TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August 22, 2001

The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable William R. Ratliff
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the 77th Legislature
Commissioner James E. Nelson

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Grape Creek Independent School District (GCISD).

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

I have made a number of recommendations to improve GCISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations-model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers, and staff. This report outlines 39 detailed recommendations that could save GCISD nearly $239,000 over the next five years, while reinvesting nearly $42,000 to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach nearly $197,000 that the district can redirect to the classroom.

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

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

Sincerely,

Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2001, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander began a review of the Grape Creek Independent School District (GCISD) as part of a six-district project that also included reviews of the neighboring San Angelo, Veribest, Christoval, Water Valley and Wall school districts of Tom Green County. Based upon more than six months of work, this Texas School performance Review (TSPR) report identifies GCISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 39 recommendations could result in net savings of nearly $197,000 over the next five years.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

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

Recognizing that only 51 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to drive more of every education dollar directly into the classroom. Comptroller Rylander also has ordered TSPR staff to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically with all the state's school districts and with anyone else who requests such information. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as a clearinghouse of the best ideas in Texas public education.

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

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

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

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

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

TSPR in Grape Creek ISD

GCISD is located in Tom Green County, about 12 miles northwest of the city of San Angelo. The district added its high school in 1996-97 and graduated its first senior class in May 2000. In addition to the new high school, GCISD added a pre-kindergarten program in 1998-99.

GCISD's 2000-01 enrollment totaled 1,151, a nearly 3-percent increase from 1,122 in the previous year. In 2000-01, the district split its elementary school into two schools, using one physical location. The primary elementary school includes pre-kindergarten through grade 3, while the intermediate elementary school includes grades 4 and 5. The middle school is located on the same campus as the elementary schools and includes grades 6 through 8. The high school, serving grades 9 through 12, is located on a separate campus. The district's administrative offices are located nearby. The district is served by the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Regional Education Service Center XV (Region 15) in San Angelo.

TSPR contracted with Gibson Consulting Group Inc., an Austin-based firm, to assist with the review. The review team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held a public forum on Thursday, March 29, at the Grape Creek High School cafetorium from 5 to 8 pm. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted small focus-group sessions with teachers, principals and board members. The Comptroller's office also received letters and phone calls from a wide array of parents, teachers and community members.

A total of 278 respondents answered written surveys distributed by the review team, including 45 campus and central administrators and support staff, five principals and assistant principals, 53 teachers, 126 parents and

49 students. Details from the surveys and the public forum appear in **Appendices A** through **F**.

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

GCISD selected four "peer districts" for comparative purposes, based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The districts chosen were Celina, Hutto, Shallowater and Troy ISDs.

During its six-month review, TSPR developed 39 recommendations to improve GCISD's operations and save its taxpayers nearly $239,000. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach nearly $197,000 over a five-year period.

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

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller's office and Gibson Consulting Group Inc. wish to express their appreciation to the GCISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent Don Ickles, former director of Business and Finance Mae Lay and Teri Deweber, director of Public Information and Grants, as well as district employees, students, parents and community residents who helped during the review.

Grape Creek ISD

In 2000-01, GCISD served 1,151 students. Of these, 76.5 percent are Anglo, 21.1 percent Hispanic, 2.1 percent African-American, 0.2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.1 percent Native American. Economically disadvantaged students made up 46.7 percent of the total student population. **Exhibit 1** compares GCISD's demographic characteristics with those of its peer districts, TEA's Region 15 and the state.

Exhibit 1
Demographics of GCISD, Peer Districts,
Region 15 and the State
2000-01

District	Student Enrollment	Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Other	Economically Disadvantaged
Troy	1,277	77.2%	20.4%	1.5%	0.9%	34.6%
Hutto	1,232	75.1%	18.9%	4.6%	1.4%	15.4%
Shallowater	1,205	70.0%	28.8%	1.1%	0.1%	35.5%
Grape Creek	**1,151**	**76.5%**	**21.1%**	**2.1%**	**0.3%**	**46.7%**
Celina	1,147	79.4%	14.1%	5.3%	1.2%	23.1%
Region 15	**50,696**	**47.8%**	**47.9%**	**3.6%**	**0.7%**	**53.5%**
State	**4,071,433**	**42.1%**	**40.5%**	**14.4%**	**3.0%**	**49.2%**

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

GCISD's enrollment has risen consistently since 1996-97, from 817 students to 1,151 students in 2000-01, a 40.9 percent increase (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2
GCISD Actual Student Enrollment History

School Year	Actual Student Enrollment	Percent Change From the Prior Year
1996-97	817	N/A
1997-98	929	13.7%
1998-99	1,049	12.9%
1999-2000	1,122	7.0%
2000-01	1,151	2.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS 2000-01.

GCISD's annual budget was nearly $6.4 million for 2000-01. GCISD had the second-lowest property tax rate of its peer districts in 1999-2000, but the highest tax rate for 2000-01 (**Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3
Adopted Tax Rate and Taxable Property Value per Pupil
GCISD Versus Peer Districts
1999-2000 Through 2000-01

District	1999-2000 Taxable Property Value Per Pupil	1999-2000 Adopted Tax Rate	2000-01 Adopted Tax Rate
Grape Creek	**$73,660**	**$1.475**	**$1.74**
Celina	$175,031	$1.633	$1.59
Hutto	$194,124	$1.559	$1.62
Shallowater	$68,192	$1.384	$1.64
Troy	$103,278	$1.560	$1.54

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000 and TSPR peer surveys, 2000-01.

TEA rated GCISD as "Academically Acceptable" in 1999-2000. The district's 1999-2000 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) passing rate for all tests taken in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10 was 89.1 percent, above both the Region 15 average of 82.2 percent and the state average of 79.9 percent. The 1999-2000 passing rate was 3.7 percent higher than the district's 1998-99 rate of 85.4 percent.

On August 16, 2001, TEA released the TAAS results for the 2000-01 school year. GCISD received an overall rating of "Academically Acceptable." While the rating remains the same as in 1999-2000, the latest reports show that GCISD made some improvement at the high school level. Of the district's three schools, the high school was rated as Exemplary, up from its 1999-2000 Recognized rating, while the middle and elementary schools retained their status as Recognized schools. Because this information came late in the review process, and because information regarding the cumulative test results will not be available until November 2001, the data presented throughout the rest of this report reflects 1999-2000 information.

GCISD's History of Financial Challenges

GCISD has encountered a number of financial challenges during the last few years. A number of failed bond elections have been proposed to build a new high school, the first in 1992-93. Because the bond elections did not pass, GCISD was forced to send its high school students to Water Valley High School and San Angelo ISD Lakeview High School and to pay a continually increasing tuition rate to these districts. In 1995-96, the district paid $2,100 per student tuition for the nearly 300 GCISD students.

In 1994-95, the district's previous superintendent created a public facilities corporation with the GCISD Board of Trustees as the corporation's board members. The corporation sold $8.5 million in lease-purchase bonds to

build a new high school and leased the facility back to GCISD. The new high school opened in 1996-97. The original estimation of costs, however, had excluded operating costs such as salaries and benefits, supplies and utilities. Even so, taxpayers were assured that the tax rate would not increase.

Superintendent Ickles was hired in May 1999, with GCISD more than $925,000 in debt with creditors, including more than $768,000 for the lease-purchase bond payment, $77,000 for a contractual obligation payment and $80,000 for a delinquent note payment. The superintendent soon discovered that Tier II funding-state funding provided to school districts with low property values-could not be used for bond payments on lease-purchase bonds. Since general operating funds could not cover the bond payment, the district was near bankruptcy. At that point, a Citizen's Committee was formed that began investigating the district's options. The committee recommended and the taxpayers supported a more than $9 million May 2000 bond election, which resulted in the tax rate rising 26.5 cents from $1.475 to $1.74.

In 2000-01, GCISD obtained two state Instructional Facilities Allotment grants totaling $397,441 to cover the high school's bond payments.

Of necessity, GCISD has maintained a very lean operation, as evidenced by the fact that TSPR found only limited opportunities for savings. The district is to be applauded for its efforts to become fiscally sound. Today, for the first time in many years, the district is in a position where it can plan effectively for the future.

As GCISD positions itself for the future, the board, Superintendent Ickles and the administrators have a number of challenges to address, including:

- improving planning efforts.
- enhancing educational opportunities for students.
- strengthening internal controls.
- increasing financial monitoring.
- maximizing external support.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Improve Planning Efforts

- ***Expand the annual strategic plan to a five-year plan linked to the budget and other district planning documents.*** GCISD's 2000-01 strategic plan provides a basic framework, but does not serve as a long-range plan that comprehensively reviews the district's needs and identifies the resources needed to meet them. The district and

campus improvement plans, technology plan, facilities plan and annual budget are not linked to the strategic plan, which also does not address business and management functions such as payroll, personnel management, transportation and food service. By linking all of the district's plans with the resources needed to accomplish their goals, GCISD will be better able to focus on its future.

- ***Conduct a facilities study and incorporate its results into a long-range facilities master plan.*** GCISD has no facilities planning committee other than for the high school, and lacks an up-to-date facilities master plan. In 1994, the Texas Association of School Administrators conducted a facilities evaluation before the district built the new high school, but greater-than-anticipated student growth is straining the elementary/intermediate school, which is overcrowded and poorly maintained. A thorough facilities study would give GCISD the roadmap it needs to properly plan for the expansion and/or replacement of its facilities.

- ***Require the Technology Task Force to update GCISD's technology plan and tie it to the district strategic plan.*** GCISD's 1999-2002 required technology plan does not reflect the district's latest vision and is not up to date because it does not address the district's ongoing grant-funded initiatives, the loss of computer labs in the elementary/intermediate school or the loss of technological capabilities in some classrooms. Updating the district's technology plan and linking it to the overall strategic plan would provide a useful guide for the future.

Enhance Educational Opportunities for Students

- ***Incorporate funding sources and performance measures for at-risk students into district and campus improvement plans.*** GCISD's district and campus improvement plans do not include sources of funds used for students at risk of dropping out, as required by law, nor has the district conducted a needs assessment to show how programs match students' needs. By identifying the resources and programs provided to the at-risk student population in its plans, GCISD can better determine if these programs are helping students succeed.

- ***Share teachers that teach advanced courses with neighboring districts.*** The percentage of GCISD high school students completing advanced courses such as chemistry, physics, advanced foreign languages and computer science is only 10.6 percent, well below the state average of 17.5 percent. Teachers and administrators expressed concern that the needs of their college-

bound students are not being met. By entering into a cooperative agreement, possibly through Region 15, and partnering with neighboring districts to obtain teachers for advanced courses either through direct instruction or distance learning, GCISD could ensure that its students become better prepared for college.

Strengthen Internal Controls

- ***Store blank check stock in a locked cabinet or locked office at all times and limit access to individuals with check-writing authority.*** Weak controls over check stock provide opportunities for unsupervised and unauthorized access to blank checks. Blank checks are stored in a lockable safe inside a lockable office until the checks are needed for processing, and each is locked when employees leave the building. During office hours, however, the checks are not secured when Business Office staff are away from their offices or otherwise distracted. By securing blank check stock until needed, the district can eliminate an unnecessary risk of theft or abuse.

- ***Develop and document records retention guidelines.*** GCISD has no records retention guidelines. Consequently, a number of critical documents are no longer available. For example, the district does not have copies of prior budgets or a copy of the depository agreement with its bank. In addition, the director of Technology and Operations does not maintain consistent support documentation for annual budget requests, making it impossible to compare allocated to requested funding. By adopting records retention guidelines, the district will comply with the Texas Education Code and ensure that historic records are available to support future decision-making.

Increase Financial Monitoring

- ***Enhance the Public Education Information Management System data submission process.*** GCISD does not always report accurate information to TEA through PEIMS. For example, in 1999-00, GCISD's accountability rating was downgraded because it reported an inaccurate number of students leaving the district. District and campus-level PEIMS coordinators have other significant responsibilities that often make it difficult to monitor the PEIMS submission closely. By reviewing the entire PEIMS process and staff responsibilities and making changes as needed, the district can ensure that its PEIMS submissions reflect actual events.

- ***Allocate utilities, maintenance and janitorial costs to applicable departments and campuses.*** Utilities and other overhead costs are centrally budgeted in the General Operating Fund and are not charged to campuses and cafeteria operations, making it difficult to match expenditures with cafeteria revenues generated. By using a cost allocation system, GCISD could apply overhead costs appropriately to departmental budgets.

- ***Develop plan of action to replenish the general operating fund balance to the equivalent of three months' worth of operating costs.*** GCISD's 2000-01 beginning fund balance of more than $540,000, maintained to accommodate contingencies and unexpected variations in cash flow, will support only one month of district operations. TEA recommends an optimum fund balance of $1.4 million, according to the district's August 31, 2000 financial statements. By instituting a plan to replenish the fund balance to a reasonable level, the district's can ensure that its finances remain stable.

- ***Establish performance measures and a monitoring plan for the custodial services contract.*** GCISD's custodial contract saves money, but the service delivered is inadequate. The district reduced payroll-related expenses alone by $114,000 with this contract, and also avoided costs for materials and supplies. About 50 percent of the teachers surveyed, however, are dissatisfied with school cleanliness. The district should include performance measures in this contract.

- ***Monitor district support functions' employee productivity.*** The productivity of support functions such as transportation and food service are not being monitored adequately. The district does not track and use measures such as meals served per labor hour to ensure that staffing levels are appropriate. Similarly, bus routing and scheduling are not as efficient as they might be. Monitoring productivity and instituting performance standards could channel additional funds to instruction as opposed to support functions.

Maximize External Support

- ***Pursue Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) funding for the renovation of the elementary/intermediate school.*** GCISD has not taken advantage of federal interest-free funding to make renovations to the elementary/intermediate school identified in a 1994 facilities study. These needs have only intensified since 1994. By pursuing funding through the federal QZAB program, which allows districts to incur interest-free debt for renovation and

repairs, the district may be able to meet its facility needs in a cost-effective manner.

