless new schools are built, very little change is made to the regular routes from year to year.

Exhibit 10-13 shows the number of routes by area office for regular education and special education.

Exhibit 10-13
School Bus Routes in El Paso

Regional Offices	Regular Education	Special Education
Northeast Area	39	37
West Area	46	28
Central Area	41	45
Total	126	110

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

In 1995, the Transportation Unit purchased, installed, and implemented BUSTOPS for special education bus routes. The experience gained over

the past three years shows the system helped to improve the efficiency of the special education bus routing. The number of students transported per bus, on average, has risen from five to eight riders to 13 to 16 riders. The automated system is capable of handling the entire district's routing and scheduling operation, but is not yet being used for regular transportation bus runs.

The director of Transportation said the regular bus runs are not being analyzed with BUSTOPS because the regular bus runs are largely stable from year to year. Moreover, only one person in the department is trained in the software's use. The Transportation Unit plans to implement an improved version of MicroAnalytics BUSTOPS for Windows, which is expected to be more user-friendly. But only the headquarters clerk knows how to use the system. Upgrading the BUSTOPS software from a disk operating system (DOS) to a Windows-based environment could facilitate easier and more efficient use of the system because the screens are designed with graphics and questions can be quickly answered through a help icon.

Route scheduling software uses geographic information and student residence information to automatically establish pickup points and school bus routing. The basic foundation of the system is the "map" or the geographic information system, a software program to identify all city streets and residences. Once the map is created, it can be matched by address to the student database. The system allows bus drivers to rely on current information on what student is at what bus stop, by name and address.

According to a software support manager with North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction, one school district with a 250-bus fleet was able to put aside 60 of its vehicles after making "radical changes" suggested by the computer, such as staggered school starting times. A recent review conducted by a Virginia school district showed that route scheduling software could provide a 5 to 10 percent reduction in the district's number of routes.

Recommendation 118:

Upgrade the computer-based route scheduling software and train the foremen and assistant foremen in its use.

An upgrade of the system to a Microsoft Windows-based environment should make the system more user-friendly. Each of the foreman would need a computer workstation connected to a central computer server that would store all of the records.

Using the upgraded system to analyze and recalculate new regular education routes should produce a 5 percent reduction in routes; this would reduce the number of routes by 12, from 236 to 224.

The efficiency of the entire transportation operation depends upon a route scheduling system that makes the best possible use of buses and reduces deadhead time (periods in which buses are running nearly empty of students) to an absolute minimum.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops a budget request to support the expansion of an automated routing and scheduling system to include regular routing.	April 1999
2.	The director of Transportation purchases the upgraded software system and begins implementation.	May 1999
3.	The director of Transportation provides for the training of foremen and assistant foremen in the new system.	June 1999
4.	The foremen and assistant foremen establish routes for summer school using the new system.	July 1999
5.	The director of Transportation submits an attrition plan to the assistant superintendent of administrative services and the superintendent to reduce the number of bus drivers.	January 2000
6.	The director of Transportation reduces the drivers by the appropriate amount and sells unneeded buses for salvage.	June 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of the upgraded route scheduling software is estimated at \$30,000, with a yearly maintenance fee of \$3,000.

TSPR conservatively estimates that route scheduling software would allow EPISD to eliminate 12 buses from the regular education fleet plus 12 bus driver positions.

The salvage value for each bus after 12 years of service would be about \$500 for a one-time savings of \$6,000 in 2000-2001. The average cost for bus drivers is \$12,200 (\$9,757 plus 25 percent benefits). Eliminating 12 positions would produce a total savings of \$146,400. The bus driver positions should be eliminated through attrition or considered as candidates for the additional driver positions created as a result of designating lead drivers.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Purchase and maintain route scheduling software	(\$30,000)	(\$3,000)	(\$3,000)	(\$3,000)	(\$3,000)
Eliminate 12 bus driver positions	\$0	\$146,400	\$146,400	\$146,400	\$146,400
Sell 12 older buses	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	(\$30,000)	\$149,400	\$143,400	\$143,400	\$143,400

FINDING

Regular school bus routes have stayed largely unchanged over the past several years. Although special education routing is done with computer assistance, most routing focuses on individual runs, without examining overall routing patterns. As a result, only minor modifications are made to routes to accommodate new special education students.

The key to an efficient routing and scheduling system is to use each bus a maximum number of times for both morning and afternoon runs. EPISD uses each bus an average of two times in the morning and two times each afternoon. Many school districts, such as Fairfax County, Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, and Prince George's County, Maryland, use a bus three to four times for both morning and afternoon runs, increasing driver efficiencies and reducing operational costs.

EPISD's route maps indicate starting and stopping times for the morning runs, but do not include afternoon starting and ending times. Some display distances from one stop to the next, but none of the regular education route maps feature times for pickup and delivery of students at bus stops.

TSPR also observed inefficiencies in the general methods used by EPISD for routing buses on regular home-to-school runs. EPISD buses often make two or three of the same runs each morning and afternoon, picking up students at the same bus stops two or three times, retracing their paths four to six times per day, without being at full capacity. The routes call for a bus to be assigned to a particular school rather than to an area. Each bus completes two or three runs to and from a particular school, getting students there at about 7:20 a.m. on the first run and by 8:00 a.m. on the last.

Parents told TSPR that some students are dropped off at school before the faculty and staff arrive. A review of such complaints indicated that such drop-offs do occur, especially at the Rosa Guerrero School.

Students are transported to an elementary school by grade level. The first group of students arriving at school may be Grades 4 and 5, the second group may be the pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students, and the third group may be Grades 1 through 3. In the afternoon, the pattern is repeated. Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 3 are released before the other students at 2:45 p.m. Grades 4 and 5 are released at 3:30 p.m.

TSPR reviewed several routes for routing strategy and for ridership. Route HC-73 for Logan School, for instance, picks up 119 students per day, or an average of 20 students per run. The bus makes three runs in the morning and afternoon on the same route to pick up Grades 4 and 5; pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Grade 1; and Grades 2 and 3. Route HC-74 runs on the same schedule for the Travis school as the route described for the Logan School; however, only 30 students per day are transported on this Route HC-74, or just five students per run.

Based upon a review of the manually prepared routing schedules for regular education runs, TSPR found that no bus spends more than an hour in its total morning or afternoon runs. Most of them are short 10-15 minute runs to get the children there for breakfast and to take all children home at the same time in the afternoon.

The Transportation Unit has attempted to maximize the number of trips a bus can take in the morning and afternoon, but the routing has not been reviewed to ensure maximum efficiency, nor have school starting and ending times been adjusted to get more use out of buses. If school starting and ending times could be staggered, buses could be used more efficiently. Instead, all schools independently prepare and maintain their own bell schedule with no central coordination. TSPR observed that it required a special effort on the part of EPISD's central office just to collect the bell schedules for the analysis conducted in this report.

A review of trip data shows that of 165 trips taken by 85 buses in the northeast and west areas, the average number of trips taken per bus was 1.93. The number of trips by bus for the central area was not provided, but a review of its routing indicated two trips per bus. Most bus runs take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. Coupling that with the fact that only two runs are made on average, the bus drivers seem unnecessarily idle. Three runs per bus per day not only would improve the efficiency of the bus operation, but also would increase the amount of time a bus driver could work each day.

Exhibit 10-14 shows the bell schedules for EPISD's schools.

Exhibit 10-14
EPISD High School Bell Schedule, 1998-99

School	Region	Starting Time	Ending Time
Andress High School	1	8:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Irvin High School	1	8:20 a.m.	3:30p.m.
Austin High School	2	7:30 a.m.	4:30 p.m.
Burges High School	2	8:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Sunset High School	2	8:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.
Bowie High School	3	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
El Paso High School	3	7:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Jefferson High School	3	8:15 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Coronado High School	4	7:30 a.m.	4:30 p.m.
Franklin High School	4	7:20 a.m.	4:30 p.m.

Exhibit 10-14 (Continued)
EPISD Middle School Bell Schedule, 1998-99

School	Region	Starting Time	Ending Time
Canyon Hills Middle	1	8:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Charles Middle School	1	8:15 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Magoffin Middle School	1	8:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Richardson Middle School	1	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Terrace Hills Middle School	1	8:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Bassett Middle School	2	8:30 a.m.	3:35 p.m.
Coldwell Elem/Interm	2	8:05 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Cordova Middle School	2	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Crockett Elem/Interm	2	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Houston Elem/Interm	2	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
MacArthur Middle School	2	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Ross Middle School	2	8:19 a.m.	3:30p.m.
Guillen Middle School	3	8:15 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Henderson Middle School	3	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Wiggs Middle School	3	8:20 a.m.	3:30 p.m.

Hornedo Middle School	4	8:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
Lincoln Middle School	4	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Morehead Middle School	4	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.

Exhibit 10-14 (Continued)
EPISD Elementary School Bell Schedule, 1998-99

School	Region	Starting Time	Primary Dismiss	Ending Time
Bradley Elementary	1	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Burnett Elementary	1	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Collins Elementary	1	8:10 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	3:15 p.m.
Crosby Elementary	1	8:10 a.m.		3:20 p.m.
Dowell Elementary	1	8:23 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Fannin Elementary	1	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Lee Elementary	1	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Newman Elementary	1	8:00 a.m.		3:20 p.m.
Nixon Elementary	1	8:00 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Park Elementary	1	8:30 a.m.		3:30 p.m.
Schuster Elementary	1	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Stanton Elementary	1	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Wainwright Elementary	1	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Whitaker Elementary	1	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Bliss Elementary	2	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Bonham Elementary	2	8:00 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Cielo Elementary	2	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Clendenin Elementary	2	8:15 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Hawkins Elementary	2	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Highland Elementary	2	8:15 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Hillside Elementary	2	8:05 a.m.	2:55 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Hughey Elementary	2	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.

Logan Elementary	2	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Milam Elementary	2	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Rusk Elementary	2	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Travis Elementary	2	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Alamo Elementary	3	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Alta Vista Elementary	3	8:10 a.m.	11:45 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Aoy Elementary	3	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Beall Elementary	3	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Burleson Elementary	3	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Clardy Elementary	3	8:15 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Cooley Elementary	3	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Douglas Elementary	3	8:30 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Hart Elementary	3	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Lamar Elementary	3	8:20 a.m.	2:35 p.m.	3:20 p.m.
Mesita Elementary	3	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Roosevelt Elementary	3	8:15 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Vilas Elementary	3	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Zavala Elementary	3	8:15 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Dr. Green Elementary	4	8:10.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Guerrero Elementary	4	8:20.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Johnson Elementary	4	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Kolhberg Elementary	4	8:10.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Lindbergh Elementary	4	8:10.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Polk Elementary	4	8:15.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Putnam Elementary	4	8:10.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Rivera Elementary	4	8:15.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Roberts Elementary	4	8:05.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Western Elementary	4	8:10.a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
White Elementary	4	8:20 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Ravmond Telles	4	7:30 a.m.		3:52 p.m.

Academy				
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Source: EPISD.

Recommendation 119:

Establish three uniform school starting and ending times to accommodate three runs per bus in the morning and three in the afternoon.

EPISD should change school starting and ending times districtwide to accommodate three runs per bus in the morning and three runs in the afternoon.

Staggered bell schedules would require close coordination between the Transportation Unit and the schools. The focus of attention in the early stages should be on the elementary schools, since that is where the bulk of the ridership is concentrated. Starting one elementary school at 8:00 am, another at 8:30 am, and another at 9:00 am would allow a bus serving those schools to make at least three runs of 25 minute durations to maximize the bus ridership. A similar time schedule would be needed in the afternoon to continue to maximize efficiency. The 52 elementary schools in the district could be divided into three groups of 17 schools and assigned three different starting and ending times.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops a staggered schedule to permit a minimum number of three runs per bus in the morning and afternoon.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent presents a recommendation to the board to change starting and ending times to accommodate three runs per bus in the morning and the afternoon.	July 1999
3.	The board holds a public hearing to explain the reasons for changing school starting and ending times.	July 1999
4.	The board approves the staggered bell times.	July 1999
5.	The director of Transportation implements the new three-bell schedule.	August 1999
6.	The director of Transportation submits an attrition plan to the chief financial officer and superintendent to retain the number of	September 1999

	bus drivers and buses needed for the new schedule.	
7.	The director of Transportation, in conjunction with the assistant superintendent for Administrative Services, considers the needs for lead drivers and substitute drivers and develops a plan to transfer or eliminate unneeded bus driver positions through attrition.	September 1999
8.	The director of Transportation reduces the number of regular buses and sells the oldest buses for salvage.	January 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

By changing to a staggered schedule, EPISD should be able to eliminate 25 of its regular education buses and 25 driver positions. Since 12 buses and drivers have been recommended for elimination with greater use of the BUSTOPS system, the net affect of this recommendation is a reduction of 13 buses and drivers. The average cost of a bus driver is \$12,200 (\$9,757 plus 25 percent benefits). This would result in annual savings of \$158,600 (13 drivers X \$12,200). The salvage value for each bus after 12 years of service is estimated at \$500. This would result in a one-time savings of \$6,500 (13 buses X \$500 each).

Driver positions should be eliminated through attrition, and efforts should be made to place drivers in any vacancies created as a result of creating lead driver positions.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Reduce 13 bus driver positions.	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600
Sell 13 older buses.	\$6,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$165,100	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600	\$158,600

FINDING

EPISD provides school bus transportation for its own students and those of three other districts who attend the Silva Health Magnet School located in El Paso. Students are picked up at a designated school and returned there after class each day. Five routes and buses are used for this program. EPISD provides this transportation at no cost to the other districts. The no-cost policy resulted from an informal agreement among district superintendents, but there are no off-setting reciprocal agreements. **Exhibit 10-15** shows the impact of health magnet school transportation.

**Exhibit 10-15
Health Magnet School Transportation**

Route	School District	Route Length	Daily Runs	Daily Miles
Magnet II	Ysleta	38 miles	2	152
Magnet III	Ysleta	20 miles	1	40
Magnet IV	Ysleta	46 miles	1	92
Magnet VI	Socorro	60 miles	1	120
Route 21	Canutillo	20 miles	1	40

Recommendation 120:

Charge other districts for the cost of transportation to the health magnet school.

EPISD should develop a reimbursement plan to recover expenses for the transportation it provides to other districts. It is a reasonable expectation that each independent school district should fund its own cost of transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation prepares a transportation reimbursement policy for recouping transportation expenses from other independent school districts.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent approves transportation reimbursement policy.	May 1999
3.	The executive director of Finance, Budget, and Accounting, with assistance from the director of Transportation, prepares transportation billing charges to appropriate school districts for Silva Magnet School transportation costs.	May 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

EPISD's transportation cost per mile is \$2.56. Each day, EPISD provides 288 miles of bus transportation for Ysleta, 120 miles for Socorro, and 40 miles for Canutillo Independent School Districts per day for 176 days annually. Reimbursements total \$201,851 (\$2.56 X 176 day X 448 miles).

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004

Charge other districts for the cost of transportation to the health magnet school	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$201,851	\$201,851
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C. Vehicle Maintenance and Bus Fleet Management

EPISD's bus fleet consists of 296 school buses. The buses use two types of fuel: liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and unleaded gasoline. Each bus is assigned to one of EPISD's three area transportation facilities: central, northeast, or west.

Exhibit 10-16 shows the fleet mix assigned to each facility. Each facility has secure parking areas for its assigned buses. The central area facility provides maintenance for 110 school buses and 284 other school vehicles, such as security cars, mowers, trailers, trucks, and dump trucks. The northeast area maintains 92 buses while the west area maintains 94.

Exhibit 10-16
EPISD Buses by Type and Location

	Central		Northeast		West		
Fuel	W/O Lift	With Lift	W/O Lift	With Lift	W/O Lift	With Lift	Total
LPG	85	16	84	8	84	10	287
Gas	9	0	0	0	0	0	9
Total	94	16	84	8	84	10	296

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

All transportation operations require substitute vehicles to cover for units experiencing breakdowns or scheduled preventive maintenance. The generally accepted range for school bus fleet spares is 10 to 20 percent of the regularly scheduled peak bus usage. The factors affecting the spare bus ratio are fleet age, effectiveness of the maintenance program, climatic and operating environment, fleet mix, and training program. The peak bus requirement per day for EPISD is 236. The district's total bus fleet is shown as 296, of which 59 serve as spares, for a spare ratio of 20 percent. A 20 percent spare rate for EPISD, given the age of its fleet and its maintenance facilities, is appropriate.

COMMENDATION

The Transportation Unit maintains a spare bus ratio to peak bus use of 20 percent.

FINDING

EPISD maintains a fleet of 296 buses and 284 units of support equipment, for a total fleet of 580. The fleet is maintained by 33 mechanics: 11 senior mechanics, 13 mechanics, one electrical mechanic, and eight trade assistants. The 284 units of support equipment include many lawn mowers and trailers, which obviously require less sophisticated maintenance than school buses. EPISD's ratio of vehicles to mechanics is 18 to one.

The transportation industry commonly uses a ratio of 20 to 30 vehicles per mechanic depending on the age of the fleet, mechanics' expertise, and the type of maintenance equipment available. EPISD falls well below the industry recommended range at 18:1. Socorro and Ysleta operate at a ratio of 25:1. Florida's Lee County School District uses a 24:1 ratio of vehicles to mechanics.

Recommendation 121:

Initiate a staffing policy mandating 25 vehicles per mechanic.

A reduction in the number of bus routes resulting from using the automated scheduling system, bell schedule modifications, and the number of spare buses needed all would reduce the number of vehicles required. The 25:1 ratio should be the district standard staffing policy. Any expansion or contraction in fleet size would require adjustments in the number of mechanics.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation and the executive director of Human Resources adopt the recommended mechanic staffing policy.	April 1999
2.	The interim superintendent and the school board approve the mechanic staffing policy change.	April 1999
3.	The executive director of Human Resources reduces the number of mechanic positions.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

EPISD currently has 33 mechanics to maintain a total fleet of 296 school buses and 284 pieces of other equipment, for a total of 580 pieces of equipment. A staffing level of one mechanic per 25 vehicles would reduce the number required to 23. The fiscal impact of reducing 10 mechanic positions is shown in **Exhibit 10-17**. The salaries shown are average estimates based upon pay information provided by the Transportation Unit. Average pay for a senior mechanic is \$21,770. With 25 percent

benefits of \$5,442, the total cost of a position is \$27,212. Average pay for a mechanic/trade assistant is \$17,760. With 25 percent benefits of \$4,440, the total cost one of these positions is \$22,200.

**Exhibit 10-17
Transportation Positions
Current Versus Proposed Organization**

Position	Current	Proposed	Difference	Average Cost	(Cost)/Savings
Senior Mechanic	11	8	(3)	\$27,212	\$81,636
Mechanic/Trade Assistants	22	15	(7)	\$22,200	\$155,400
Total	33	23	(10)	-	\$237,036

Source: EPISD.

Positions should be eliminated through attrition or mechanics should be retrained as bus drivers as appropriate. Eliminating these positions may require two years for full implementation.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Initiate a staffing policy mandating 25 vehicles per mechanic	\$118,500	\$237,000	\$237,000	\$237,000	\$237,000

FINDING

EPISD does not have a bus replacement or procurement plan. The 1998-99 budget submitted by the director of Transportation requested six regular program and three special education lift buses, but the request was not included in EPISD's approved budget. The district purchases buses in response to critical needs. **Exhibit 10-18** shows the EPISD fleet inventory by age. More than a third of the fleet is 15 years old or older.

**Exhibit 10-18
EPISD Fleet Inventory By Age**

Year	Buses With Lift	Buses Without Lift	Total
1977	0	29	29

1978	3	41	44
1980	3	10	13
1981	0	3	3
1983	0	7	7
1984	7	13	20
1985	0	8	8
1986	3	8	11
1987	2	9	11
1988	3	10	13
1989	2	9	11
1991	1	11	12
1992	1	4	5
1993	9	91	100
1997	0	9	9
Total Fleet	34	262	296

Source: EPISD.

An aging fleet is subject to more breakdowns on the road, more expensive repairs, and can jeopardize the safety of students. Recent events in the Houston ISD illustrate what can happen when a bus replacement schedule is not used. Following the 1998 spring break, high school start times had to be delayed by several hours when not enough road-worthy buses were available to run regular routes.

EPISD has not purchased any home-to-school buses since 1993, except for nine purchased in 1997. The 100 buses that were purchased with bond funds in 1993 were replaced pre-1977 buses that did not meet the safety standards of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The nine buses purchased in 1997 were unleaded gasoline buses used for transporting athletic teams to outlying areas where propane fuel is not available. Most of EPISD's fleet of buses is propane-equipped.

Currently, 25 percent of EPISD's bus fleet is 20 years old or older. Maintenance demands increase with the age of the fleet and at the same time cause scheduling backlogs, especially when mechanics are required to substitute for an absent driver. During the past 15 years, EPISD has purchased the equivalent of two special education buses and 12 regular

education buses per year. This average equates to a procurement cycle of 14 buses every 15 years, or nearly the number of buses needed to keep pace with a 15-year replacement cycle. The typical useful life of school buses is between 10 and 15 years. TEA recommends a 10-year depreciation cycle and most districts have adopted a 10-to 12-year replacement cycle. With an aggressive maintenance program, a 15-year replacement policy is feasible for EPISD.

Recommendation 122:

Establish a bus procurement program to systematically replace buses every 15 years.

A 15-year replacement cycle would require the annual replacement of 7 percent of the lift buses for special education programs (two buses in 1999-2000) and 7 percent of the regular buses (17 buses in 1999-2000) each year.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops a 15-year bus procurement plan that requires annual replacement of 17 regular buses and two special education buses.	April 1999
2.	The superintendent presents the replacement plan to the board and the board adopts the bus procurement plan.	May 1999
3.	The board establishes a five-year capital budget for bus purchases.	June 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost information provided by peer districts show regular program buses cost an average of \$40,000 and special education lift buses cost an average of \$42,000. Based on the 15-year replacement program, 17 regular program buses would cost \$892,550 and two special program lift buses would cost \$84,000, for a total cost of \$976,500 each year.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Establish a bus procurement program	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)	(\$976,500)

FINDING

District maintenance records do not provide enough information to determine the district's annual maintenance cost per bus per year.

Preventive maintenance is the cornerstone of an effective and efficient transportation organization. Regular and periodic services detect and correct emerging problems before more costly out-of-service-repairs become necessary. A good preventive maintenance program reduces the number of breakdowns and lessens the wear and tear on the fleet.

The EPISD preventative maintenance program inspects each bus at 6,000 miles and at 12,000 miles. Oil changes are conducted at 12,000 miles or at the discretion of the shop foreman. EPISD completed engine overhauls on 43 buses and 22 trucks during 1996 through 1998. The oil change and filter replacement policy accepted by most fleets doing stop-and-go driving is 6,000 miles. Some fleets use an oil sampling analysis program that tracks metal and coolant content of engine oil throughout their life and can pinpoint specific engine component degradation before a catastrophic failure occurs. EPISD does not conduct such analysis.

Recommendation 123:

Establish an oil analysis program to determine appropriate oil change intervals.

The district, by doubling the mileage interval between oil changes used by most fleets, must take into consideration the lessened lubricating qualities of older engine oil on stop-and-go driving routes. Diminished lubricating qualities increase the risk of internal engine component wear, which may cause catastrophic engine failure. EPISD has overhauled an average of 14 bus engines each year since 1996. Quarterly laboratory oil analysis would provide information on the condition of the oil sample, metal and coolant content, and an oil change recommendation. EPISD supervisors then could make the final determination whether to change the oil or not.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops an oil analysis program and includes it in the Maintenance standard operating procedures.	June 1999
2.	The director of Purchasing prepares bid and awards oil analysis contract.	July 1999
3.	Assistant shop foremen conduct training on proper oil sampling procedures.	August 1999

4. Mechanics begin using the oil analysis program.	October 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

The oil sample kit, with laboratory results, costs \$38 (\$9.50 X four samples per bus per year). The annual fleet cost of the oil analysis for 296 buses is \$11,248. The oil analysis program could pay for itself if two engines per year are saved from catastrophic failure. The cost of a complete engine overhaul varies from \$6,000 to \$8,000 per engine but these savings are not shown since actual failure rates will depend on a variety of conditions.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Establish oil analysis program	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)	(\$11,248)

FINDING

An effective preventative maintenance program is enhanced by a vehicle maintenance information system that provides complete management tracking of preventative maintenance schedules, labor and part costs, services performed, repairs made, and fuel used. The district is not using the Gateway automated system to track due dates for preventative maintenance. Monthly odometer mileage taken from each bus is compiled and the assistant shop foreman schedules the appropriate service. EPISD does not maintain roadcall information showing the number of service calls made by a mechanic or the number of wrecker calls.

The VMIS systems used by the district-the Gateway Automotive Repair Work Order System and the Gateway Automotive Parts Purchasing System-have not been fully integrated into the maintenance operation. Both systems can track parts usage and cost, record labor hours used on each work order, schedule preventive maintenance, and determine if PMs are conducted on time. Instead, the Gateway systems are used by a clerk in the Transportation director's office to track repairs, parts, and labor. However, the three maintenance shops cannot use the Gateway systems, have no access to the automated maintenance data, and have not trained their staff to use the systems. The Transportation director told TSPR that the former assistant superintendent wanted the Gateway systems centralized in the director's office and not placed in the shop areas. This centralized approach, however, has precluded the shop foremen from using data that could assist them in planning, scheduling, and quickly assessing required maintenance actions.

Recommendation 124:

Make full use of the Gateway systems' capabilities as vehicle maintenance information systems and install them in each maintenance shop.

Fully integrated Gateway systems could provide the district with tools to track and record important data not currently reported. Shop foremen need analyzed data and trend information that currently is not available to them at the shop level. The paper maintenance records now used could be eliminated once the Gateway systems are fully integrated into each shop. More meaningful data analysis should provide useful trend information not currently available to supervisors or managers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation arranges for training of maintenance supervisors on the Gateway systems.	May 1999
2.	The director of Transportation conducts 30-day trial of the integrated Gateway systems on 10 buses from each of the maintenance shops.	June 1999
3.	The director of Transportation and shop foremen determine desired reports.	June 1999
4.	The director of Transportation implements the decentralized Gateway systems across the district.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would entail a one time cost of \$9,000 for three computers and Gateway software to be installed in each of the three maintenance shop facilities.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Make full use of the Gateway Systems' capabilities	(\$9,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

EPISD's mechanics do not receive comprehensive in-house training, and the district does not specify the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification as a condition of employment. Interviews with some

mechanics and supervisors said that the only training that district mechanics receive is supplied by vehicle vendors for new buses.

Qualified mechanics are needed to maintain school buses, and ASE certification is an excellent way of determining whether or not a mechanic is qualified. As of November 1997, only one percent of all ASE certifications were school bus technicians. At that time, there were 414,413 ASE certified repair technicians and only 4,166 had a certification in school bus repair.

ASE certification requires several steps. The candidate initially registers and takes one or more of the 33 ASE exams. After passing at least one exam, and providing proof of two years of relevant work experience, the mechanic becomes an ASE-certified technician. Tests are conducted twice a year. Certified mechanics must be retested every five years to maintain their certification. EPISD offered an ASE program in 1992-93 with the assistance of El Paso Community College, but it was terminated due to lack of interest by district mechanics.

Recommendation 125:

Provide ASE certification training for all EPISD mechanics and reward those who become certified.

The district should establish policies to provide annual bonuses of \$500 for each certified mechanic. Certification would reduce costs because better training makes for more accurate fault diagnosis, allowing more items to be repaired rather than replaced..

The district's recruitment of mechanics should include ASE certification as a highly desirable qualification.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation develops and establishes a policy for professional certification of mechanics and institutes a salary bonus to encourage participation.	April 1999
2.	The executive director of Human Resources establishes a pay scale to motivate the mechanics, and includes ASE certification as one of EPISD's recruitment requirements.	June 1999
3.	The director of Transportation institutes a program to begin the certification process with existing mechanics.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation's cost to EPISD would be relatively small. The ASE registration fee is \$25 and the test fee is \$20. Tests are administered in 7,000 locations throughout the country in May and November. ASE also has a school bus preparation guide that can be accessed on the Internet at <<http://www.asecert.org/>>.

The estimated cost is \$150 in registration fees (for six employees) plus \$100 per person for travel or \$750 in total. Minimal transportation and per diem costs also might be associated with taking the test; the estimate allows about \$100 per person for such costs. Bonuses will increase annual wages by \$500 per mechanic for 6 mechanics or \$3,000 annually. This will increase annually as more mechanics are certified.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Registration, Testing, and Travel Costs	(\$750)	(\$750)	(\$750)	(\$750)	(\$750)
Wage Increase	\$0	(\$3,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$9,000)	(\$12,000)
Total	(\$750)	(\$3,750)	(\$6,750)	(\$9,750)	(\$12,750)

FINDING

EPISD uses new steering tires for all wheel positions on its school buses. Federal transportation law requires the use of original tires only on the steering axles of regulated vehicles, including school buses. The district has used recaps on drive tires previously, but the failure rate was unacceptable. However, interviews with maintenance personnel indicate that the district did not receive its own original casings back as recaps, but received casings that were recapped from unknown resources that may not have been capable of being recapped again.

Recommendation 126:

Adopt a policy of using recaps on bus drive tires.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Transportation adopts a policy of using recaps on bus drive tires.	April 1999
2.	The director of Purchasing solicits bids from qualified recappers.	April 1999

3.	The director of Purchasing awards the recap contract.	June 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

The district could save approximately \$50 per tire by using recaps instead of new tires. Recapping 296 drive tires annually (25 percent of the bus fleet), would save \$14,800 annually.