- ***Develop strategies to increase the identification of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.*** GCISD does not actively encourage parents to complete eligibility forms for free and reduced-price meals. Certain state and federal funds such as Compensatory Education and Title I funds are tied directly to the number of economically disadvantaged students, defined as the number of students identified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals. By intensifying efforts to identify every eligible student, whether they eat in the cafeterias or not, the district will receive about $604 per identified student in additional state and federal funds, or an estimated $14,000 annually if only 23 additional students could be qualified for the program.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

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

- ***The superintendent communicates effectively with the board.*** The board credits the superintendent for its improved understanding of the financial status of the district as well as an overall improvement in the board's function. At least three days before board meetings, the superintendent provides information packets to board members containing pertinent information regarding the district's financial status, management issues and program information. The superintendent meets individually with board members as needed, and frequently calls and e-mails board members to solicit responses to any questions or concerns.

- ***District leadership teams and site-based committees contribute to policy- and decision-making.*** GCISD's superintendent uses the district leadership team to assist in establishing administrative procedures at the district and campus levels. The district also uses its site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees to involve professional staff, parents and community members in the creation of educational plans, goals, performance objectives and classroom instructional initiatives. In addition to the four SBDM committees (district; elementary, which includes the primary and intermediate schools; middle school; and high school) four

complementaryleadership teams provide input to the board and staff on initiatives that affect their respective schools.

- **_GCISD has controlled its staffing level, focusing its primary efforts on classroom instruction._** Understanding that the vast majority of all district expenditures are for staffing, the district has kept administrative staffing levels low, dedicating its very limited resources for teachers and other student-specific personnel. In 1998-99, the district initiated periodic reviews of all staffing and began assessing teaching and administrative requirements on each campus. As a result, the district eliminated several administrative positions, filled others at lower salaries and reduced the number of auxiliary staff by contracting for maintenance services.Furthermore, from 1997-98 through 2000-01, the district increased its teaching staff by 12 positions and its educational aides by 5.3 full-time equivalents.

- **_The Grape Creek Education Foundation has secured thousands of dollars in donations._** The mission of the Grape Creek Education Foundation, formed in August 1999, is to enhance the GCISD educational environment. A 12-member board seeks and secures grants, endowments and donations for the enhancement of educational opportunities for persons of all ages in GCISD. Funds can be disbursed to meet physical or professional development needs, extracurricular programs or special project sponsorships. This can include the purchase of equipment, technology, books, curriculum, furniture and facilities as well as support for programs by supplying stipends, money for instructional substitutes/aides, and expenses for field trips and training.

- **_The Small Schools Cooperative provides special education services to GCISD students._** The most valuable services mentioned by staff include the availability of expert diagnosticians, therapists and psychologists, training materials and literature related to various special education topics, and periodic updates to current state and federal regulations and laws. The Small Schools Cooperative also works closely with Region 15 to provide services to member districts. Community feedback indicated that the special education program in GCISD is respected.

- **_GCISD provides outstanding health services to students and staff_**. GCISD has used innovative preventive practices to improve the quality of health services delivered to students and staff. The nurse maintains a medical card for every student and school staff member. The nurse notes the reason for a visit on each student's medical card, which allows the nurse to track medical issues for all

students and detect patterns requiring additional parental or medical attention. In the event of a major medical emergency, or a school security lock-down, the nurse can quickly access important medical information including blood type, previous heart attack, known allergies to medications and other important information, and can quickly assist emergency medical personnel.

Savings and Investment Requirements

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

TSPR recommended 39 ways to save GCISD nearly $239,000 in gross savings over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities would cost the district nearly $42,000 during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report, then, could produce net savings of nearly $197,000 by 2005-06.

Exhibit 4
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Grape Creek Independent School District

Year	Total
2001-02 Initial Annual Net Savings	$16,571
2002-03 Additional Annual Net Savings	$47,947
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	$47,947
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	$47,947
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	$47,947
One Time Net (Costs)/Savings	($11,500)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2001-2006	**$196,859**

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exhibit 5
Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1 District Organization and Management							
1 Expand the annual strategic plan to a five-year strategic plan and link the plan to the budget and other district planning documents. p. 26	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
2 Develop an administrative manual for key functional areas and train all staff in their application. p. 28	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3 Include reason for separation as part of the formal exit interview process and track the results. p. 34	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Chapter 1 Total	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Chapter 2 Educational Service Delivery							
4 Review the PEIMS data submission process, establish written guidelines and redefine the job responsibilities of PEIMS data operators. p. 47	$0	$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0
5 Identify	$0	$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0

	students currently below the Texas Learning Index value of 85 for special preparation efforts and performance incentives. p. 49							
6	Supplement distance learning opportunities and share teachers that can teach advanced courses with neighboring districts. p. 50	($1,260)	($2,520)	($2,520)	($2,520)	($2,520)	($11,340)	$0
7	Establish a vertical alignment between middle school and high school mathematics. p. 51	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
8	Ensure that the goals and objectives of gifted and talented education established in the District Improvement Plan are implemented. p. 61	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($6,000)	$0
9	Expand the career and	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	technology program by establishing more relationships with area colleges and trade schools and by sharing teachers and courses with neighboring districts. p. 65								
10	Incorporate performance measures for at-risk students into district and campus improvement plans. p. 68	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
11	Develop a community-wide safety committee that includes members from law enforcement, fire safety, health care, social services and the community to share information, skills and resources related to school and public safety. p. 73	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	Chapter 2 Total	**($2,460)**	**($3,720)**	**($3,720)**	**($3,720)**	**($3,720)**	**($17,340)**	**$0**

Chapter 3 Financial Management							
12	Develop and implement detailed, comprehensive, written procedures for cash receipts, cash disbursements, accounts payable and payroll. p. 83	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
13	Store blank check stock in a locked cabinet or a locked office at all times and limit access to individuals with check-writing authority. p. 84	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
14	Develop and implement documented records retention guidelines. p. 86	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
15	Develop written, detailed budgeting procedures that can be integrated with a comprehensive district financial manual. p. 87	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
16	Allocate utilities, maintenance	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

and janitorial costs to applicable departments and campuses. p. 88							
17	Establish a committee of staff and administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action. p. 91	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
18	Develop a fiscal plan of action to replenish the general operating fund balance to optimum levels. p. 93	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
19	Develop written fixed asset policies and procedures and distribute them to staff members involved in the accounting and management of fixed assets. p. 94	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
20	Form a committee of superintendents, Regional Education Service Center representatives	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

	and representatives from the Texas Education Agency to explore the opportunities for shared financial services. p. 97								
	Chapter 3 Total	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Chapter 4 Operations								
21	Establish performance measures and a monitoring plan for the custodial services contract. p. 104	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
22	Conduct a facilities study and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan. p. 105	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($8,000)
23	Pursue Qualified Zone Academy Bond funding for renovation of the elementary/ intermediate school. p. 108	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
24	Implement an automated system to manage work orders, and develop priority codes. p. 110	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

25	Update energy audit and participate in the State Energy Conservation Office energy conservation loan program. p. 111	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
26	Create signs that direct visitors to the parking lot, student loading and unloading zones, school entrance and main offices for each campus. p. 112	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
27	Evaluate the job description for the director of Technology and Operations and prioritize primary functions in conjunction with the technology plan. p. 117	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
28	Require the Technology Task Force to update GCISD's technology plan and tie it to the district strategic plan. p. 118	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
29	Upgrade four of GCISD's five servers with a	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($3,500)

#	Description							
	hard disk system that supplements tape backups. p. 120							
30	Store backup tapes at an off-site location to ensure the integrity of the disaster recovery process. p. 121	$0	$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0
31	Develop a transportation operations and maintenance handbook. p. 124	$0	$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0
32	Adopt a fleet procurement plan to replace one bus annually based on miles operated, years of service and cost of maintenance p. 126	$0	$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0
33	Aggressively seek to identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. p. 131	$0	$13,892	$13,892	$13,892		$13,892	$55,568	$0
34	Develop strategies to increase breakfast participation at both campuses.	$2,886	$2,886	$2,886	$2,886		$2,886	$14,430	$0

	p. 133							
35	Increase employee productivity and reduce associated payroll costs. p. 137	$18,745	$37,489	$37,489	$37,489	$37,489	$168,701	$0
36	Establish an equipment replacement plan based on priority. p. 138	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($10,000)	$0
37	Conduct surveys of students, parents and faculty about food quality, quantity, price, variety, nutrition and other areas of food operations and implement corrective action where needed. p. 139	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
38	Develop and implement a plan to recognize cafeteria staff who obtain certification. p. 141	($600)	($600)	($600)	($600)	($600)	($3,000)	$0
39	Compile and distribute accurate, detailed and useful school-specific financial and	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

performance reports to cafeteria managers on a quarterly basis. p. 142								
Chapter 4 Total	**$19,031**	**$51,667**	**$51,667**	**$51,667**		**$51,667**	**$225,699**	**($11,500)**
Gross Savings	**$21,631**	**$54,267**	**$54,267**	**$54,267**		**$54,267**	**$238,699**	**$0**
Gross Costs	**($5,060)**	**($6,320)**	**($6,320)**	**($6,320)**		**($6,320)**	**($30,340)**	**($11,500)**
Total	**$16,571**	**$47,947**	**$47,947**	**$47,947**		**$47,947**	**$208,359**	**($11,500)**

Total Savings	**$238,699**
Total Costs	**($41,840)**
Net Savings/(Costs)	**$196,859**

Chapter 1
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines the organization and management of the Grape Creek Independent School District (GCISD) in four parts:

A. Board Governance
B. District and School Management
C. Personnel Management
D. Community Involvement

The effectiveness of a district's organization and management may be evaluated against several critical success factors: a vision that is clearly communicated to staff and community members through a planning document; an efficient and logical organizational structure supporting site-based decision-making; a harmonious planning, budgeting and improvement process that ensures resources are used efficiently and support district goals; a thorough and objective performance evaluation system; sound and consistently applied policies that comply with applicable laws; and board actions that demonstrate an understanding of members' roles as planners, policy-makers and performance monitors.

BACKGROUND

GCISD is located in Tom Green County approximately 12 miles northwest of the city of San Angelo. The district was formed in 1875, and in 1948 the district consolidated with Pulliam School to form Grape Creek-Pulliam ISD, serving kindergarten through eighth grade students. In 1994, the district was the largest kindergarten through eighth grade district in Texas, with a total enrollment of 700 students. That year, the district had 249 high school students attending San Angelo ISD's Lakeview High School and another 43 attending Water Valley High School. In 1996, Pulliam was dropped from the district's name and the district once again was called GCISD. The district added its high school in 1996-97 and graduated its first senior class in May 2000. In addition to adding a new high school, GCISD added a pre-kindergarten program in 1998-99.

In 2000-01, the district split the elementary school into two schools using one physical location. The primary elementary school includes pre-kindergarten through grade 3, and the intermediate elementary school includes grades 4 and 5. The middle school is located on the same campus as the elementary schools and includes grades 6 through 8. The high school, serving grades 9 through 12, is located on a campus separate from the elementary and middle schools. The district administrative offices are located nearby.

Enrollment for the district in 2000-01 was 1,151. Since 1996-97, when the district had 884 students, the district has increased its enrollment by 30 percent. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Regional Education Service Center XV (Region 15) in San Angelo serves the district.

For this review, GCISD selected four peer districts. Those districts are the Celina, Hutto, Shallowater and Troy ISDs. **Exhibit 1-1** shows a demographic presentation of GCISD and its peers. GCISD has a significantly larger percentage of economically disadvantaged students as compared to its peers. The

district is not in an incorporated area, and does not have any major employers or economic development in its taxing area.

Exhibit 1-1
Student Enrollment for GCISD and Peers
2000-01

District	Enrollment	Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Economically Disadvantaged
Celina	1,147	79.4%	14.1%	5.3%	0.2%	1.0%	23.1%
Hutto	1,232	75.1%	18.9%	4.6%	0.9%	0.5%	15.4%
Shallowater	1,205	70.0%	28.8%	1.1%	0.0%	0.1%	35.5%
Troy	1,277	77.2%	20.4%	1.5%	0.2%	0.8%	34.6%
Grape Creek	**1,151**	**76.5%**	**21.1%**	**2.1%**	**0.2%**	**0.1%**	**46.7%**

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-2 shows the revenue sources for GCISD and its peers. The district receives revenue from state and local sources. The average percentage of total revenues for Texas schools is 53.1 percent from local revenue, 43.6 percent from state sources and 3.4 percent from federal sources.

GCISD, State, and Peer District Revenue Sources
as a Budgeted Percentage of Total Revenues
2000-01

District	Local/Other Revenue	Percentage	State Revenue	Percentage	Federal Revenue	Percentage	Total Revenue
Celina	$5,590,531	71.0%	$2,144,405	27.2%	$140,000	1.8%	$7,874,936
Hutto	$2,955,427	38.1%	$4,709,172	60.7%	$90,000	1.2%	$7,754,599
Shallowater	$1,767,418	22.0%	$6,095,010	76.0%	$157,550	2.0%	$8,019,978
Troy	$2,265,000	28.2%	$5,586,300	69.5%	$181,000	2.3%	$8,032,300
Grape Creek	**$1,614,200**	**21.4%**	**$5,684,850**	**75.6%**	**$227,800**	**3.0%**	**$7,526,850**
State Totals	**$13,858,297,539**	**53.1%**	**$11,377,498,894**	**43.6%**	**$884,281,086**	**3.4%**	**$26,120,077,519**

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

Chapter 1
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Board Governance

Section 11.151 of the Texas Education Code provides for an elected Board of Trustees to administer the district. The Board of Trustees governs and oversees management of the schools. Board members are elected by district residents either at-large, districtwide, or from single-member districts.

As a legal agent of the State of Texas, the board derives its legal status from the Texas Constitution and state laws. School boards must function in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, regulations interpreting statutes, and controlling court decisions. Under Section 11.151 of the Texas Education Code, each board must:

- Govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district;
- Adopt such rules, regulations, and bylaws as the board may deem proper;
- Approve a district-developed plan for site-based decision-making and provide for its needs;
- Select tax officials, as appropriate, to the district's need;
- Prepare and adopt a budget for the next succeeding fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- Have district fiscal accounts audited at district expense by a Texas certified or public accountant holding a permit from the Texas State of Board of Public Accountancy following the close of each fiscal year;
- Publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including campus performance objectives and the progress of each campus toward those objectives;
- Receive bequests and donations or other money coming legally into its hands in the name of the district;
- Select a depository for district funds;
- Order elections, canvass the returns, declare results, and issue certificates of election as required by law;
- Dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the school district;
- Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district; and
- Hold all powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to the Texas Education Agency or the State Board of Education.

The leadership of a Board of Trustees determines board governance. Posted public notices are required for all called board meetings. Board meetings are held to carry out the business of the district and are open to the public in accordance with the state's Open Meetings Act. Board meetings may be closed to the public only during executive sessions when personnel matters, student hearings, real estate transactions and other specific legal matters are discussed.

GCISD's board consists of seven members elected at-large for three-year terms. Elections are held each year on the first Saturday in May, as mandated by the Legislature. Board meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at the administration building.

Exhibit 1-3 illustrates the composition of the 2000-01 GCISD board.

Exhibit 1-3
GCISD Board of Trustees
May 2001

School Board Members	Title	Term Expires	Board Tenure	Occupation
Gene Marsh	President	2003	11 Years	Payroll
Ollie Hight	Vice President	2003	7 Years	Legal Secretary
Belinda Poehls	Secretary	2002	2 Years	Self (Interior Design)
Debbie Fisher	Member	2004	9 Years	Self (Grocery Store)
Steve Hochreiter	Member	2003	7 Years	Accounting
Fred Contreras	Member	2002	5 Years	Economics Coordinator
Butch Hasty	Member	2004	0 Years*	Electrician

Source: GCISD Superintendent's Office, May 2001.
* Elected in May 2001

The superintendent has worked for the district for approximately two years, since May 1999. The former director of Business and Finance was hired to help develop systems and processes for the district, and retired in June 2001. The district hired a new director of Business and Finance in the same month.

The superintendent, the former director of Business and Finance, and now the current director of Business and Finance have been working to improve operating procedures, document the financial status of the district

and increase communication with the board. Several board members mentioned how much better the board had functioned in the last two years since the arrival of the current superintendent.

FINDING

All board members told the review team that the board functions well as a policy-making organization, and that communication among board members and the superintendent was excellent. All board members viewed the superintendent as effective in his role and felt comfortable talking to him when needed. All board members had a clear understanding of their role as policy makers and the administration's role as managers. The board updates its policies on a regular basis, and the policies are available online on the Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) Web site and through a link on the district's Web site.

The board credits the superintendent for its improved understanding of the financial status of the district as well as the overall improvement in how it functions.

At least three days before board meetings are held, the superintendent contacts members and provides them with information packets. The board packets include pertinent information regarding the financial status of the district, district management issues and program information. The superintendent meets individually with board members as needed, and frequently calls and e-mails board members to solicit responses to any questions or concerns. Board meetings are well documented as indicated in a review of the board meeting notes.

The board has two standing committees that meet as needed to review issues critical to the district. The board has a committee to review and consider a long-term strategy for its facilities and has a community budget advisory committee to help with its budgeting decisions. Standing committees, appropriately configured, allow the board to have an open interaction with the superintendent and administrative team to better understand how policy decisions relate to district administration and operations. Accordingly, committees allow the board to discuss and resolve questions about administrative and operational issues and their effect on school district policy in detail without prolonging regular board meetings.

The superintendent has improved governance through effective communications and candid discussions of issues. Board members indicate strong support for the leadership team in place at GCISD.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent has enhanced communication with the board and has improved its working relationship by providing meaningful and timely information to board members on a formal and informal basis.

FINDING

GCISD board members take advantage of continuing education, with all tenured members attending at least 18 hours of continuing education annually, more than the minimum number of hours required by law. **Exhibit 1-4** presents an overview of the minimum annual continuing education requirements prescribed by TASB for new and experienced board members.

Exhibit 1-4
Overview of Continuing Education Requirements
For School Board Members

Type of Continuing Education	First Year Board Member	Experienced Board Member
Local District Orientation	Required within 60 days of election or appointment	Not required
Orientation to the Texas Education Code	Three hours	Not required
Update to the Texas Education Code	Incorporated into Orientation to the Texas Education Code	After legislative session: of sufficient length to address major changes
Team-Building Session/Assessment of Continuing Education Needs of the Board-Superintendent Team	At least three hours	At least three hours
Additional Continuing Education, based on assessed need and Framework for School Board Development	At least 10 hours	At least five hours
Total Minimum Number of Hours	**16 hours, plus local district orientation**	**Eight hours, plus update to the Texas Education Code**

TEA considers all district files to be the official records for board member training. GCISD also reports board member training hours to TASB. The review team analyzed board member training hours documented in TASB's Member Training Report, Summary of Credit Hours and Region 15 to determine if board members had met the minimum continuing education requirements. According to summary reports and interviews with the superintendent, board members earned more than the minimum continuing education hours required by law for the reporting period from February 2000 through January 2001 (**Exhibit 1-5**).

Exhibit 1-5
GCISD Board Training Hours
February 2000 through January 2001

Board Member	Training Hours 2/1/2000-1/31/01
Gene Marsh	20.00
Ollie Hight	20.00
Belinda Poehls	18.25
Debbie Fisher	19.50
Steve Hochreiter	21.25
Fred Contreras	19.50
Butch Hasty	Elected May 2001

Source: GCISD superintendent.

COMMENDATION

GCISD board members regularly participate in training to enhance their board member skills.

Chapter 1
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. District and School Management

A superintendent and senior administrators or cabinet members typically manage Texas school districts. As specified by Section 11.201 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), the superintendent primarily holds:

- Administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the educational programs, services, and facilities of the district and for annual performance appraisals of the staff;
- Administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all district personnel;
- Responsibility for termination or suspension of staff members or the non-renewal of staff members' term contracts;
- Authority over day-to-day management of district operations;
- Responsibility for preparation of district budgets;
- Responsibility for preparation of policy recommendations for the board and implementation of adopted policies;
- Responsibility for development of appropriate administrative regulations to implement board policies;
- Responsibility for leadership in attainment of student performance; and
- Responsibility for organization of the district's central administration.

Section 11.253(a) of the Texas Education Code requires "each school district to maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance."

The Texas Education Code requires each school district to establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees that consist of representatives from the school, parents, local businesses and community members. These committees advise school administrators on campus planning, goal setting, budgeting and decision-making.

Section 11.253(c) of the Texas Education Code also requires that "each school principal, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan for the purpose of improving student performance for all the student population." The campus plan must outline the role of the school committees in goal setting, curriculum, budgeting, staff patterns and school organization.

By law, school districts must establish a district-level planning and decision-making committee configured like the campus committees. At least two-thirds of the elected professional staff representatives from the district must be classroom teachers. Section 11.252(a) of the Texas Education Code requires that "each school district have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to academic excellence indicators (dropout rates, percentage of graduating students who meet course requirements established for a recommended high school program, results of Scholastic Aptitude Test)."

Every two years, the law requires each school district to evaluate the effectiveness of its decision-making and planning, policies, procedures and staff development activities related to district and campus-level decision-making and planning. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that district policies, procedures and staff-development activities are effectively structured to boost student performance.

Site-based decision-making has provided a way for teachers, parents and community members to help central and campus administrators make decisions about improving student performance.

The district is managed by a superintendent who directs all functional areas of the district including: personnel management, facilities use and management, asset and risk management, financial management, purchasing, technology, student transportation, food services and discipline management. The superintendent delegates responsibility to the four principals of all campuses, the director of Business and Finance, the director of Technology and Operations, the director of Public Information and Grants and the director of Transportation. In 2000-01, the director of Transportation position was vacant, and the director of Technology and Operations assumed those duties.

Exhibit 1-6 shows GCISD's organizational structure.

Exhibit 1-6
Organizational Structure of GCISD
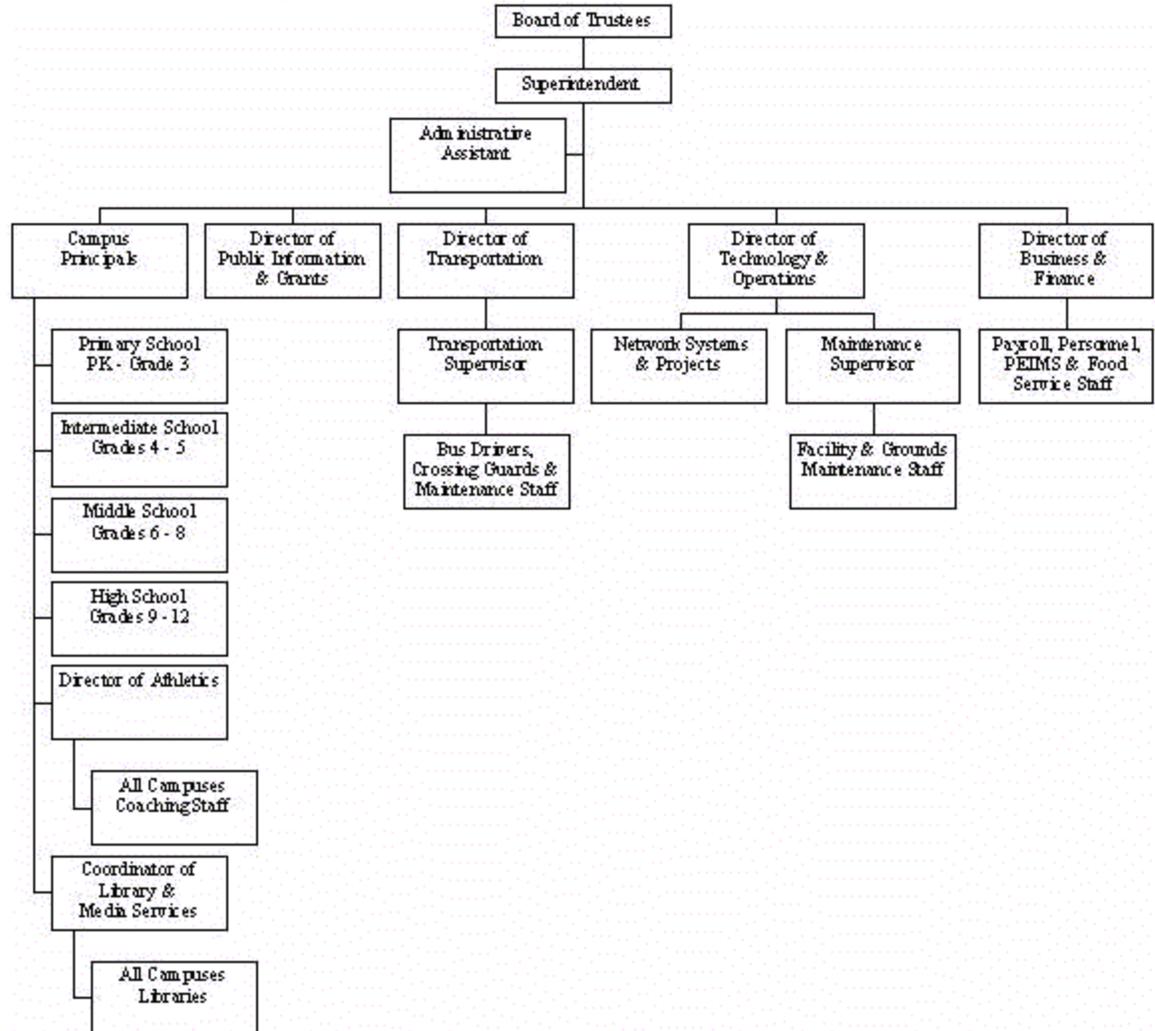
Source: GCISD superintendent, April 2001.

FINDING

The superintendent uses a district leadership team to help in the policy- and decision-making process. The team includes the principals, the high school assistant principal, the director of Business and Finance, the director of Public Information and Grants, the director of Special Populations, the director of Technology and Operations, the in-school suspension director, three counselors, the director of Athletics, the technology integrator, and three master teachers. The master teachers are practicing full-time teachers in their respective campuses. GCISD's superintendent uses the district leadership team to assist in establishing administrative procedures at the district and campus levels. The district also uses its site-based decision-making (SBDM) committees to involve

the professional staff of the district, parents and community members in establishing educational plans, goals, performance objectives and classroom instructional initiatives.

In addition to the four SBDM committees (district; elementary, which includes the primary and intermediate schools; middle school; and high school) there also are four complementaryleadership teams that provide input to the board and staff on initiatives that ultimately affect their respective schools.

The district leadership team's responsibility includes serving as an advisory committee to the district-level and campus-level site-based planning committees and to the superintendent. In its role as advisory committee, the leadership team assists with the development, evaluation and annual revision of the district improvement plan, including district staff development programs. The leadership team also serves as a technical advisory committee to the superintendent, board, director of Business and Finance and the community budget advisory committee in the development, evaluation and implementation of the district's annual budget process.

The relationship between the leadership teams and the SBDM committees is shown in **Exhibit 1-7**.