Recommendation	1999- 2000	2000- 01	2001- 02	2002- 03	2003- 04
Adopt a policy of using recaps on bus drive tires	\$14,800	\$14,800	\$14,800	\$14,800	\$14,800

Chapter 11

FOOD SERVICE

This chapter reviews EPISD's Food Service Department in three sections:

- A. Organization and Management
- B. Student Meal Participation
- C. Cost Reporting and Control

BACKGROUND

School food service programs should provide students with an appealing and nutritionally sound breakfast and lunch program as economically as possible. Food service programs are funded through several sources, including:

- federal reimbursements for all students who eat school meals, with differing reimbursement rates for each student receiving free meals, reduced-price meals, and paid meals;
- student payments;
- a la carte sales of food items; and
- fees from special functions catered by the food service program.

EPISD's Food Service Department is subject to audits conducted every five years by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), annual audits by the Texas Department of Health, and inspections conducted by the City of El Paso Health Department two to three times a year. The department also must file a detailed report with TEA to document its reimbursements from the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.

A. Organization and Management

CURRENT SITUATION

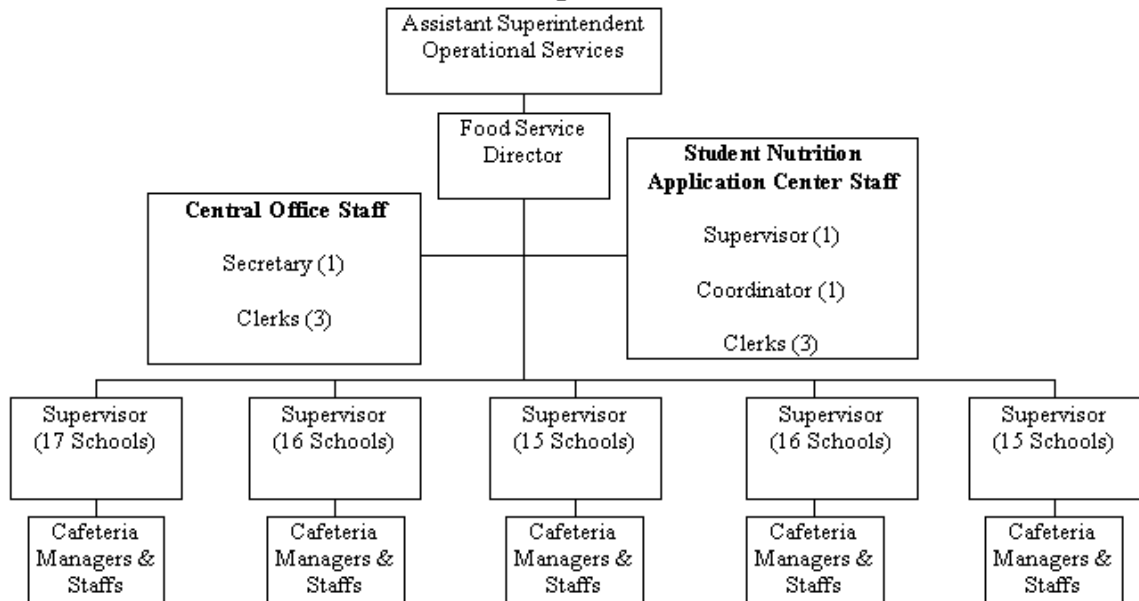
EPISD Food Service has an annual operating budget of about \$17.6 million and employs 553 employees: 14 in the central office, 299 full-time cafeteria employees, and 240 part-time cafeteria workers. Food Service served more than 8 million meals to district students, faculty, and staff from its 80 cafeterias in the 1997-98 school year. The department serves an average of nearly 11,000 breakfasts and more than 36,000 lunches per day.

The Food Service management team in the central office includes:

- The director of Food Service, who is responsible for the overall management of the operation and for ensuring that the program complies with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) school breakfast and lunch program requirements and associated regulations of TEA's Child Nutrition Program.
- Five supervisors, each responsible for overseeing Food Service operations in a different geographic area of the district. These areas do not correspond to regions established by the district for other services. In addition to their oversight responsibilities for specific schools, each supervisor oversees a specific area of Food Service operations for the entire district. These areas include nutrition education, menu coordination, the coordination of training for Food Service personnel, oversight, and management of the Student Nutrition Accountability Program (SNAP) system (the district's computerized point-of-sale system), catering, special functions, and coordination of the evaluation of recipes.
- Four employees of the Student Nutrition Application Center (SNAC) including a supervisor, a coordinator and three application clerks.
- Four additional office workers including the director's secretary, a purchasing clerk, an accounts payable clerk, and a clerk that performs other office duties.

Exhibit 11-1 presents the organizational structure of the Food Service Operations.

**Exhibit 11-1
Episd Food Service Organizational Structure**



Source: EPISD Food Service Department, 1998-99.

One supervisor position was vacated when the supervisor was promoted to be Food Service director in May 1998 but has now been filled. The fact that another supervisor is relatively new in the role, required two supervisors to temporarily serve additional schools until the newest supervisor is better prepared to assume full responsibility.

Each of the five supervisor positions is responsible for a specific area of food service management. The supervisor who serves as the **nutrition education coordinator**:

- produces and distributes a monthly menu calendar to campuses and managers;
- plans, coordinates, produces, and distributes materials for and implements a variety of nutrition promotional activities, including Back-to-School Bag of Tricks, October Kitchen Tours, the Thanksgiving meal, the January Five-A-Day program, March Nutrition Month, and the production and distribution of "TAAS Breakfast Bags" on days when students take the TAAS test;
- prepares press releases for activities and submits them to the Communications Unit for distribution to the media;
- requests purchases of materials and prizes for promotions;
- maintains a library or resource list for requests for speakers, videotapes, brochures, and other educational materials on nutrition;

- coordinates nutritional education activities with school nurses, wellness coordinators, and other district personnel; and
- prepares and delivers nutritional education and wellness training for Food Service employees.

The nutrition education coordinator also is primarily responsible for the theme currently used in the district's cafeterias, "EatSmart Café." This concept is designed to encourage students to develop and maintain good nutritional habits and is reinforced through a variety of nutritious meal options and nutrition educational and promotional programs in cafeterias throughout the year.

The supervisor who serves as **menu coordinator**:

- plans a master cycle menu with input from other supervisors and cafeteria managers that considers factors such as commodity availability, food costs, student preferences, color, appearance, and variety;
- plans daily menus and worksheets based on the master cycle menu, with adjustments for holidays, early release days, and changes in commodity allocations;
- provides menus to the nutrition education coordinator in a timely fashion so that she can prepare and distribute a menu calendar to campuses;
- coordinates the kitchens' commodity use by obtaining and reviewing all commodity allocation bulletins and inventory levels and planning the use of commodities in upcoming menus;
- prepares menus and worksheets for the Summer Food Service Program based on the master menu cycle; and
- informs other supervisors of menu activities and changes and seeks their input as needed.

The supervisor who serves as **training coordinator**:

- plans and coordinates all training activities for assistant managers and manager trainees;
- schedules periodic classes to train substitute Food Service workers and cashiers;
- coordinates the scheduling and implementation of annual lunch clerk training and other training as needed;
- coordinates departmental in-service training;
- recommends career ladders, incentives, and rewards for Food Service employees;
- prepares brochures and standard menus for catered functions, recommends a pricing structure, and establishes standards for food presentation;

- oversees and coordinates major district catering efforts from planning through billing;
- maintains a supply of equipment and materials for catering, and recommends purchases as needed; and
- recommends and provides catering training for managers and employees.

The supervisor who serves as the **recipe coordinator**:

- chairs the recipe testing committee;
- prints and distributes standardized recipes to cafeterias;
- coordinates yearly food product testing and update product specifications as needed;
- coordinates the development of student activity committees, focus groups, and parental input;
- coordinates planning, organization, implementation, and training for the Summer Food Service Program;
- oversees and coordinates a safety and sanitation program in all cafeterias; and
- evaluates recipe programs annually and recommends changes as needed.

The supervisor who serves as **SNAP coordinator**:

- provides leadership and expertise in the organization and management of the SNAP computerized system, coordinates planning for the system, identifies needed resources, and recommends related budget amounts;
- serves as liaison to SNAP Systems, Inc. and oversees the districtwide SNAP operation;
- maintains records of computer hardware throughout the district, evaluates hardware, and recommends upgrades;
- installs software updates and coordinates associated training;
- recommends and provides computer-related training for Food Service staff;
- downloads student data records and obtains and loads direct certification data;
- ensures that bid information is entered accurately and in a timely manner, produces instructions and bid sheets for purchasing, prepares training materials and procedures, and assists with training related to computer ordering and inventory;
- writes procedures for and oversees computerized application processing, including staff training in the process; and
- conducts computerized nutritional analysis of district recipes and menus and maintains files of these analyses as well as product nutritional data.

For 1997-98, 68.2 percent of EPISD's students were approved to receive free or reduced-price meal benefits through USDA. In addition to such reimbursements, the district also receives free USDA food commodities.

Students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals if they meet certain income guidelines
(**Exhibit 11-2**).

Exhibit 11-2
1998-99 Income Eligibility Guidelines for
National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Programs

Family Size	ANNUALLY		MONTHLY		WEEKLY	
	Free	Reduced-Price	Free	Reduced-Price	Free	Reduced-Price
1	\$10,465	\$14,893	\$873	\$1,242	\$202	\$287
2	14,105	20,073	1,176	1,673	272	387
3	17,745	25,253	1,479	2,105	342	486
4	21,385	30,433	1,783	2,537	412	586
5	25,025	35,613	2,086	2,968	482	685
6	28,665	40,793	2,389	3,400	552	785
7	32,305	45,973	2,693	3,832	622	885
8	35,945	51,153	2,996	4,263	692	984
9	39,585	56,333	3,300	4,695	762	1,084
10	43,225	61,513	3,604	5,127	832	1,184
11	46,865	66,693	3,908	5,559	902	1,284
12	50,505	71,873	4,212	5,991	972	1,384
Additional Members Add:	\$3,640	\$5,180	\$304	\$432	\$70	\$100

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In fulfilling its responsibilities for this program, the district must ensure that:

- benefits are provided to foster children in certain cases;

- benefits are provided to children from families experiencing strikes, layoffs, or other unemployment that causes their incomes to fall below the eligibility threshold;
- no child receiving these benefits is overtly identified through payment procedures or in any other way;
- no child is discriminated against because of race, sex, color, handicap, age, or national origin;
- a fair hearing process is provided for applicants who are denied benefits and wish to appeal;
- public releases explaining the free and reduced-price meal program are submitted to the media, local employment offices, and major employers contemplating layoffs; and
- TEA is notified of any proposed alterations of the district's policies concerning this program prior to implementation, and that such changes become effective only upon TEA approval.

Food Service's SNAP management software includes a point-of-sale device that allows cafeteria workers to record transactions for paid meals and free and reduced-price meals. The system also allows the department to capture the information needed to obtain reimbursement from state and federal sources for free and reduced-price meals and to run a variety of management reports to monitor the department's financial status.

FINDING

In the 1997-98 school year, Food Service achieved a fund balance of \$2,596,337. This marked the third consecutive year that the department reported a positive fund balance, after losses in the 1992-93, 1993-94, and 1994-95 school years.

Exhibit 11-3 Episd Food Service Revenue and Expenditures

Revenue Source	1996-97	1997-98
Local	\$3,501,105	\$3,563,951
State	231,665	236,378
Federal	13,484,418	13,767,862
Total	\$17,217,188	\$17,568,191
Expenditure Category	1996-97	1997-98
Payroll	\$7,190,533	\$7,433,193

Contracted Services	839,400	872,381
Food Supplies	7,946,163	7,461,531
Non-Food Supplies	356,932	567,195
Other Operating Expenditures	4,666	7,926
Capital Outlay	117,670	124,466
Total	\$16,455,364	\$16,466,692
Net Profit	\$761,824	\$1,101,499
Fund Balance (Beginning)	\$455,988	\$1,217,812
Total	\$1,217,812	\$2,319,311

Source: EPISD.

In districts where the fund balance is negative the general fund pays overhead costs and often must supplement the cost of the operation. EPISD's Food Service uses its fund balance to offset some general fund expenditures by allocating a portion of its funds to cover overhead costs such as utilities. The department also has made good use of its positive fund balance by investing in up-to-date equipment for each of its cafeterias, such as new ovens, cooking utensils, pots, pans, and deep fryers.

COMMENDATION

EPID's Food Service has paid for overhead costs and used its positive fund balance to keep the equipment in its cafeterias up-to-date, which should continue to improve its profitability in the future.

FINDING

Food Service places a great deal of emphasis upon staff training. One of the five supervisors is responsible for developing a training program and overseeing its implementation. Most training is delivered either by the five supervisors or the director of Food Service, but occasionally the program brings in guest lecturers to offer training on specific topics.

Food Service offers training courses in subject areas such as culinary techniques, nutrition, safety, sanitation, catering, marketing and promotions, and math (**Exhibit 11-4**). Specific training programs are offered to all clerks, substitute workers, and manager trainees.

Exhibit 11-4
Examples of Training for Episd Food Service Employees
1998-99 School Year

Training	Training Audience	Examples of Subjects
Annual Training	Lunch Room Clerks	Eligibility Determination- Applications Direct Certification Pre-K Registration Procedure for Bar Coding Communication Procedures Time Cards
Year-Round Training	Assistant/Manager Trainees	Menu Planning Offer vs. Serve Recipe Management Equipment Care & Use Computerized Ordering Competency Assessment & Performance Evaluation
Managers' Meetings	Cafeteria Managers	Marketing & Promotions Safety & Sanitation Culinary Techniques Finance
Inservice Training	Substitute Workers	Food Service Organization National School Lunch Program Description of Duties Required Uniforms, Hygiene Serving Requirements Safety Procedures Pay & Benefits
Staff Development	Cafeteria Workers	Culinary Techniques Preparing Healthy School Meals Processed Meats Quick Breads Pasta & Rice

Source: EPISD.

COMMENDATION

Food Service offers a comprehensive employee training program that allows workers to keep abreast of information they need to do their jobs and enhance the operation of their cafeterias.

FINDING

Although Food Service uses a number of vendors to purchase specific food products, one vendor supplies the majority of its grocery products. The vendor, a local El Paso company, was awarded the contract through the Texas General Services Commission's bidding process.

The contract requires the vendor both to store food for the district for long periods of time, including food purchased from the vendor as well as federal commodities, and to deliver food items to each of the district's 80 cafeterias. The latter requirement has caused some problems for the vendor and the district. According to the Food Service staff, the vendor has had difficulty delivering frozen food items to each cafeteria so that they remain frozen and useable upon arrival. The vendor maintains that it does not have enough freezer trucks to make the deliveries to each cafeteria in a timely manner.

The vendor is required to make separate deliveries to each cafeteria because EPISD does not have any large freezer units at its central warehouse to store groceries and commodity items.

Though EPISD's warehouse staff has considered adding storage space for Food Service to the district's James Gamble Service Facility, they have not brought such a proposal to EPISD's administration or board. Warehouse officials estimate that the startup costs for such a project would be about \$2 million, including the addition of freezer space and shelving units as well as the purchase of forklifts and delivery trucks and the salaries of personnel to operate them. Despite the cost, the Food Service staff believes the savings from no longer paying the vendor to store food for long periods of time and the ability to avoid food spoilage would allow the district to save money in the long run.

In addition, the district would be able to open its market to other vendors that would be able to afford to meet the district's new bid specifications, since they would not have to deliver products to each school several times a week.

Recommendation 127:

Build freezer units at the James Gamble Service Facility to store groceries and commodities for district cafeterias.

A centralized warehouse for grocery and commodity items should allow the district's vendor to make a single delivery of all items needed by district cafeterias at a reduced cost, since the vendor would no longer be responsible for food storage or for individual deliveries to 80 schools. The

district would store the items and deliver them to schools as needed. This also would greatly reduce the risk of food spoilage. Over a period of ten years, the cost of constructing the facility will be recovered.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director and Warehouse director work with the superintendent to develop a proposal for adding freezer warehouse facilities at the James Gamble Facility.	April - May 1999
2.	Upon approval, the superintendent brings the proposal to construct warehouse facilities for Food Service to the EPISD board.	June 1999
3.	The board approves the proposal, and authorizes the use of Food Service fund balance to construct the warehouse, purchase warehouse equipment and delivery trucks, and hire drivers.	June - July 1999
4.	Construction begins.	August 1999
5.	Construction is complete and contracts are renegotiated with vendors.	August 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

According to district calculations, \$2 million startup costs would be expended in the first year.

Annually recurring expenditures would include salaries for three drivers (at a total cost of \$60,000) and operating expenses for the warehouse space (at an annual cost of \$90,000). Total annual costs thus are estimated at \$150,000 after the first year. The estimated amount the district could save by storing and transporting its food products is approximately \$375,000 annually, according to the director of Purchasing. This should save the district \$200,000 a year after expenses on food storage and delivery.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Build freezer units at the James Gamble Service Facility	(\$2,000,000)	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000

FINDING

Food Service has assembled a comprehensive manual of policies and procedures for its managers and manager trainees. The *Manager's Food Service Handbook* provides a variety of useful information to Food Service managers and staff, including:

- job descriptions for all Food Service positions;
- policies covering Food Service employees, including personal appearance and conduct and procedures for requesting substitute workers, filling job vacancies, and employee counseling;
- procedures for a variety of other operations, including the acceptance of student prepayments by cash or check, the tracking of reimbursable meals, and follow-up on health inspections;
- procedures for purchasing;
- procedures for data entry into the SNAP software program and the production of reports; and
- Food Service bulletins detailing new policies governing Food Service operations developed and approved by the district administration.

The handbook contains a great deal of useful information although it is written only in English. No similar manual exists for other cafeteria workers to provide them with useful information on how to perform their jobs in both English and Spanish.

Recommendation 128:

Provide a policies and procedures manual for Food Service employees in English and Spanish.

The manual should contain some of the same materials provided in the managers' handbook, including job descriptions, policies covering personal appearance and conduct, and procedures for entering information into the SNAP software system. The manual should be available in both English and Spanish.

This should help ensure that all employees understand the requirements of their jobs and ensure consistent dissemination of information to all employees. Food Service should contact the district's language and arts personnel, who oversee provisions of foreign language in each region, for assistance in translating these materials. These personnel also are responsible for providing literacy training for each region and should be consulted if Food Service personnel have reading difficulties.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The field supervisor responsible for training contacts the district's language department to get assistance on translating the job descriptions, policies, and procedures in the manual into Spanish.	April - May 1999
2.	The district's language department translates job descriptions, policies, and procedures into Spanish and provides them to Food Service to be included into one Food Service policies and procedures manual.	June - December 2000
3.	The field supervisor responsible for training distributes copies of the manual to all cafeterias.	January 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

B. Student Meal Participation

CURRENT SITUATION

Increasing student meal participation is important to a school district not only because a district increases its federal reimbursements for every student who participates in meals, but also because it can ensure that more students receive the nutrition they need to perform well during the school day.

Many EPISD students qualify for the free and reduced-price meals; in the 1997-98 school year, about 70 percent of the student body was eligible.

As in many other districts, a much larger percentage of EPISD's students participate in the lunch program than in the breakfast program, regardless of whether they are in the free and reduced-price program or pay full price for their meals. Food Service served an average of 10,957 reimbursable breakfasts and 36,254 lunches a day in the 1997-98 school year. In addition to lunches, the department operates snack bars and an "a la carte" lunch program offering items such as pizza, hamburgers, and sandwiches at district secondary schools.

While the overall lunch participation rate—the average number of daily student lunches served expressed as a percentage of average daily attendance—was 59 percent for the 1997-98 school year, the overall breakfast participation rate averaged 18 percent (**Exhibit 11-5**).

Exhibit 11-5
Average Daily Participation in Breakfast and Lunch
in Episid Schools in the 1997-98 School Year

Month	ADA	Average Daily Lunch Participation	Daily Participation Rate	Average Daily Breakfast Participation	Daily Participation Rate
August	61,476	36,060	58.7%	10,004	16.3%
September	61,476	38,222	62.2	11,623	18.9
October	61,336	37,858	61.7	11,689	19.1
November	61,336	37,772	61.6	11,831	19.3
December	61,336	35,151	57.3	10,650	17.4
January	61,336	35,304	57.6	10,345	16.9
February	61,336	37,200	60.6	11,468	18.7

March	61,336	34,864	56.8	10,790	17.6
April	61,336	35,945	58.6	10,840	17.7
May	61,188	34,164	55.8	10,330	16.9
Averages	61,349	36,254	59.1%	10,957	17.9%

Source: EPISD.

Lunch participation is lower at high schools (from 15 percent to 39 percent); breakfast participation is low throughout the district. The reaction of students, parents, and teachers to the quality and quantity of the food is mixed, and ranges from poor (with comments such as "The food is almost inedible!") to good ("Enchiladas are great!" and "I applaud the selection, preparation, and serving of our cafeteria food. Bravo to food and to personnel").

The district uses a variety of prepackaged/preprocessed food products as well as foods made from scratch. For example, items such as chili and enchiladas are prepared from scratch, but the district also uses prepackaged pizza and some prepackaged breakfast items.

Exhibit 11-6 compares meal participation at EPISD with seven peer districts. The chart displays the average daily attendance (ADA) in each district and the average daily participation (ADP) of students in breakfast and lunch.

Exhibit 11-6
ADA and ADP of Breakfast and Lunch Meals
EPISD and Peer Districts
1997-98

District	Average Daily Attendance	ADP (Breakfast)	ADP as % of ADA	ADP (Lunch)	ADP as % Of ADA
Houston	205,657	38,362	18.7%	105,200	51.15
Dallas	152,357	29,640	19.5%	96,958	63.6
Fort Worth	75,492	11,478	15.2%	34,997	46.4
El Paso	61,349	10,957	17.9%	36,254	59.1
San Antonio	56,525	18,987	33.6%	42,755	75.6%

Ysleta	44,007	7,768	17.7%	23,341	53.0
Corpus Christi	39,073	5,440	13.9%	21,846	55.9
Socorro	21,680	2,774	12.8%	9,454	43.6
Average	82,017	15,676	19.1%	46,351	56.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency.

Exhibit 11-7 shows current EPISD breakfast and lunch prices. The adult prices are a la carte because the price varies depending on what meal items they choose. Of course, adults can choose to eat a regular breakfast or lunch just as the students eat, and in that case, the price is the same as the price for paying students.

**Exhibit 11-7
EPISD Meal Prices
1997-98**

Meal Type	Price
Student paid breakfast	\$.60
Student reduced-price breakfast	\$.30
Adult paid breakfast	A la carte
Student paid lunch (grades k-6)	\$1.25
Student paid lunch (grades 7-12)	\$1.35
Student reduced-price lunch	\$.40
Adult paid lunch	A la carte

Source: EPISD.

FINDING

Food Service uses several methods to ensure the anonymity of students who participate in the free and reduced-price meal programs. Students and faculty are issued bar-code cards that they swipe through a card reader on top of the SNAP point-of-sale terminal. In elementary schools, the teachers usually collect the cards from the students and hand them to the lunch clerks for swiping; this is done to decrease the likelihood of students losing their cards. High school students also are issued bar code cards, as are most students in middle and intermediate schools. In some middle and intermediate schools, the SNAP unit includes a keypad on which students

enter their numbers. The director of Food Service explained that students just entering middle school tend to lose their cards more often than other students; they are accustomed to the elementary school practice of giving their cards to their teachers for safekeeping and are not yet used to keeping the card themselves. The keypad is an easy alternative.

Students who pay for their meals are encouraged to prepay to a Food Service account so that they do not have to pay for their food at each meal. Parents can prepay with checks or cash; credit cards are not accepted. Prepaying avoids the "singling out" of students who participate in the free and reduced-price meal program, allows cafeteria lines to move more efficiently, and allows parents the convenience of paying once a month instead of on a day-by-day basis.

COMMENDATION

Food Service uses several effective methods to ensure the anonymity of students who participate in free and reduced-price meal programs and allows cafeteria lines to move more efficiently.

FINDING

The Food Service Unit recently has used a series of methods to increase breakfast participation at the elementary school level, on the assumption that, if students get in the habit of eating breakfast at an early age, they will continue throughout their school years. This year, Food Service introduced an "Awesome Breakfast Challenge Club" at ten elementary schools as a pilot test. The club is intended to interest students in breakfast by offering incentives such as inexpensive toy prizes, guest appearances by characters such as TEA's "Earl E. Bird," videos, and special breakfast items.

Food Service also provides TAAS breakfast bags to elementary classrooms on the morning that students take the TAAS test, so that children can feel more mentally alert and prepared for the test. The department also schedules cafeteria tours for elementary classes that emphasize the importance of nutrition in effective learning. Other special promotions, such as the "Five a Day" program (promoting the importance of eating five servings of vegetables every day) and Nutrition Month in March, also are used to increase interest in nutrition and stress the importance of a good, healthy breakfast and lunch to academic success. Over the last four years, these programs are credited with increasing breakfast participation rates by 50 percent at the elementary level.

COMMENDATION

Food Service uses a variety of educational and promotional methods to increase breakfast participation in EPISD elementary schools.

FINDING

Despite Food Service's efforts to increase breakfast participation in its elementaries, the participation percentage remains low. Food Service has not operated any of these pilot projects long enough to determine their cost-effectiveness. In addition, Food Service has only piloted these programs rather than establishing them at all elementary schools, and has no programs to raise breakfast participation at middle schools or high schools. Breakfast participation rates at the elementary schools are higher than before the programs were implemented; participation has been 50 percent higher in the four years since the initiatives began. The success of the program has prompted the district to begin expanding it into other schools.

One such program known as "grab and go" has been used successfully in other districts. Ysleta ISD has instituted a "grab-and-go" breakfast concept to increase participation. Students in 37 elementary schools eat in cafeterias, while students in four high schools eat on the bus on the way to school, in the cafeteria, at the snack bar, or in the classroom. The "grab-and-go" test in two elementary schools has increased participation by 50 to 90 percent.

Other school districts have had similar success with the "grab-and-go" concept. For example, the Brownsville ISD established a breakfast-to-go program in 1994 that resulted in a 617 percent increase in participation at the high school where they pilot-tested the program.

Recommendation 129:

Introduce the "grab-and-go" breakfast concept to all EPISD secondary schools and continue testing programs already under way in elementary schools.

Breakfast meals should be prepackaged for ease of serving and handling and should be served on mobile carts or other easy-access/high-traffic locations where students tend to congregate each morning before class.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Food Service supervisors develop a cost-effective "grab-and-go" breakfast meal programs.	May -June 1999
2.	The Food Service director, supervisors, and cafeteria managers at	August

	secondary schools implement the "grab-and-go" program.	1999
3.	The Food Service director and supervisors gather feedback from principals, teachers, students, and cafeteria managers to refine the program and record progress	October 1999
4.	The Food Service director and supervisors make refinements to the program as needed based on feedback and expand the program to secondary schools.	January 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

EPISD's federal breakfast revenues for the 1997-98 school year were \$1,907,817. A conservatively estimated increase of 5 percent in breakfast participation would generate additional revenue of \$95,391 annually. Food costs are 35 percent of total costs, so a cost of \$33,387 must be taken into account; labor costs are not estimated to increase, since the same labor can be used to prepare and serve breakfast. This would give EPISD a net profit of \$62,004 annually beginning in 2000-2001 once the recommendations are fully implemented across the district. It is assumed that only half of the savings, on \$31,002, could be achieved in the first year to give the district ample time to implement breakfast programs.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Introduce the "grab-and-go" breakfast.	\$31,002	\$62,004	\$62,004	\$62,004	\$62,004

FINDING

EPISD high schools have one 40-minute lunch period. Because these cafeterias serve between 300 and 650 students each at lunch, they are crowded and students often must stand in long lines to get served. In some schools, students can spend up to 30 minutes of their lunch period in line, leaving them with only ten minutes to actually eat lunch. The open lunch period gives students the option of leaving campus and eating a faster but less nutritious lunch. Food Service staff members attribute relatively low lunch participation rates at high schools to the single lunch period; again, lunch participation at the district's high schools ranges from 15 to 39 percent.

Recommendation 130:

Establish a second lunch period at all EPISD high school campuses.

At least one more lunch period should be added at all EPISD high schools. For schools serving 650 students or more, a third lunch period is advisable. Additional lunch periods should help reduce crowding in high school cafeterias as well as the amount of time students must wait in line. As a result, the number of students who eat lunch at high school cafeterias should increase.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director works with the supervisors and high school principals to establish a second or third lunch period.	June 1999
2.	The Food Service director, supervisors, and managers prepare campus lunch schedules and work programs for Food Service personnel.	July 1999
3.	The second lunch period is implemented at all EPISD high schools.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Applications for free or reduced-price meals are distributed in English and Spanish to all students at registration. Students are encouraged to complete the applications and submit them to the principal's office, cafeteria personnel, or their teachers as soon as possible. In addition to the applications, the district also uses direct certification to qualify students for free and reduced-price meals. The district obtains lists from the Texas Department of Human Services of students who live in households that receive food stamps to automatically qualify those students for the program. **Exhibit 11-8** shows the number of students approved for free and reduced-price meals for the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years.

Exhibit 11-8
Students Approved for Free And Reduced-Price Meals
Through Application or Direct Certification
1997-98 and 1998-99 School Years

Category	1997-98	1998-99	Change
Free	39,616	37,577	-2,039

Reduced	5,238	5,516	+278
Total	44,854	43,093	-1,761

Source: EPISD.