Exhibit 1-7
GCISD District Leadership Team and
Site-Based Decision-Making Committees
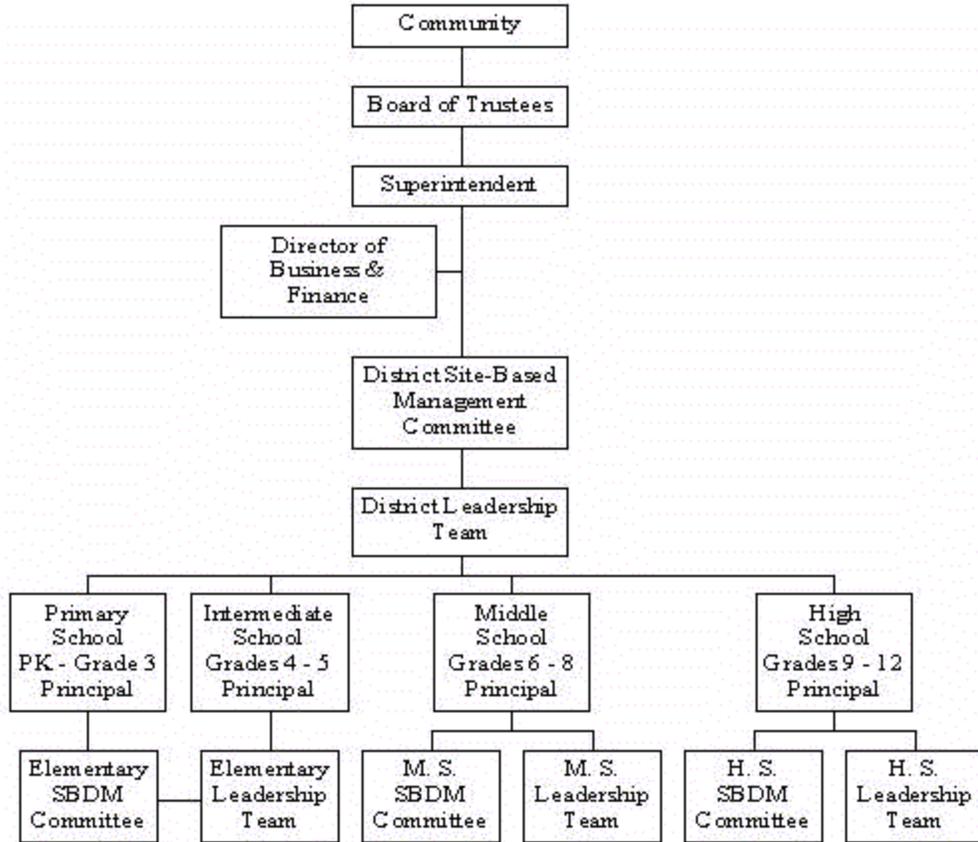
Source: GCISD superintendent, April 2001.

The district leadership team meets monthly. Campus principals and program directors also have their own leadership teams that work with the campus-level SBDM management teams for elementary, middle school and high school. The leadership teams have enhanced district communication and improved the decision-making process according to focus group comments and interviews conducted by the review team.

COMMENDATION

GCISD gives many stakeholders an opportunity to pa rticipate in the district's decision-making processes through its leadership teams and site-based decision-making committees.

FINDING

While the district has a strategic district improvement plan for 2000-01, it does not have a long-range strategic plan that comprehensively reviews

the district's needs and identifies resources to meet those needs. In the planning process, the strategic plan is the basic framework developed by the GCISD Strategic Planning Committee. The committee consists of business leaders, community members, students, teachers, campus administrators, various department leaders and central office staff. The committee also includes the district leadership team, district Site-Based Committee members and district Citizen's Budget Advisory Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee develops the plan as a vision for district and campus improvement planning.

The district improvement plan and campus improvement plan include major objectives, strategies for reaching objectives and methods of evaluating their progress. The district improvement plan and campus improvement plan also link the planning process to the district's budgetary process.

The annual district strategic plan includes the following goals:

- **Goal 1**: An aligned curriculum with a formal process to evaluate effectiveness to meet the needs of all students.
- **Goal 2**: Fair and impartially administered discipline plan that promotes responsibility as seen by a reduction in Alternative Education Programs (AEP), In-School Suspension (ISS), suspension, and expulsion placements.
- **Goal 3**: State of the art facilities that meet the needs of all students.
- **Goal 4**: Families, communities, staff are involved in student success.
- **Goal 5**: Establish a district financial plan that provides for the needs of students and school district.

The plan includes objectives for each goal, but does not include strategies for reaching these objectives or methods for evaluating progress. Most importantly, the plan is not linked to the district budget, although the district and campus improvement plans link the planning process to the district's budget. The district's strategic plan is not tied to the technology plan. The district says that while the district strategic plan is not tied directly to the technology plan, the technology plan is developed as part of the strategic and the district and campus improvement planning process.

The district does not have a current facilities plan. In addition, the district does not have a plan that addresses all of its business and management functions, including payroll, personnel management, transportation and food service.

Recommendation 1:

Expand the annual strategic plan to a five-year strategic plan and link the plan to the budget and other district planning documents.

The strategic plan should serve as the framework for future district decisions. The district should expand the mandatory improvement planning process to become a comprehensive strategic plan with clearly defined goals, objectives, strategies and evaluation criteria. The plan also should clearly specify how the district would evaluate the plan, once adopted by the board.

The district should integrate the strategic plan with the technology plan, any other district plans that are developed and with the budget to fund the district's initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, with the assistance of the district site-based decision-making committee and the district leadership team, develops a plan of action and expands the district and campus improvement planning process into a comprehensive strategic plan and links it to the budget.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent presents the new strategic plan to the board for approval.	January 2002
3.	The board holds at least two public meetings on the proposed plan.	February 2002
4.	The board considers and/or revises and approves the plan.	April 2002
5.	The board refers the plan to the superintendent to include objectives in the 2002-03 budget, based on the priorities set forth in the plan.	May 2002
6.	The superintendent and staff implement the strategic plan.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

GCISD has no documented procedures in many areas such as payroll processing, records management and personnel management to guide district operations. In a district the size of GCISD, many key functional areas are handled by one position. Operating procedures that document

these functions are important to ensure that tasks can be accomplished in the event of an absence or sustained illness of key staff, or when key staff members leave the district.

While the district's employee handbook provides general information regarding district policies and administrative functions, it does not provide the level of detail needed to understand the processes and procedures to be followed for district operations. There are no written standard operating procedures for personnel activities such as recruiting, posting of vacant positions, reassignment and transfer of staff, and quality control processes such as maintaining personnel files and district records other than those included in the employee handbook. The district relies on memos, some written standard operating procedures kept in files and information shared by other staff to accomplish its tasks.

The district does not have written procedures for records management including file security, filing equipment, file contents and filing procedures.

Recommendation 2:

Develop an administrative manual for key functional areas and train all staff in their application.

The standard operating procedures should be the basis of an administrative manual for the district. The administrative manual should include step-by-step descriptions of each process and procedure used to deliver services, including employment applications, posting of positions, recruitment, adding or reassigning staff, evaluations, transfers, payroll, benefits, and records retention. Copies of all forms, as well as examples of computer screens used in the processes, should be included in the manual. The manual should be updated on a regular schedule, and the director of Business and Finance should review the procedures with staff so that improvements are made as part of the overall quality control system within the district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the director of Business and Finance identify key functions.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent appoints the director of Business and Finance and the director's staff to prepare administrative procedures.	November 2001

3.	The director of Business and Finance prepares detailed operating procedures for key functions and develops an administrative manual of the procedures.	December 2001 - January 2002
4.	The director of Business and Finance trains staff on the procedures.	March 2002
5.	The director of Business and Finance updates procedures routinely.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

C. Personnel Management

Personnel management is a critical function of a school district. Successful management of personnel includes efficient recruiting, hiring, classification and compensation, benefit administration, training and development, and performance evaluation. Compliance with equal employment opportunity statutes and other applicable federal and state laws, and the establishment of fair and practical policies, procedures and training are important for the recruitment and retention of competent staff.

District recruitment efforts include participation at the Angelo State University Job Fairs and the Abilene Christian University Job Fair. The district posts job openings at its three campuses, at the central office and on the district Web site, www.grapecreek.org. The district also advertises positions on the Texas Association of School Administrators Web site, other professional Web sites, and in the *San Angelo Standard-Times*.

The director of Business and Finance, a payroll/personnel clerk and the assistant to the superintendent oversee the personnel management functions of the district.

Exhibit 1-8 displays the ratio of students to total district employees. The district has increased its student-to-total district employees since 1998-99, indicating improved efficiency.

Exhibit 1-8
GCISD Ratio of Students to Total FTEs
1997-98 Through 2000-01

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Number of Students Enrolled	929.0	1,049.0	1,122.0	1,151.0
Number of Total FTEs	146.8	166.0	155.3	153.4
Ratio of Students to Total FTEs	6.3	6.3	7.2	7.5

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-9 displays the 2000-01 ratio of students to teachers and students to total staff for GCISD and its peer districts. This shows that GCISD is approximately in the middle of its peers.

Exhibit 1-9
Student to Total Staff and Student to Teacher Ratios
for GCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Student/Total Staff Ratios	Student/Teacher Ratios
Troy	8.0	14.2
Celina	7.3	13.1
Shallowater	8.0	14.1
Grape Creek	**7.5**	**13.9**
Hutto	7.4	13.4

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 1-10 demonstrates that GCISD's average teacher salary is significantly lower than the average of the state or peer districts.

Exhibit 1-10
GCISD and Peer District Average Teacher Salaries
2000-01

District	Average Salary for Teachers
Celina	$36,977
Hutto	$36,795
Shallowater	$34,147
Troy	$35,397
Grape Creek	**$30,166**
State	**$37,567**

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

GCISD pays a lower beginning teacher salary compared to beginning teacher salaries of the state average and all but one of its peer districts (**Exhibit 1-11**).

Exhibit 1-11
GCISD and Peer District Average Teacher Salary
by Years of Experience
2000-01

Years of Experience	Grape Creek	Celina	Hutto	Shallowater	Troy	State
Beginning Teachers	**$24,981**	$27,126	$27,749	$25,534	$24,240	**$27,007**
1-5 years	**$26,515**	$31,040	$29,337	$27,534	$28,221	**$28,758**
6-10 years	**$32,181**	$34,689	$34,755	$33,357	$32,238	**$33,499**
11-20 years	**$38,746**	$40,293	$41,547	$38,414	$40,173	**$39,426**
More than 20 years	**$42,807**	$42,814	$43,247	$41,452	$41,805	**$43,602**

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

FINDING

The district provides a comprehensive employee handbook to all employees, which is updated annually. The handbook includes the district vision statement, goals and objectives, district organizational chart, school directories, and information regarding district policies and procedures. Samples of frequently used forms, such as the employee accident report, field trip bus request, and referrals to counselors and nurses also are in the handbook.

COMMENDATION

GCISD provides comprehensive district information to its employees through its employee handbook.

FINDING

Region 15 conducts the majority of the district's professional education training. Each year, Region 15 publishes a catalog of course offerings for the year- more than 200 in 2000-01. These courses are offered at multiple times. Most of the courses are targeted at educators, but Region 15 also offers a significant number of technology courses aimed at all school personnel.

Region 15 tracks all the training it provides through a database. Employees may request a transcript of completed coursework to meet

TEA certification renewal guidelines. In addition, employees may register online through the Service Center's Web site.

In 1999-2000, more than 200 GCISD employees participated in Region 15 training sessions, attending an average of five programs each. A total of 1,010 participants attended 228 sessions. Categories of training programs attended by GCISD staff at Region 15 include:

- "At risk";
- Capacity building;
- Classroom management;
- Curriculum writing;
- Drug education;
- Early childhood;
- Equipment training;
- General education;
- Gifted/talented;
- Language arts, social studies, science;
- Leadership;
- Legislative update;
- Mathematics;
- New teacher orientation;
- Reading/language arts;
- Social studies;
- Special education;
- TAAS;
- Technology;
- TEKS; and
- Youth leadership.

In addition, Region 15 sponsors ongoing meetings for special interest groups to share ideas and best practices. These include meetings for technology staff, curriculum directors, gifted/talented staff, special education staff, bilingual/ESL directors and migrant directors. Region 15 provides the district with other cost-effective services, such as printing documents for distribution to large numbers of employees.

COMMENDATION

GCISD takes full advantage of the comprehensive training courses offered by Region 15.

FINDING

The district emphasizes putting more resources in the classroom, and has taken steps to increase the level of support to campuses. **Exhibit 1-12** shows the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions at GCISD.

Exhibit 1-12
GCISD Number of FTE Employees
1997-98 Through 2000-01

Classification of Staff	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Teachers	71.1	48.4%	80.1	48.2%	81.1	52.2%	83.1	54.2%
Professional Support	9.2	6.2%	8.0	4.8%	7.4	4.8%	8.8	5.7%
Campus Administrators	4.5	3.1%	4.7	2.8%	3.9	2.5%	5.0	3.3%
Central Administrators	2.0	1.4%	2.0	1.2%	1.0	0.6%	2.0	1.3%
Educational Aides	13.7	9.4%	15.8	9.5%	13.9	8.9%	19.0	12.4%
Auxiliary Staff	46.3	31.5%	55.5	33.4%	48.0	30.9%	35.5	23.1%
Total Staff	**146.8**	**100.0%**	**166.1**	**100.0%**	**155.3**	**100.0%**	**153.4**	**100.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 1999-2000, PEIMS, 2000-01. Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

The number of employees in the district has increased slightly since 1997-98, from 146.8 FTEs in 1997-98 to 153.4 FTEs in 2000-01, a net increase of 6.6 FTEs (**Exhibit 1-13**). During the same time period, student enrollment increased from 929 to 1,151, a net increase of 222 students.

Exhibit 1-13
GCISD Staff FTEs
1997-98 Through 2000-01

Staff Category	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Net Increase/ Decrease 1997-98 to 2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Teachers	71.1	80.1	81.1	83.1	12.0	16.9%
Professional Support	9.2	8.0	7.4	8.8	(0.4)	(4.4%)
Campus Administrators	4.5	4.7	3.9	5.0	0.5	11.1%
Central Administration	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0%
Educational Aides	13.7	15.8	13.9	19.0	5.3	38.7%
Auxiliary Staff	46.3	55.5	48.0	35.5	(10.8)	(23.3%)
Total Staff	**146.8**	**166.1**	**155.3**	**153.4**	**6.6**	**4.5%**
Student Enrollment	**929**	**1,049**	**1,122**	**1,151**	**222**	**23.9%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 1999-2000, PEIMS, 2000-01.

In 1998-99, the district initiated periodic reviews of all staffing le vels and began assessing each campus' and the district's teaching and administrative requirements. As a result, the district eliminated several administrative positions. Additionally, the district filled several vacant administrative positions at a lower salary level.

The district created a new director of Public Information and Grants position to develop additional funding sources for the district. The changes in non-teaching personnel from 1998-99 through 2000-01 are shown in **Exhibit 1-14**.

Exhibit 1-14
GCISD Changes in Non-Teaching Personnel
1998-99 Through 2000-01

Position	Salary	Change to Staffing	Savings (Cost)
Assistant principal elementary school	$44,401	No replacement	$44,401
Personnel clerk	$14,577	No replacement	$14,577
Social worker	$24,810	No replacement	$24,810
Maintenance supervisor	$21,732	No replacement	$21,732
Transportation director	$22,276	No replacement	$22,276
Head mechanic	$18,290	No replacement	$18,290
Maintenance worker	$16,369	No replacement	$16,369
Director of Public Information and Grants	$21,030	Added position	($21,030)
Principal intermediate school	$41,000	Added position	($41,000)
Net Savings (Cost)	**N/A**	**N/A**	**$100,425**

Source: GCISD director of Business and Finance, April 2001.

The district also reduced the number of auxiliary staff by contracting for maintenance services. This saved the district additional funds that could be reallocated to classroom or other needed positions. The district increased its teaching staff by 12 positions and its educational aides by 5.3 FTEs from 1997-98 through 2000-01.

COMMENDATION

The district is controlling overall staffing levels while increasing its support to the classroom.

FINDING

Teacher turnover for the district has been increasing and is at an all time high for the district. The district does not track the reasons for teacher turnover, so it is unable to assess specific reasons why teachers are leaving the district.

Exhibit 1-15 shows that GCISD had the highest teacher turnover rate (24.6 percent) among its peers in 1999-2000, well above the statewide average of 15 percent.

Exhibit 1-15
GCISD and Peer District Teacher Turnover Rate
1996-97 Through 1999-2000

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Celina	7.5%	8.8%	13.1%	14.3%
Hutto	17.6%	11.1%	23.5%	17.9%
Shallowater	13.2%	12.8%	5.0%	7.3%
Troy	11.8%	10.3%	14.8%	11.1%
Grape Creek	**12.9%**	**11.8%**	**19.9%**	**24.6%**
State Average	**12.6%**	**13.3%**	**15.5%**	**15.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

The district conducts exit interviews with departing staff, but does not have categories for employees to check so that employees can document the specific reason for leaving. The trend for staff turnover can be tracked over time by having specific categories for separation reasons. This often helps districts determine why employees are leaving, and helps the district design strategies that promote employee retention.

Many school districts that conduct exit interviews include documentation of the reason for separation, including:

- Moving from district;
- Returning to school;
- Dissatisfied with type of work;
- Health reasons;
- Family obligations; and
- Promotion/higher pay.

Employee turnover is a measure of workforce stability, job satisfaction, and the adequacy of programs and initiatives designed to retain qualified personnel. High turnover rates cause disruption in the classroom and in campus operations. Other schools have addressed the turnover rate for teachers, particularly new teachers, in various ways. Some effective practices used in other school districts include providing non-monetary rewards, creating team-building opportunities, developing new teacher

support groups and minimizing paperwork for teachers. Exit interviews can help determine which incentives are needed to reduce teacher turnover.

Recommendation 3:

Include reason for separation as part of the formal exit interview process and track the results.

The personnel staff should include the identification of any and all sources of job dissatisfaction as part of its exit interview process. After developing the exit interview process, the yearly turnover rate by reason for separation should be analyzed for all categories of employees. Turnover information should be shared with the board and staff so that the district can develop strategies to reduce turnover.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the director of Business and Finance modify the formal exit interview process to include reasons for separation.	October 2001
2.	The director of Business and Finance implement the exit interview process and track reason for leaving for each employee.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent monitors the exit interview process.	December 2001 and Ongoing
4.	The director of Business and Finance shares the exit interview information with the board and staff so that strategies to reduce turnover can be developed.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

D. Community Involvement

Community involvement is essential to both the success of a school district and the quality of life within a school district's community. Community involvement includes those activities that enable parents, business leaders and others with a stake in public education to become involved in the district.

Effective community involvement programs address the unique characteristics of the school district and the community. A critical component of community involvement programs includes strategies for externally communicating with the community and internally communicating within the school district. Other essential program components include methods for recruiting volunteers and soliciting business support for campus functions and outreach activities designed to encourage community participation in the district.

The director of Public Information and Grants is responsible for managing community involvement for GCISD.

FINDING

GCISD has an active Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) program, particularly in the elementary school. The VIPS support the mission of GCISD, which is "to provide an exemplary education for all students through a quality school system."

The district had 41 VIPS in 1999-2000 that contributed 343 volunteer hours towards activities such as:

- tutoring individual students;
- helping kindergarten students take their computer tests;
- assisting in the library shelving books;
- assisting with school picture day;
- running errands for the dental van;
- assisting with vision and hearing screening;
- assisting with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA); and
- helping with special projects such as the University Interscholastic League (UIL)-sponsored activities.

The district and the PTA sponsor an awards luncheon each year to honor the volunteers. They also have formal training orientation for new VIPs

each fall, using materials from the National Association of Partners in Education, Inc., along with materials the district has produced. The district trains all VIPs in sexual harassment and trains teachers in how to use VIPs effectively in their classrooms.

The district's PTA is very active. Over the past year, it has supported the district's Accelerated Reader program by providing incentives for reading, including awards and items in the Accelerated Reader "store." The PTA also supports the district's employees by providing items that show appreciation to them and by supporting the annual employee appreciation banquet financially. The PTA also provides financial support to several school education projects including an Outdoor Education Project conducted by the fourth grade at the H-E-B camp in Leakey, Texas. They also supported an Abstinence Education Program in 2000-01 in high school and middle school.

The district's Technology Task Force consists of district employees from all campuses as well as parent representatives and student representatives. This committee reviews technology needs, purchases and donations as well as any district technology grants.

The Citizens Committee was formed in 1999 to study financial options as the district investigated the possibility of a bond election. This well-organized group worked hard to study options to meet the educational needs of the district, including consolidating with another school district, holding a bond election or going to a "basic school" format where only the core subjects are taught. This committee included parents, community members and business leaders. They finalized their report and made a formal recommendation to the district's Board of Trustees.

The high school has athletic and band booster clubs that involve high school parents in students' athletic and band activities, including raising funds for uniforms and helping with UIL-sponsored activities. Coordinated by the University of Texas, UIL promotes academic and athletic competition among the state's public schools.

Another volunteer group is the mentoring program that pairs a trained adult mentor with an at-risk child for the year to work on the student's self-esteem and study skills weekly.

COMMENDATION

GCISD uses volunteers effectively to support the district's education mission.

FINDING

The Grape Creek Education Foundation has secured thousands of dollars in donations from large corporations and local businesses as well as community individuals. The mission of the Grape Creek Education Foundation is to enhance the educational environment in the GCISD.

The Grape Creek Education Foundation was formed in August 1999 when it became a recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the Internal Revenue Service. The foundation was established as an 11-member board who developed the organization's mission and purpose statements. Later, the foundation added an additional member to the board, and it remains a 12-member board today.

The purpose of the Grape Creek Education Foundation is to seek and secure grants, endowments and donations for the enhancement of educational opportunities for persons of all ages in the GCISD. Funds can be disbursed to meet physical or professional development needs, extracurricular programs or special project sponsorships. This can include, but is not limited to, the purchase of equipment, technology, books, curriculum, furniture and facilities as well as support for programs by supplying stipends, money for instructional substitutes/aides, and expenses for field trips and training.

The foundation entered into a memorandum of understanding with GCISD whereby the district will support the endeavors of the foundation by sharing office space, a telephone line and support materials. The district's director of Public Information and Grants also provides support to the foundation. The foundation's office is located in the high school.

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

In support of teachers, the foundation awards a $25 gift certificate to the local teacher store to those staff members who have created the best Web site pages for each six-week grading period. The teacher or aide is given recognition in the local newspaper and district publications. When an eighth grade teacher needed help raising funds for an outdoor education project, the foundation secured a $1,200 grant to help pay for it, and when the publications department needed software, the foundation identified another $1,707 in grants to cover the expense for three software titles.

The establishment of a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization has opened up many opportunities for securing grants and donations for which a school district would not otherwise qualify. The foundation has assisted other school districts in setting up supporting nonprofit organizations. As an aid

to those wishing to set up a foundation, the Grape Creek Education
Foundation has organized a "Help Packet" available for a nominal amount.

COMMENDATION

**GCISD's educational foundation provides funds to support innovative
academic and staff development projects.**

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter discusses the Grape Creek Independent School District's (GCISD's) educational service delivery system in five sections:

A. Student Performance
B. Curriculum and Instructional Resources
C. Special Programs
D. Health Programs
E. Safety and Security

Effective educational service delivery requires appropriate instruction, highly qualified teachers, adequate resources and a thorough understanding of all students' instructional needs. GCISD students need well-designed and implemented instructional programs. Effective and caring leadership from GCISD's central office and individual schools' administration leads to successful instructional programs.

BACKGROUND

GCISD selected four Texas school districts to serve as peer districts for comparisons: Troy, Hutto, Shallowater and Celina. None of these districts is in the immediate geographic area of GCISD, with two located in central Texas (Hutto and Troy), one in the panhandle (Shallowater), and one in north-central Texas (Celina). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided information on the state-mandated student achievement test scores, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and other student performance measures.

Demographic, staffing and financial data for each school district and school are reported in TEA's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports. These reports are sent to each school and district and are available on TEA's Web site (www.tea.state.tx.us). The latest AEIS data, published by TEA in November 2000, are for 1999-2000. In a small district like GCISD, a small number of staff or students can have a large impact on percents. TSPR noted this effect when comparing GCISD to its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-1 presents demographic information for GCISD, the selected peer districts, Regional Education Service Center XV (Region 15) and the state.

Exhibit 2-1
Demographic Characteristics of GCISD
and Peer School Districts
2000-01

District	Student Enrollment		Ethnic Groups					Economically Disadvantaged	
	Number	5 Year Percent Change*	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent Minority	Percent	5 Year Percent Change*
Troy	1,277	6.2%	1.5%	20.4%	77.2%	0.9%	22.8%	34.6%	16.9%
Hutto	1,232	47.9%	4.6%	18.9%	75.1%	1.4%	24.9%	15.4%	(33.0%)
Shallowater	1,205	5.4%	1.1%	28.8%	70.0%	0.1%	30.0%	35.5%	(9.2%)
Grape Creek	**1,151**	**40.9%**	**2.1%**	**21.1%**	**76.5%**	**0.3%**	**23.5%**	**46.7%**	**0.9%**
Celina	1,147	24.1%	5.3%	14.1%	79.4%	1.2%	20.6%	23.1%	579.0%
Region 15	50,696	(3.8%)	3.6%	47.9%	47.8%	0.7%	52.2%	53.5%	5.1%
State	4,071,433	6.3%	14.4%	40.5%	42.1%	3.0%	57.9%	49.2%	2.3%

*Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01. * Percent Change is defined as 2000-01 values minus 1996-97 values divided by 1996-97 values.*

For 2000-01, GCISD's enrollment was 1,151, up slightly from 1,122 in 1999-2000. All of GCISD's peer districts are of approximately the same size (**Exhibit 2-2**). GCISD's enrollment increased faster than its peers, Region 15 or the state from 1996-97 to 2000-01. However, GCISD added a high school during this time, accounting for much of the increase. Hutto ISD did have a larger increase than the other peer districts, but it is in close proximity to a rapidly expanding urban area. A range from 20.6 percent in Celina ISD to 30 percent in Shallowater ISD exists for minority enrollment in the districts. GCISD is in the middle with a minority student population of approximately 24 percent.

Exhibit 2-2
Enrollment Trends for GCISD
and Peer Districts
1996-97 Through 2000-01

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1996-97 to 2000-01
Celina	924	970	992	1,024	1,147	24.1%
Grape Creek	**817**	**929**	**1,049**	**1,122**	**1,151**	40.9%
Hutto	833	888	977	1,062	1,232	47.9%
Shallowater	1,143	1,188	1,189	1,228	1,205	5.4%
Troy	1,203	1,218	1,231	1,242	1,277	6.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 1999-2000 and PEIMS, 2000-01.

GCISD has the highest percent, 46.7 percent, of economically disadvantaged students among the four peer districts. Between 1996-97 and 2000-01, the percent of economically disadvantaged students in the state has increased by about 2 percent. In GCISD, the percent of economically disadvantaged students remained about the same.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-3,** GCISD ranks last in instructional expenditures per student, at $2,869 per student, compared to its peer districts. This amount is about $1,000 less than the state average. TEA does not report actual expenditures for Educational Service Centers (ESCs). Approximately 60 percent of the district's instructional expenditures are directed to instruction. GCISD does report a higher percent of expenditures for Special Education and Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction than its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-3
Actual Instructional Expenditures in GCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Total Expenditures	Instructional Expenditures Per Student*	Percent Regular	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Education	Percent Career & Technology	Percent Bilingual/ English as a Second Language	Percent Compensatory
Celina	$8,482,761	$3,798	67.4%	0.1%	13.4%	4.1%	1.0%	8.9%
Hutto	$10,722,781	$3,580	68.9%	0.0%	11.0%	5.8%	0.1%	9.7%
Shallowater	$9,621,224	$3,261	67.3%	0.4%	11.1%	7.6%	0.3%	9.2%

Troy	$9,102,284	$3,168	59.3%	2.3%	15.8%	5.5%	0.3%	13.3%
Grape Creek	$7,120,924	$2,869	60.3%	0.3%	21.6%	2.3%	3.2%	8.3%
State	$31,639,852,010	$3,738	61.5%	1.7%	15.2%	4.0%	3.7%	11.7%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.
*Includes instruction and instructional leadership expenditures.