During the on-site visit to EPISD, officials at Burges High School said that the school has students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals but have not been approved to receive them. Though the SNAC program distributes applications to every student at registration and there are numerous people to whom a student can submit a completed application, some eligible students do not submit applications because their parents do not wish to complete them. The SNAC Supervisor indicated that one factor making parents reluctant to complete the application is that the form itself is confusing and difficult to fill out. The district loses money from this failure in reimbursements from the federal government for meals served.

Recommendation 131:

Pre-certify families for free and reduced-price meals.

If one child in a family is qualified for free or reduced-price meals, Food Service should search the district's student database to see if other children in the family are students in EPISD, and automatically qualify them as well. The district should consider relying on the pre-certification data already available by DHS and qualify families rather than individual students, to ensure that no one falls through the cracks to receive free and reduced-price meals. If a student is already certified with DHS, an application should not be made mandatory.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The SNAC supervisor and clerks receive applications for free and reduced-price meals.	August 1999
2.	The SNAC supervisor and clerks check the student database to locate any siblings of applicants who have not applied.	August 1999
3.	The SNAC supervisor automatically qualifies other students in the same family.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

By increasing the number of eligible participants in its free and reduced-price meal programs by 1 percent, EPISD could increase its state

compensatory education funding by \$218,136 annually (\$488 x 447 additional students). The savings were derived by dividing EPISD's total state compensatory education 1998-99 allotment of \$21,824,246 by 44,733, the district's best six-month average of their 1997-98 enrollment in the free and reduced-price meal program.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Pre-certify families for free and reduced-price meals.	\$218,136	\$218,136	\$218,136	218,136	218,136

FINDING

The Food Service Department has made a variety of efforts to brighten up its cafeterias and make eating in them fun for students. TSPR visited ten of the district's cafeterias, and found them to be clean and well-maintained. Posters, displays about good nutrition, and other colorful items decorate the walls in most of these cafeterias. Some EPISD high school cafeterias have begun to adopt broader food choices; pizza and pasta lines have proven popular.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to depart from the institutional look and feel of cafeterias, even given EPISD's significant efforts in this direction. High school students are allowed to eat lunch off-campus, and their cafeterias find it difficult to compete with nearby fast-food establishments. The institutional setting and the fact that the high schools offer only one lunch period both drive many students away from campus at lunch (**Exhibits 11-9 and 11-10**).

**Exhibit 11-9
Lunch Participation Rates at EPISD High Schools 1997-98**

<i>High School</i>	Average Daily Participation (ADP)	Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	% ADP of ADA
Andress	321	2,025	15.9
Austin	465	1,849	25.1
Bowie	619	1,582	39.1
Burges	492	1,498	32.8
Coronado	282	1,936	14.6
El Paso	387	1,225	31.6
Irvin	654	2,041	32.0

Jefferson	430	1,763	24.4
Total High School	3,650	13,919	26.2

Source: EPISD.

Participation rates at Bowie, Burges, El Paso, and Irvin are higher than other schools while Coronado and Andress are significantly lower. The district gave no explanation for the variances.

**Exhibit 11-10
Breakfast participation rates at episd high schools 1997-98**

<i>High School</i>	Average Daily Participation (ADP)	Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	% ADP of ADA
Andress	57	2,025	2.8
Austin	148	1,849	8.0
Bowie	250	1,582	15.8
Burges	118	1,498	7.9
Coronado	89	1,936	4.6
El Paso	112	1,225	9.1
Irvin	177	2,041	8.7
Jefferson	134	1,763	7.6
Total High School	1,085	13,919	7.8

Source: EPISD.

Some schools in other parts of the state have chosen to adopt a "food court" appearance similar to that used in malls. Corpus Christi and Spring high school cafeterias, for instance, have implemented the food-court concept. Students can select from alternatives such as a fajita bar, hamburger stand, soup and salad bar, or full-course meal. When TSPR reviewed this district, students said that they preferred to stay on campus for lunch because the food was good and the prices were better.

Recommendation 132:

Develop methods to monitor, analyze, and increase lunch participation rates at district high schools.

In tandem with TSPR's other recommendations to relieve overcrowding and improve the atmosphere of the cafeterias, the district also should make a concerted effort to draw high school students into participating in lunch through giveaway promotions, special theme days, healthy food choices, and ethnic foods.

Initially, EPISD must look at the schools experiencing higher rates to determine what is going right and then look to schools with lower rates to determine what is going wrong.

In developing and implementing this strategy, Food Service staff should enlist the help of manufacturers of food products, supplies, and equipment to obtain promotional ideas, decorations (in food-court decor) and other marketing strategies designed to increase high school lunch participation. In addition, the department should survey its high school customers periodically to gauge participation and attract comments about meal service, a task that it has done in the past only on a limited basis.

Food carts, colorful awnings, neon signs, and flags would strengthen the "Eat Smart Café" concept and graphics already in use in district cafeterias, brightening their image with a food-court appearance. The design elements can be rotated or changed often to maintain variety appeal. Menus can be designed in line with the themes of the food courts. Food Service can assemble a committee of students at each school to obtain their input about the types of foods they would like to see incorporated into the food courts. The committees might consider carts or kiosks featuring soups, salads, tacos, or burritos; potato bars are another popular food-court option.

High school cafeterias should strive to achieve a food court appearance that has proven popular among students. The district should pilot the concept at one or two high schools and monitor the results.

Performance measures should be set that contain targets for increased participation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director, field supervisors, and high school cafeteria managers meet with the assistant superintendent of Operations to discuss strategies and methods for increasing high school lunch participation.	April 1999 and ongoing
2.	The Food Service director, supervisors, and high school cafeteria managers observe operations at all schools and develop a customer survey to be distributed to students and	April 1999

	faculty.	
3.	The Food Service director and supervisors contact food product manufacturers to request help in providing promotional giveaways and advertising of name brand foods.	May 1999 and Ongoing
4.	The Food Service director and supervisors meet with high school principals to discuss ways to improve lunch service.	May 1999
5.	The Food Service director, supervisors, and student committees develop menus for a food court concept.	August 1999
6.	The Food Service director, supervisors, and cafeteria managers purchase and install materials needed to give high schools a food court appearance.	August 1999
7.	The Food Service director and assistant superintendent of Operations establish performance targets for higher participation rates at high school cafeterias.	August 1999
8.	Two high schools are piloted for food court concept.	August 1999
9.	The Food Service director and supervisors regularly monitor the high school cafeterias to determine their progress in meeting the established participation targets.	Ongoing
10.	Food courts are established for remaining high schools on a staggered basis.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming that increased lunch participation at high schools results in an overall annual increase of 1 percent in lunch participation for the district, 1997-98 federal lunch reimbursement revenues of \$10,383,106 would increase by \$103,831. Food costs are 35 percent of total costs, so a cost of \$36,341 must be taken into account. This would give EPISD a net profit of \$67,490 annually.

The food-court pilots would not require expensive renovations and the costs for equipment and materials could be used with food service fund balance. The marketing materials needed to decorate high school cafeterias to look like food courts should cost EPISD no more than \$20,000 per school. Assuming the program proves effective, additional high schools could be piloted subsequent years.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
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Develop methods to monitor, analyze, and increase lunch participation rates at district high schools.	\$67,490	\$67,490	\$67,490	\$67,490	\$67,490
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C. Cost Reporting and Control

CURRENT SITUATION

The Food Service Department uses the SNAP point-of-sale and reporting system in its cafeterias. This system has been approved by the USDA for use in conjunction with the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to capture information needed to file for federal reimbursements. The SNAP system records sales, verifies the status of students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals, and tracks a variety of performance information such as food costs as a percentage of revenue and meals served per labor hour.

Food Service uses SNAP to track its costs, revenue, inventory, and other indicators of its effectiveness. The department uses this information to keep its costs in line and determine whether additional savings measures are needed. The department already has taken several steps to control costs, including participating in purchasing and food preprocessing cooperatives and using disposable meal ware at its middle and high schools.

FINDING

A review of data gathered by the SNAP system shows that the ratio of meals served to labor hours (MPLH), a standard measure of food service efficiency, is low at some district schools, particularly the high schools. The department attributes the low MPLH in its high schools partly to the fact that service in its a la carte lines is even slower than in more basic lunch lines. The district's overall MPLH was 14.5 for the 1997-98 school year. High school cafeterias averaged 13.8 meals per labor hour in 1997-98; middle schools averaged 15.3 meals per labor hour, and elementary schools averaged 14.4. By contrast, common efficiency standards cited in Dorothy V. Pannell's *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors* range from 14 to 18 MPLH, depending on the number of meals served.

The district uses a system based on Pannell's measures to staff its cafeterias. But as **Exhibit 11-11** shows, some of its schools, particularly its high schools, do not fall within Pannell's standards.

Exhibit 11-11
Current and Recommended Meals Per Labor Hour and Comparison
of Staffing Hours to Episd Staffing Chart
1997-98 School Year

School	Meals	Hours	Meals	Pannell	EPISD	MPLH	Staffing
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			Per Labor Hour	Rec. MPLH	Recommended Staff Hours Per Day	Variance	Variance
High Schools							
Andress High	745.3	59.8	12.5	17	52	-4.5	7.8
Austin High	1035.6	74.2	14.0	18	64	-4.0	10.2
Bowie High	1222.3	73.9	16.5	18	72	-1.5	1.9
Burges High	758.6	64.3	11.8	17	52	-5.2	12.3
Coronado High	563.7	50.0	11.3	15	44	-3.7	6.0
El Paso High	764.7	56.4	13.6	17	52	-3.4	4.4
Franklin High	637.7	55.3	11.5	16	48	-4.5	7.3
Irvin High	1152.8	65.2	17.7	18	68	-0.3	-2.8
Jefferson High	755.2	52.8	14.3	17	52	-2.7	0.8
Avg. High Schools	848.4	61.3	13.7	17	56	-3.3	5.3
Middle Schools							
Bassett Intermediate	954.7	52.5	18.2	18	60	0.2	-7.5
Canyon Hills	762.9	51.5	14.8	17	52	-2.2	-0.5
Charles Intermediate	831.2	55.5	15.0	18	56	-3.0	-0.5
Guillen Intermediate	712.8	51.5	13.8	17	52	-3.2	-0.5
Henderson Intermediate	1032.0	59.2	17.4	18	64	-0.6	-4.8
Hornedo Intermediate	839.8	55.9	15.0	18	56	-3.0	-0.1
Lincoln	749.6	52.5	14.3	17	52	-2.7	0.5

Intermediate							
Magoffin Middle School	759.2	52.7	14.4	17	52	-2.6	0.7
Morehead Intermediate	573.4	43.9	13.1	15	44	-1.9	-0.1
Ross Middle School	684.5	51.3	13.4	16	48	-2.6	3.3
Terrace Hills M.S.	1266.7	69.3	18.3	18	72	0.3	-2.7
Wiggs Intermediate	725.8	50.3	14.4	17	52	-2.6	-1.7
Avg. Middle Schools	824.4	53.8	15.2	17.2	55	-2.0	-1.2
Elementary Schools							
Alamo Elementary	371.9	30.9	12.0	14	28	-2.0	2.9
Alta Vista Elementary	603.9	39.2	15.4	16	40	-0.6	-0.8
Aoy Elementary	607.8	38.4	15.8	16	40	-0.2	-1.6
Beall Elementary	664.4	42.0	15.8	16	40	-0.2	2.0
Bliss Elementary	701.1	47.9	14.6	17	44	-2.4	3.9
Bonham Elementary	273.4	20.2	13.5	13	24	0.5	-3.8
Bradley Elementary	555.3	36.4	15.3	15	36	0.3	0.4
Burleson Elementary	482.2	33.6	14.4	14	32	0.4	1.6
Burnet Elementary	514.8	36.4	14.1	15	36	-0.9	0.4
Cielo Vista Elementary	222.6	21.7	10.2	12	21	-1.8	0.7

Clardy Elementary	779.1	45.9	17.0	17	44	0.0	1.9
Clendenin Elementary	453.3	30.2	15.0	14	32	1.0	-1.8
Coldwell Elementary	617.2	41.5	14.9	16	40	-1.1	1.5
Crockett Elementary	922.1	54.7	16.9	18	52	-1.1	2.7
Cooley Elementary	802.3	51.7	15.5	18	48	-2.5	3.7
Crosby Elementary	589.8	38.0	15.5	15	36	0.5	2.0
Douglass Elementary	755.2	42.3	17.9	17	44	0.9	-1.7
Dowell Elementary	441.6	33.4	13.2	14	32	-0.8	1.4
Fannin Elementary	596.0	41.4	14.4	15	36	-0.6	5.4
Green Elementary	394.4	31.7	12.5	14	28	-1.5	3.7
Guerrero Elementary	522.4	36.4	14.3	15	36	-0.7	0.4
Hart Elementary	607.3	38.1	15.9	16	40	-0.1	-1.9
Hawkins Elementary	468.5	32.9	14.2	14	32	0.2	0.9
Highland Elementary	164.5	33.3	4.9	10	18	-5.1	15.3
Hillside Elementary	628.5	34.1	18.4	16	40	2.4	-5.9
Houston Elementary	741.3	49.8	14.9	17	44	-2.1	5.8
Hughey Elementary	638.3	37.3	17.1	16	40	1.1	-2.7
Johnson Elementary	690.4	41.5	16.6	16	40	0.6	1.5

Kohlberg Elementary	432.7	32.3	13.4	14	32	-0.6	0.3
Lamar Elementary	906.8	51.8	17.5	18	52	-0.5	-0.2
Lee Elementary	834.7	50.0	16.7	18	48	-1.3	2.0
Lindbergh Elementary	447.4	34.7	12.9	14	32	-1.1	2.7
Logan Elementary	750.7	49.6	15.1	17	44	-1.9	5.6
MacArthur Elementary	666.6	47.7	14.0	16	40	-2.0	7.7
Mesita Elementary	437.2	38.5	11.4	14	32	-2.6	6.5
Milam Elementary	241.5	25.6	9.4	12	21	-2.6	4.6
Newman Elementary	621.1	42.8	14.5	16	40	-1.5	2.8
Nixon Elementary	452.4	33.8	13.4	14	32	-0.6	1.8
Park Elementary	424.3	36.4	11.6	14	32	-2.4	4.4
Polk Elementary	361.5	32.6	11.1	14	28	-2.9	4.6
Putnam Elementary	451.5	36.0	12.5	14	32	-1.5	4.0
Rivera Elementary	417.4	34.4	12.1	14	32	-1.9	2.4
Roberts Elementary	729.5	49.0	14.9	17	44	-2.1	5.0
Roosevelt Elementary	411.7	31.8	12.9	14	32	-1.1	-0.2
Rusk Elementary	775.8	48.5	16.0	17	44	-1.0	4.5
Schuster Elementary	325.1	29.3	11.1	14	28	-2.9	1.3

Stanton Elementary	652.5	46.7	14.0	16	40	-2.0	6.7
Travis Elementary	414.0	31.1	13.3	14	32	-0.7	-0.9
Vilas Elementary	512.3	36.3	14.1	15	36	-0.9	0.3
Wainwright Elementary	609.6	41.4	14.7	16	40	-1.3	1.4
Western Hills Elem.	314.5	28.5	11.0	14	28	-3.0	0.5
Whitaker Elementary	493.8	33.7	14.6	14	32	0.6	1.7
White Elementary	533.7	35.7	15.0	15	36	0.0	-0.3
Zavala Elementary	471.0	35.1	13.4	14	32	-0.6	3.1
Avg. Elementary Schools	546.3	38.0	14.1	15.1	36	-1.0	2.0

Source: EPISD, and Dorothy V. Pannell, Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors, Tactics.

Although labor costs have been reduced significantly in the last few years, as **Exhibit 11-12** shows, they remain slightly higher than the industry standard of 40 percent.

Exhibit 11-12
Episd Food Service Labor Costs As A Percentage of Revenue
1992-93 through 1997-98 School Years

	1992-93	1994-1995	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Labor Costs	\$10,172,635	\$7,716,477	\$6,986,016	\$7,021,234	\$7,190,533	\$7,025,043
Revenue	\$15,429,788	\$15,647,246	\$15,170,782	\$16,690,840	\$17,217,188	\$16,260,013
Percentage of Revenue	65.9%	49%	46%	45%	42%	43%

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

Recommendation 133:

Review food service labor costs regularly to determine if individual campuses' MPLH figures are within industry standards.

Food Services should review labor costs on a monthly and annual basis to determine if efforts to increase overall meal participation also increase the MPLH on each campus and therefore decrease overall labor costs as a percentage of revenue.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director and supervisors create a plan and training program to increase productivity and reduce labor costs.	April 1999
2.	The Food Service supervisors train all cafeteria managers on new processes and strategies.	May 1999
3.	The Food Service supervisors tailor the plan to fit the specific needs of each EPISD cafeteria.	June 1999
4.	The Food Service director, supervisors, and cafeteria managers put the plan into effect.	September 1999
5.	The Food Service director and supervisors review monthly management reports from SNAP detailing MPLH by school.	October 1999
6.	The Food Service director and supervisors evaluate progress, adjust specific school plans as needed, and share successful aspects of each plan with all cafeteria managers.	October 1999 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Vending machines are operated by EPISD's individual schools. Contracts with vending machine companies vary from school to school and placement of the machines and the items sold are determined by the principals on each campus. Revenues vary from school to school; exact amounts were not available for this report.

Other school districts in Texas and elsewhere have found that exclusive contracts for vending services have increased their profit margin. This

does not mean that profits from the machines are in any way diverted from their current uses; instead, it means that district management controls the products sold and negotiates for the highest profit possible from group volumes. In return, many vendors are willing to give the district bonuses for exclusive access.

Several Texas school districts have similarly advantageous contracts with soft-drink companies. Tyler ISD signed a 10-year exclusive contract with Pepsi that included a \$500,000 bonus earmarked for technology-related projects. Plano ISD made a 10-year exclusive agreement with Dr. Pepper that pays the district \$1 million for each year of the agreement. Spring Branch ISD signed an agreement with Coca-Cola that includes a signing bonus of \$2.5 million and \$10.3 million over the agreement's ten-year period. Spring ISD signed an 11-year Sponsorship Agreement with the Pepsi-Cola Company. This contract allows for commissions and other incentives for Spring ISD schools. Other Texas districts that have signed exclusive vending contracts include Aldine (a \$12.8 million agreement for 10 years), Klein (\$10.7 million) all districts that signed agreements with the Pepsi-Cola Company; and Galena Park, which made a \$1.4 million agreement with Dr. Pepper.

As lucrative as these agreements may appear, districts should be aware of potential objections to such agreements. For example, a school district in Southeast Texas is being sued by a soft drink company after the district signed an agreement with another soft drink company that forced the district to pull out its competitor's vending machines. Concerns also have been expressed concerning the effects of promoting sugary soft drink products, and whether this occurs at the expense of more nutritious food items. Still, some people object to advertising certain products on school campuses.

As long as a district is aware of these concerns and takes steps to mitigate them, exclusive contracts can provide substantial revenue for educational purposes.

Recommendation 134:

Negotiate an exclusive vendor contract for vending machines.

EPISD should negotiate an exclusive contract for vending machines throughout the district and should be earmarked for education programs or other incentives that benefit students. The district also could consider splitting the profits with individual schools.

In addition to providing more revenue for the district, such a contract should enable Food Service to ensure that the placement and content of vending machines comply with state and federal guidelines.

To address concerns about the nutritional needs of EPISD students and the nutritional value of some products provided by soft drink companies, EPISD should make arrangements to provide vending machines with some nutritious items such as juices, fruit, and bottled water.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director meets with the assistant superintendent of Operations to receive approval to negotiate an exclusive vendor contract for vending machines.	April 1999
2.	The Food Service director and assistant superintendent of Operations seek approval from the superintendent and board to initiate an exclusive contract.	April 1999
3.	The assistant superintendent of Operations notifies principals of its plans to negotiate a prime vendor contract.	April 1999
4.	The Food Service director works with the Purchasing Unit to develop a request for proposals (RFP) to be distributed to vendors. The Food Service director specifies items to be included in the RFP, including nutritious food and beverage items.	April 1999
5.	The Food Service director distributes an RFP to vendors.	June 1999
6.	The Food Service director and director of Purchasing review responses and recommend a vendor.	July 1999
7.	The Purchasing director initiates the contract for a prime vendor.	August 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

EISD could not provide figures in annual vending machines revenues that would allow TSPR to calculate the fiscal impact of this recommendation. The amounts of bonuses vary from district to district although it is reasonable to assume that EPISD could receive a minimum \$1 million in a signing bonus should they pursue an exclusive vending machine contract.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Negotiate an exclusive vendor	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

contract for vending machines.					
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Chapter 12

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This chapter reviews EPISD's safety and security functions in three sections:

- A. Discipline Management
- B. Security
- C. Safety

BACKGROUND

Providing a safe and secure environment for students, teachers, and other school district employees is a critical task for any district. Because of the priority placed on the safety and security of our children by parents, educators, taxpayers, and the community, the 1995 Texas Legislature addressed school violence by establishing major safety and security-related revisions in the Texas Education Code.

According to the Education Code, each school must adopt a student code of conduct with the advice of a district-level committee. Additionally, students who engage in serious misconduct must be removed from regular education settings and placed in alternative education programs; specific information concerning the arrest or criminal conduct of students must be shared between law enforcement and local school districts. Moreover, the Education Code requires school districts, the juvenile board, and juvenile justice systems in counties with a population of 125,000 or more to establish a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP). The JJAEP operates under the jurisdiction of the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and is intended to provide for the education of incarcerated youths and youths on probation.

To provide a safe and secure learning environment, safety and security programs must include elements of prevention, intervention, and enforcement, as well as cooperation with municipal and county governments. Discipline management and alternative education programs are key tools in this process.

A. Discipline Management

Under the provisions of the Texas Education Code, each Texas school district must adopt a student code of conduct establishing standards for student behavior. Student behavior often is measured by levels of offenses, which typically are outlined in the code of conduct. Depending on the type and level of offense by students, various discipline management techniques are suggested for teachers, campus administrators, and district administrators. For example, minor offenses may require student-teacher conferences or detention; major offenses may require suspension or placement in alternative educational programs.

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's discipline management program is coordinated through the Pupil Services and Guidance and Counseling sections of the Support Services Unit. The Pupil Services Section monitors and tracks all student disciplinary actions, including referrals to alternative education programs and expulsions. Principals send all student discipline action forms to the director of Pupil Services, who verifies compliance with the Education Code. Clerks in the Pupil Services Section enter descriptive data about the disciplinary action into a computer database, and use it to produce a monthly student discipline report for elementary, middle, and high schools. This report summarizes total offenses by type of offense, total number of students by ethnicity and gender, grade levels of students, personnel involved, and current action taken. Student discipline reports are submitted to the board monthly, with an annual report presented to the board at the end of each school year.

The Guidance and Counseling Section publishes and distributes the Student Code of Conduct and *Student Handbook* to associate superintendents in EPISD's four regions. Each associate superintendent ensures that principals, administrators, teachers, students, and parents receive a copy of the Student Code of Conduct at the beginning of each year. The Student Code of Conduct and related *Student Handbook* are printed in both English and Spanish. Principals distribute the *Student Handbook* to all students and post the Student Code of Conduct at their respective schools in a prominent place readily accessible to all students, teachers, and administrators.

EPISD's Student Code of Conduct has a five-part discipline management plan covering student rights, student responsibilities, scope of the district's authority (e.g., within 300 feet of school property), expectations for student conduct, and guidelines for assessing penalties. The code also includes detailed descriptions of four categories of offenses, along with

discipline options and disciplinary procedures for each category. The categories include:

Level 1 - Minor offenses not requiring administrative action (e.g., using inappropriate language)

Level 2 - Minor offenses requiring administrative action (e.g., possession or use of tobacco products)

Level 3 - Serious offenses requiring administrative action (e.g., inciting a fight or fighting)

Level 4 - Major offenses requiring administrative action (e.g., possessing a firearm or knife)

The Code of Conduct also details how discipline will be handled for students with disabilities, as well as a description of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program.

EPISD has four alternative schools for students removed from regular education settings. These include Raymond Telles Academy, Sunset High School, the School Age Parent Center, and the Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy. Raymond Telles Academy's enrollment includes high school and middle school students as well as adjudicated youth referred from the El Paso County Juvenile Probation Center. Sunset High School's enrollment includes high school students with problems not related to behavior (such as students who work to support their families) who may benefit from alternative methods to complete their education. The School Age Parent Center's enrollment includes high school and middle school girls who are pregnant. The Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy's enrollment includes 10- to 17-year-old students, including elementary through high school-age children from the El Paso County juvenile probation system who have violated parole or committed crimes.

Through the Telles Academy, EPISD operates one of two JJAEPs in El Paso County, serving students in El Paso, Anthony, and Canutillo Independent School Districts (ISDs). Ysleta ISD operates El Paso County's other JJAEP and serves students in Ysleta, Socorro, San Elizario, Fabens, Clint, and Tornillo ISDs.

EPISD's Pupil Services Section monitors alternative education program (AEP) placements by school and provides the board with monthly reports on the number of students placed and the number of offenses by home school. **Exhibit 12-1** presents offenses compared to AEPs by school classification for 1996-97 and 1997-98.

Exhibit 12-1
Offenses Compared to Alternative Education Placements
1996-97 and 1997-98

Classification of School	1996-97 Offenses	1996-97 Alternative Education Placements	1997-98 Offenses	1997-98 Alternative Education Placements	Offenses Percent Increase (Decrease)	Placements Percent Increase (Decrease)
High School	12,744	794	11,285	724	(11%)	(9%)
Middle School	12,152	854	13,177	792	8%	(7%)
Elementary School	2,687	15	2,041	18	(24%)	20%
Total	27,583	1,663	26,503	1,534	4%	(8%)

Source: EPISD.

The total number of offenses fell by 4 percent between 1996-97 and 1997-98, with a corresponding 8 percent decrease in alternative education placements during the same period. More significantly, no EPISD students were expelled as a result of offenses committed in 1996-97 or 1997-98; all were placed in Telles Academy's alternative education program.

FINDING

The director of Pupil Services has taken the initiative to prepare a draft handbook for school administrators entitled Student Due Process: A School Administrator's Guide. The handbook is designed to provide technical support for school administrators as a supplement to EPISD's Student Code of Conduct. The handbook, drafted July 14, 1998, contains:

- a student discipline flow chart;
- emergency placement or expulsion guidelines;
- a description of the AEP and placement process;
- suggested scripts for alternative education conferences;
- expulsion guidelines and procedures;
- expulsion formal due process hearing procedures; and
- an appendix with preprinted processing forms.

The board had not approved the draft document as of October 1998, but the director of Pupil Services expects approval by March 1999, at which time the manual will be made available to school administrators. Giving administrators ready access to this information should help reduce or eliminate any inconsistent treatment of students, and go a long way toward

ensuring that all EPISD students receive due process in accordance with district policy.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Student Due Process, A School Administrator's Guide will ensure that all administrators have ready access to district policies and forms needed when disciplining students.

FINDING

EPISD, through its Raymond Telles Academy, has been authorized by the El Paso County Juvenile Board to operate a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program as outlined in the Education Code. The local Juvenile Probation Department, through the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, will fund all placements in the JJAEP resulting from mandatory expulsions covered by Education Code Section 37.007(a), (d), and (e).

The board approved an interlocal agreement with the El Paso County Juvenile Board for the 1998-99 school year to provide a JJAEP serving students in El Paso, Anthony, and Canutillo ISDs. The agreement also requires the Telles Academy to provide a curriculum including instruction in English, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and self-discipline. It also provides for guidance counseling services and mandatory meetings with students' parents to review academic progress and establish a specific graduation plan for students. The agreement also requires the program to be operated at least seven hours per day for 180 days per year. EPISD also must provide a high school equivalency program (GED) and administer the TAAS test to assess student performance. For operating the program, El Paso County will pay a startup fee of \$55,553 and \$53 per day per student in attendance at the JJAEP.

Before entering into the interlocal agreement, Telles Academy, with a total capacity of 450 students, was operating an AEP for both mandatory and discretionary placements, serving about 675 students in 1997-98. Discretionary placements are students placed in Telles Academy for disruptive behavior that violates provisions in EPISD's Student Code of Conduct but does not require mandatory placement in the alternative education program (such as throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage to property). The program met or exceeded all curriculum requirements outlined in the Education Code for JJAEPs, including a GED program. These curriculum requirements include courses in English, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and self-discipline.

Telles Academy's alternative education program uses individual, self-paced instruction as required by the Education Code. However, the unique

self-paced instruction goes above and beyond other self-paced instruction programs offered by similar JJAEPs. Telles Academy's program is designed to develop individual "portfolios" based on pretesting, which then are used to develop a "prescription" for individually tailored instruction. Based on these prescriptions, JJAEP students are separated from the regular alternative student population for four hours each day to receive intense, individually tailored instruction. Moreover, JJAEP students are exposed to fine arts through extracurricular activities such as opera performances and plays to provide a well-rounded curriculum.

The interlocal agreement does not limit the number of mandatory placements from Anthony or Canutillo ISDs; EPISD is required to take any student expelled from these districts for a JJAEP offense. However, schools within EPISD are allocated spaces based on enrollment. For example, schools with enrollments of less than 1,000 students are allocated 10 slots; schools with enrollments of from 1,000 to 1,400 are allocated 12 slots; and schools with enrollments of more than 1,400 are allocated 14 slots. Schools with AEPs exceeding their allotments must request waivers from the associate superintendent of each region to obtain additional slots at Telles Academy. Waiver requests normally are granted.

COMMENDATION

EPISD operates an exemplary JJAEP, complete with unique self-paced instruction, in cooperation with county government and surrounding school districts, providing shared alternative education services for both mandatory and discretionary expulsions.

FINDING

The principal of Telles Academy has established a cooperative relationship with El Paso County to provide health services to students enrolled in the academy, including dental work, eye examinations, pregnancy tests, and medical examinations. Students requiring health services are transported to the El Paso County Health Department for examinations and treatment.