As seen in **Exhibit 2-4**, GCISD reported the highest percent of students identified as special education compared to its peer districts. There are relatively few students enrolled in bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in any of these districts. The bilingual/ESL enrollment is significantly lower than the statewide average of 12.5 percent. GCISD ranks in the middle of percent of students enrolled in career and technology education programs.

Exhibit 2-4
Student Enrollment by Program
1999-2000

District	Percent Bilingual/ESL	Percent Career & Technology	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Education
Grape Creek	2.0%	19.8%	7.8%	17.4%
Troy	0.8%	21.3%	8.3%	16.1%
Celina	3.1%	17.2%	12.1%	13.9%
Hutto	3.4%	17.9%	5.6%	11.7%
Shallowater	2.0%	24.4%	3.9%	9.7%
Region 15	7.3%	22.8%	7.5%	14.0%
State	12.5%	18.6%	8.4%	12.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-5 shows the percent of professional staff in various categories. GCISD has the lowest percent of teachers and the highest percent of staff listed as auxiliary workers. GCISD has the lowest percent of staff listed as central administration and the second-lowest percent of campus administration staff. While these data are from 1999-2000, according to the Fall 2000 PEIMS submission, the percent of teachers increased slightly to 54.2 percent from 52.2 percent in 1999-2000. The percent of educational aides increased from 8.9 percent in 1999-2000 to 12.4 percent in 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-5
Professional Staff
GCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

Professional Staff	Grape Creek	Celina	Shallowater	Troy	Hutto	Region 15	State Avg.
Teachers	**52.2%**	54.3%	55.9%	56.1%	57.7%	51.0%	51.3%
Professional Support	**4.8%**	5.4%	3.4%	6.1%	2.8%	5.9%	7.3%
Campus Administration	**2.5%**	2.8%	3.8%	3.1%	2.1%	2.6%	2.6%
Central Administration	**0.6%**	2.5%	2.0%	1.6%	2.1%	0.9%	0.9%
Educational Aides	**8.9%**	13.1%	13.0%	14.5%	7.7%	11.5%	10.3%
Auxiliary Staff	**30.9%**	22.0%	21.9%	18.6%	27.5%	28.1%	27.6%
Percent Minority Teachers	**3.7%**	5.0%	3.7%	1.1%	1.2%	16.3%	26.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

GCISD has a larger percent of teachers with no listed degree than its peer districts (**Exhibit 2-6**), but equal to the state average. At 6 percent, GCISD has the lowest percent of teachers with a masters degree and is considerably below the state average of 24.3 percent.

Exhibit 2-6
Teacher Degrees
GCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

	Grape Creek	Troy	Shallowa ter	Hutto	Celina	Region 15	State Avg.
No Degree	**1.2%**	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	1.2%
Bachelors	**92.6%**	89.7%	81.7%	79.3%	71.3%	81.3%	74.1%
Masters	**6.0%**	10.3%	18.3%	19.5%	28.7%	17.0%	24.3%
Doctorate	**0.1%**	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.
Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

As seen in **Exhibit 2-7**, GCISD and its peer districts report a lower annual dropout rate than either Region 15 or the state. GCISD also reports a lower rate than any of its peers. Because the district has only had a high school for four years, important measures applied to other districts such as the graduation rate, longitudinal dropout rate and continuing students are not yet available. GCISD reports a

lower attendance rate than any of its peers, a rate equal to Region 15 and slightly above the state average. Attendance rates are a significant portion of the calculation for the amount of state aid a district receives.

Exhibit 2-7
Annual Dropout and Attendance Rate
GCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

	Grape Creek	Shallowater	Troy	Hutto	Celina	Region 15	State Avg.
Dropout Rate	**0.6%**	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%	1.6%
Attendance Rate	**95.8%**	96.1%	96.3%	96.5%	96.9%	95.8%	95.4%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

Under the state's school accountability system, TEA assigns annual ratings to each district and school based upon TAAS results, attendance, dropout rates and data quality. In 1999, TEA added two new rating categories: Unacceptable: Data Quality (a district-level rating) and Acceptable: Data Issues (a school-level rating).The accountability system includes five ratings for districts: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable and Unacceptable: Data Quality.

To receive an Exemplary rating, at least 90 percent of all students, as well as 90 percent of African American, Hispanic, Anglo, and Economically Disadvantaged students, must pass the reading, writing and mathematics portions of the TAAS. To achieve a Recognized rating, 80 percent of all students and each student group must pass the same reading, writing and mathematics sections of the TAAS. In 1999-2000, to be rated Academically Acceptable, 50 percent of each student group had to pass TAAS. Beginning in 1999-2000, scores from students with disabilities and from the TAAS Spanish version of reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 6 were included in the accountability calculations. Although the state accountability system also considers attendance and dropout rates, TAAS is the primary determining factor in ratings. According to TEA, failure to meet TAAS standards is the primary reason that a school is rated low performing. However, other factors such as data quality can affect ratings.

Exhibit 2-8 shows that three of the five districts were rated Acceptable in 1995-96. While GCISD was rated as Acceptable in 1998-99, due to one student group rating below the 80 percent standard in writing, all student groups were at recognized levels in 1999-2000. Beginning in 1999-2000, a district could also have a restricted rating no higher than Acceptable if there were under-reported leaver code students. A leaver code must be assigned to every student no longer enrolled in the district. If an excessive number of students are reported as unknown, the district rating cannot exceed Acceptable. This rating is only applied at the district level.

Exhibit 2-8
Accountability Ratings
GCISD and Peer Districts
1995-96 Through 1999-2000

	1995-96	**1996-97**	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**
Grape Creek	**Recognized**	**Recognized**	**Recognized**	**Acceptable**	**Acceptable**
Hutto	Recognized	Recognized	Acceptable	Recognized	Acceptable
Troy	Acceptable	Recognized	Acceptable	Acceptable	Recognized
Celina	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Shallowater	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Source: TEA Accountability Reports, 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

Two additional campuses were listed in the TEA report, but one, Trinity Early Childhood, was not rated because only pre-kindergarten students attend the school. The other campus, Fairview Accelerated, was rated Acceptable under the alternative accountability system. Both of these campuses are part of a shared-service arrangement with other districts.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A. Student Performance

Effective instruction depends upon adequate human and fiscal resources and on support from the district's central office. The school administrative and instructional team must be qualified and active in planning and implementing the curriculum. TAAS performance, the primary factor in determining a district's accountability ratings, depends on effective instruction.

TAAS is administered in grades 3 through 8 and 10 and includes a reading and mathematics test in grades 3 through 8 and 10 and a writing assessment in grades 4, 8 and 10. Science and Social Studies tests are added at grade 8, but are not used in determining accountability ratings. Because there are five tests administered in grade 8, this grade level usually has the lowest percent of students passing all tests taken. The Spanish version of TAAS is given in grades 3 through 6.

Changes will be made to the TAAS on an incremental basis between 2000 and 2003, particularly at the high school level. By 2003, TAAS will be administered in grades 9, 10 and 11. Reading and mathematics tests will be added at grade 9. The exit-level examination will be moved to grade 11 and will include science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics. A science test will be added to grade 5.

FINDING

GCISD uses a variety of instructional approaches to ensure that TAAS performance continues to improve for all students. The elementary principal said that teachers examine the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) from grade levels above and below their assigned grade in order to provide better continuity across grades. TAAS objectives are derived directly from the TEKS. The actual test items are grouped within these objectives. The Accelerated Reader program is an integral part of instruction. This reading program allows students to select books to be read at their own pace, followed by computer quizzes. Both student and teacher receive immediate feedback to direct reading practice. More information regarding the Accelerated Reader can be found at www.renlearn.com. GCISD also expects each school to set its own performance standards that exceed TAAS. An elementary principal said, "TAAS is only the beginning," to ensure high performance levels. In addition, GCISD's ongoing effort to improve and update the district's

curriculum guides has allowed the district to enhance the instructional delivery system.

GCISD also contracts with Texas Tech University to provide a writing instruction program that uses tutors from Texas Tech to improve student writing skills. The program included one fourth-grade class and one eighth-grade class. Texas Tech graduate students assisted students with their writing skills by editing their writing samples and providing feedback.

Four years ago, Grape Creek Elementary instituted "Kids and Nature Come Together," a service-learning project that includes multidisciplinary learning and a service project at neighboring San Angelo State Park. Mathematics and science are taught through water quality analysis experiments, data collection and activities such as creating pictographs using natural dyes. Language arts are interwoven among all activities through student journals and writing assignments. This project is funded through grants and donations. The students have been able to rework the park's multi-use trails, build benches, renovate restrooms and landscape the park's new cabin area.

Grape Creek's Middle School project has become a model for neighboring school districts. Instructional leaders have given presentations on the "Kids and Nature Come Together" project at the state and local levels. In 2000, the high school applied for and received a campus grant for almost $10,000 to fund a service-learning activity that will include the construction of a community livestock facility and improvement projects at the Grape Creek Community Cemetery. At the elementary level, the fourth grade class traveled to the H-E-B Camp in Leakey, Texas in 2000 for an outside learning activity and participated in a camp cleanup project.

Through all of these projects, the district has learned how to cooperate with private businesses and to tap into resources available in the community. Partnerships have been formed that will help the district expand on these innovative teaching and learning ideas.

Exhibit 2-9 shows that for grade 7, student performance at GCISD was higher than the state average for 1996-2000. GCISD's TAAS scores have significantly improved over this period, especially at the elementary level and grade 8. This increase in performance is noteworthy given that half of students in GCISD are listed as economically disadvantaged.

Exhibit 2-9
Percent of Students Passing TAAS
GCISD, Region 15 and State
1995-96 and 1999-2000

Grade Level*	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies		All Tests Taken	
	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000
Grade 3												
GCISD	86	95	73	93							71	94
Region 15	83	89	81	82							74	79
State	81	88	77	80							70	77
Grade 4												
GCISD	80	99	84	93	84	98					69	91
Region 15	80	90	83	88	85	92					70	81
State	78	90	79	87	86	90					67	80
Grade 5												
GCISD	94	98	92	99							90	98
Region 15	83	89	82	94							75	87
State	83	88	79	92							74	85
Grade 6												
GCISD	90	93	97	97							90	92
Region 15	81	90	83	94							75	87
State	78	86	78	89							70	82
Grade 7												
GCISD	94	87	90	93							87	84
Region 15	84	85	77	92							73	82
State	83	84	72	88							68	79

Grade 8												
GCISD	94	93	74	97	83	92	94	97	85	93	66	82
Region 15	78	88	69	91	76	85	80	88	71	73	54	65
State	78	90	69	90	77	84	78	88	70	72	54	65
Grade 10												
GCISD**	90	91	79	84	96	89					76	80
Region 15	80	90	65	86	86	91					59	80
State	82	90	67	87	86	91					61	80

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 and 1999-2000.
* Shaded areas indicate that those particular tests are not administered at those grade levels.
** The earliest data available for grade 10 is from 1998.

COMMENDATION

GCISD uses a variety of instructional approaches and gives personal attention to students' needs to ensure that all students are performing at high levels as measured by TAAS.

FINDING

GCISD's PEIMS reporting process had difficulties in 1999-2000 because the district inaccurately reported the number of students who did not return to school, which resulted in a district rating of Acceptable. Each district is required to submit a leaver code for each student leaving the district during the school year or not returning from the prior year. If an excessive number of students cannot be matched from one year to another, in attendance or with a leaver code, the district cannot be rated as either Exemplary or Recognized, even if all other standards are met. A district with either more than 1,000 underreported students or with 10 percent or more of the total enrollment is subject to this restriction in ratings. A district that can demonstrate that it is making significant efforts to eliminate PEIMS identification errors may have an appeal considered by the commissioner. In 2000-01, TEA informed the district that they had achieved no PEIMS reporting errors, an improvement from 1999-2000.

However, the PEIMS data submission process continues to lack clarification and guidelines.

PEIMS Identification errors can include transposed numbers, internal communication errors and, in some cases, deliberate actions by either staff or guardians attempting to hinder the tracking of students. In addition, districts with high mobility rates need to be more diligent in tracking all students that enter and leave the district and ensuring that student data files are correct. As seen in **Exhibit 2-10**, GCISD has a higher mobility rate than any of its peer districts and a rate almost 6 percent higher than the state average. A student is classified as mobile if he or she is in attendance for less than 83 percent of the school year.

Exhibit 2-10
Mobility Rate and Under-Reported Students
GCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

	Grape Creek	**Shallowater**	**Troy**	**Hutto**	**Celina**
Mobility Rate	**27.5%**	16.5%	14.2%	13.2%	13.8%
Under-Reported Student Rate	**12.4%**	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Number of Under-Reported Students	**64**	0	1	0	1

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

While TEA found GCISD had no PEIMS identification errors for 2000-01, the district's current reporting structure does not contribute to data accuracy. The district PEIMS coordinator works at the central administration building. In addition to being the PEIMS coordinator, this position has other significant responsibilities related to school business operations. The PEIMS coordinator does not have access to student records in the central administration building. Campuses cannot be directly connected via computer because different providers serve different portions of the district. The district's main office must link through Region 15 to communicate electronically with all the campuses. According to the PEIMS coordinator, no outside reviews are conducted to find errors that might appear unreasonable but would not trigger an error in the PEIMS system. This means that as long as data are meeting the parameters set by PEIMS, incorrect and illogical data may be reported. The district does have an internal review and each principal and the superintendent are required to validate that the data are correct.

In a joint interview with the staff from the elementary, middle and high schools, concerns were raised regarding the lack of time available to accurately attend to the PEIMS submission process. Often, the PEIMS staff members also have other significant responsibilities within the school. Low pay and long hours were cited by each staff member along with a general lack of understanding about the importance and difficulty of the job. Campus-level PEIMS coordinators also said that there is a lack of training for teachers regarding PEIMS.