A cooperative relationship also has been established with the El Paso Police Department (EPPD). EPPD provides 10 police officers who act as teacher aides during the school year to mentor students. The total cost of the cooperative program, \$14,000, is paid by EPPD to supplement officers' salaries. Additionally, the El Paso County Sheriff's Department allows students attending Telles Academy who have parents incarcerated in the county jail to visit them during the day.

Cooperative relationships with city and county government has enabled Telles Academy to provide a variety of social services to students enrolled in the district's alternative education programs.

COMMENDATION

The Raymond Telles Academy has aggressively pursued cooperative relationships with city and county governments to enhance services for students enrolled in its alternative education programs.

FINDING

EPISD operates a School Age Parent Center (SAPC) and Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy (JJC) as alternatives for pregnant teenagers and students who are supervised by the El Paso County juvenile probation system. Both alternative schools use a variety of exemplary programs and instructional techniques to serve their students.

The SAPC is a 23-year-old program established to keep pregnant teens in school and prepare them to be responsible parents. SAPC is a voluntary program that serves about 150 to 160 pregnant EPISD teens each semester in a short-term program that ends in the semester in which their babies are delivered. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) operates a child care center in the SAPC facility, allowing students to attend classes with close-by free child care. **Exhibit 12-2** summarizes of the programs offered by SAPC.

**Exhibit 12-2
School Age Parent Center
Program Offerings**

Program	Description
Enhanced Academic Program	Core courses are taught with practical applications geared toward pregnancy. For example, in mathematics courses expectant teens are taught weights and measures using baby formula. In geometry, teachers use sewing techniques in clothing classes to illustrate problem-solving techniques.
Innovative Parenting Class	Parenting classes are taught over two semesters to enhance parenting skills and include topics such as appropriate nutrition, breast-feeding, parent-child bonding, and discipline.
Physical Education Class	Physical education classes are taught for pre- and post-natal teens and include walking, stretching, and Lamaze techniques.
Project	SAPC contracts with the local YWCA to provide case

Redirection	management services to support teen parents in all aspects of pregnancy and parenting-related services. Services include transportation to and from SAPC, transportation to and from the teen parent's physician or clinic for required medical services, counseling related to domestic violence, assistance with the federal Women, Infants, and Children program, Medicare, and immigration issues.
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Source: EPISD.

Through these programs, SAPC teaches pregnant teens to be responsible parents and prepares them to return to their home schools.

The JJC operates a comprehensive alternative program for non-adjudicated youth, adjudicated youth, and students with serious psychological disorders at the Psychiatric Center located at the Thomason Medical Center. JJC works with El Paso County to serve students that have violated parole or committed crimes. The JJC rather than the JJAEP serves these students because they are short-term placements referred directly from the El Paso County Juvenile Probation Center (JPC). About 3,000 students from EPISD and surrounding school districts are served by JJC each year. A high number of students pass through the center because of a short-term detention unit operated by JPC. Students in the detention unit have been arrested for a crime but have not been adjudicated. The normal stay in the detention center is 10 days, but can be extended at the judge's discretion up to 10 months. These students are housed in separate high-security units and classes are taught within the unit.

The JJC is located adjacent to El Paso County's JPC; EPISD teachers and counselors provide services to the El Paso Psychiatric Clinic, a residential placement facility adjacent to the Thomason Medical Center. **Exhibit 12-3** summarizes innovative alternative programs offered by JJC.

Exhibit 12-3
Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy
Description of Program Offerings

Program	Description
Challenge Program	This is a "boot camp" program for adjudicated youth that includes physical exercise, strict uniform and grooming regulations, and efforts to force students to comply with rules. No females are allowed in the program and each unit is limited to 12 students.
Southwest Kev	This is a traditional program for adiudicated vouth who have

Program	committed first offenses. The program includes a regular education program consisting of traditional lessons in math, English, and social studies delivered in day rooms in the JPC where students live. A half-day instruction program also is offered. Twenty students are served in the regular education program and 12 in the half-day program.
Inpatient and Outpatient Psychiatric Program	This program provides support services to students at the El Paso Psychiatric Clinic who have been diagnosed with serious psychological disorders by a psychiatrist and placed in the facility. Some students are inpatients and confined to the facility, while others are treated in an outpatient program. EPISD provides two teachers and two paraprofessionals to work with K-12 students in the inpatient/outpatient program.
Psychiatric Transition Program	This program was set up in the 1998-99 school year to help students move from a controlled hospital environment to the open environment of middle school or high school. The transition program has 14 students and is taught by two teachers and one paraprofessional.

Source: EPISD.

COMMENDATION

EPISD operates two innovative alternative programs that provide comprehensive academic programs and integrated social services to meet the special needs of pregnant teens, students in the juvenile probation system, and students with psychological disorders.

FINDING

EPISD lacks a central point of coordination for its programs addressing student violence, self-discipline, peer mediation, and drug abuse. Although the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program director coordinates a majority of the district's intervention and prevention programs, the associate superintendents of each of EPISD's four geographic regions are responsible for monitoring programs addressing student violence implemented in schools within their respective areas.

TSPR interviewed each regional associate superintendent to identify specific prevention and intervention programs (**Exhibit 12-4**).

Exhibit 12-4
Programs Addressing
Student Violence, At-Risk Youth, and Discipline Management

Community-Based Program	Description of Activities	Program Coordinator
Project About FACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the needs of students in grades K-5 who have failed to respond to classroom intervention and discipline in an alternative setting. • Requires a signed agreement and commitment from the student, parents, teachers, and administrator from the students' home school. • Requires parents to participate in parenting sessions and teachers, counselors, or administrators from the home school to visit and communicate with students on a regular basis. 	Director of Guidance Services
First Chance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the needs of students in grades 7-12. • Provides disciplinary action other than removal from the student's assigned program for first-time substance abusers, students involved in a single serious event, and students whose chronic misbehavior points to a need for counseling. 	Assistant principals at Nixon and Travis Elementary Schools
Red Ribbon Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a unified and visible commitment to creating a safe and drug-free community. • Creates awareness concerning problems related to substance abuse. • Builds community coalitions to implement substance abuse prevention strategies. • Supports substance use-free lifestyles. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director
Children Are People Too (CAPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists elementary students with character enhancement, life skills, coping skills, and drug and 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director

	<p>violence education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists students with conducting one community service project. 	
Education for Self-Responsibility Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses its efforts on 5th through 7th graders. Presents lessons in science classes dealing with self-enhancement, decision-making, safety, goal setting, and drug and violence education. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director
Student Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses its efforts on middle and high school students. Addresses stress management, anger management, coping skills, drug and violence education, character enhancement, and relationships. Assists students with conducting at least one community service project. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director
Student Mentor Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses its efforts on elementary and middle school students. Encourages high school students who participate in extracurricular activities to act as role models for elementary and middle school students sharing similar interests. Assists elementary and middle school students with developing goal-setting skills. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director
Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes certified law enforcement officers, educators, students, parents, and community members to offer educational programs in the classroom to prevent or reduce drug abuse, violence, and gang involvement for all grades. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director

Drug and Violence Education (DAVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides specific lessons geared toward coping skills, resiliency, communication, anger management, drug abuse, and conflict resolution to all grades. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director
Peer Mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses on selected grades in middle and high school. Provides an avenue for students to conduct sessions with other students to resolve conflicts. 	Safe and Drug Free Schools director

Source: EPISD.

The director of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, who coordinates a majority of the programs listed in **Exhibit 12-4**, reports to the director of External Funding. The director of External Funding in turn reports to the executive director of Curriculum and Instruction. The director for Guidance Services coordinates Project About FACE and reports to the executive director for Special Services. Assistant principals at Nixon and Travis elementary schools report to their respective principals, who report to the associate superintendents for Region 1 (Nixon) and Region 2 (Travis).

Although EPISD's commitment to the regional concept allows individual schools within each of the four geographic regions to develop autonomous programs addressing student violence and discipline management, the absence of a central point of coordination prevents the district from evaluating the districtwide effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs. Moreover, the impact of prevention and intervention programs on safety and security cannot be effectively assessed.

EPISD's Pupil Services Section of the Special Services Unit has no role in the central coordination and evaluation of programs addressing student violence and discipline management. Pupil Services is responsible only for conducting hearings for placing students in alternative education programs and monitoring and reporting student disciplinary actions on a monthly basis.

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) centrally coordinates its prevention and intervention programs through an alternative district established to monitor prevention and intervention programs. Furthermore, HISD's Research and Evaluation Department conducts periodic

evaluations of these programs, assessing their impact on safety and security.

Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD) is another example of a district that centrally coordinates prevention and intervention programs, including dispute resolution, peer mediation, and D.A.R.E. CCISD's Office for At-Risk Programs coordinates districtwide programs for at-risk students, allowing the district to monitor the performance of these programs effectively and determine their effect on safety and security.

Recommendation 135:

Coordinate programs related to student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management through the Pupil Services Section of the Special Services Unit.

The Pupil Services Section is the logical point of coordination for prevention and intervention programs addressing student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management. This unit should coordinate these programs, collect program performance data, and monitor their effectiveness. The district should set up a procedure for reporting both existing and new programs, along with annual program performance data.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent designates the Pupil Services Section of the Special Services Unit as the central coordinator of programs related to student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management.	May 1999
2.	The associate superintendent for Support Services directs the executive director of Special Services to work with the director of Pupil Services to develop a plan for identifying all programs within the district, collecting program performance data, and monitoring the effectiveness of each program.	June 1999
3.	The executive director of Special Services presents the plan to the associate superintendent for Support Services.	June - July 1999
4.	The associate superintendent for Support Services reviews and approves the plan.	August 1999
5.	The director of Pupil Services begins collecting program performance data and monitoring the effectiveness of programs throughout the district.	September 1999 Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD's Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy served about 2,300 students in the 1997-98 school year and expects to serve more than 3,000 students in 1998-99. Including the interim administrator, the JJC has a staff of 27 full-time equivalent employees including teachers, teacher aides, counselors, social workers, and clerical workers.

The associate superintendent of Region 3 said that the JJC is managed from the regional office by the Region 3 facilitator, who is responsible for the center's time and attendance reporting and budget administration. More significantly, the current director of JJC was never intended to be permanent and was named administrator of the JJC on an interim basis.

TSPR conducted follow-up interviews with the Region 3 facilitator and found that he receives a special stipend for managing the JJC in addition to his current duties as facilitator. Since TSPR's initial interviews with the interim administrator and associate superintendent in October 1998, the interim administrator and Region 3 facilitator have been assigned joint responsibility for managing the JJC and have established a more cooperative relationship that extends beyond the traditional supervisor/subordinate relationship. Accordingly, all important management decisions are made jointly.

Assigning an administrator to the JJC on an interim basis and providing joint oversight of the JJC through a facilitator from Region 3 without delegating complete management authority and responsibility to the interim administrator runs contradictory to the site-based decision-making premise. This management technique undermines the authority of the interim administrator, compromises accountability, and limits his ability to make decisions that affect the day-to-day operation and administration of AEPs offered by the JJC.

Recommendation 136:

Delegate complete management authority, responsibility, and attendance accountability to the interim administrator of the Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy.

Site-based decision-making is based on the premise that site-based administrators have the authority to make decisions at the level at which programs and services are offered. Providing JJC's administrator with complete management authority and responsibility would improve accountability and allow for more effective decision-making.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the associate superintendent to give complete management authority to the interim administrator of the JJC in accordance with the Texas Education Code and district policy.	April 1999
2.	The associate superintendent informs the Region 3 facilitator and interim administrator of the JJC, via formal memorandum, that complete management authority and attendant accountability will be vested in the interim administrator the JJC.	April 1999
3.	The interim administrator of the JJC begins managing the center and reporting to the associate superintendent of Region 3.	May 1999 Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

By delegating full authority to the interim JJC administrator, the Region 3 associate superintendent should eliminate the facilitator's \$5,000 a year stipend beginning in 1999-2000. The administrator's assignment to the JJC had been approved by the board as a lateral transfer so there is no fiscal impact associated with his salary.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Delegate management authority to the interim administrator	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

FINDING

EPISD's Research and Evaluation Office does not maintain data on the progress of students enrolled in the School Age Parent Center, such as statistics regarding re-enrollment at home schools, courses taken, dropout rates for teen parents returned to home campuses, graduation rates, and college attendance or employment by graduates. Moreover, recidivism rates are not tracked or monitored to determine the percentage of teen parents returning to SAPC after returning to their home schools. However, the YWCA does monitor and track the progress of students it provides services to at the center. These statistics are available on request but are not provided to the center on a routine basis.

The principal of SAPC does not know how effective the program is simply because the district has no detailed statistics on what ultimately happens to teen parents who return to their home schools.

Some Texas school districts use the Texas State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee's (SOICC's) Texas Automated Follow-Up System to track the post-graduation activities of their students. Using Social Security numbers, the follow-up system tracks high school seniors to determine how many graduate and enter the labor force or postsecondary training. For those entering the labor market, a survey of employers supplements the available database (the federal Unemployment Insurance Wage Record System) because it does not provide details on job titles and wages. SOICC has found that 85 percent of all students can be matched to one or more databases, leading to up-to-date information on employment, wages, and training activities, along with any associations with prison, welfare, or the military.

Recommendation 137:

Monitor, track, and report the progress of students from the School Age Parent Center when they return to their home schools.

The ability to track and monitor teen parents once they leave the center is essential for improving program offerings, counseling services, and follow-up counseling activities with home schools. The monitoring program must be comprehensive and include such statistics as date released from SAPC, date returned to home school, attendance while at home school, courses enrolled in at home school, grades, dropout dates, graduation dates, college attended, and eventual employment. These statistics also should include the number of teens returning to the center. The principal of the SAPC should work with EPISD's Research and Evaluation Unit and the YWCA to determine the appropriate statistics to be tracked and monitored.

As long as the students remain at EPISD, they can be tracked internally. Once they leave the system, the district should use the SOICC Texas Automated Follow-Up System to track the post-graduation activities of students from SAPC and other alternative programs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The principal of SAPC and the executive director of Research and Evaluation work with the YWCA to determine the appropriate statistics to be tracked related to teen parents enrolled in SAPC.	May 1999
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2.	The executive director of Research and Evaluation directs his/her staff to develop a draft program for tracking and monitoring the statistics agreed to with the principal of SAPC, including an evaluation of the SOICC Follow-Up System.	June - July 1999
3.	The principal of SAPC reviews the draft and recommends revisions as required.	August 1999
4.	The executive director of Research and Evaluation revises draft as appropriate and finalizes tracking and monitoring program.	August 1999
5.	The associate superintendent for Region 3 reviews and approves the tracking and monitoring program.	September 1999
6.	The principal of SAPC implements the tracking and monitoring program.	September 1999 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with the existing resources.

B. Security

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's Police Services Unit (Police Services) operates a police organization with 26 full-time police officers (including seven school resource officers), six dispatchers, one police chief, and one clerical assistant. All 26 full-time officers are certified Texas peace officers licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Education (TCLEOSE).

The mission of Police Services is to "provide services with integrity and dedication, to preserve life, to enforce the law, and work in partnership with EPISD, the City of El Paso, and other law enforcement agencies in order to enhance the quality of education and life in the community." To accomplish this mission and provide for the overall safety of students, teachers, administrators, and other district personnel, Police Services provides the following services:

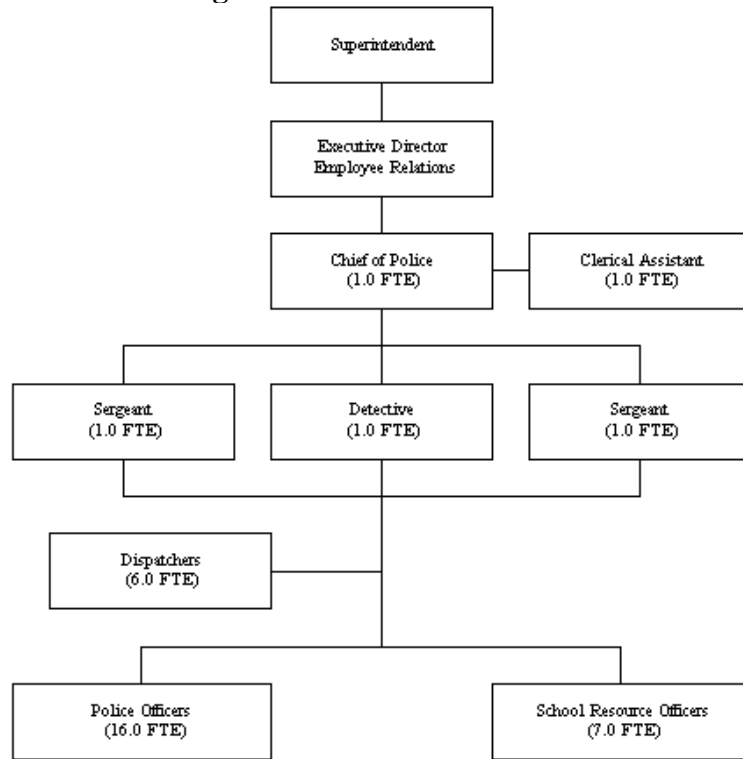
- Emergency response to situations affecting potential loss of life or serious property damage
- Criminal investigations
- Case preparation and presentation
- Court testimony
- Traffic investigation and traffic control
- Physical security of buildings and grounds
- Dispatch operations and alarm computer operations

Police Services protects more than 120 schools and administrative and operations facilities. Patrols provide security 365 days per year, 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Exhibit 12-5 presents the organization structure for Police Services.

Exhibit 12-5 EPISD Police Services Unit

Organization Structure



Source: EPISD Police Services Unit

EPISD's Police Services budget (**Exhibit 12-6**) rose by 16 percent between fiscal 1997 and 1999. The increase occurred primarily because EPISD hired one additional officer and began paying 100 percent of the salary and benefits for seven school resource officers during the 1997-98 school year. Budgeted expenditures for capital outlays decreased because the Police Services implemented a "lease-purchase" program in which five police vehicles are leased each year for a three-year term, at \$6,400 per year per vehicle. As a result, the majority of the Police Services fleet is in good condition.

Exhibit 12-6
EPISD Police Services Budgets
Fiscal 1997, 1998, and 1999

Line Item	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Percent Incr. (Decr.)
Payroll	\$577,859	\$775,799	\$745,468	29%
Contracted Services	72,200	78,478	107,800	49%
Materials and Supplies	44,209	63,927	40,800	(8%)

Other Operating Expenses	0	0	8,850	100%
Capital Outlay	95,300	0	15,000	(84%)
Totals	\$789,568	\$918,204	\$917,918	16%

Source: EPISD.

Exhibit 12-7 presents EPISD's incident statistics for the past three years.

Exhibit 12-7
EPISD Incident Statistics
1995-96 through 1997-98

Incident	1995- 96	1996- 97	1997- 98	Percent Increase (Decrease)
Burglary	50	120	76	52%
Attempted Burglary	3	9	6	100%
Theft	136	344	154	13%
Criminal Mischief	444	416	151	(66%)
Disorderly Conduct	27	61	17	(37%)
Graffiti	0	51	81	100%
Aggravated Assault	5	17	5	0%
Assault	41	106	52	27%
Arson	5	8	14	180%
Hit and Run	15	53	8	(47%)
Poss. Of Alcohol/Controlled Subs.	30	69	25	(17%)
Terroristic Threats	6	32	16	167%
Traffic Accidents	59	116	54	(8%)
Violations of Stud. Code of Conduct *	249	541	238	(4%)
Other Incidents**	234	441	224	(4%)
Totals	1,304	2,384	1,121	(14%)

Source: EPISD

* *Violations of the Student Code of Conduct include such offenses as possession of communications devices, school policy violations, truancy, criminal trespass, etc.*

** *Other incidents include items such as breach of computer security, attempted kidnapping, evading arrest or detention, indecent exposure, knives on school grounds, probation violations, and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.*

Exhibit 12-7 shows an overall 14 percent decrease in incidents between 1996-96 and 1997-98. The decrease in incidents is primarily attributable to reductions in the number of criminal mischief, violations of the Student Code of Conduct, and other incidents.

In addition to certified peace officers, EPISD has campus security officers, called "campus patrols." Campus patrols are paid for from school budgets and report to principals. The classifications and respective roles of EPISD police and security-related personnel, then, include:

Police Officers - Certified peace officers that patrol all district facilities, respond to incident calls, conduct criminal investigations, and issue traffic citations and citations for Class "C" misdemeanors such as simple assaults and possession of alcohol or marijuana.

School Resource Officers (SROs) - Certified peace officers stationed at middle schools that assist students in dealing with conflicts, resolving problems, handling peer pressure, and avoiding criminal activity. As law enforcement officers, they can take police action related to incidents on or around schools, but are not responsible for security.

Campus Patrols - Security guards hired by principals to manage the security of schools by patrolling the grounds and the school's facilities. Their duties include protecting school property, enforcing school rules and regulations, escorting students to the office who are sent for disciplinary reasons, and monitoring the loading and unloading of buses. Campus patrols also direct traffic around schools during school hours and report evidence of illegal substances consumed, transported, or traded on school property.

FINDING

EPISD's Police Services Unit consists primarily of retired officers from the El Paso Police Department. Each officer receives the minimum 40 hours of training required to maintain TCLEOSE certification. Because all EPISD police officers are TCLEOSE-certified peace officers, the board recently authorized them to issue citations for Class "C" misdemeanors such as simple assaults and possession of alcohol or marijuana. EPISD

officers familiar with district facilities and student behavior can issue citations and make arrests with minimal disruption to daily school activities. When arrests are made, students are processed at either El Paso County or El Paso City juvenile detention facilities in cooperation with local law enforcement officials. EPISD police officers call and notify school administrators and parents as to where the students are taken.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Police Services Unit consists of certified police officers, skilled in all areas of law enforcement, who are authorized to issue citations for Class "C" misdemeanors.

FINDING

EPISD has formed a Police/Schools Safety Committee to improve overall communications between EPPD and the district, make better use of resources available through EPPD, and to provide EPISD schools with a better understanding of how the EPISD works and communicates with school administrators and the district. The committee meets monthly and consists of representatives from the school board, regional associate superintendents, high school principals, alternative school principals, citizens, the EPISD police chief, and representatives from EPPD.

EPISD benefits from this relationship by sharing information about general safety and security issues with seasoned professionals. School-based, regional, and central administrators maintain a continuing dialogue with EPPD, the district's Police Services Unit, and community members to continuously improve safety within the district. Moreover, the committee provides a "think tank" for developing model safety and security strategies through the exchange of ideas among a diverse group of people.

COMMENDATION

EPISD and the El Paso Police Department regularly meet to exchange ideas for improving safety and security in the district.

FINDING

In October 1997, EPISD's school board approved the implementation of a canine (K-9) program as a deterrent to alcohol, drugs, and weapons possession and use. Southwest Drug Education and Deterrent Service, Inc. (SDEDS) was contracted to provide K-9 units to search campuses during the 1997-98 school year for \$79,931. The K-9 units, consisting of a dog and a dog handler, performed random searches at nine high schools, 11 middle schools, and four elementary schools. Schools are randomly

selected and visits are unscheduled, although SDEDS is required to ask principals for permission before searching school grounds.

During school searches, dogs are allowed to sniff only lockers and vehicles-not students. The dogs sniff for various drugs and other contraband including marijuana, cocaine, LSD, Rohypnol, gunpowder, hashish oil, heroin, and crack. During the 1997-98 school year, K-9 units conducted 294 unscheduled elementary and middle schools visits and 173 unscheduled high schools visits. Alcohol, drugs, or weapons were found in 99 instances (**Exhibit 12-8**).

Exhibit 12-8
Summary of K-9 Visits and Results
1997-98 School Year

School	Number of Visits	No. of Times Contraband Found	Percent Contraband Found to Visits
<i>Elementary/Middle School</i>			
Basset	18	0	0%
Canyon Hills	16	0	0%
Charles	19	0	0%
Guillen	23	0	0%
Henderson	18	0	0%
Hornedo	21	0	0%
Lincoln	0	0	0%
Magoffin	16	0	0%
Morehead	25	5	20%
Ross	17	0	0%
Terrace Hills	20	1	5%
Wiggs	27	0	0%
MacArthur	17	0	0%
Crockett	19	0	0%
Houston	21	0	0%
Coldwell	17	0	0%
Subtotal	294	6	2%

Elementary/Middle			
<i>High School</i>			
Andress	17	4	24%
Austin	16	1	6%
Bowie	18	7	39%
Burges	15	13	87%
Coronado	19	19	100%
El Paso	22	16	73%
Franklin	17	20	118%
Irvin	15	4	27%
Jefferson	19	9	47%
CCT	15	0	0%
Subtotal High School	173	93	54%
Grand Total	467	99	21%

Source: EPISD.

Drugs, alcohol, or weapons were found 2 percent of the time in middle schools and 54 percent of the time in high schools. In all, the K-9 program found contraband in 21 percent of its unscheduled visits. A Canine Program evaluation conducted in September 1998 reported that discipline referrals related to alcohol, drugs, or weapons fell by 5 percent as a result of the program (**Exhibit 12-9**).

Exhibit 12-9
Middle and High School Discipline Referrals
Related to Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons
1996-97 Versus 1997-98

Reason for Referral	1997-98	1996-97	Difference	Percent Difference
Influence of alcohol	89	69	20	29%
Distribution or possession of alcohol	52	41	11	27
Influence of drugs	278	241	37	15
Distribution or possession of	232	232	0	0

drugs				
Tobacco use	202	278	-76	(27)
Possession of weapons or dangerous materials	186	229	-43	(19)
Totals	1,039	1,090	-51	(5%)

Source: EPISD.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's K-9 drug program has decreased the number of incidents of alcohol, drugs, and weapons possession throughout the district.

FINDING

Although the K-9 program has been successful, it should be noted that the statistics presented in **Exhibit 12-9** indicate that significantly more contraband was found in EPISD's high schools than in its middle or elementary schools, despite the fact that the high schools were visited less often (294 visits to elementary and middle schools versus only 173 visits at high schools).

Recommendation 138:

Allocate the number of random K-9 searches for alcohol, drugs and weapons to give special emphasis to campuses experiencing higher incidences of contraband found.

Because contraband was found more often in high schools, the K-9 contractor should increase the number of visits to high schools as an intervention measure. As high school searches increase, visits to elementary and middle schools should be decreased but not eliminated. Should the rate of incidences increase at certain campuses, K-9 searches should concentrate on those campuses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director of Employee Relations and police chief, ask the K-9 contractor to modify its searches to concentrate more on high schools than elementary and middle schools.	May 1999
2.	The K-9 contractor modifies its searches in accordance with this request.	June 1998

3.	The K-9 contractor begins conducting more searches at high schools and fewer at elementary and middle schools.	August 1999
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

EPISD's Police Services Unit does not report to the appropriate functional area within the district organization. The police chief reports to the executive director of Employee Relations. In its 1996 Manpower Efficiency Study KPMG Peat Marwick recommended that the police chief report directly to the superintendent, but the previous superintendent felt this direct reporting relationship was inappropriate and opted to continue the existing reporting relationship to the executive director of Employee Relations.

Exhibit 12-10 compares the reporting relationships of police departments in selected peer districts.

**Exhibit 12-10
Comparison of Reporting Relationships for Police Departments**

District	Police Department Reports To:
Corpus Christi ISD	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services
Dallas ISD	Associate Superintendent for Human Resources
El Paso ISD	Executive Director of Employee Relations
Fort Worth ISD	Contracted to Fort Worth Police Department
Houston ISD	Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Business Services
San Antonio ISD	Associate Superintendent for Planning and Change Management
Socorro ISD	Assistant Superintendent for Administration
Ysleta ISD	Executive Director of Auxiliary Services

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

Exhibit 12-10 shows that in five of the seven districts surveyed, the police chief reports to a deputy superintendent, an associate superintendent, or an assistant superintendent.

If the Police Services Unit does not report to the associate superintendent level or above, the district runs the risk of neglecting the importance of its safety and security priorities, which could result in an unsafe environment for students, teachers, and school employees.

Recommendation 139:

Realign the Police Services Unit reporting relationship so that the police chief reports to the associate superintendent for Support Services.

The associate superintendent for Support Services is the logical overseer for the Police Services Unit. The Support Services Unit also handles pupil services and discipline-related issues, an appropriate complement to police services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent revises the organization chart to create a direct reporting relationship from the Police Services Unit to the associate superintendent for Support Services.	May 1999
2.	The board approves the reorganization.	June 1998
3.	The superintendent implements the new reporting relationship.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Police Services Unit is understaffed and cannot adequately cover the district's schools and administrative facilities. On a given weekday, from three to five patrol officers are assigned to cover 125 schools and facilities throughout the district. **Exhibit 12-11** presents the actual EPISD Police Services Unit patrol schedule for the period September 14, 1998 through October 11, 1998.

**Exhibit 12-11
EPISD Patrol Schedule
September 14, 1998 Through October 11, 1998**

Shift	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Shift No. 1							
7:30a-5:30p	Officer #1	Officer #1	Officer #1	Officer #1			
7:30a-5:30p		Officer #2	Officer #2	Officer #2	Officer #2		
7:30a-5:30p		Officer #3	Officer #3	Officer #3	Officer #3		
7:30a-5:30p							
9:30a-7:30p	Officer #4				Officer #4	Officer #4	Officer #4
9:30a-7:30p	Officer #5	Officer #5	Officer #5	Officer #5			
9:30a-7:30p		Officer #6	Officer #6	Officer #6	Officer #6		
9:30a-7:30p							
Shift No. 2							
7:30p-5:30a							
7:30p-5:30a	Officer #7				Officer #7	Officer #7	Officer #7
7:30p-5:30a		Officer #8	Officer #8	Officer #8	Officer #8		
7:30p-5:30a							
9:30p-7:30a							
9:30p-7:30a		Officer #9	Officer #9	Officer #9	Officer #9		
9:30p-7:30a							
9:30p-7:30a							

Source: EPISD.

On Tuesday through Thursday, then, five officers are available to respond to incidents during the day. On Monday, only three are available; on Friday, four are available. Only one officer is available to cover the entire district on weekends.

Because of the lack of patrols, principals often complain about slow response times when incidents occur. Some even resort to contacting the EPPD, depending on the nature of the incident. While Police Services maintains a high level of cooperation with EPPD, EPISD police officers told TSPR that when EPPD is contacted, jurisdictional issues regarding who should handle the incident sometimes arise.

Exhibit 12-12 presents benchmark comparisons of police patrol coverage in selected peer districts.

Exhibit 12-12
Peer District Comparisons for Police Coverage

Benchmark	Corpus Christi ISD	Dallas ISD	El Paso ISD	Fort Worth ISD	Houston ISD	San Antonio ISD	Socorro ISD	Ysleta ISD	Average without El Paso ISD
Square Miles	68	351	253	*	312	80	136	67	169
Facilities	75	318	125	*	418	106	29	62	168
Police Officers	51	124	26	*	210	81	47	88	100
Square Miles per Police Officer	1.3	2.8	9.7	*	1.5	1.0	2.9	0.8	1.7
Facilities per Police Officer	1.5	2.6	4.8	*	2.0	1.3	0.6	0.7	1.7

Source: Texas School Performance Review.

** Fort Worth ISD contracts its police department to the City of Fort Worth through a shared services arrangement.*

Exhibit 12-12 shows that EPISD's Police Services Unit is considerably understaffed compared to police departments in peer districts. EPISD's police officers cover 9.7 square miles per police officer, more than five times the average in the peer districts, and 4.8 facilities per police officer, almost three times the peer district average. These statistics indicate inadequate coverage and must lead to slow response times and overworked officers. The police chief told TSPR that the district simply does not have the financial resources to increase its number of police officers.

In a search for best practices, TSPR found that the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) has implemented a novel cooperative five-year program with the City of Fort Worth so that the Fort Worth Police Department provides shared security services for its secondary schools. The City of Fort Worth passed a one-half cent sales tax to fund this School Security Initiative, which requires the district to split the payroll costs for 41 officers, one sergeant, and one lieutenant evenly with the City of Fort Worth. The 41 officers are stationed in 24 secondary

schools and also provide coverage for elementary schools in each secondary school's feeder pattern. Vehicles, equipment, supplies, and training also are funded by the School Security Initiative. FWISD reports that the increased presence of law enforcement has improved the schools' climate and resulted in positive changes in student behavior.

EPISD pays 100 percent of the salary and benefits cost for the seven school resource officers serving its middle schools. In most school districts, this cost is shared with the police or sheriff's department providing the SROs. The executive director of Employee Relations and EPISD police chief said the district used EPPD SROs at one time, but had to pay EPPD 75 percent for the officers' salaries and benefits even though EPPD received federal grants for the SRO program. The EPPD SROs also were required to answer city calls, pulling them away from assigned campuses. EPISD had no control over the assigned SROs' duties and responsibilities. As a result, EPISD established its own SRO program for a lower cost and assigned the SROs to its Police Services Unit.

Typically, SRO programs are designed to assist schools with problems that go beyond traditional policing. The officers are equal partners with school faculty and staff, and assist students in dealing with conflicts, resolving problems, handling peer pressure, and avoiding criminal activity. As law enforcement officers, SROs can take police action related to incidents on or around schools, but are not responsible for security nor the enforcement of district administrative policy. Accordingly, school districts usually do not use SROs to monitor or chaperone extracurricular functions.

During focus group sessions with the SROs, TSPR found that they maintain an excellent relationship with EPPD and continuously share information related to EPISD students with the department.

Recommendation 140:

Develop a program for shared security services between the City of El Paso and EPISD for police officers and school resource officers.

Because of a lack of resources that limit Police Services' ability to adequately cover EPISD's schools and facilities, the district should consider sharing its police services with the City of El Paso. The program should involve an interlocal agreement for the City of El Paso to provide police services to the district at one-half of their current cost. The program should add a minimum of 14 police officers to the district, bringing the total to 40, with the increased cost split evenly between the district and the city police force. EPISD also should pay 50 percent of the cost of equipment, maintenance, supplies, and training.

EPISD should assist displaced police officers not hired by EPPD, in finding employment with surrounding school districts, the City of El Paso, or elsewhere in the district for which they are qualified.

Given the nature of the SROs' relationship with EPPD and its limited resources, EPISD's Police Services Unit should share the cost of its SROs with EPPD. EPISD should include SROs in the shared services agreement and pay 50 percent of the cost as outlined in the proposed shared services model. Because of its limited financial resources, the district cannot afford to continue to carry 100 percent of the cost of SROs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts the mayor of the City of El Paso to begin discussions about developing a shared services model.	May 1999
2.	The superintendent and mayor develop a framework for sharing police services and SROs.	June - October 1999
3.	The superintendent and mayor present the a shared services model, with an interlocal agreement, to both the El Paso City Council and EPISD board for approval.	November 1999
4.	The El Paso City Council and EPISD board approve the interlocal agreement.	December 1999
5.	The superintendent and associate superintendent for Support Services develop action steps, with responsibility assignments and time lines, for implementing the interlocal agreement.	January - February 2000
6.	The superintendent, in conjunction with the associate superintendent for Support Services, implements the interlocal agreement.	September 2000

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on the restructuring outlined in the above recommendation. Average salary and benefits (computed at 37 percent of salary) for EPPD officers were obtained from EPPD. Equipment, materials, supplies, and other expenses were obtained from estimates prepared by Fort Worth ISD for its 1997-98 School Security Initiative. Fiscal impact estimates shown in **Exhibit 12-13** assume that both EPISD and the City of El Paso would contribute 50 percent each in payroll, equipment, materials, supplies, and other costs.

Exhibit 12-13
Proposed Restructuring
of EPISD Police Services Unit

Line Item	One-Time (Costs)	Annual (Costs) Savings
<i>Payroll & Related Benefits</i>		
Eliminate 34 positions in the EPISD Police Department		\$745,468
Add: 38 EPPD officers, including 7 SROs (38 x \$46,286 x 50%)		(\$879,434)
Add: One Lieutenant (\$60,280 x 50%)		(\$30,140)
Add: One Sergeant (\$53,430 x 50%)		(\$26,715)
Add: Overtime pay (160 hrs. x 34 officers x \$24.36 per hr. x 50%)		(\$66,259)
<i>Net Savings (Cost) of Shared Payroll</i>		(\$257,080)
<i>Equipment</i>		
Eliminate EPISD Police Dept.'s capital outlay budget		\$15,000
Add: 12 police vehicles (12 x \$19,000 x 50%)	(\$114,000)	-
Add: 12 mobile radio systems (12 x \$2,250 x 50%)	(\$13,500)	-
Add: 12 portable hand-held radios (12 x \$2,500 x 50%)	(\$15,000)	-
Add: 12 mobile data terminals (12 x \$3,500 x 50%)	(\$21,000)	-
Add: 12 prisoner screens (12 x \$280 x 50%)	(\$1,680)	-
Add: 12 bar and siren assemblies (12 x \$1,498 x 50%)	(\$8,988)	-
Add: 12 push bumpers (12 x \$250 x 50%)	(\$1,500)	-
<i>Net Savings (Cost) of Shared Equipment</i>	(\$175,668)	\$15,000
<i>Materials, Supplies, and Other Expenses</i>		
Eliminate EPISD Police Dept.'s remaining budget		\$157,450

Add: fuel and maintenance costs (30 vehicles x 20,000 miles x 38 cents x 50%)		(\$114,000)
Add: uniforms and equipment. for 40 officers (40 x \$1,996 x 50%)		(\$39,920)
Add: cost of annual training for officers (\$120,000 x 50%)		(\$60,000)
Add: office supplies and support for 40 officers (40 officers x \$3,500 x 50%)		(\$70,000)
<i>Net Savings (Cost) of Shared Materials, Supplies, and Other</i>		(\$126,470)
<i>Net Savings (Cost)</i>	(\$175,668)	(\$368,550)

EPISD also budgets \$90,000 annually for districtwide campus patrols that would no longer be needed if the shared services model is implemented.

An analysis of the cost of shared services shows a one-time net investment of \$175,668 and annual, ongoing net costs of \$368,550. Although the analysis shows a net cost to EPISD, security service levels would increase incrementally, providing more coverage of schools and facilities throughout the district.

Moreover, when the shared services model is implemented, existing EPISD police officers should be given an opportunity to be hired when EPPD and EPISD begin sharing police services.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Shared security services costs with City of El Paso	\$0	(\$368,550)	(\$368,550)	(\$368,550)	(\$368,550)
One time investment for equipment	\$0	(\$175,668)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Eliminate campus patrols	\$0	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
Net Cost	\$0	(\$454,218)	(\$278,550)	(\$278,550)	(\$278,550)

FINDING

EPISD does not have a formal anti-gang initiative and no longer reports incidents of violence, drug use, and gang-related activity to EPPD although the district estimates that there are about 150 known gang affiliations in EPISD, and are approximately 300 known gangs in the city. EPISD's police chief said the Police Services Unit is attempting to develop a uniform crime information database. The database will be connected to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) uniform crime information database. As of October 1998, however, EPISD did not have the fiscal resources to program accumulated EPISD incident data in the electronic form required by the FBI. The police chief did not know when funds would be available to complete the effort.

EPISD's police chief told TSPR that formal cooperation with EPPD through shared police reports is not possible because of EPPD's procedures and requirements. EPPD requires that any information entered into its Records Management System be entered in a report written by one of its own officers under one of its case numbers. EPISD's Police Services Unit inquired about receiving copies of police reports from EPPD involving EPISD cases and was advised that the district must pay for each copy and pick them up from EPPD's public information window. As a result, the Police Services Unit opted to informally cooperate on cases of interest to both EPISD and EPPD on a regular basis.

In the absence of financial resources to create a uniform crime information database and pay for copies of police reports, EPISD still can report incident statistics to EPPD at no incremental cost to the district. However, EPPD's Gang Task Force, in its "Gang Initiatives" report dated October 27, 1997, found that the majority of schools within the three school districts located within the City of El Paso avoid keeping gang-related statistics because of negative publicity. Reporting these incidents, nevertheless, would allow EPISD and EPPD to share information and design prevention initiatives related to violence, drug use, and gang-related activity.

Recommendation 141:

Share information about violence, drug use, and gang-related incidents with the El Paso Police Department.

EPISD should share incident statistics with EPPD as it continues to develop the uniform crime information database. Sharing information about violence, drug use, and gang-related incidents with EPPD would allow the district to develop cooperative prevention and intervention programs with the police force.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The EPISD police chief meets with EPPD to determine the form in which incident statistics are to be submitted and the frequency of submission to EPPD.	May 1999
2.	The EPISD police chief and EPPD establish a protocol for sharing information based on the format and frequency of submission, including follow-up activities.	May - June 1999
3	EPISD's police chief begins sharing information with EPPD.	July 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented with existing resources.

C. Safety

CURRENT SITUATION

EPISD's superintendent, in accordance with the *Board Policy Manual*, has delegated leadership of the district's safety program to the director of Risk Management. This includes developing and circulating the *Safety Manual for Employees* and coordinating safety training for operating units such as maintenance, transportation, and the warehouse. The director of Risk Management also works through the Staff Development Unit to provide workers' compensation-related training to custodians, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers.

Principals, directors, and other immediate supervisors are responsible for developing proper safety attitudes and properly educating all personnel under their direction about safety rules and regulations to be observed in their schools and departments. They also are responsible for supervising safety meetings, safety inspections, and accident investigations.

FINDING

EPISD developed a formal *Crisis Response Guide* in August 1998 to enhance student and employee safety. The guide includes:

- the district's philosophy for dealing with different crises;
- detailed crisis response procedures;
- internal and external procedures to disseminate information;
- alternate school locations and pupil dismissal procedures;
- procedures for handling loss of utilities and inclement weather;
- procedures for handling accidents/illnesses, bomb threats, and chemical accidents;
- procedures for handling contagious diseases, dangerous persons, death, and fallen aircraft;
- procedures for handling fires, explosions, food poisoning, gang violence/riots, and hostages;
- procedures for handling natural disasters, nuclear threats, protests and demonstrations, and sexual assault or abduction; and
- procedures for handling suicide, weapons on campus.

The manual also contains emergency phone numbers that can be called in the event of a crisis and is distributed to all schools, departments, and units throughout EPISD. Principals, unit managers, and department managers review crisis response procedures annually with teachers, students, and employees to be sure that each group understands what to do if any of these crises occur.

COMMENDATION

EPISD's Crisis Response Guide outlines measures to guarantee the safety of students and employees in the event of crises within the district.

FINDING

EPISD does not have a safety coordinator to coordinate and implement safety training for district employees. The director of Risk Management has no staff and only one secretary to assist with coordinating districtwide training activities. As a result, he cannot devote the necessary time to conduct the appropriate safety training for employees and investigate accidents as a method of prevention. For example, without a safety coordinator, the director of Risk Management makes extensive use of training videos to provide safety training for the district's employees. Moreover, because he is responsible for conducting safety presentations to schools when requested by principals, little time is allocated to planning for the long-term safety needs of the district.

In districts of similar size, safety specialists develop and monitor districtwide safety programs, work closely with principals and department heads to develop safety procedures, and conduct accident investigations. For example, Ysleta ISD has approximately 20,000 fewer students than EPISD, but has two safety specialists that perform these responsibilities.

Recommendation 142:

Hire a districtwide safety coordinator.

The safety coordinator should be assigned responsibility for coordinating safety training efforts and be accountable for monitoring EPISD's safety training program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The executive director for Human Resources requests approval of an additional position for a safety coordinator.	April 1999
2.	The associate superintendent for Support Services and superintendent approve the position of safety coordinator.	May 1999
3.	The executive director of Finance includes the position in the 1999-2000 budget.	June 1999
4.	The director of Risk Management posts the position.	June 1999
5.	The director of Risk Management interviews and selects the	July - August

	best candidate.	1999
6.	The executive director for Human Resources approves the hire.	August 1999
7.	The safety coordinator begins his/her employment with the district.	September 1999

FISCAL IMPACT

A safety coordinator can be hired for \$36,000, plus benefits at 16 percent, or \$41,760.

Recommendation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hire a safety coordinator	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)	(\$41,760)

Appendix A

As part of the review, community meetings were held in each of the four area districts. Parents, teachers, administrators, and community members wrote comments on the major topics of review, and in some cases, spoke with the review team. These comments illustrate community perceptions of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD), and do not reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller. The following is a summary of comments received by topic.

District Organization / Education Service
Community / Personnel Management
Assets and Risk Management / Financial
Purchasing / Computers and Technology
Facilities / Transportation
Food Service / Safety and Security

COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Site-based decision-making (SBDM) does not work.
- Organization into regions is a waste of money; there are too many administrators.
- The money is not reaching the children. Schools lack sufficient books, tables, desks and adequate facilities.
- Dividing into regions creates more highly paid administrators and does not increase service to schools.
- Downtown relocation wasted a lot of money and further isolated administrators.
- Regional system just added more paperwork.
- Regional concept does not work; it's too top-heavy; (the district) hires lots of assistant supervisors and support personnel (e.g. secretaries, etc.) which detract from classroom activity.
- Communication does not reach the people involved.
- If regions run schools, then it is not site-based management.
- Board governance may be misunderstood or misinterpreted if the public does not attend meetings and relies solely on media for information.
- School management varies across campuses depending on leadership team and prior experience.
- Under SBDM not all employees comprehend the value of the District Education Improvement Council (DEIC) or communication with DEIC and EPISD employees needs improvement.
- We support the regional concept.

- Exercise true site-based decision-making.
- In the superintendent search process, EPISD AdCom provided necessary information to give everyone the opportunity to attend.
- Sometimes the school board attempts to micro-manage; many of the members do not have a background or knowledge of the "business" itself and tend to become political in their decisions. Due to lack of understanding, public opinions and criticism easily influence members.
- Make sure that the schools are following the right steps in running a school, especially the principal; if he/she is not doing the job right, then who will?
- The dress code is too strict.
- SBDM needs support at the district level; needs more support and less management.
- Stop social promotions.
- Improve "quality" of student learning.
- Set academic performance goals for students.
- Do not allow school board to set policy.
- Make schools accountable for the students that they deliberately slipped through the system.
- Board should be instructed on its appropriate job and duty. Board members should be directors not administrators. Let the professionals do their jobs. If they don't perform in an adequate time frame, then "fire" them. The "Good Buddy" or "Good Ole Boy" system should be abolished. The regional concept is an absolute waste of personnel and resources.
- True SBDM should be given to each school; including budget responsibility. Not long ago, it was decided that three areas were too great an expense. Now we have four regions costing way too much with high salaries and too much duplication.
- Each school should be given a certain budget for outsourcing certain low-cost maintenance projects.
- The school board members should worry more about the students and not their own egos.
- The regional concept has helped schools by supporting initiatives.
- Consolidation of school districts would combine the best administrators of each district and pool their resources effectively.
- The regional concept created unnecessary competition, increased bureaucratic empire-building, and has taken money away from the children.
- School counselors are overburdened by the number of students they must service; the net effect is that individual student progress and promotion suffer. Both my children received neglected service due to the sheer lack of time available to meet with their counselor. There must be an answer. How can these students receive needed scholarship information without career counselors?

- The regional concept has taken away staff development from educators and money from students. EPISD needs to do away with this system. Give the money back to the schools where it is needed to help students the most.
- Why can't students get in to see their counselors?
- Why don't counselors counsel students on classes, scholarships, colleges, etc.?
- Every facet of the district's life has been affected by politicizing forces - largely disgruntled citizens or former employees with axes to grind, or political hopefuls who hope to use the district as a stepping stone. Children are suffering from the bickering, micro-managing and downright interference of a few people. Hold administrators accountable, but first, give them the freedom to do their jobs. Employee morale is very low and public trust has been lost.
- Overall, the district is being mismanaged from the board level and below.
- Creating four regional superintendents only added to the bureaucracy. We do not need this waste of money.
- The decision to accept the "Blue Flame" building provided consumers a "nice" donation and tax break for the donor. The anticipated maintenance costs do not justify its acceptance. Now we have two buildings to maintain.
- Superintendent and support/administrative appear to have mismanaged oversight responsibilities as demonstrated by the misappropriation of tax dollars by employees.
- The board blew it by rewarding the superintendent with bonuses while this was going on.
- The reorganization plan that was implemented last year needs to be reviewed and evaluated by the new superintendent.
- Change the rule of not being able to advertise until a position is vacant. This creates a time lapse until the new person is fully trained. Bring in new person as an apprentice under the person already in position.
- Why should we have this dumb regional concept? If we are going to pay a lot of money to a superintendent he should do the job and not have his assistant superintendent do it. We are paying double for unresolved issues.
- The superintendent isolated himself from the public. I hope this does not continue. An appointment is required to see him. You must get past all the security guards downtown (a rule by ivory - protected tower).
- SBDM as interpreted by EPISD give principals more control of teachers and parental involvement.
- Strategic planning is reserved for the professionals. Where is the community involvement?

- How much community involvement is there in the superintendent selection process?
- Superintendent contracts should have a clause stating that they get no severance pay if they quit. If I quit my job, I do not get a "golden parachute." I get nothing and superintendents should get the same if they quit!
- Decentralize Regional (4) offices to their respective areas and rotate the regional administrator annually to a different school in his/her area of responsibility; this fosters feedback and contact with the community.
- More access to school personnel (principals, vice principals in particular).
- Consolidation of functions among local governments (e.g., EPISD, city and county) has potential for providing better service to the public at less costs: for example, purchasing of common consumables like paper in bulk; use of excess school buses could reduce costs of providing transportation to currently under-served areas in the county.
- A condescending attitude by the main office administrators is no help.
- Implement "one-stop" shopping; that is, a person with a question should not be passed around like a football.
- The new slogan for EPISD should be "Administrators at the main building are sacred cows."
- School superintendents should want to hold neighborhood meetings and give "State of the District Reports " and receive feedback from citizens often and not one or two times per year.
- There are too many administrators. The farther away they are from the students, the more a person makes! We need more teachers and better quality teachers; class loads are too high; 30-37 students is too large; The idea of four regions is ridiculous.
- The superintendent may get too many perks; when he left the district, he got paid for all his accumulated sick leave at his high rate of pay. Teachers do not get paid for sick days when they leave the district without retiring. Even when they retire, they only get paid for half of their sick days.
- We are always told to express our concerns. Nothing ever happens! The people making the decisions are not in the classroom nor do they have any idea about what is going on in the classroom!
- I agree that the site-based concept needs to be emphasized. We haven't truly given it a chance to work.
- I would like for the superintendent to investigate why many students are being discriminated against at Rosa Guar. The principal is weeding out all the students that cannot keep up with her way of teaching. She has forgotten that the children are the reason for her profession, not how good she looks when the TAAS

scores are high. So please investigate so we don't make our children go through all this terrible process of feeling dumb and hating school. My daughter hated school and felt dumb because of (the principal). Now she is back to herself again at Kohlberg. But there are still a lot of children going through this. The principal says that all other schools are no good and they give you the good grade and that is why children cannot learn in her school. The answer has always been to move. Now it is time to investigate why she cannot teach normal children. Because of the new zoning, children from Polk and Roberts had to go to Rosa Guerrero. Most of them have returned to their old school.

- The weak board is due partially to lack of involvement by voters. Many are poorly educated.
- EPISD needs locally recruited superintendents.
- SBDM is good.
- We should get rid of the regions, the regional directors, their secretaries, their offices and equipment and use that money on the school campus, the buildings, maintenance, supplies, and books.
- We should get rid of the Blue Flame Building and use the money from the refrigerated air, computers, upkeep, maintenance, to add teachers and support personnel raises.
- If we get rid of the Blue Flame Building we can save over 2 million dollars on downtown parking! It cost \$300,000 to refurbish Boeing Building.
- Regions only insulate the superintendent from the schools. It is an unnecessary, expensive layer of bureaucrats which has little to do with the essential teacher/student transaction.
- Sell the Blue Flame for whatever it will bring.
- The regional concept has destroyed Professional Development (New Teacher Orientation, selection of workshops, depth of facilitators).
- The administration is top-heavy while custodians and cafeteria personnel are decreased and teaching positions are scrutinized.
- Need to find out the overhead of administration to teaching staff. Compare 1978 to 1998, especially since the regional concept was re-introduced.
- School management in this area appears weak. Either they are afraid of educators, especially coaches, at their school who have been there longer, or they just accept the fact that the educator may know best.
- Administration is top-heavy and of little value to students and teachers.
- Need to go back to a single EPISD superintendent deleting the four area superintendents.
- The education and well-being of students should be the only priority for board, administrators, teachers, and parents. Bickering

and politics only diminish our district's effectiveness. Site-based management is great!

- Empower, truly empower your teachers to make the right decisions, given all the information they will produce, and the students will succeed.
- School management is very low in this school. When it comes to coaches they think they're above everyone and everything. Administration needs to take parents' concerns to heart instead of always siding with coaches.
- SBDM works if fiscal, instructional and custodial responsibilities are given to campuses regionally. Management is good, however EPISD is too big. Regions allow less governance from central office and more campus input, but instructional facilitators should be on campuses.
- Does regionalization provide maximal efficiency versus centralization? EISD has regionalized and centralized several times; since the last Peat Marwick commission study.
- I wonder if the school board knows what site-based decision making is! Decisions made at our school have been questioned by our school board.
- SBDM is a farce. The campus improvement team at Coronado Senior High school (C.S.H) had no voice in the appointment of a principal during the 1996-97 school year. The management of the C.S.H. campus during school year 1997-98 was and most likely, still is, unfair. The principal of this campus had the police of El Paso search a teacher outside of a classroom during a state-mandated meeting. This search was conducted because the administration listened to and believed an anonymous tip. No weapon was found and no apology was offered. Why should the security, the civil rights, the freedom of this teacher be at risk of being lost because the C.H.S. administration, backed by the school board, exercises Nazi-like authority? If the principal appoints an advisory team to help improve a teacher's classroom instruction, why is he allowed to ignore their recommendation?
- If an advisory team of experts states that a teacher in need of assistance has made progress and doesn't deserve to be terminated, why is the termination forwarded? Why is a principal allowed to ignore the advice of a team he created? Fire them all!
- There are too many administrative and curriculum facilitators; put the money back into the schools and classrooms.
- Facilitators make no impact on individual student performance.
- Site-based management has put too much power in the hands of principals. The Campus Improvement Team (CIT) is a joke-loaded with people who are "yes men" to the principal.
- The biggest cost to EPISD by far is the cost of having a student drop out. Statistics prove this costs money in the cost of social

services for future generations. Spend the money needed to significantly reduce the dropout rate.

- The school district should do a better job of looking out for alternative funding. We don't need to have the highest tax rate in Texas.
- If SBDM is here for awhile every administrator needs to have the same definition. It is time for everyone to be on the same sheet of music.
- SBDM has meant more time outside the classroom. Decisions are still made by the administration; Teachers are doing the work. What is wrong with placing one of the consultants on a campus to do the extra work?
- The principal at Coronado appears to be very interested in the welfare and progress of the students at Coronado. He cares about the students.
- Board members and staff need to listen to the community and ask themselves how does it affect the students and is it in their best interest.
- The principal at Coronado has too much autonomy and authority and frequently abuses his power and micro-manages.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- TAAS helps students.
- Do not give us books.
- We have no lockers, so we need fewer books.
- Less time in classes, less work.
- Eliminate TAAS. It's not a nationally recognized test. Instead make seniors take the SAT or ACT, even though they have no plans for attending college.
- The curriculum is very generic not individually tailored for all students.
- Spend less time on TAAS and more time learning.
- Make TAAS more interesting, not boring!
- Offer a *Folklorico* dance class or a *Mariachi* class.
- The TAAS scores are not audited and probably edited and cannot be used to monitor school performance.
- It should nevertheless warm our hearts that so many students may be ready to move on to the eighth grade.
- Expand TAAS testing to all core subjects. Increase the frequency of testing to the beginning of student year, mid-point, and end of school year.
- TAAS is an evaluation tool, not a standard test, and has been taken out of context, not only denigrating its usefulness, but also its validity as a tool, which is a shame.

- All children are gifted, some in different ways than others. We must find the optimal method by which each child learns and build upon that strong point.
- This district has very few athletic programs for middle school students.
- Ysleta and Socorro spend money for boys' baseball and soccer and girls' softball and soccer. Many students are involved because of this, and not on the streets.
- Logan should not be a magnet school.
- There is too much emphasis on TAAS.
- Get student teachers in classes with more than just 20 students.
- My son is not getting the education he deserves. There is a seventh grader with the reading skills of a fifth grader. Teachers teach students to pass the TAAS test rather than teaching them how to learn.
- We need smaller classes, please.
- Teachers should be Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certified. There have been too many deaths caused by having to wait for the nurse.
- How about a science technology magnet high school?
- Both the federal and state governments have succeeded in making a mess of special education. You make laws about something you know nothing about. Until you start to involve teachers and make realistic laws, lawyers will make a killing and the taxpayers will pay for it all. Teachers will be away from their classrooms in continual meetings and the kids will be the losers.
- Teachers need to be the ones to decide where and how curriculum money will spend, not administrators!
- When TAAS scores go up, check to see the increase in the number of TAAS-exempt students. Is it a coincidence? I think not.
- Gifted and Talented (G/T) children are neglected. Magnet schools (such as Roberts) are not supported well by "feeder" schools and an excellent program (Connections) is not being used as extensively as it could be. G/T programs are being opened to too many. This dilutes the program.
- Eliminate Bilingual education Get those children speaking English ASAP. I have no doubt we have bright, capable children who are being stifled in Bilingual education. As a student, G/T is a necessity in middle school because there is such a difference between some of the children!
- Content mastery teachers are ineffective and excessive.
- Teach English first. We live in the U.S.
- Take the TAAS out. It is a waste of time in the classroom.
- Toss the TAAS. Teachers and students are stressed.

- Too much emphasis is placed on TAAS. It should be replaced by SAT and ACT in order to better prepare the children for higher education.
- G/T program is a must!
- Fifth grade is still an elementary grade. The maximum student-teacher ratio should be the same as lower elementary grades 22, to 1, not 30 to 1. Overcrowded classes diminish all students learning.
- Teachers are being forced to teach TAAS questions and answers!
- You have talented artistic students. Why not display some student work here in the cafeteria? Change displays. Have secure display cases locked.
- Greenhouses? Why not a plant or two? Something green or even flowering?
- There is far too much emphasis on TAAS in the school today. Not enough higher order thinking skills to truly challenge students.
- I hate TAAS and my two have aced it. We emphasis minimum standards. Give our children the Iowa or some other test so I know how my children compare to children in other parts of the country.
- Bilingual education program should be eliminated. Honors and gifted children's programs are discriminating and should be removed from the system. Math, especially Algebra, should be revised. Too many tutors are needed. The system is failing our children!
- Why are there nurses only half the time at elementary schools?
- Nurses are needed full time, especially when there is a campus that has early childhood, AIM, BIC, wheelchair students, students with walkers, diabetes and brittle bone disease.
- Gifted and advanced math programs at Coronado are very good. They enabled my daughter to advance further in math. The initial testing of students in math enables the teachers to determine a child's level of mathematical comprehension. This enables students to test out of lower courses and move to more advanced classes.
- Need progress reports for high school students. Parents need to be more informed of their children's progress. All instructors should issue progress reports in high school. This should be mandatory and uniform throughout the district.
- Better explanations should be given to parents as to what elective courses are offered and as to what courses will better benefit a student's core courses.
- TAAS would be better used to track student's progress! I'd like to know exactly how much money is spent each year on TAAS?
- Summer school attendance should not determine retention/passage to next grade level. Mastery of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEK) should determine this.
- Is the book selection committee made up of teachers who will use the books?