Recommendation 4:

Review the PEIMS data submission process, establish written guidelines and redefine the job responsibilities of PEIMS data operators.

The superintendent should move the PEIMS coordinator's office to one of the campuses to take advantage of direct communication. Job descriptions and duties for both the PEIMS coordinator and campus-level PEIMS data entry operators should be redefined and PEIMS responsibilities should be reduced for the secretaries at the various campuses. The PEIMS coordinator should ensure that all staff understand the importance of accurate data and that there are appropriate levels of training.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent redefines the PEIMS coordinator position and the PEIMS data entry operator positions at each campus.	October 2001
2.	Principals, with the help of the PEIMS coordinator, reduce secretarial duties for PEIMS data operators.	November 2001
3.	The PEIMS coordinator and principals, with assistance from Region 15 or TEA, conduct training sessions for all staff regarding the importance of PEIMS data and appropriate procedures to ensure accuracy.	November 2001 and Ongoing
4.	Principals or their designees add a section to the Student Program Guide that describes PEIMS and the importance.	December 2001
5.	The superintendent establishes quantifiable standards for PEIMS accuracy for each principal.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Between 1996-97 and 1997-98, the percent of GCISD students passing all TAAS tests taken had signigicantly declined. GCISD has a significant number of students in special programs whose TAAS scores are at the minimum passing. Overall, special education TAAS passing rates of 58.8 percent for all tests taken are more than 20 percent lower than the 79.9 percent all tests taken statewide passing rate. As seen in **Exhibit 2-11**, the percent of special education students is higher in GCISD, Celina ISD, Troy ISD and Shallowater ISD than the 58.8 percent state average.

Exhibit 2-11
Percent of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken (Grades 3-8 and 10)
Special Education Students
1999-2000

	Grape Creek	Troy	Celina	Hutto	Shallowater	Region 15	State
Percent Special Education	**17.4%**	16.1%	13.9%	11.7%	9.7%	14.0%	12.1%
Percent ARD exempt	**6.1%**	9.5%	9.6%	3.3%	4.2%	7.7%	7.1%
Percent Passing All Tests Taken	**65.0%**	73.1%	72.2%	56.3%	73.2%	58.4%	58.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

In 2002-03, TAAS testing will include grade 9 for the first time as well as the exit level exam, including Algebra and Social Studies, administered in grade 11. In addition, TEA reports that TAAS will be more difficult at all grade levels. Historically, student performance declines whenever there is a major shift in the state testing program. When the Texas Education Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) replaced the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills, an earlier assessment test, student performance, especially for economically disadvantaged students, declined. Similarly, when TAAS replaced TEAMS, a decline occurred.

Between 1996-97 and 1997-98, the percent of students passing all portions of the TAAS significantly declined for GCISD. While it was expected that there would be a decline in overall district scores because of the inclusion of special education and Spanish TAAS student scores that year, the decline for the state, Region 15 and peer districts was not significant (**Exhibit 2-12**).

Exhibit 2-12
Percent of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken (Grades 3-8 and 10)
1995-96 Through 1999-2000

District	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*	1998-99**	1999-2000	Percent Change from 1995-96 to 1999-2000	Percent of Students Tested on TAAS 1999-2000
Celina	71.8%	75.0%	74.1%	80.6%	86.8%	20.9%	89.2%
Shallowater	72.1%	74.7%	79.0%	84.3%	86.1%	19.4%	95.3%
Troy	72.9%	80.3%	72.5%	80.9%	84.9%	16.5%	92.4%
Grape Creek	**79.0%**	**83.7%**	**72.0%***	**85.4%**	**89.1%**	**12.8%**	**92.9%**
Hutto	80.9%	87.6%	84.3%	86.9%	86.4%	6.8%	93.1%
Region 15	**69.0%**	**76.2%**	**73.6%**	**80.7%**	**82.2%**	**19.1%**	**90.6%**
State	**67.1%**	**73.2%**	**73.1%**	**78.3%**	**79.9%**	**19.1%**	**90.2%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1995-96 through 1999-2000.
*TEA recalculated from original posting to include special education and grade 3 and 4 Spanish TAAS.
** TEA recalculated from original posting to include special education and grade 3-6 Spanish TAAS.
***GCISD's original posting was 83 percent, prior to including special education. The district did not have any students taking the grades 3 and 4 Spanish TAAS.

The Texas Learning Index (TLI) is a measure of performance growth derived from the TAAS reading and mathematics test. These tests are given at grades 3 through 8, and 10 (English language only). TLI measures are determined for those students who took the reading and/or mathematics tests. Even though students with a TLI below 85 (and with a TLI of at least 70) are considered passing TAAS, TEA estimates that

students with a TLI below 85 may have a difficult time passing the 2003 TAAS. These students may need additional teaching/tutoring to ensure that they will be prepared in 2003.

The progress of students who have previously failed the TAAS, as measured by the TLI, exceeded the state and Region 15 gains for the last two years (**Exhibit 2-13**).

Exhibit 2-13
Progress of TAAS Failures as Measured by Reading TLI

	Grape Creek Elementary	Celina Elementary	Troy Elementary	Shallowater Intermediate**	Hutto Elementary	TEA Peer Group
TLI Growth	**17.7**	*	9.8	7.0	9.5	12.3

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.
* Fewer than five students not reported.
** Shallowater Intermediate has grades 4 and 5 only.

Recommendation 5:

Identify students currently below the Texas Learning Index value of 85 for special preparation efforts and performance incentives.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Principals and counselors identify students currently passing who may be at risk of failure on the 2003 TAAS.	November 2001 and Ongoing
2.	Principals assess student test data and provide teachers with item-level analysis for each targeted student.	October 2002
3.	The superintendent works with Region 15 to provide specific training to teachers that addresses borderline students.	November 2002
4.	The principals and counselors work with teachers to ensure that educational programs are adapted to ensure student success.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The percent of high school students participating in and passing advanced courses is below the state level. The high school program has only been in place for four years, and the high school is adding advanced courses every year, however, the percent of students completing advanced courses is 10.6 percent, below the state average of 17.5 percent. Advanced courses include chemistry, physics, advanced foreign language and computer science.

In surveys received from teachers, 36 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "The needs of the college bound student are being met." Forty-seven percent of teachers expressing an opinion disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was an effective foreign language program.

As a new high school, Grape Creek High School has a state-of-the-art distance-learning laboratory. The use of distance learning is worked into the high school educational program and is made available to the public as well. Both elementary and junior high school students also use the lab extensively.

Recommendation 6:

Supplement distance learning opportunities and share teachers that can teach advanced courses with neighboring districts.

The district should enter into a cooperative agreement, possibly through Region 15, to obtain teachers to support advanced courses, either through direct instruction or through supplements to distance learning courses. The district could identify all staff qualified to teach advanced and upper-lever courses. For example, GCISD may identify a qualified science teacher and share this teacher with one neighboring district. In exchange, the neighboring district could provide another teacher to teach advanced courses in GCISD.

Courses to be offered would vary every two years to ensure more complete coverage of advanced instruction. For example, Calculus A and B and Chemistry could be offered in 2001-02 and Computer Science I and Physics B in 2002-03. Course offerings would depend to a large extent on teacher and distance learning course availability.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent assesses the qualifications of all certified personnel and identifies all teachers who can teach advanced courses.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent enters into a cooperative arrangement with other districts.	September 2001
3.	The superintendent implements the cooperative teacher program for advanced courses.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is estimated by assuming that two currently employed teachers will be shared with a neighboring district. Each district will continue to pay the same salary. An additional amount of $5,040 is included to account for 180 travel days at an average of 50 miles per teacher per day at a rate of 28 cents per mile (50 miles per day x 180 days x .28 per mile x 2 teachers). The mileage costs are divided between two districts, so the cost for each district is $2,520 ($5,040 / 2). The first year would cover only the second semester and would cost half as much as the subsequent years. ($2,520 / 2 = $1,260).

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Supplement distance learning opportunities and share teachers that can teach advanced courses with neighboring districts.	($1,260)	($2,520)	($2,520)	($2,520)	($2,520)

FINDING

The GCISD middle school and high school mathematics program are not vertically aligned. The middle school curriculum is not preparing students for success in the high school Algebra I course. As shown in **Exhibit 2-14** the percent of students passing Algebra I is lower at Grape Creek High School than at the middle school for both 1998-99 and 199-2000.

Exhibit 2-14
Percent of Students Passing Algebra I (Grades 3-8 and 10)

Year	Middle School	High School
	Percent Passing	Percent Passing
1999-2000	96.7%	26.7%
1998-99	88.5%	8.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 through 1999-2000.

Recommendation 7:

Establish a vertical alignment between middle school and high school mathematics.

The middle school mathematics teachers should jointly review the curriculum in grade 8 mathematics and should identify areas of weakness that can be improved. The grade 8 mathematics course should provide a stronger pre-algebra component to allow students to be better prepared for the Algebra course in high school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the middle school and the high school campus principals to jointly review the grade 8 mathematics curriculum.	September 2001
2.	Middle school grade 8 mathematics and Algebra I teachers collaborate with the high school Algebra I teachers to review and establish improvement for vertical alignment.	September 2001
3.	In conjunction with the grade 8 teachers, the high school Algebra I staff will identify all Algebra I students that are at risk of not passing the test and require that these students stay after school for extra tutoring early in the school year.	September 2001 - Ongoing
4.	Grade 8 and high school mathematics teachers and the high school principal review end-of-course passing rates for the Spring of 2002 to assess progress in increasing the percent of students passing the Algebra I at the high school.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

B. Curriculum and Instructional Resources

Instructional resources are the materials used to ensure successful learning, including curriculum guides, fiscal and human resources, and other instructional materials and direction. For instruction to be effective, a school district must have a sound instructional management system in place.

FINDING

GCISD is updating and aligning all of the district's curriculum guides in response to a needs assessment indicating that the curriculum was not vertically aligned from grade to grade within the district or with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS.) This long-term process began in 1997 with the training of all instructional staff in the curriculum development process.

The first goal listed in GCISD's district improvement plan states that the district will have "an aligned curriculum with a formal process to evaluate effectiveness to meet the needs of all students." Staff are committed to improving the district's guides. One of the elementary principals said, "You need to have more than TEKS...The curriculum revision process allows all of us to review our standards and to discuss all of our goals as a group. First grade teachers talk to third grade teachers, fourth grade math teachers know what is expected in sixth grade math..."

GCISD is also an active member of Region 15's Curriculum Collaborative Project, a united effort between Region 15 and Region 5 to provide curriculum aligned with TEKS and TAAS for Region 15 schools. In 1999-2000, GCISD purchased the Texas School Steps Curriculum. The leadership team was active in customizing the curriculum. The Capacity Building Initiative will provide additional curriculum training for faculty and staff. GCISD recently made its curriculum available to district staff through the district's intranet Web site. This provides all internal users easy, inexpensive access to the curriculum.

COMMENDATION

GCISD has made a commitment to develop, update and align all of the district's curriculum guides.

FINDING

Grape Creek High School publishes a Student Program Guide that describes all of the educational programs available to students. General information is provided regarding graduation requirements, class rank, extracurricular activity participation and other areas of interest. The guide also provides an in-depth description of all courses provided, including those that are offered via distance learning and college courses that are offered at Howard College. This guide helps students and parents better understand all of the options and programs available at Grape Creek High School.

COMMENDATION

Grape Creek High School produces an excellent Student Program Guide that clearly informs students and parents about the educational opportunities available.

FINDING

GCISD has by far the largest percent of beginning teachers and the smallest percent of teachers with more than 20 years of experience than any of its peer districts (**Exhibit 2-15**). GCISD also has the highest teacher turnover rate at 24.6 percent. The next-highest turnover rate, 17.9 percent, is found in Hutto ISD.

Exhibit 2-15
Teacher Experience and Turnover Rate
GCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

	Grape Creek	Hutto	Troy	Celina	Shallowater	Region 15	State Average
Beginning Teachers	**18.0%**	3.7%	3.4%	2.5%	0.0%	6.9%	7.6%
1-5 Years Experience	**43.1%**	25.4%	22.7%	24.8%	15.3%	22.6%	27.0%
6-10 Years Experience	**13.4%**	30.5%	20.4%	20.5%	33.0%	17.7%	17.9%
11-20 Years Experience	**17.4%**	29.8%	31.9%	29.9%	31.7%	28.9%	26.2%
Over 20 Years Experience	**8.0%**	10.6%	21.5%	22.3%	20.0%	23.9%	21.2%

Average Years Experience	**7.3**	10.5	12.7	12.3	13.5	12.8	11.9
Average Years Experience with the district	**4.1**	4.2	7.9	7.8	9.2	8.6	8.0
Turnover	**24.6%**	17.9%	11.1%	14.3%	7.3%	13.6%	15.0%
Beginning Teacher Salary	**$25,632**	$26,863	$24,336	$30,015	n/a	$24,334	$28,588
Average Teacher Salary 6-10 Years	**$31,306**	$35,687	$32,444	$34,559	$32,350	$32,498	$34,632

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

In response to the need to recruit and retain new teachers, GCISD began a New Teacher Academy for all teachers new to the profession. At the beginning of the school year, new teachers receive orientation information and meet with each master teacher. The district requires all new teachers to attend the New Teacher Academy once every six weeks. In these sessions, teachers discuss a variety of subjects, including TAAS administrative procedures, discipline issues, and legal and educational questions regarding special education. These sessions also allow new teachers to discuss individual issues, concerns and needs.