- Pre-Kindergarten classes should be open to all 4-year-olds, not just "low-income" or "non-English-speaking" students. It should be equal opportunity.
- In the past the enrollment age for school was set for September 1. For example: any child entering kindergarten had to be five years old on or before September 1. Now that we begin school in August, the enrollment age date needs to be changed to August 1. For example: any child entering kindergarten would need to be five years of age by August 1. This would allow the maturing young child to feel more successful. As the age requirement is now, a kindergarten class has students ranging from four to six Pre-Kindergarten students range in age from three to five years old. This great difference in age results in students falling behind and being retained due to lack of maturity, and not lack of ability.
- We are excited about EPISD's Region 3 curriculum alignment project currently under construction.
- TAAS realizes the need for accountability and measurement of impact.
- Bilingual education; we appreciate the opportunity to pilot Dual Language/Gifted and Talented program in EPISD's Region 3.
- Special education; we are pleased with campus efforts on programs available, especially the pilot program at Mesita.
- Support is needed for an accountability system in order to have these programs excel.
- Banning TAAS testing is the best thing to do. Do not base a student's diploma on one test! It is not fair for those who don't know English.
- The curriculum and educational programs are outstanding for an honors student. Very low expectations are set for "those kids" who are not labeled "honors" or "gifted." Regular students are not encouraged to reach high levels academically. Teachers with experience and a good track record in high school are the assigned teachers for the Honors or AP classes, while the rookie teachers are given the average students.
- Where are the real evaluations of employees?
- Evaluations are a joke.
- Protect those who stand up for quality education by trying to reform, re-educate, or remove incompetent employees.
- Students are given way too many chances to pass the TAAS test. Not enough time is given (in class) to prepare for it.
- We are short-changing regular school child large class-loads. There is little or no technology except for overhead projectors and videos. In contrast, our Special Education students get resources that cannot be shared with regular classes. It is strange to see one classroom, one aide and one student. This is a very unfair distribution of educational resources.

- Teachers have to teach "all" children: gifted, handicapped, learning disabled, etc., but yet there are no full-time paraprofessionals to help.
- Over the past seven years or so, the district has undergone several "reorganizations" and other structural changes. Now, some are calling for the dismantling of the regional concept, which has been in place just over a year. Give this change some time! How can we know how effective something is when there is never any time to really implement it, much less let it be refined? In my view, dividing a huge, unyielding entity into smaller pieces makes sense for the support of educational programs.
- The curriculum is fair. However, heavy emphasis on TAAS has resulted in too much attention given to test-taking and not enough to learning the basics needed to prepare our youth for college studies and life.
- There should be a fine arts magnet school for the EPISD, using the same standards as those for a health magnet school.
- School performance should not be based on TAAS alone. This limits the focus of a well-rounded curriculum.
- If the principal does not bring up the TAAS scores after three years, get rid of them and start anew. Something is wrong at that campus. The teachers' and students' morale might be down because of all the important stuff the principal is asking of them!
- Curriculum is given by state, not local option. Class sizes are growing due to lack of money for teachers and facilities.
- I think TAAS is over rated and too much time is spent on it.
- Since teachers are now rated on TAAS results, all scores are on the rise. Are we teaching the TAAS on basic education skills?
- We are an international city enriched by learning more than one language. This will help them in the international market.
- Special Education at EPISD needs to hire more related service providers and/or ensure that each student receives the type/amount of related services mandated by the student's Individual Education Plan (unlike the situation in the past).
- It should be mandated that a student in elementary school who can't read at approximate grade level be remanded to a highly trained person on each campus to solve the problem.
- Schools should include vocational learning at the site to service students in their area.
- District to continue to search for inclusion programs to make an effort to make them successful.
- District should train teachers, principals and staff on working with disabled students. This is the main reason why pilot programs do not succeed.
- Teachers need the supplemental help to make "inclusion" a success and not to object when they encounter a "special student."

- Keep programs for kids at the other end of the spectrum. The gifted need as much help in their own way as the other kids with special needs.
- Too many children don't have to take the TAAS test. What is the percentage that doesn't take it? What are their reasons for not taking it?
- Too many exemptions make inconsistent, unrealistic results to compare from one campus to the next.
- Definite need for standardized pre/post test to determine a child's level upon entrance to that grade, and to see that teacher and student have worked hard to progress a child's growth - regardless of level.
- First and second grade teachers need to concentrate on reading only!
- Use a testing firm to come in to all schools and proctor TAAS - eliminate any possibility of altering answer sheets prior to sending to state for grading.
- Do take pressure off all students, teachers and curricula in the district and let teachers do what we do best. Test to the individual rather than the TAAS!
- The TAAS is more of a political thing than anything and the people administering it are creating their own positions.
- TAAS test should be eliminated. Bilingual education needs to be eliminated.
- You should implement better programs for Hispanic people.
- Pass TAAS, fail life. Why do we support a system that encourages failure?
- Teach culture, not black and white.
- Some students transferring from states other than Texas have already passed the "do or die" standardized test as a freshmen, sophomore, or junior. Why test them again? It's only another standardized test required by another state.
- Teachers do help the students a lot and prepare students to take tests.
- Special Education should be revised and smaller classrooms with students.
- Students should have TAAS testing, but with less importance.
- Students should be given national tests.
- Honors and AP good at high school, but not at middle.
- The English as a Second Language (ESL) program has been greatly hurt by the formation of the regions!
- Too much of the curriculum is text driven. Stay in your seat type educating instead of child centered.
- Class structure is the same as in the 50's. Important classes should be 1 1/2-hour long, i.e. English, math, science, and business computers. Other classes maybe one-hour long i.e. social studies,

health, physical education, foreign language, and electronics. High school days should be five hours long, which would allow students time for community involvement in their senior year and allow for maturing of students to be better prepared for college.

- Magnet school concept is being used to improve TAAS scores and school enrollment of home school.
- Block scheduling is waste of teacher resources 4 1/2-hour classes and 1 1/2-hour conference, schools have to hire 6-12 extra teachers at each school with block.
- Students get only 75 percent instructional time compared to one-hour classes - sure they can take more courses - watering down all quantity and quality.
- Students are often overlooked when policies are made. For example; if a school requires uniforms, administration gets feedback from parents, teachers, but they don't take into consideration what the students think about uniforms, same with block scheduling and regular schedules.
- TAAS scores are being used as a measure of how to improve basic education.
- Don't teach the TAAS test. Teach the basics so students will be literate upon graduation.
- Campuses should decide curriculum.
- How can per capita expenditures of special education be reduced to provide more funds for regular education programs?
- I want to know why the state mandates a 24-credit graduation plan, mandates that we adjust our schedules to allow students to complete the required 24 credits and then they don't fund the extra teachers required to implement such changes? Too many demands on limited time; try quality instead of quantity in degree plans, curriculum, and schedules.
- Students need alternative education discipline.
- Evaluation is very subjective and no one cares about Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) since it is not tied to money.
- PDAS is a waste of time and effort.
- Curriculum should be based on the need to prepare students to enter a workforce that is dependent on technology. There is entirely too much focus on college preparation; look at the SCANS report. Let's prepare our students for the 21st century, not a 19th century Ivy League school.
- Need to rid us of such standardized tests, especially national ones that tend to promote outcome-based education and Goal 2000 programs. Such tests are detrimental to parental rights and individualism and do not produce a good back-to-basics academic education, tempered with morality to educate well-balanced and productive citizens that will excel and have success and

satisfaction at whatever work they decide to do whether in technological area or McDonald's.

- Teacher's attitude of "not my problem" puts students at risk.
- Get rid of TAAS and use comprehensive final exams. TAAS has proven to be an unnecessary obstacle for students that even end up attending Harvard University.
- Need to refocus, concentrate on real skills, problem solvers, and promote independent thinking.
- TAAS does not address the real problem.
- Better screening system in the area of legal students in the school district, specifically Mexican residents crossing border and attending our schools. They are not paying taxes.
- Middle school students are not getting money or an equal share of the pie. Special Education and Gifted and Talented students get a lot of funds. Regular students get very little and fall through the cracks.
- We assume every student is college bound. There needs to be other options/opportunities for students. For example, instead of taking chemistry, offer a general science class; the student will be better served.
- End-of-the-year exams for biology are a joke. Students can sit in a biology class and do absolutely nothing and pass the "Mickey Mouse" end-of-the-year exam and receive credit for the entire year of biology. It sends the wrong message. As a teacher, I am spinning my wheels.
- There should be criteria for students to enroll in advanced classes. The advanced classes are watered down to address students who should not be in advanced classes.
- We need to set the standards and encourage students to achieve them, instead of lowering the standards to address the limited capabilities of the students.
- I would like to see a smaller teacher-student ratio in the classrooms. I also would like to see kids who don't get into trouble and try their best to be recognized, instead of coming up with "programs" for kids have discipline problems.
- I would like to see a revision in the high school math program. The percentage of failure is high. Every teacher who fails a student should be evaluated.
- I would like to see an end to Bilingual education. It is a waste of money. EPISD has a fund that gives grants; good job!
- The way Bilingual education is taught should be changed. The class should not be taught in all Spanish, but English and then translated in Spanish. So, then Pre-K and kindergarten will be bilingual. This will help the children be in first grade on up.

- SAT preparation courses are desperately needed and should begin this year. I think the Gifted and Talented program is a form of discrimination. Intelligence is self-discipline.
- Why are English speaking, non-poverty level children not permitted to attend Pre-K? EPISD advises Pre-K criterion on the following: 1) child must be from Spanish-speaking family and/or, 2) low-income family. There are no programs for others. We were also told that Pre-K is for children at risk of becoming involved in gangs. Does this mean that others (English-speaking and non-poverty level families) are not at risk?
- SAT tests should be administered free to all juniors and seniors (one time only).
- Preschool program should be available to all children or none at all.
- Too much discrimination in the system.
- Straight A-students should not be acknowledged, especially in elementary schools. There are too many special programs (i.e. Hall of Honors, etc.). This can be very damaging to students. Good grades should be between parents and children only.
- Regarding Pre-K and Head Start, why are similar programs duplicating the same goal of integrating the child into mainstream? Why not make Pre-K available to any child and maintain Head Start?
- School nurses these days need to be at the school and very aware of the student body and their problems and sicknesses (i.e. diabetes, asthmatics, physically challenged). Don't nurses deserve more money?
- Need more parental involvement and closer cooperation with community leaders.
- Parents must be integrated, not just involved. Many parents lack the same skills their children now need. Knowing the characteristics of the surrounding community will assist the school in its goal to educate not only the children, but also the entire community. Education is not finite (for young students only). It should be for all. That's efficiency.
- The schools discourage parental involvement. There is always an implied threat to the child should the parent be perceived to be creating waves. Parent patrol needs to be started again.
- If you can have detentions held on Saturdays, why not have some kind of program for working parents to participate in. Why can't admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) meetings be held on this day also?

COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Not enough information filters down to parents and not enough parent involvement in their children's education.
- Parents need to volunteer at schools.
- Seek and you will find and be welcome to the classroom.
- Corporate sponsorship?
- School district should find ways to get more funding from corporations. (For example: school sponsorships, magnet/technical donations).
- District should find ways to incorporate parental input.
- Get parents involved and keep them involved.
- Parenting skills needed.
- Establish an outreach position to effect clear, continuous community relations, public relations, recruitment of business partners; in short to keep the mission of each school before the public for purposes of assistance and accountability.
- Parental involvement is an important component of a successful school. We must provide programs for the parents.
- Progressive campuses that seek grants are beneficial to the learning community; increase parental involvement.
- Internal and external communications, district publications, and instructional television programs provide valuable information to employees and the community.
- Parental involvement is dormant at times. It is hard to recruit parents in some areas of the district as you can tell by the results of people attending meetings such as this one.
- The community is largely apathetic; a few politically motivated get constant press. They do not speak for the majority.
- Principals and superintendents should have a performance contract, which require more effective communications with consumers, teachers and parents. Calls to principals often go unanswered (my experience).
- I participated in a community forum where the majority of the parents were Spanish-speaking or had little limited English-speaking abilities.
- None of the superintendent's reps, or school reps, including assistant superintendent and principal, spoke or understood Spanish. There was no effective communication!
- Generally speaking, parents with kids in school keep up with their kid's needs and are superficially knowledgeable about what's going on. If community is to be more involved as mentors, volunteers,

etc. schools must open to community use. District energy-saving policies keep most buildings locked up tight. Campuses and energy department need to identify most cost-effective areas for day care, after school arts programs, use by seniors. My sense is that the general public feels a "just leave us alone" attitude from admin. Ysleta ISD public may be annoyed, but they are at board meetings and in the schools actively. Comparison of the money EPISD puts into community involvement is very low. I don't feel that EPISD has too close of a relationship with the *El Paso Times*. Good news gets out every day. My concern is why exemplary campuses get good publicity. I served as a volunteer for a math contest to San Antonio. Felt the regional concept made all the mechanics of rooms, food, permissions, etc. very difficult. Responsibilities and who has the budget authority was clouded. I hope things get better in 1998-99 year.

- Invite and involve more people into the schools. Stop all the red tape. We have had good role models for the kids turned away because the principal does not think they are important.
- The district and schools have far too much red tape with respect to community involvement.
- Business school partnerships need to be forged as partnerships, not just what can business give to the schools today.
- The district is not serious about parental involvement. CIT is controlled by principal and does not empower community.
- District committees with parent representatives shy away from any serious issues.
- Integrate business practitioners into instructional roles. For example: a local engineer gets release time from his company to teach one physics class for nine months (two semesters).
- Print shop does an outstanding job; they are an asset to the district.
- Parental meetings with the teachers should be mandatory for the troublesome students or academically weak students; it's hard to get a parent meeting.
- Even though parental involvement is lauded by EPISD, in reality it is not reinforced. Lights at EPHS are turned off in the hallways, in the foyer, in the basement counselor's office at 3:45 p.m., which discourages visitation and conferences. The doors to the building are locked from the outside, making it impossible for me as a parent to enter EPHS and meet with the principal, vice principal, or counselor's who are on duty until 4:30 p.m. I have waited by the "tunnel door" for the janitor to exit to gain entrance to the counselor's office after 4:00 p.m.
- Use of EPISD buildings very limited to EPISD events only.
- Administrators and principals need to provide time for all students to attend plays and musical performances in the high schools.

Students need to be exposed to "culture." Give plays. Band and orchestra the same as high school.

- School board meetings need more parental attendance.
- Community needs to be better informed about taxes going up, PTA meetings, and more concerned about school activities.
- Schools need to encourage more parent involvement.
- Schools that have a significant drop in [VIP] hours; PTA memberships, etc., should be examined. Someone is keeping them away.
- School board meetings need taxpayer attendance.
- Need to have more parent teacher (conferences) one on one.
- Each school should have a parent coordinator to work together with students and their parents.
- Many schools do not welcome parental involvement.
- Many schools control PTA by teachers being in control.
- Preferential treatment to certain groups.
- Schools are for all students, not one group, elected officials, and individuals.
- Parents are welcome in many capacities (i.e. attendance office, fund-raising for kids, helping teachers, serving as translators, patrolling the halls, etc.). I wish more parents were involved.
- I am interested in changing the elementary, middle, and senior high school parent-teacher meetings or open-house meetings from being on the same days.
- I would like to be able to work with teachers and school more. My work hours won't allow me to get involved. I work from 6:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- More parental involvement.
- Screen parents.
- Make non-residents (from Mexico) pay for their education. Yes, the schools do not work for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), but they should made to prove they come from here.
- Insist that state lottery money be used for its intended purpose: to help offset school taxes. The state should report each year how much is collected and how much is collected for education. We were promised something that is not being fulfilled.
- Thomason General Hospital should be forced to disclose the money it receives from the federal government (millions) and use these amounts to offset school taxes.
- Never allow cost over-runs on contracted-out projects. Make contractors deliver what they signed on the line to deliver for the money they said they would.
- Texas lottery should provide more money for our schools instead of budgeting our education and making our residents pay more taxes on homes.

- Parental involvement should be encouraged through actions by the district regional meetings "meet the public." The meetings should be made available to the public. Meetings should not be held at 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Most parents can't make it with picking up kids, etc.
- Develop more business-school partnerships to better help students decide which career to pursue.
- Support civic involvement by students through school clubs. Support civic initiative through local clubs. Partner with local service clubs and organizations.
- Superintendent and regional supers should be involved with community, not through newsletters, etc., but direct contact at hours and days when parents can attend.
- I support a movement toward getting parents more involved; it should not be optional, but required. It's the only way parents will become aware of the problems in public schools. They're getting their information from those that have an agenda that makes public education seem to be failing completely. Parents should be forced to become involved. Also, more effort should be put into getting the business community involved. In a poor district like EPISD, we could use the help.
- One method to get parents involved is to mandate community involvement courses (student council, band, and sports). As students sign up for courses, the parents support school activities.
- Since our tax dollars don't seem to go a long way, I have to volunteer in my child's school to help them with school trips, awards programs, etc. Because of this I cannot go to work.
- Lack of parental involvement.
- Parenting classes for young mothers needed.
- Local churches (all denominations) should be encouraged to participate in their community. Their apathy adds to the problems with youth. Small business should be encouraged to give ideas of how to resolve so much negativism within the community.
- We should have more programs to involve the parents. Students sometimes have too much free time.
- I hope this helps all of the EPISD. We need it. Good luck!
- Poor involvement as student ages. Require more signatures on papers, report cards, etc. Business involvement is good, however don't allow businesses to take over the school district's responsibilities.
- If our district is so strapped for money, why not allow national companies to advertise on the school buses? It's done in many other places.
- If you want community involvement, then listen to the community. Don't just give excuses.
- It looks like we may have to make parental involvement a mandatory part of a child's education. This is sad.

- Provide opportunities for parents to be truly involved. Show how they can be involved, where, when, and with whom.
- We forget that sometimes parents are not educated.
- School needs to make parents an integral part of participating on school goals. Provide input. Schools need to make parents welcomed not as an adversary. El Paso needs greater support from businesses... it's in their best interest.
- I believe that parents are welcome to my school. Notices go out to the parents and notices are on our marquee. I do feel parents should be more involved, but it's difficult for single-parent households as well as with families and with two parents working.
- Parents have given a new meaning to "*en loco parentis*." Teachers are parents to many kids because parents don't want to be bothered.
- Communication between administration and faculty and between faculty and parents is poor. Communication between principal and faculty and principal and parents is poor also.
- Counselors have the "Harvard mentality." If you are going to Harvard, Yale, etc. they will help you.
- Why are some board meetings not held in different areas of the community?
- Coronado High School counselors should be more accessible to parents. They need to make time to discuss the children's progress and what is needed to help the children advance in school.
- The counselors at Moorhead Junior High school are more attentive to the needs of the students and parents. The counselors at Moorhead Junior High school are doing a good job. Uniform policy is very good at Moorhead. A uniform policy should be in place for high schools. If not, then stricter enforcement of the dress code should be required.
- This area is excellent at my school.
- Community involvement equals agreeing with the district. Differing views are not appreciated.
- You must find a way to have schools open as community centers after-hours. Do it soon. This may cost some money up front, but you will gain in community involvement with schools and good PR when you must raise taxes or take other action.
- The board puts important issues off until midnight or later to prevent public participation. This is definitely a sneaky process that happens.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Pay certified, experienced, professional retired teachers something more than minimum wage and you will find a few more volunteers!
- Salary for subs is poor.

- Recruitment of non-Texas graduates seems slight.
- It should be easier to fire the bad teachers. Parents who volunteer in a school know who they are. Parents who don't volunteer have their children doomed to lousy year. Fire the incompetents!
- Fire the incompetent principals and assistants.
- Too many administrators, especially at district level where there is no direct contact with students. Top-heavy administration.
- They wait until school starts to hire new teachers for a school, even though they know additional students will be attending the school.
- We have too many top administrators that do not have real jobs.
- Some have jobs created for them because they are buddies. "Good Old Boy system" is alive and well in EPISD! It lives and breathes; it just won't die.
- Too much time is spent in obtaining payroll checks.
- Waste of time of going to and from school and EPISD just to justify that you work 40 hours. A procedure should be formulated for the convenience of hourly employees that rely on this paycheck.
- Calls made at EPISD take time before they are returned.
- Payroll department needs to improve hourly pay employees.
- Sometimes these hourly employees have to borrow money to compensate administration's delay of releasing paychecks.
- Consultants and Staff Development personnel need to be cut. We rarely see them! If you are to continue with regions, put the supervisors in their areas in regional schools. How about portables?
- Regional facilitators have allowed teachers to get more information quicker!
- Before, we had one person in charge and we didn't get the personal time and attention we get now!
- We need to develop a better system of getting rid of bad teachers. We need to stop placing into other schools just to make the precious schools happy. Offer early retirement? Or just fire?
- Salaries need to be raised and expectations of both administrators and teacher raised.
- [USI] mentors and other administrators have not been any help. They should be back in the classroom.
- We need charter schools to create more competition among the schools! This is working great in Mesa Public Schools in Arizona. Public schools' quality has really improved because of this competition.
- Certainly, more money for teachers is needed, However incentives, other than longevity, should be utilized to reward good teachers. More mid-level administration should be directed, by needs assessed, to appropriate schools. For example, low-performing math schools equal more math administrative assistance via

delegated full-time assistance, rather than central office personnel. What is a "good" teacher? Administration is run on bias. PDAS - bias again!

- Establish a student-to-administration personnel ratio (i.e. 2.3 administrators to one student).
- Pay the teachers a decent salary - the good teachers will stay.
- Pass a state law to give teachers "a tax" abatement on their property.
- Too many people are involved in decision making in Human Resources (HR) and throughout the district.
- Too many directors in the HR and they are paid more than market wage
- Clerks could do a lot.
- Who hired the incompetent teachers and why?
- A program is needed for troubled students.
- This school needs trained security people!
- Supervisors use intimidation to "control" their employees.
- Special Education counselors are needed for special education students
- Police officers should be on school grounds.
- A coordinator is needed that will see to students who are facing problems due to divorce or a loss of loved ones.
- Administration needs to support parents and teachers, and not make their own decisions; teachers should be able to communicate without fear of losing their job.
- The proper tools are needed to educate students.
- The Special Education department needs to be investigated closely!
- Teachers who need additional training need to be identified and training given. Dollars should be allocated at local level and administered by school administrators.
- Texas needs a cap on class size in the Special Education department and maybe we can recruit and keep more teachers.
- EPISD spends thousands of dollars recruiting out-of-state teachers while there are many local qualified teachers without a job.
- Raises should be given on individual performance, not schoolwide. Bad teachers stay on the hard work of good ones. An end-of-year assessment by parents of children in the teacher's classroom should be statewide and basis of promotions and raises. I was told that would make teachers compete against each other, but the only drawback I see is that kids will get ahead, (with) better grades and self esteem.
- A 20 percent cut for everyone who has an office to themselves! If you work with or for kids, it should be for their wellbeing not how much is in it for them.
- Teachers and other school personnel need CPR certification.

- There is no check on the increase of high-paying administrative positions located away from the schools. There is also no check on how these people are spending their time and our school money that should be on the kids and on the people working with kids.
- How much money is spent on substitute teachers when teachers are in service? For example: all third grade teachers had third day end-of-school year to plan, substitutes were in all rooms. There are days set aside for inservice. This is a common practice in this district.
- A strong audit of central office staffing is needed. For example, salaries are as follows: executive directors at \$70-75,000. Eight directors at \$50-60,000. The district had seven associate superintendents at \$85-90,000, but when superintendent resigned, why did we have to hire a temporary superintendent at \$10,000 per month? Aren't any of the seven associate superintendents qualified?
- Police Command Center should be in our schools and have the seniors handle calls and appointments while not run by an officer.
- What happens when you have teacher and staff playing with a student resulting in a sex act? Everyone knows, but teacher/staff stay; shouldn't the person be removed!
- The so-called "profile" used to match candidates to schools they serve and the fact that previous leadership strived to choose candidates to work in neighborhood schools they resided in was a bunch of hogwash! Hiring practices in place now have allowed nepotism and certain groups for promotion based on "politics" and not on educational background. Eighty percent of our budget is tied to personnel and district needs to hire the best educated/qualified candidates for positions and not relatives or persons from cultural/ethnic/political groups. Personal/business "conflict of interest" among board members needs to stop and an investigation from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is needed.
- CIT committees in schools do in some cases pick administrators for schools, but what happens when the individual talks a good game, but doesn't perform. They're stuck with him or her forever.
- Pay teachers more for our education and work. We deserve to be more than the lower middle class.
- Why are there so many permanent substitute teachers and staff? Is this so the district doesn't have to pay benefits? If these people are qualified as subs and work years in the same position, why not hire them permanently?
- District promotes teachers into administrative positions; these people are qualified to be teachers not administration. Check HR department! Really Bad!
- How many coaches are now principals?

- Hiring practices: UTEP interns who graduate early need to be hired before other neighboring districts hire. Don't wait until July or August to sign recruits.
- Staff Development should focus on improved meaningful staff development. Not perfect, but opportunity to enhance professional skill is available.
- Keep educated personal in the classroom or school where they are making a difference rather than transferring them to administration.
- Give principal opportunity to voice his observation of his staff.
- Until the good teachers are identified and rewarded accordingly (financially and or otherwise), education will continue to be saddled with the bad teachers.
- Contrary to popular belief, a teacher's most important commodity is time: we must explore "outside the box" thinking in scheduling, staffing, etc. to free teachers while at school to plan, integrate curricula, and find solutions to endemic problems.
- Too much staffing and expenditure in athletics, in particular football, which exceeds the needs of both a particular sport, and also the general student population. Eighty percent of our students don't play sports-what do we have for them?
- In order to keep the good personnel, salaries must be competitive in all areas. It takes good people and good teachers to form a good business.
- Bonuses do not make better teachers. For example, once the extra money for the teacher at Guillen was taken away, the teacher left. What we need is better teachers out of college and not those greedy so-called teachers.
- Teachers complain in class that their salaries are too low.
- Teachers should be paid bimonthly.
- We need people with successful human resource management experience to come in and take over this function. We need to minimize/cut down on suits and other wasteful spending resulting from mismanagement of personnel functions.
- Stop the "who you know" policy. A person should be hired for what they know. Less administrative positions and fancy titles and get back to what matters-our kids.
- Why is it so difficult to get rid of teachers who should not be in the teaching field?
- Teacher salary comparability should be based on competitor cities (e.g. Austin, Albuquerque, etc.) not local ISDs, to attract top teaching talents.
- I wonder why the district has to go to Nebraska, Montana, etc. to find teachers? Is it because we can't compete locally for teachers? In fact, EPISD can hardly compete with Ysleta and Socorro for staff because of low salaries and worse working conditions.

- Salary and incentives should be constructed to keep teachers teaching, not forcing them to move to administration if they want to increase their income.
- Hire and promote local administrators.
- Processing of retirement forms is way too slow, which causes big problems to retirees.
- Too much money is spent on staff development, yet teachers who use PCs aren't well trained.
- Some principal hire young new teachers rather than more experienced teachers who desire to return after children are raised and in school.
- There is not enough staff development on the campus level at the time it is needed (e.g. technology support), including specialized support for teachers in the regular classrooms.
- Hiring of new applicants is too slow. I went to the YISD because my appointment for an interview was scheduled more than one month from the date I reported to the personnel office. YSID hired me in three days. Plus, I have heard of many teachers this same thing happened to. I tried on two other occasions to change districts, but the same thing happened.
- Recruitment is good for entry-level teachers. I question the hiring process for professional staff with experience. I know of administrators hired by EPISD who were released from other districts in (El Paso) for serious infractions!
- I feel staff development for counselors in Region III is excellent. However, there is no consistency throughout the district.
- I switched districts due to a death in my family. Even though it was a lateral switch, I took a significant cut in salary.
- Set up a demotion policy at the Central office. Administration doesn't like cutting heads. Set up a third party for this job.
- Why are there no Social Security benefits for employees? Teachers find it necessary to go to New Mexico and teach for a few years after retirement to get "quarters" needed for Social Security benefits. It does not seem fair to lifelong Texas employees.
- How much money is being paid out for consultants and for what reason?
- Why can't the school administration spend up to \$25,000 without bringing the item before the board for approval?
- Why can the same consultants be repeatedly paid in \$25,000 increments and by dividing it this way avoid going before the board?
- Personnel management should find other ways or outlets to raise money without having to raising taxes.
- Professional service contracts by law are exempt from the \$25,000 cut; why are they allowed to spend so much money without board

approval? Can we have an itemized list of these expenditures and who received the money and for what?

- More funds should be allocated for parent involvement.
- We need personnel at the campus level, not on top. We have the same amount of administrative people as much smaller schools. We are overloaded with paperwork and too many administrators.
- Less personnel at the Blue Flame building, Education Center, Boeing and more personnel at campuses, especially more assistant principals and clerks.
- I deeply resent money being spent for downtown parking when there is not money for maintenance, when I worked downtown.
- Why are principals who do not operate their schools with the best interests of their students and communities at the core of their actions not reprimanded/disciplined? They cause lack of parental involvement-crucial to the success of the schools. The CYA is at work in our top-heavy district. Too often the outcome of incompetence is promotion.
- Pay them more and let their incompetence affect more people when they mess up!
- Staff development is a joke. With the new areas, no one seems to be in charge or know what is going on. The news about new developments never gets to the teachers or if it does, it's too late.
- Need to have incentives for people to become teachers. More pay and better benefits.
- Faculty should go to training on how to communicate and or understand today's youth.
- The "good old boy" system is in place; one can predict who is going to be hired.
- There is poor management at the top.
- A culture of fear and retaliation prevails.
- Listen to the whole community and not a select few.
- Salary, same percent for all; all are valuable, if people are overpaid or not needed, then fix the problem.
- The classrooms at Austin are too large for effective group learning. Hire more teachers.
- If positions are especially for people working in EPISD, do not show them to the public.
- Need to recruit good teachers.
- Performance needs to look better.
- Standards should be lowered in order to fill those difficult to recruit positions. Higher pay would work better. Also, emergency permits that somehow become permanent should be eliminated.
- Student/teacher class size ratios should not be increased to save money; the first option should be to cut administration at Region 19, not school classrooms.

- Why is it necessary to divide the district into four regions? Once divided, why were the administrators of each region not placed in their area of responsibility? This would promote the idea of access by parents and concerned citizens. Isn't the regional concept doing a good job!
- Pay teachers more since they are the educators, not administration. Teachers should not have to buy supplies.
- Currently, a teacher cannot get an evaluation of "exceeds expectations," no matter how well he/she does, if he/she is at a "low performing" school. This can de-motivate and reduce productivity of teachers who are hard workers and talented.
- What happened to the slogan "children first?" Administrators and bureaucracy-building seem to dominate the budget. The resource classrooms should be the priority. Flatten the organization. Site-based management is only as effective as the organization permits.
- Support staff is paid peanuts compared to administration. Many support staff live below the poverty level and are on food stamps.
- There is too much harassment and discrimination in the district. One only has to look at all the Equal Employment Opportunity complaints.
- Its maintenance department is overstaffed?
- District is top-heavy. Put resources at the local schools.
- Pay the teachers more. Require master degrees in a certain time frame.
- The closer you are to the students, the less respect you get.
- It must have cost a lot of money to completely change over the staff at Guillen Middle School. Any teacher willing to mover over to Guillen was given an extra \$5,000 per year. The cost to have the teachers away from Guillen must have been great. Despite the reorganization, Guillen has not improved and the district is spending even more money to hide this fact.
- Recruitment - Teacher staff development is ineffective. New teachers should not get bonuses (math).
- Too many teachers being pulled out of the classrooms. We are losing out on quality teaching time with the students. The students are the ultimate losers.
- Salaries are pathetic for this size district. We're tired of being blamed for tax increases.
- Salaries should be increased in areas where there is a shortage. Staff development is outdated, but it's a way to promote people and pay them money that should remain in the classroom. Teachers have gotten \$1,000 + increases for the past three years. Support staff also have expenses and need extra money!
- In the hiring process it is "who you know and not what you know." Why advertise if the department already has someone in mind! People with less than two years experience in the district are

promoted to high-level positions. In 20 years and 10 months I have received nothing.

- Let's do away with the "good old boy" system.
- We don't need national searches for superintendents. We have local people who are adequate for this job.
- The superintendent should be paid on a ratio of lowest-paid staff person.
- Reduce the central office staff.. Start with facilitators and review every corporate person. If they don't face kids every day, their worth to the district should be questioned.
- El Paso ISD has the lowest teachers' salaries in the city. Starting with year 13 on the pay scale for teachers with a BA and continuing on up, EPISD pays exactly state minimum. A city this size should be able to do better than that. Too many teachers are leaving the district, or planning to in the future, or going to other high-paying jobs.
- The [ESOL] stipend is being phased out in the EPISD. All other districts here have one. In the San Antonio district, theirs is \$2,000. We are being asked to do more work for a cancelled stipend.
- Stop spending tons of money on teacher recruiting trips and give scholarships, and give contracts for a certain number of years to prospective teachers.
- Teachers do not get any credit for all the hard work they do with the students.
- Staff development should come not only from outside the schools, but also from within.
- Make sure staff development helps teacher instead of adding work.
- Provide training that they can use.
- Do not have staff development in the first week of duty. Teachers are preparing for the school year.
- Pay teachers a proper salary. A first-year loan officer makes as much as a sixth-year teacher.
- Principals hire and promote employees without regard to qualifications, experience or seniority. Too much favoritism and good old boy stuff. When questioned, it's "the principal's discretion."
- Why is it that when it comes to paying journalism teachers, they have the lowest salaries?
- Schools should be able to hire/fire personnel from the campus. Greater autonomy to principals or personnel issued for that particular campus.
- More time for teacher preparation (start of year). Salaries need to be greater at campuses.
- Is a merit system similar to federal and civil service examinations available to avoid political appointments? Perform a statistical analysis of promotions with regards to educational/work

backgrounds. Why are most appointments ascribed to PE majors, or is it the good old boy syndrome?

- Salaries should be based on a "needs" basis. Our district is short of mathematics teachers because math majors can go to careers that pay more even if they want to be teachers.
- Teachers' salaries need to be reevaluated in the state of Texas. Wrong priorities placed on prisons and athletics.
- How can you expect to pay and keep quality teacher when you pay mediocre above minimum wage salaries?

COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

ASSETS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Couldn't many districts agree to use same groups of professional bond firms in exchange for lower costs/rates?
- Costs are outrageous when carrying dependents on EPISD policies. The city of El Paso uses Young Insurance Company and the costs are considerably lower.
- Health insurance for EPISD is the weakest I have ever run across.
- The bonds passed should be used for what they were intended for (a new high school in the northeast).
- Much too much waste on higher management.
- District should look into consolidation with other districts and organize and have one health plan. Get out of this stupid self-insurance program. The public should know the exact annual cost of the Blue Flame building. It was supposed to eliminate leases two years ago and no leases have been dropped as of yet.
- Check the downtown parking garage costs monthly and yearly! Funds spent should be made public. After all, we're paying with our tax dollars. Where is the money really going?
- Need more local "professional" input. We have many willing, yet untapped resources in our parental community.
- Get a better health insurance plan cheaper for families. Lower deductions. (District is self-funded! They need more qualified personnel in the benefit/HR dept.).
- Get rid of PAZ Tower - free building has done nothing except cost millions (unknown amount).
- I agree. Get rid of the PAZ building.
- Sell the PAZ "Mahal" and use funds for students!
- Didn't factor in the thousands spent for "parking" and the fact that the "PAZ MAHAL" was not computer ready. What a waste of money!
- Give teachers better retirement and retirement health insurance. We should at least match what state employees are getting. Why charge such high interest and fees for teachers to buy out of state retirement years? Don't take money from our retirement fund!
- Employee benefits are fair and excellent except for the long lines.
- An employee benefits fair needs to be organized! We have to wait too long.
- Health insurance is not adequate.
- Being "self-insured" is expensive and inefficient. Many employees cannot afford to insure their families.
- Find a reliable insurance person!

- Improve workers' compensation.
- Investment practices; the district approves of vendors, but does very little to educate employees.
- Commissioned agents do all the training with their pockets in mind.
- Increase life insurance minimum, (pr/rate) so these employees do not waste money on expensive insurance.
- Educate employees. The district is fairly ignorant on benefits (pros/cons) on different products.
- Insurance rates on spouses and kid are too high.
- Are the spouse and kid rates subsidizing the employee rate?
- The district should avoid all cost overruns and live within the budget with proper management.
- Why are projects listed in the budget under one heading changed around on a frequent basis, thus making it almost impossible to keep track of where the money is going? The community should hold monthly meetings to discuss the audits.
- The school board should publish "a cash flow accountability" quarterly in the newspaper.
- Are we getting the best we can for our health care dollar?
- A recent cut of health care funds to balance the budget is not wise management.
- We need to organize a third-party administration for health insurance.
- Employees need to be notified in time when changing carriers. For example, eye vision and dental; hardly any dentists are listed.
- Insurance is very expensive, need better cash investments and opportunities for the employees.
- Notifications of changes this August were mailed after the information sessions began. Once school starts, it's difficult to attend these meetings.
- Stress management classes, yearly health evaluation, or check-ups depending on age of teacher.
- Lower our health insurance to be able to include our families. Too high for so little pay. Better benefits.
- Blue Flame building has already used up too much money. We have necessities.
- Older employees cannot pay into Medicare.
- Find better providers with lower costs and better benefits.
- Publicize what these policies are. The average taxpayer or employee has no idea.
- We could use vision and dental plans more beneficial to the employees.
- What investment practices? The average taxpayer has no idea of how and where money is spent.

- Review the district's association with Young Insurance Agency. Poor customer relations, expensive cost for family coverage, poor selection of representatives. Co-payments go up with no notice.
- Employees should choose health insurance provider and EPISD.
- We need to go out of town to invest or seek better insurance rates for employees; this would be better for taxpayers.
- Need better communication to taxpayers on EPISD investments.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Money is wasted on satellite dishes at schools. They are now technologically impossible to use.
- If we must have several different school districts in El Paso, can these districts co-op on warehousing, purchasing, insurance, etc.?
- EPISD paid for a certified teacher's study of ESL at UTEP but did not assign him to teach that. The district wasted taxpayers' money.
- The district pays curriculum specialists to assist teachers, in need of assistance, become better teachers. A principal is allowed to overrule the recommendations of this team so the money spent helping a teacher is wasted because the principal has some vendetta.
- The most important part of this audit is getting a response in writing from the district as to the plans/acts in response. Will this occur? When? What will the Comptroller's office do to follow up?
- No More Taxes! Pay teachers a decent salary with money usually wasted.
- Curriculum specialists don't assist teachers. These "facilitators" are only facilitating their own "pockets."
- The Blue Flame building is a boondoggle! We are spending \$700,000 to lease parking spaces for the administration. What a waste!
- EPISD needs to get rid of all extra housing facilities and put them all in a smaller amount of buildings. This would save on a lot of leasing costs.
- Is a monthly budget vs. actual prepared and available to board administration and educational staff and public? Is the chart of accounts broken into major categories?
- Better budgeting - EPISD has the money, however it is not being used for what it is needed. Soda machines are everywhere. But good books to get students prepared for college are needed.
- Better facilities - the buildings are in bad shape. Repairs need to be made as soon as they are reported or, if not reported, district needs to check on each school.
- Send home with student financial and operating cost reports, along with other reports, to be reviewed by parents.

- Too much money going to higher management, less for teachers and students.
- Student was in reading class with no books. Books were stolen. When reported to main office, main office covered up.
- We as parents/taxpayers should get financial reports and know what is coming to our schools.
- Money is being wasted in this district. No need for Blue Flame Building, regions, and top-heavy administration.
- High level administration is extremely top-heavy. There is no need to hire such high paid individuals, when the students are being deprived.
- Get an independent private auditor and insist that the school report all expenses.
- Why are there special schools for "the gifted" (i.e. Silva Magnet) and nothing for students with learning disabilities? They are not providing their needs.
- Only the school board should have authority to reprogram the budget when approved.
- Provide justification of costs related to central office functions.
- Put internal controls in place to monitor acquisition of new programs such as the AIM program, which was 25 years old when purchased by EPISD and retired by Dallas because it failed to meet the needs of the group of students it was purchased for at a cost of \$35,000.
- Architects/engineers on construction/renovation projects paid often too high percentages and still ask for additional services to correct their own design mistakes.
- Fiscal policies should reflect the existing needs with an eye to the future, taxes are accepted if a visible positive result is seen by John Q. Public. When reports of fiscal irresponsibility are exposed, the public becomes very skeptical of school leadership. Let's put dollars in the classroom not in the push for celebrity status.
- Supervisors and campus police drive too fancy vehicles (i.e. half-ton trucks for maintenance supervisors who seldom haul items in the pickup bed).
- A lot of money is being spent on stipends for certain groups (and I'm not talking about coaches - they earn theirs w/lots of hours), for example Guillen professionals, counselors, diagnosticians - should be paid according to scale. The Merck Scale has caused too much inequity in salaries. Under this system, one can be paid "too much" or "too little" - certainly inequitable. Same service should get same pay with same years. A 10-year clerk should not make more than a 17-year clerk should; a 30-year administrator should not make more than a 16-or 18-year administrator should.
- Salary scale jobs need review.

- There is no accountability when it comes to school money, individual schools must have their own budget, and be held accountable for their actions.
- If I can run our household on one income, I believe these so-called educated, over paid administrators should do the same. Get rid of unneeded, under-worked overpaid paper pushers!
- No more deferred maintenance projects! Fix things when they are first reported - NOT one or two years later when the repaid cost have magnified and replacement is the only answer.
- EPISD needs a "financial" manager and not a "politician." Our previous superintendent was not a financial manager as we watched our fund balance start very healthy at \$40+ million and dwindle next to zero now. We need "fiscal" responsibility starting from the top down. That's a big drop in public dollars.
- The administration should answer all questions put to them by the board instead of covering up.
- Every parent should be a part of the school's budget process. Hear more about the campus rather than the district.
- Superintendent, board feels that bond issue money can be spent as they please, not as sold to public and promised to public.
- Site-based operation - Save money and schools are more accountable if a layer of administration was cut out (e.g., assoc. superintendents in area office and their many assistants).
- Principals should be able to go straight to the superintendent.
- Property taxes would not have to be raised if the money was budgeted more effectively. Get rid of the Blue Flame Building and all its expenses, the parking, and the regions, regional directors and everything else they entail. Let the superintendent do his job!
- Budgets should be set earlier to allow programs (new & old) to plan for the new school year - either cancel or buy the necessary equipment or books, etc.
- School buildings need to be looked on regionally. As cities move outward, empty classrooms are left behind as new buildings are built and staffed with the same number of administrators. We need a total classroom inventory across the metropolitan El Paso area. School district lines could be shifted or whole buildings could be leased to districts in need. Example: Burges in 1977 housed 3,300 students with fewer facilities than we have now with 1,600 students. Look at El Paso High, MacArthur, Cielo Vista, and Bonham.
- Review the school board's financial decision - recently computers were purchased for high school classrooms. The word is that \$40 - \$50,000 was overspent on lesser quality machines with a poorer maintenance agreement. All this while, the board screams about a \$230 million deficit in building maintenance.

- My taxes will go up even though my house value stayed the same. We will lose all the gain we should have realized with Governor Bush's extra property tax exemptions.
- If there will be lesser students this year, the budget should be less.
- School taxes need to be placed in a broader base, not just property owners.
- Stop blaming teacher pay raises for mismanagement by the school board. Take responsibility for your actions.
- Maintain buildings to include timely preventive maintenance.
- Check report done a couple of years ago, which advised how to save money. Did the implementation of the report really save money? The budget increased.
- Financial responsibilities to campuses will create creative financial management and budgeting responsibility to schools not departments.
- Is there a facility replacement or maintenance plan?
- Not all campuses are handicapped accessible - check all areas, playgrounds, hallways, stadiums, etc.
- Budget/tax revenues are paid to educate the citizens of our community. Illegal or foreign residents should be welcomed by our district, yet they should be required to pay tuition if they do not reside in this country. Students claiming to live in the U.S. should have their residency verified regularly.
- Can debt service be lowered and the difference used to retire the debt?
- Distribute financial resources evenly among all the schools in the district.
- Allow the campus principal to truly serve as the fiscal agent of the budget.
- Fiscal year must change so that when school starts and teachers are ready to teach, much-needed supplies and materials can be ordered right away - not five weeks after the year begins (our supplies will be received in October).
- Budget for new school year needs to be ready prior to start of school.
- Need more revenue avenues besides the local taxpayer. Why should we constantly have to raise taxes? The poor can only benefit and pay so much. This year everyone raised taxes; what's going to happen next year?
- This area is in the wrong people's hands. Financial management is one of the weakest areas of school operations.
- Too much money is being spent in overhead administrative salaries, not enough on children, teachers, and building maintenance.
- We need people with successful business experience to handle this component.

- We need an internal auditor to keep track of spending inside the district offices.
- There are way too many "high level" administrators. Example: the area superintendents are really not needed.
- Clarification to teachers - we do not know what is available to us on local campus level. Every principal seems "different" when it comes to money distribution.
- The budget could see considerable reduction with a reduction in administration costs. Right, there's too little accountability at every level other than teachers.
- Who does internal audit report to? If to the administration, isn't that like the fox in the hen house?
- A lot of things need to be contracted out. More internal audits.
- Too many people are getting paid for doing the same work at top positions.
- Budget needs to be looked at closer to reduce unwanted expenditures.
- Central office functions need trimming - real strength should be on teachers and principals.
- We need more money spent on facilities on the campus not at PDC Education Centers.
- The state needs to finance education differently (i.e., not from property tax - but sale or income tax). This would then fund every district equally.
- Go to a two-year financial planning schedule to coincide with the state-funding program. This would force the board to plan ahead. It would also eliminate the political posturing, infighting, etc. that occurs every year at salary proposal time.
- Speaking of salary proposals, any proposal should include the source of the funds.
- Public disclosure in the newspaper of the district's budget.
- Do spot checks of departments; the old adage of one hand not knowing what the other is doing was written for this district.
- The operating budget is so huge that there is no dollar for dollar accounting of taxpayers' money.
- A thorough audit will eliminate the waste and help the elderly taxpayer.
- The school district is constructing a new elementary school (Paul C. Moreno Elementary) which is needed. However, EPISD originally planned to build a three-story school for 600 students at a cost of \$5.6 million. Now, EPISD is building a two-story school (at the same site) for 400 students, costing \$7.4 million. Why pay for less?
- Need report of where the money is spent.
- Need to change audit company - same one for 30 years.
- Need to change audit report format and financial report format.

- School-based budget needs a review.
- Community interest input for money.
- Need an independent in-house external auditor to keep a sound business approach to district spending.
- Must be an external auditor that answers to the board.
- Spend money in budget only. Don't raise taxes.
- On contracts - over budget, contractor pays, over time, contractor pays - EPISD/taxpayers should never pay extra.
- More money should be budgeted for older schools in need of desperate repairs.
- Hire an in-house attorney.
- The district should be aware that sometimes principals mishandle the funds and buy things not needed. They use it on things to make the school look good. They should be spending the money on students. But since no one will check, the principals do what they want.
- District purchasing department is operating behind the times. There is poor communication with vendors, no visible minority purchasing programs, registrations are poorly maintained, decentralized purchasing (school-based) increases many costs, and principals and staff are not trained buyers, purchasing is not well automated.
- Set up web page to let each EPISD purchaser know where other EPISD purchasers are obtaining their goods, price, comments, problems, samples, use, new ideas, etc.
- There is a mismanagement of funds.
- No checks and balances on money spent at district office.
- Programs that work are being cut while superficial programs are implemented.
- Too much money going to educators and government on pretense of helping children.
- Financial management is being run according to TEA policy and federal policy - it's when board members get involved in certain areas that money is funded in wrong programs.
- Fiscal year, different than when school begins, difficult on schools.
- Sales tax to supplement property tax to be used for building maintenance. That way everyone contributes.
- I did not see the value of a \$250,000 manpower study the district conducted approximately three years ago. They paid an outside accounting firm to conduct the study. Perhaps the district could have saved money by having someone within the district, more familiar with the district, conduct the study. Perhaps they could have had a state agency come in and conduct the study. This way the cost would have been borne by the state and not the local district. I do not feel that the results of the manpower study were fruitful. As a teacher in the district, it does not seem like we need

fewer janitors. It seems to me that we barely have enough. Dividing the district into four regions as a result of the study seems to have only added another layer of bureaucracy. There is some confusion now as to where to go or who to call when something is needed. This division has resulted in my not being able to meet with other teachers in the same discipline throughout the district. This has resulted in lower quality in-service and teacher training. Teacher training within the educational discipline has decreased dramatically.

- Budget review committee does pretty well, but school board appears to want to micromanage.
- Lack of textbooks! I believe there is plenty of money, however it is not being spent in the right areas.
- To whom are administrative department heads responsible in executing their budgets?
- When the Salary Committee asks for budget breakdowns, the administration's financial officers reply that the budget is prepared according to the TEA guidelines and that the budget cannot be "explained" differently. Why can't the public find out exactly how much the entire administration costs, including their offices, equipment, secretaries, clerks plus (including) administrator's salaries? The bureaucracy's costs need to be freely and openly discussed.
- Franklin High School needs another assistant principal of discipline for the large student body. Yet "the budget" prevents that.
- Students need school trips for their particular subjects, such as government and economic courses. World history students were denied the outstanding Egyptian exhibit at the Insights Museum because "the budget doesn't allow for bus trips downtown."
- Where is all the money going? I'm in the PTA and we are the ones that fund trips and playground and whatever else is needed. What would happen if all the parents quit? The schools would be dumps. But, administration will still take a good paycheck. Who is stealing the money? Teachers buy most of their supplies. We need to know exactly where every penny is going. If everything is accounted for and legal, we should not be denied the right to know where our hard-earned money is going.
- The company administering the lottery (based in Virginia) is very reluctant to release their profits. These figures should have been public knowledge, by law, from the beginning. The public should be fully informed about every penny of lottery money. During the lobbying phase for a Texas lottery, it was said that profits from the lottery would go to education. Thus, the public should be well informed about exactly how much money their local district is receiving via the lottery. The EPISD is the fifth largest in the state

and should get an appropriate piece of the lottery pie. The public should also know what percentage of total lottery money is not going to education and why.

- Funding to support extracurricular activities. (Example: Franklin High School must rent a Ryder truck each time the band performs at another school, while the YISD provides this service to their band, booster club, and parents. Where is the money going? The EPISD comprises over half of my property tax bill - where's the beef? We need more accountability on expenditures.
- Maybe the state ought to consider taxing personal property (cars) so that each town can collect more money without additional cost to land/home-owners and get some money from renters with children who are not already putting into the system.

COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

PURCHASING

- Not enough textbooks ordered.
- We just adopted a great new art book this year. Now we need real art supplies in the elementary classroom.
- Supplies that teachers don't have to purchase themselves.
- Teachers need monies for classrooms. We spend a lot of our own money.
- My own experience with friends who are teachers is that they will spend more than \$75 of their own money for student needs a semester. More money needs to be devoted to educational and instructional supplies.
- Some programs don't require the use of texts. This money could be spent on other materials (at those campuses only) in lieu of textbook money. For examples: Sharon Miers/Sharon Wells/Manips.
- Are bids made available to the public at board meetings?
- New textbook warehouse is an improvement.
- Reduce the "red" tape, but have an accountability system for all purchases. No school should be without needed textbooks, because the warehouse is closed for inventory.
- Too much red tape.
- New edition (updated) textbooks.
- New smaller, easy-to-carry textbooks.
- The competitive low bids are not always the best in purchasing equipment, materials, etc.
- Consolidate purchasing power within Region 19.
- Get an independent private auditor. This is not a fair question to ask parents.
- Text should be appropriate for area and its needs as well as plenty in number. There should never be a shortage. Perhaps educators familiar with the area need should be commissioned to write "our" text.
- There should be a complete audit of how many children don't have textbooks. Something is wrong when students can't take textbooks home. They can at some schools and not at others.
- Be honest with parents, they should be allowed access to the state-required curriculum - to have better knowledge and to be able to make a wise decision on which books to buy.
- Resources materials for Special Education students.

- Better instruments and materials. Why does Coronado have better instruments? My kids are worth as much to me as Coronado kids! And also JROTC equipment.
- I'm tired of textbooks with missing pages!
- The three Special Education classes here received a budget of \$125 for an entire school year, not enough money to teach community living skills nor pay for the kids to go out and practice what they have learned.
- Three years in Special Education without a single textbook - these are also the citizens of tomorrow.
- Why don't the schools have enough books?
- We have had appropriate textbooks and ability to purchase materials.
- Purchasing power should be given to each head administrator of each school. He or she knows what is needed and can get it done in a timely matter.
- The necessary funding should be given to each school.
- Too many layers to obtain items from warehouse. Is there a better system that has worked somewhere else in the state of Texas that EPISD could benefit from?
- Why do non-degreed administrative jobs pay more than teaching jobs?
- Someone needs to look at staffing at the warehouse.
- Why are staff members allowed to work their other jobs during regular work hours?
- My experience with talking to district employees is that the purchasing/warehouse responsibility was severely neglected and mismanaged.
- The superintendent and support staff got away scot-free.
- We need to be fair with all employees and reward where rewards are merited; discipline where that is necessary.
- Many textbooks are too old, outdated, and damaged, yet no one is replacing them.
- Suggest paperback textbooks - less cost to students and easier to replace.
- Purchasing dept. unfriendly to local vendors, but friendly to big business.
- Even if you are registered in the district as a vendor, you are not notified of opportunities in your area.
- Because purchasing is so protective, major contract awards become political; vendors work the board.
- Is there a purchasing "master plan?"
- How do you find out about opportunities as vendor? You have to know someone. This makes selling to EPISD very expensive and results in more costs.

- Employees purchasing "stuff" need immediate status of what their requisition is. It has improved, but many times the answers are not there. They should have computer access to status. Time is money. Make those who drop the ball accountable.
- To be cost effective, standardized textbooks should be selected and all schools should get the same books for each grade level.
- An audit should be made of the textbook purchases and the textbook companies that are always favored. (financial audit).
- Children should have a book issued to them, not shared.
- Contract bidding should be highly accountable by school board.
- Some of the materials purchased are of poor quality.
- Textbooks need to be chosen with the thought the students need to learn correctly not just for the moment, but as they go on to college. Some books are not in sync with the college textbooks.
- District very short on books, supplies, arts supplies - no money for students due to too many high-salaried administrators.
- Fix school buildings; we don't need new gym.
- Lost 400 students this year- will lose 1,000 next year- no new students- all retired residents tired of paying high taxes.
- Spend wisely.
- Where are the books, we have the bill?
- Students should pay for destroyed books and equipment.
- The reason there are no supplies is because the students steal them or damage them.
- Administrators should get more pay, not 1 percent raises, for as much crud as they have to go through with the students and teacher and parents. They deserve much more.
- Parents pay for lost and destroyed books. The lottery wasn't for funding schools in Texas?
- We need more auxiliary aid for Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Study guides for AP government classes are available, but this is not part of the district budget.
- Put the lid on extravagant spending. The district needs to tighten their belts. Purchase items for function and adaptability.
- As a member of last year's textbook committee, I saw much waste. State should narrow down selection. It was terrible.
- Contracts are awarded to the lowest bidder, then contractors jack up the price through cost overruns. The contractor should be held liable for delays in construction; facilities are not ready by the deadline, taxpayers assume the cost!
- Board members play favorites like city commissioners and award bids to friends. Even when proper procedure is followed in choosing the low bidder, good quality of items is needed. The board goes with their people instead of following recommendations from department and TEA guidelines! Elect a complete new board.

- Get rid of the good old boy system!
- Bonded local businesses that are near the school in need should be influenced to give a discount (added) for the work.
- Subcontracting gets rid of all the useless personnel.
- There should be enough money available to purchase the necessary number of textbooks to be able to carry an effective class.
- Give the money to the schools and let them purchase the products appropriate to their needs.
- Competitive bids not always the best products.
- Let the schools choose their textbooks from the state list. It will end the bickering and it will put the accountability for scores and such on the teacher and the school. No more blaming the book for poor scores.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- The EPISD is making a strong effort to incorporate computer-aided instruction into classrooms. This past summer, the district offered many quality programs to show teachers how to use computers.
- Mexico has a good system of "distance learning." We must take advantage of today's technology to deal with students on edges of bell curve.
- Need more computer experts to aid the teachers with computer problems.
- We need computer and software in every classroom - not just in the "lab."
- Need a full staff in TIS to help teachers accomplish this.
- High performing schools have to "scramble" for computers, unlike low performing schools.
- Computers are a great aid to learning but they should augment teaching and not replace it. Nonetheless, more equipment is needed, as is more training of faculty on how to use these "added" resources in their curriculum.
- I have been with EPISD only two years and the technology is years/decades behind that of other districts I've worked for.
- A lab full of green screens is practically useless for Y2K.
- Certified teachers should run technology labs.
- Where is the technology plan?
- Better computers in schools.
- Technology and computers need to be updated often.
- Allow teachers to let students use computers in their classroom for work.
- How can I prevent my son from being plugged into a computer so that he can actually learn to read and write and possibly learn some math and science?

- For Pre-K - third grade, no computers. They need to learn to compute in their heads.
- Computer technology is a must, but district must be smart in purchasing. You can have too much that is not compatible. Maintenance contracts should be specific.
- There is no such thing as "learning disabled." It should be labeled (if necessary) as "learning differently." Computers can assist the teachers' and students' ability to learn via the modality that works for the individual. Track the visual, the audio, the kinesthetic learners and maximize their individual abilities.
- Must be sure that computers are being utilized properly. I do not want them to turn into busy work.
- More education for teachers on how to use computers as a tool, not as a teacher.
- Using donated computer in classrooms, instead of offices, and electronic grading books.
- More modern assisting technology in the classes for physically and mentally impaired students. They might be more than our janitors of tomorrow. Because students learn differently, they still, more than ever, need to be exposed to technology.
- We need a technology-driven high school geared to the community and world needs of tomorrow.
- Technology is needed, but it costs money.
- Teach students without computers. Once they have learned without computers, then let them use it.
- Federal government has programs where schools can get their unused computers. White Sands has such programs. H.E. Charles and Andress were told about it, yet no one tried to get these computers. I know it only took a memo from the school.
- More technology across the curriculum. Faculty, staff, student and parent training in technology areas to prepare for the future as well as today's market.
- EPISD is far behind the other districts in town. Every classroom should already have had an updated computer in every classroom. Too many layers in administration. Buy computers instead of having so many administrators at the district levels. The computers would benefit our students more.
- Why do only the indigent students get access to good computers? Other students need equal access.
- Instructional technology improving; teachers need time to master for maximum effectiveness. Technology sessions are available but not all can take advantage of attending.
- Where can we get more money. Tech is expensive, but necessary.
- We need more computer classes, not just computer math, but Internet, access, Word Perfect, Power Point, etc. and things that will give us more employable skills.

- Until the state of Texas or the federal government becomes serious about bringing schools up to par, our technology will always be stone age. Districts just can't afford the initial costs (and constant upgrading expenses) of instituting up-to-date technology in classrooms or in school "systems" (for attendance, etc.)
- If we want our students to be the best, we need to provide them with the best state-of-the-art technology available as well as the corresponding guidance and instruction. We can cut enough of the waste to finance this.
- Need to educate instructors.
- Too much emphasis is put on computer learning, but there is not much progress with student performance. Computer literacy courses are okay, but students should not be made to rely heavily on computers.
- Computer literacy courses are starting too late (8th grade)
- I think this area should be looked into. At our school, the principal would have fund-raisers along with PTA and make PTA send a letter home saying the monies raised were for computer software. We have never seen any. Yet they would spend the money on artificial trees for the school (what was that?) That's not for the students, it's for the principal.
- Open computer labs in the evening and on weekends.
- The computer area is ripe for real partnership with hardware and software firms; lots of room to innovate here.
- Where is the Management Information Systems (MIS) director? Why can't anyone run the show? Is it because it is too big of a job?
- Central building is not networked, many schools are not networked, teachers are poorly trained in anything but web pages and the Internet, district's computer software is outdated - Y2K problems, at El Paso High - students are taught programming with PC's with no hard drives.
- There is no clear telecommunication policy that is publicly known.
- No leadership; this is clearly visible in the computer arena, in both operation and classrooms. Staff is very protected and very closed.
- Many employees are unaware of their software. Money is going out the window (i.e. non-use of software - teachers, students, etc., inefficient software, excess work by employees who do not use software properly).
- Many students are from low/middle socio-economic households that do not provide home computers. Computer labs are not available to students after 3:30 p.m. EPHS has a computer math lab and a computer writing lab that is dark by 3:30 p.m. The explanation is that the teachers come to school before 8 a.m. and they go home at 3:30 p.m. Even if they are on campuses (EPSH) before 8 a.m. My son cannot enter the school because the doors are

locked to the students. Other districts (YISD) have their technology more available for extra work.

- Computer maintenance contracts are very expensive and at times there is an overlap with warranties and maintenance contracts. Are we paying too much for these services? Computers should not be in classrooms below junior high school (the best computer is in the brain, but it must be used).
- The sellers should honor computer maintenance contracts and warranties. There should be bids and also provided training. After the bid is awarded, it should be honored for one year.
- Computer technology has been a plus with additions of labs and Internet access.
- Technology programs are grant-funded with no follow through.
- Distance learning - several schools had two satellite dishes installed, which are now useless! Also, laptop computers were issued to teachers in a helter-skelter manner. Now the machines are practically obsolete; no maintenance is being provided, but teachers are required to sign an agreement to pay \$2,000 for replacement cost in the event of loss, for the privilege of using outdated technology.
- High schools should teach more about computers and the capacity of computers.
- The cost of building new computers with the latest technology is minimal compared to off-the-shelf purchases; a great way to teach our future workers on how to use and apply technical skills.
- Computers should be used at the earliest grade level; interactive learning is challenging and stimulating to the mind.
- Check to see how many computers sit unused throughout the district, and how many are not functional.
- Technology is great, but our students need to learn to read and write first.
- The technology we get is never enough or outdated.
- Highland school, being a special campus, has consistently been the last school to acquire new technology. (My class finally got Apple IIe in 1993).
- All schools should have equal access to updated computers, books, teachers, etc.
- All schools should have the adequate technology. Some middle schools have excellent technology; then go to high school and lose everything they learned.
- Keep computers and software updated.
- What happens when the electricity goes out? Teach both incorporated and basic technology.
- Hiring too many outside consultants, need to train in-house.
- There is a need for more computer training in the primary grades.

- Some schools (Franklin and Coronado) have more technology (i.e. computers, graphing calculators) than Austin. There should be an equal amount throughout the district.
- Need to hire some help in records management. Poor record-keeping affects morale of students, faculty and staff.
- Schools should have computers for students to learn on and learn how to use them.
- Students who do not have computers at home need to have the opportunity to use computers at school.
- Why should the West Side schools have more computer technology? We have just as many outstanding students on the East Side.
- We need to address the needs of the students who are considered average and above when distributing and making computers available. At-risk students should not be "rewarded" for returning to school at the expense of average and above average students.
- Look into being able to have a computer for almost every child in every class.
- Replace books with computers.
- Let the tech people do their jobs. The board has already chased away the top person in this dept. - micromanagement doesn't work. The board should give the superintendent directions, then let the professionals do their jobs.
- Campus office personnel not properly trained on computers. Either hands on at school or classes outside schools should be provided periodically.
- Some Special Education computers are so outdated, they are not being used properly.
- Older computers should automatically go to elementary schools. Those students are just starting with the basics.
- Instruct custodians on how to handle computers properly and students on how to operate them with qualified personnel.

COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- Is the Blue Flame Building necessary? This needs rethinking.
- Classrooms and schools are generally overcrowded. How do EPISD schools compare with other Texas school districts having the same general resources?
- Blue Flame Bldg. should be put to good use (allow club meetings, exhibits, conferences).
- Too many portable buildings increase heating and cooling costs. I've heard some AC's running all weekend.
- I am concerned about my child's violin security. There is no place to safely lock up the instruments. Will the school replace the violin if it is stolen? We need instrument lockers and bigger music rooms.
- Somebody can't count heads well. We open new schools and immediately need portables.
- Use schools after hours as community centers. This is an old idea; what's holding it up?
- Lockers are a necessity.
- Custodians should be paid more.
- Why is building maintenance deferred due to a lack of funds, but we hire new administrators?
- The district appears more concerned with maintenance at the Blue Flame Building than with campuses; for example ceiling tiles are about to fall in classroom, floor tiles are taped together with duct tape, roofing is covered with hot tar. During the last weeks in May, children and adults were sick, but the Health Department's "hands were tied" to stop the work.
- Older facilities need board attention.
- Emergency needs in facilities need to be addressed on an immediate basis.
- Having part-time/temporary custodians who do not receive benefits is morally wrong.
- All EPISD buildings need to be kept up before they start to deteriorate.
- Concerned about overall facilities, use and management.
- Facilities should be used more.
- Poor maintenance and budgeting for repairs.
- Poor facility planning - some facilities in very poor condition.
- Many facilities in poor shape.
- A lot of money spent on technology, and science labs are in disrepair.

- Each school used to perform its own minor maintenance work, then the district created a centralized maintenance system that is ineffective and costly. It takes too long to fix a leak or install a pencil sharpener.
- Each school could acquire assistance from local area merchants and businesses that deal with the specific maintenance problem to fix it as long as they are bonded.
- So many facilities are in need of repair, but not enough money in the budget for these expenses.
- "Poor taxpayers ruin,"- it is our hard-earned money that is being wasted.
- If 5 percent of the budget could be set aside, as if we never had it to begin with, then we could start now with the most urgent needs in repairs.
- El Paso High has cracked sidewalks, torn window screens, cafeteria tile coming up, and cement buckling.
- Newman School air conditioners, situated right above students, are in urgent need of repair. This poses a safety hazard and life endangerment for students.
- School district has neglected this responsibility districtwide. Funds set aside to fix what need to be fixed are inadequate.
- Until the state begins to really address inequities of property-poor districts this will not change, even with better management that might provide a little more money. Facilities are very expensive. Our facilities are old. EPISD ironically is the "richest" district in E Paso, and we lose funds as a result.
- The "deferred maintenance problem" continues to put projects, in need of repair, further down the priority list of needs.
- Maintenance/custodial staff should be increased, not reversed. We do the "dirty work" with pride.
- Raise the wages of this critically important group (maintenance/custodial staff).
- Students should not be denied the right to be comfortable; it is common logic that if a person is not comfortable they will not work to full capacity. AC units need to be up and running.
- I've noticed school restrooms profusely wasting water because no one turns off the leaking sinks, or flushes toilets, etc.
- We need custodial staff.
- Turn off air at Blue Flame building just like the air was turned off at local schools. If the students suffer, employees of the Blue Flame building should suffer too!
- The EPISD schools used to be really clean, but they are not that way anymore. The custodial staff has been cut back so far that they cannot keep the buildings clean.
- Maintenance has also suffered because it has been said that there is not enough money.

- If I ran a manufacturing plant, like schools run facilities, I'd be out of business quickly. The school facilities should be open and operating seven days a week, 16 hours a day, and 12 months a year.
- Consider inter-local agreements to maintain and operate facilities (e.g., w/parks and recreation for after hours and summer programs, w/housing authority for maintenance, w/police security, w/transit authority for transportation.)
- Health and safety should be a priority; letting maintenance go jeopardizes students' well-being at school.
- School crossings are increasingly more dangerous, especially at El Paso High. Can't cross walks be built for safety of students?
- Privatize a high percentage of maintenance. Start with a few schools so comparisons/evaluations can be made.
- Kitchens should be properly vented. Excess heat from freezers causes freezers to be overworked. Send heat/air to cafeteria in winter/summer - vent to outside. Draw air at night to cool down.
- Refrigerator compressors more expensive to run than ventilators.
- Do not allow custodians to run the schools (i.e. schedule of bathroom cleaning, when to open and close building, rearranging cafeterias for PTA, etc.).
- There is a shortage of vacuum cleaners and buffing machines, safety belts, breathing masks (used when they take off graffiti). Need more cleaning supplies in general, including paper towels in restrooms.
- Students are rude and abusive to custodians.
- Please fix our schools in a timely fashion, especially bathroom facilities in elementary schools! Also, where is the soap in high school restrooms?
- What is the projected cost of maintaining the Blue Flame building and parking garage per year and for the next five years?
- How much money is being paid for asbestos removal in the Blue Flame building and all other district buildings?
- Custodial/maintenance services need to be contracted out. One contractor and one inspector should be responsible for a completion of a job and they should be penalized for mistakes and errors they make.
- Irvin High School is in need of upgrading many areas of its campus. Irvin's roofs, tiles and floors are decades old; please upgrade them. Better conditions improve learning.
- Irvin High School spends a lot of money with no equal resources as Franklin.
- Also, why is it that in certain areas of the city, facilities are improved by parents or parent groups and in other areas, parents run into huge seas of red tape?

- The roof in the library of Irvin H.S. still leaks. Books have been ruined because of this.
- Maintenance and upgrade of facilities of the Blue Flame Building is a waste of our money (i.e. \$1 million for a new phone system and parking garage). Money could be better spent on maintenance of schools and facilities.
- Highland School has been deprived for many years of funds for facilities maintenance; many classrooms are missing ceiling tiles and have water-damaged ceilings; cracked, chipped, or missing floor tiles, and many other problems are the result. My room has lost 20-30 ceiling tiles (so far).
- At Irvin, many maintenance problems can't seem to be fixed. Repeated requests have no effect; sinks with no water, toilets that don't flush properly, air conditioning that never works correctly or is not maintained. Requests for maintenance have to be sent "downtown" or somewhere and repairs seem to never get done.
- Taxes should be used for upgrade on schools.
- The custodial staffs at some schools are too powerful. For example, the janitor at EPHS tells the teachers when they have to leave the building; the excuse is always that custodians don't get paid the high salary of teachers and therefore can't open or lock door after hours.
- Custodial staff is understaffed to save money, but high-salary people are overstaffed.
- Need to improve working conditions.
- More benefits for low salaried workers.
- Need uniforms.
- Buildings are in great need of repair. The roofs are leaking, air conditioning doesn't work, and there are asbestos in old schools.
- Work orders are not filled in a timely manner (i.e., request for leaky faucet to be repaired, but by the time it is responded to, condition has worsened.) Perhaps local contractors can make repairs cheaper and faster.
- Award incentive so that speed equals money for the employees.
- Custodial staff needs to wear uniforms.
- Austin H.S. needs a facelift.
- Why not open facilities for community activities which are for political gain and not for a profit? (for free).
- Are the Stanton Cottages viable?
- Have facilities open to children who arrive at school early because their parents have to work.
- The board chased a top person away; stop the school board from micromanagement and let the paid professionals do their job.
- The school district accepted a donation of the gas company building located downtown. This building was very old, probably dilapidated, and must have cost the district a large amount to bring

it up to par. Also, there was an expense of moving people out of their old office and into the gas building. My perception is that the space in this very large building was not needed. I did not sense overcrowding at central office, and this building added much extra space. Also, by virtue of this building being downtown, the district must now pay the extra expense of employee parking.

- The gas company did not donate their parking facility, and is charging the district for parking. Since employee parking is free on campuses, why isn't it free downtown?
- Before the district makes a decision involving a significant amount of money, especially with regard to a controversial item or an item out of the ordinary (i.e. manpower study, accepting the gas company building, completely changing the staff of Guillen, superintendent's severance package) the district should have a citizen review committee look at the and make suggestions/recommendations to the school board. This way, citizens get involved before their taxes go up. To some degree, isn't this already being done? "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

TRANSPORTATION

- Buses leave campuses at Hornedo 10 minutes after classes end.
- We love our elementary school bus driver, yet I get the impression he's always under pressure.
- Stop thinking us vs. them with professional and non-professional staff.
- Seat belts are needed.
- Buses don't always pick up kids. No one oversees at the middle schools that kids get picked up, so some are left at the school.
- Buses should be available for field trips, with the district picking up the cost.
- More buses.
- Later buses.
- More bus routes.
- Better routing schedules are needed. Parents and staff should decide schedules and routes.
- Bus drivers should be nice.
- Need working, modern (air-conditioned) transportation.
- Punctual buses!
- Ditto, or send out new schedule to parents.
- Training for bus aides for physically-impaired students.
- They need to hire people who can create efficient schedules and who can speak English.
- We have seat belt laws, why don't our children's buses have seat belts?
- Bus safety; seat belt policy unclear.

- Bus drivers are doing the best they can.
- We want a bus driver and someone that can help him keep control of all the students in the bus.
- Considering the fact that bus drivers drive, they do an excellent job of being facilitator, parent and servant!
- There is a seriously low amount of buses in route, resulting in longer waiting times and fewer spaces on the bus.
- Little input from parents allowed in regards to bus schedules and routing.
- How many students miss school because bus was too late or didn't show or wouldn't let student on the bus?
- Likewise, how many students get stranded at school for same reason?
- Consider using public busing. Make deals with city to use their buses so students do not pay.
- School buses should be equipped with hand-held metal detectors.
- Try advertising on buses to improve buses. It works in other districts. Put air and seat belts on the buses.
- Please check and see if white reflective paint on the top of the bus in YISD is part of EPISD fleet.
- Develop inter-local agreement with transit authority to maximize and optimize services.
- Investigate contracting services to reduce overhead associated with fleet mgmt.
- School buses should have seat belts.
- When the district has twice as many buses as the city, that's too many.
- Better routing and scheduling should be required.
- They better hire bus drivers and safer bus drivers.
- If they paid a decent wage, they'd get better drivers. All trips need to be planned better. Also monitors need to be polite.
- Buses should pick up and drop off students in the school's parking lots only.
- The school system needs too many buses.
- Returning schools to K through grade 8 would eliminate many students having to be bused. It would save a lot of money and unnecessary buses. Cut out the waste.
- Bus scheduling needs a lot of work (pick up and drop off).
- Students as well as parents have to have more courtesy in crossing the road. Some parents are teaching their K through 6 children to jay walk!
- Bus drivers need a better salary and eight-hour jobs.
- Cost-effective maintenance.
- Buses need upgrading for safety.
- Need activity bus for those students staying after school for extra curricular activities.

- Public schools should have school buses not only for military people, but also for all the students that are not military and have to walk home when their home is far away from school.
- Busing is not available. Street crossing is not safe (Alabama Street). Students who live close to school should be allowed to ride the bus even if we have to pay.
- Poor discipline on the bus. All bus drivers cannot maintain order.
- Every year or so, evaluate the bus routes. This will make a better effort at maximizing resources.
- Careful with routes, change can throw off the Special Education kids; they need that stability.
- Bus drivers should follow a schedule so they don't have kids waiting 30 minutes outside in the cold weather. Sometimes they arrive 15 minutes early and sometimes 15 minutes late; that is the reason children have to be out early because no one knows when the bus will arrive.
- Transportation office should make sure that someone will be at the school to watch the children. Rosa Guar does not have anyone in the playground until 8 a.m. Children arrive between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m.
- Reevaluate hardship situations for school bus routes, where students have to arrive too early for parents to get them to school before they go to work. Same situation after school. My kids also have to cross three very busy intersections.
- Transportation dept. needs to do a better job of explaining transportation guidelines imposed by the state and rules and regulations imposed by EPISD.
- Transportation department also needs to be consistent with what they tell the parents.
- Disability of child needs to be considered when bus routes are assigned. Some children are on routes for long periods.
- Bus drivers need more training; too many accidents and near misses. They also speed.
- They do a good job. Let's have some type of incentives for them.
- Bus drivers need to observe speed signs.
- The conditions of the buses are unsafe.
- The drivers and monitors need incentives. The morale is very low. The transportation dept. feels that we are put down. People need to consider that our responsibilities are very important. We carry lives, not material.
- Our working conditions are very poor. We always run out of supplies. For example: soap, paper towels, first aid kits, are empty, no window cleaners, no bus washes and no tissue.
- If you have children riding on these buses, you should check the dept. out.

- People accuse us of speeding. If you only knew the shortage of drivers and having us double up our routes and trying to get them to school on time, you would have to hurry. Please have the dept. checked out. We need the help. Nobody seems to care or listen to us. EPISD is the poorest in the transportation dept. Please, again, help us out.
- Transportation maintenance is always to blame and we are the ones to get cut in hours and wages.
- The support personnel are paid wages that are too low!
- Get rid of some of these huge buses that carry only a few students and invest in smaller vehicles to save us money in the long run.
- Too many buses that transport one or two students to schools. Try to keep children nearest the school.

COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

FOOD SERVICE

- Our bus drivers are always made to suffer when budget problems arise. I do not believe that their salaries should decrease. In fact they are due for an increase.
- The cafeteria food is almost inedible!
- Enchiladas are great!
- The general nutritional content of food is poor. Hamburgers and fries are known not to be balanced or nutritionally varied. These sorts of things may keep you alive, but they do not lead to healthy eating practices.
- More emphasis should be placed on "cooked" meals as opposed to serving canned cold food (side dishes).
- We need real food.
- We need better service.
- Better variety.
- Better quality food. For example: Real beef, not soy burgers.
- The school needs to get real food. Real good, healthy yet tasty.
- Real meat and salt.
- Our cafeteria staff is wonderful.
- Need candy machines.
- Need integrated nutritional health aspects of dining.
- We need bigger helpings (especially at middle schools).
- We need a cafeteria for Terrace Hills (students eat rushed and late).
- Should go back to preparing food in the kitchen instead of trucking it in.
- Should issue cards to all children in school in case they forget their lunch money or lunch so they won't be left without food.
- Students need to keep up with lunch cards.
- I like open campus, my child can come home to eat.
- Elementary food service serves fatty foods. More low-cal food would be better. At the middle school, fast food line needs to be nutritious yet prepared fast.
- Reducing cafeteria staff to a skeleton crew causes crowding during lunch shifts, over worked, too much lifting, etc., which will ultimately cause more workers' compensation cases. Does that save money?
- Need to close campuses at lunchtime and offer more variety to older students.
- Quality of food needs improving.
- Food services seem organized and willing to provide a good service to not only the students but to the district as well.

- I think that they should give a better quality of food in all of the schools.
- I applaud the selection, preparation, and serving of our cafeteria food. Bravo to food and to personnel.
- Students should be allowed second helpings of food in order to keep concentration levels high.
- Facilities in which food is served should receive high priority in the upkeep of maintenance and repair.
- Our cafeteria is not a pleasing place to eat. It is a nerve-wracking and stressful environment.
- Middle school lunch schedule should be split up and not scheduled for all students to eat at same time.
- The cafeteria food at EPISD is good. More importantly the cafeteria manager at EPISD always goes the extra mile for students and faculty. The food is good, but only appeals to the students who don't have cars to eat off campus.
- Parents should be given a copy of nutritional information of meals served in school cafeterias.
- Make lunch free for all, not just the lower income. The government is supplying it any way.
- Continue efforts to recycle. Thanks for joining the city of El Paso in that effort.
- Should be contracted out.
- Give students adequate time to get and eat their lunches!
- Need better menus, there should be good food and no snack food.
- Cafeteria improvements this past summer were great.
- Stress the importance of a balanced diet to all students.
- Incorporate lessons in food service.
- Serve less, come back for more (take all you want and eat all you take).
- There should be more variety for lunch as well as healthier food.
- They should not serve much ground beef in lunch. Should be more variety.
- No varieties of school lunches.
- Children should be allowed to have seconds for no extra charge. What do you do with leftovers? With all the taxes we pay, why can't children have free lunch like Santa Teresa?
- Have more of a variety of meals. Attempt to have more meals made from scratch. Limit the bland pre-fab items.
- Free seconds if it's the food the government pays for; otherwise, it gets thrown out.
- More healthy and vegetarian alternatives.
- Should let us get seconds for a lower price than \$1.35.
- Feed the kids who- want it - instead of wasting all that food! It's their only meal.

- Food should be appetizing. You could do better. Use local business experience in food flavoring.
- Charge the individual \$2 when he/she first gets their food tray, if they think they might come for seconds. If they change their mind the schools keeps the extra change.
- These people do a great job, but are underpaid and understaffed.
- The cafeteria doesn't offer many meals that are healthy for students. Other than salads, all the other meals are "junk food."
- Nachos are not a meal for "real" people. Give a well-balanced meal.
- At some elementary schools, employees pay adult prices, and get first-grade servings.
- It's really hard to have a well-balanced menu since kids at this age live on junk food.
- High schools need to cater fast foods. Elementary students have too many choices and waste food. Cafeteria staff does a good job.
- Need foods lower in fat and healthy options.
- Many years ago school cafeterias were safe havens for kids/faculty/staff providing good nutritious meals. Today they have become a fast food mentality with limited personnel. It is truly a shame.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- No coherent reporting policy for campus crimes. Staff does not encourage reporting of campus crimes. Staff at Hornedo denies campus crimes occur.
- Uniform policy is good, however don't get carried away (e.g. three-button white shirts vs. white shirts).
- I like the red and white days at Moorehead; lets the students have more concentrated learning.
- Teachers need more control over removal of disruptive students.
- Review process for Alternative Education takes too much time between offense and removal. Paperwork enough to bury administration.
- Need more parking lot monitors after school in order to safeguard the children.
- More security officers needed to monitor student behavior.
- More security needed in middle and high schools.
- Safety in the classroom needs rethinking. An intercom link from classrooms to office could help safety of students and teachers.
- Are there community police stations in the schools?
- Parking at Carlos Rivera is so awful - actually there are no spaces for visitors.
- More consequences for bad behavior.
- More recognition and reward for the good students.

- Stop sitting around and watching students fight.
- A lot of special education students are being placed in Alternative Education because is it easier to put them there than to deal with their needs.
- Idle hands and minds are indeed the devil's workshop.
- Recently the EPISD Police Department was authorized to issue tickets. I pass Andress High School every day during lunch and I have yet to see EPISD in front of the school. The only law enforcement I have seen at this time is the El Paso Police Department. It appears we are not getting our money's worth for the EPISD Police Department.
- Need constant security in parking lot for staff/teacher vehicles. It is sad you have to come to work and have a student(s) vandalize you car all the time.
- We may not be able to teach religion or even political science, but we should teach "citizenship" and the importance of making "right" decisions and consequences of each. Responsibility is most lacking in the decision-making process of most teens today.
- Why does EPISD have Ford Crown Victoria chase cars? I do not know of any hot pursuits they make.
- EPISD Police Department should be downsized. We would be better served if EPISD would pay for part of El Paso Police Department or part of the Sheriff's Dept. salary and these individuals could man storefront operations at local high schools and middle schools.
- School resource officers on campus are excellent.
- Citizenship should be taken care of in grade schools.
- There are no assigned teachers to Alternative Education Class at Andress High School.
- Why does school have its police department? Wouldn't it be more cost-efficient to work with established agencies?
- Student discipline policies are satisfactory in primary grades where policies are enforced.
- Safety and Security Programs; in light of national incidents, would like to address the issue with current research/data to prevent tragedy from striking on our campuses. Need programs in place.
- Budget should allow far more security, especially on campuses that are widespread in area and/or enrollment.
- Movement towards school uniforms at various campuses is a big plus.
- Need more school police with added responsibilities not only to provide security but to also provide educational programs with topics to include the danger of playing with weapons.
- An El Paso Police Department officer should work (be stationed) at every area high school.

- Canines should also be implemented in everyday drug searches in every school.
- El Paso Police Department (EPPD) is doing well in enforcing speed limits in school zones
- EPPD may be doing a good job patrolling school zones, but patrol units are speeding through the school zones endangering everyone else.
- Bring back paddling the troubled children.
- School should be optional; students who create problems usually do so because they are forced to go to school.
- We need more emphasis on curriculum development related to community service bringing together the school community and larger community. In our middle school, we spend hours on detention and discipline policies and no time on commitment and service. This also is true for elementary schools.
- Tight discipline by school principals and/or assistants has led to schools looking like prison, which has resulted in greater dropouts.
- There is no real alternative education philosophy, only an alternative school for discipline problems.
- This district is more interested in coming down on non-conformists rather than finding creative/effective ways of "bringing them out" - educate.
- Someone has got to get serious about parental involvement and reach out to all parents, including those that are poor.
- There is no alternative education program for the students of EPISD. The program that exists on the high school campuses is stupid. Why doesn't every high campus have a Nova-net or Plato program as an alternative education program? Many of our EPISD students go to YISD in order to participate in YISD's program. The alternative program at Sunset is not available to the many students in EPISD who need it.
- Student discipline policies are not consistent. There is NOT an effort on the part of EPISD to meet the behavioral needs of our children. High schools' favorite action is to send the misbehaving kid home. This only puts a behavior problem on the street with no supervision.
- EPISD should use their counselors in alternative education, discipline. EPISD uses counselors for paper work only. Many EPISD counselors are not well prepared to make a difference in the behavior of EPISD students. The EPISD counseling program does not compare with the counseling programs available in Socorro ISD or Ysleta ISD.
- Cause all principals to back teachers up with discipline problem consistency.
- A boot camp within the school district would solve many discipline problems.

- There should be watchdogs after school around the school zones with interested parents to report illegal activities.
- The school should not be overruled by chain of command.
- The implementation of a district alternative school has been a big plus.
- Make sure someone listens to the student and parent, too. There seems to be a policy of listening too much to students, not the problems they cause for teachers and other students.
- Teach "Golden Rule" to kids. Maybe you won't need so much security.
- Educate teachers about their legal rights. They have not given up their citizenship just because they signed a teaching contract. Encourage them to report illegal acts, such as threats, to the police. Encourage them to insist that the education code be followed regarding removal and placement of disruptive/violent students.
- Districtwide uniforms for ALL students. This has already been proven successful where implemented.
- We spend too much time on disruptive students' "due process"; what about the rights of the teacher to teach without disruption to the students who want to learn?
- Need more security for students that have and/or attend after-school functions.
- Need a place where students can go if there is trouble.
- A parental mentoring group should be established where students could go talk to them in confidence.
- Stronger, stricter discipline.
- Good safety programs at Burges.
- High school alternative programs could use a police officer in attendance to handle the really defiant students.
- Why not put our campus security in uniforms like in other local districts?
- Set rules, codes, and stick to them!
- Don't allow parents to undermine the process of teaching and learning.
- Discipline policies should apply equally to all students. Teachers' favorites should not be overlooked.
- What happened to zero tolerance? Get rid of EPISD police, save money. We should be allowed to expel to the street!
- Student discipline policies should be relevant; who cares if a student chews gum?
- Need better means of dealing with discipline problems in classrooms.
- Students are free to smoke, drink, and do drugs with no repercussions. They endanger all students, teachers, support personnel and community members, but district ties administrators' hand and they remain on campus.

- Special Education students can assault teachers without fear because they are protected.
- Starting from Kindergarten, we are people; our strengths are in being different, by being different we are the same.
- Don't need uniform for students. Schools have security guards and students are also very respectful.
- Not all schools are safe.
- Open campuses are a problem waiting to happen. Teachers don't feel safe.
- Follow through on programs. If you implement something, stick with it!
- Need warning lights badly for school zones on Alta Vista.
- Parents jaywalk in school zones with their kids, students. Parents should get tickets for 1) endangering life of their children, and 2) jaywalking.
- Problem kids and other students beginning to get in trouble should be taken on tour of jail with hard core inmates.
- The U.S. school system is in shambles and about to collapse, because we have forgotten God, just like Russia did by obliterating God from the classroom.
- Regarding programs to keep youth out of trouble, it seems to me that sanctioned extra-curricular school activities (sports, band, student council, etc.) keep youth busy while fostering fundamental values. Why does the EPISD make participation so difficult (reduced funding, limited or reduced credit, inflexibility in schedule changes)? Extra-curricular activities are a low-cost alternative (and readily available) programs that build citizenship. These activities should be a required curriculum in "community involvement" - not merely "extra" - that present additional challenges to our youth.
- Uneven application of discipline. The same offense deserves the same consequence, regardless of who is administering the punishment. Also needed is more security personnel (four security personnel at Franklin are not enough).
- Student discipline starts at home.
- Where is corporal punishment when needed?
- Better lighting of the schools after dark.