COMMENDATION

GCISD's New Teacher Academy provides support to all beginning teachers.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. Special Programs (Part 1)

Several educational programs including special education, gifted and talented, bilingual and compensatory education are provided in Texas schools for students with special needs. Career and technology programs are also offered to allow students to gain the skills necessary to obtain an entry-level job or continue with post-secondary education.
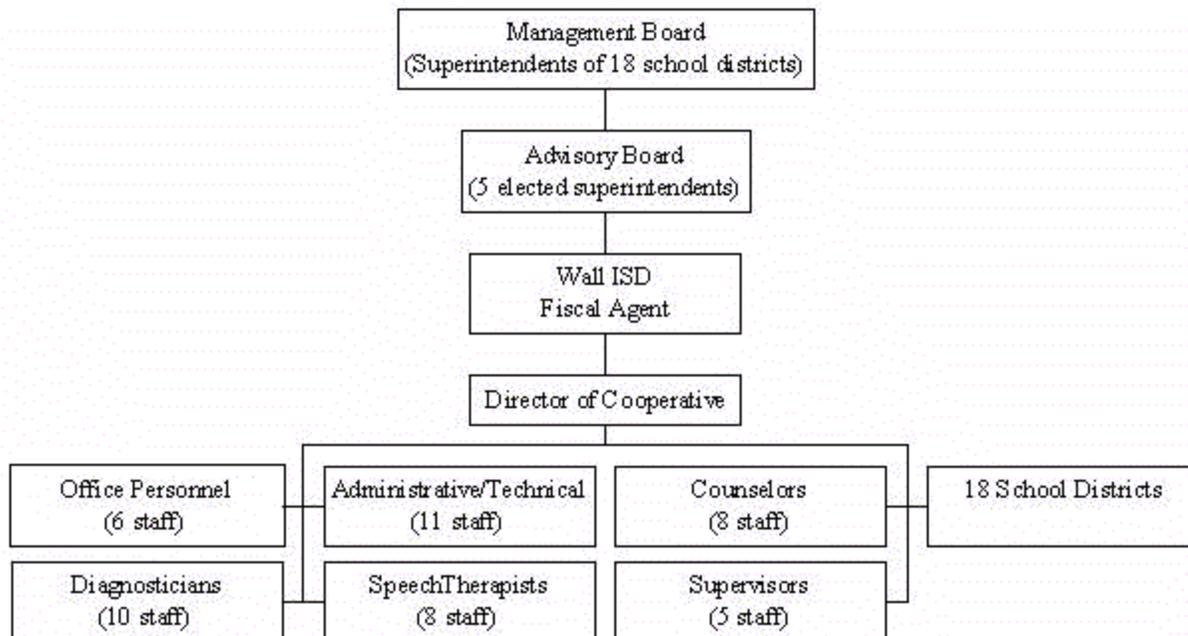
Special Education

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires districts to provide appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of the handicap. The law states that the education is to be provided in the least restrictive environment and that students with disabilities are to be included in state and district assessment programs. This law, which is designed to protect children and parents in the educational decision-making process, requires districts to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child. The IEP should include the input of regular education teachers and be clearly aligned with the education plan for children in general classrooms.

GCISD is a member of the Small Schools Cooperative. The cooperative is a shared service arrangement designed to assist member districts in providing educational services to all students with disabilities. The cooperative is composed of 18 school districts and serves approximately 1,500 students.

Exhibit 2-16 presents the organizational chart for the cooperative. The management board of the cooperative is composed of the superintendent from each member school. The management board meets twice each year and elects members to serve on the cooperative's advisory board. The advisory board meets monthly and is led by the superintendent of the cooperative's fiscal agent district and includes superintendents from four member districts. The advisory board's role is limited to decisions involving daily operations.

Wall ISD serves as the fiscal agent for the cooperative and is responsible for all budget preparations and the completion of all funding applications.

Exhibit 2-16
Small Schools Cooperative Organization

Source: GCISD Department of Special Education, 1999-2000.

The cooperative provides a wide range of services that include initial student assessment, equipment, special units, staff training, software and legal updates. In addition, the cooperative hires teachers and aides for multi-district classes; interprets for the deaf; and contracts with a child and adolescent psychiatrist and several psychologists, counselors, physical therapists and occupational therapists. Homebound services are also provided. The cooperative operates several multi-district classes designed to meet the needs of these students. These units are housed in various locations throughout the member districts.

Exhibit 2-17 shows GCISD, its peer districts, Region 15 and the state special education program enrollment information for 1998-99 and 1999-2000. There is a wide range between GCISD and its peer districts in the number and percents of students receiving special education services and the number of special education teachers reported by AEIS. For 1999-2000, GCISD has the highest percent of students enrolled in special education of its peers with 17.4 percent, which is 5 percent higher than the percent of students identified as receiving special education services statewide.

Exhibit 2-17

Number and Percent of Special Education Students and Teachers
GCISD, Peer Districts, Region 15 and State
1998-99 Through 1999-2000

District	Special Education Student Enrollment				Special Education Teachers (FTEs)			
	1998-99		1999-2000		1998-99		1999-2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grape Creek	**195**	**18.6%**	**195**	**17.4%**	**11.3**	**14.2%**	**10.6**	**13.1%**
Troy	180	14.6%	200	16.1%	5.9	6.6%	6.8	7.8%
Shallowater	127	10.7%	119	9.7%	5.7	6.9%	6.0	7.3%
Hutto	126	12.9%	124	11.7%	3.5	4.6%	4.1	5.0%
Celina	147	14.8%	142	13.9%	4.5	5.5%	4.8	6.0%
Region 15	**7,428**	**14.4%**	**7,178**	**14.0%**	**381.5**	**9.9%**	**377.2**	**9.7%**
State	**76,712**	**12.1%**	**482,427**	**12.1%**	**24,744**	**9.5%**	**25,784**	**9.6%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1998-99 through 1999-2000; Small Schools
Cooperative, San Angelo, Texas, 2001.

Exhibit 2-18 shows that GCISD has the highest percent of actual
expenditures allocated to special education when compared to its peers.
GCISD spends $5,104 per special education student; this amount is lower
than the state average of $5,937 per student.

Exhibit 2-18
GCISD Actual Expenditures for Special Education
GCISD, Peer Districts and State
1999-2000

District	Number of Students Enrolled	Actual Special Education Expenditures	Percent of Actual Expenditures	Per Student Expenditure
Celina	142	$661,336	13.4%	$4,657
Grape Creek	**195**	**$995,287**	**21.6%**	**$5,104**
Hutto	124	$537,348	11.0%	$4,333
Shallowater	119	$584,741	11.1%	$4,914
Troy	200	$803,123	15.8%	$4,016
State	**482,427**	**$2,863,938,472**	**15.2%**	**$5,937**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-19 presents enrollment by type of instructional arrangement. Seventy-three students are in mainstream classes and 78 are in resource classes.

Exhibit 2-19
GCISD Students Enrolled in Special Education
Instructional Arrangement
1999-2000

Instructional Arrangements and Number of Students	Total Students
No Instructional Setting (Speech Therapy Only)	25
Homebound	*
Resource Room/Services	78
Vocational Adjustment	*
Off Home Campus	*
Early Child Multi District	6
Mainstream	73
Early Child Full-Time	8

Total	195

Source: Small Schools Cooperative, San Angelo, Texas, 2001.
*Indicates numbers less than 5.

Exhibit 2-20 also provides a description of the instructional arrangements available for special education students.

Exhibit 2-20
GCISD Students Enrolled in Special Education
Instructional Arrangements
1999-2000

Description of Basic Programs
Mainstream - To ensure the least restrictive environment appropriate for each student, district personnel first consider providing services in regular education with supplementary aids. Students with disabilities who spend all of their classroom hours in a regular classroom are called "mainstreamed" students.

Resource - These students have a combination of regular classes and resource classes. In a resource class, some students are pulled out from the regular classroom for specific instruction or tutoring, while other students spend most or all of the instructional day in the resource classroom.

Vocational Adjustment class (VAC) - This setting provides educational and vocational services to eligible secondary students. Students are instructed in job readiness skills.

Self-Contained classes - If a student's disability is so severe that satisfactory education cannot take place in a regular classroom, the student will be served in a separate self-contained classroom.

Behavior Adjustment Class (BAC) -Special education students who are disruptive in the regular classroom are sent to the BIP, a separate classroom that serves as an in-school alternative placement classroom primarily for emotionally disturbed students.

Adaptive Physical Education - These classes provide specialized physical education curriculum for students who are unable to benefit from the regular physical education program.

Homebound - This program provides at-home services for students at all grade levels who cannot attend school because of illness, injury or expulsion.

FINDING

The Small Schools Cooperative provides services in a timely and professional manner to GCISD students. The most valuable services mentioned by staff include the availability of expert diagnosticians, therapists and psychologists, training materials and literature related to various special education topics, and periodic updates to current state and federal regulations and laws. The cooperative also provides special education units that meet the needs of all GCISD students. The director of the cooperative said that district staff is committed to serving the needs of students and shares responsibility with the cooperative staff. The cooperative staff also works closely with Region 15 to provide services to all member districts. Community feedback indicated that the special education program in GCISD is respected.

The cooperative provided a technology-based education system, INVEST Learning, for every member district. The cooperative purchased both the hardware and software for each of the member districts. The program was installed on a server so additional computer workstations can be added in the future.

COMMENDATION

GCISD's participation in the Small Schools Cooperative helps provide excellent services for the district's special education students.

FINDING

GCISD has recently instituted a pre-referral system in the elementary school. A special education pre-referral committee was formed and meets as needed, such as when a teacher requests a meeting or when a student is considered for referral. A form, *Pre-Referral Checklist for Regular Classroom Teachers*, is used to ensure that educational efforts and strategies are provided and/or considered for the student prior to referral to special education. These efforts are also documented for future reference.

To serve the multiple needs of all students with disabilities and to comply with IDEA's requirements, an effective special education program should implement pre-referral intervention practices in regular education. When a student experiences an academic problem in the regular education program, an intervention can and should be conducted to solve the problem. If steps taken to solve the problem by the regular education teacher do not produce results, the problem is then referred to special education staff.

COMMENDATION

GCISD provides a pre-referral system for elementary students before they are referred to special education.

FINDING

GCISD implemented a full inclusion program that benefits students receiving special education services. Grape Creek Elementary defines itself as a "full inclusion school" meaning it keeps special education students in regular education environments for most of their academic instruction. Many educators believe that this strategy 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.

One of the key elements to a successful inclusion program is the teacher-to-student ratio. As seen in **Exhibit 2-21**, while the Grape Creek ISD special education student-to-teacher ratio is lower than its peer districts, it is in line with Region 15 and the state average. The district employs a teacher's aide at each grade level. Teacher aide positions are funded with Title I or special education funds. At GCISD, there is one special education teacher for pre-Kindergarten through grade 2, and one for grade 3.

Exhibit 2-21
Special Education Student-to-Teacher Ratio
GCISD, Peer Districts, Region 15 and State
1999-2000

Grape Creek	Shallowater	Troy	Celina	Hutto	Region 15	State Average
18.4:1	19.8:1	29.4:1	29.5:1	30.2:1	19.0:1	18.7:1

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

Inclusion takes appropriate staffing and teamwork between the teacher, the special education teacher and the teacher's aide. Grape Creek Elementary has made a commitment to ensure that effective inclusion practices are implemented. Teachers and aides work closely together and have the same conference periods, and support the inclusion approach. One teacher said, "...we have worked hard to make this work....Those kids don't even know that they are in special education...it is good for them socially and academically...We do not want to lose what we have built."

COMMENDATION

GCISD effectively uses a continually improving full inclusion program by placing special education students in the least-restrictive environment possible.

Gifted and Talented

Texas state law requires all school districts to identify and provide services for gifted and talented students. In 1990, the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students.* This plan is a guide for meeting the law's requirements. In 1996, the SBOE updated the plan to include measures for program accountability.

Exhibit 2-22 shows enrollment figures and expenditure amounts for the gifted and talented program in GCISD and its peer districts. According to the PEIMS report for 1999-2000, GCISD spent $148 per gifted and talented student, significantly less than the state average of $951 per student. The percent of GCISD students identified as gifted and talented is lower than the state average. There is significant variation among the peer districts in reported expenditures for gifted and talented programs.

Exhibit 2-22
Number and Percent of Gifted/Talented Students and Teachers
Actual Expenditures
GCISD, Peer Districts, Region 15 and State
1999-2000

District	G/T Student Enrollment		G/T Teachers		Actual Expenditures for G/T	
	Number	Percent	Number*	Percent	Expenditure	Amount per student
Troy	103	8.3%	0	0%	$117,523	$1,141
Shallowater	48	3.9%	3.3	4.1%	$18,541	$386
Grape Creek	**87**	**7.8%**	**0.2**	**0.3%**	**$12,885**	**$148**
Celina	124	12.1%	8.2	10.2%	$6,000	$48
Hutto	60	5.6%	1.0	1.2%	$0	$0
Region 15	**3,830**	**7.5%**	**60**	**1.5%**	**N/A**	**N/A**

State	336,532	8.4%	5,853	2.2%	$319,880,467	$951

In GCISD, gifted and talented Kindergarten students are served in the regular classroom with enrichment activities offered at a minimum of one class period per week. Elementary students are served through a pullout program for two hours a week. In the middle school, gifted and talented students are served through honors courses in addition to a 45-minute pullout class once a week. The district's coordinator for gifted and talented education said that the district is in the process of improving the program's instructional approach in the middle school. High school students are served through advanced placement courses. However, because the high school is only four years old, the district is still making more advanced courses available to students.

FINDING

While GCISD has made significant progress since a 1998 TEA District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visit, some areas of concern remain. The DEC visit in 1998 identified areas of weakness in the gifted and talented program. The DEC report noted that there is no evidence of a well-defined curriculum coordinating all three campuses. The district does not have adequate curriculum guides for all core gifted and talented courses. The DEC review team recommended in 1998, "the district should develop a more comprehensive gifted and talented program that includes program evaluation, a plan for staff development beyond certification, and articulation in each campus improvement plan..." The DEC report also said that the district does not fully address how educational services are modified to meet the needs of gifted and talented students. District staff said the parent, teacher and student surveys are used to evaluate the program.

The 2000-01 District Improvement Plan (DIP) outlines several goals and objectives for improving the gifted and talented program. One objective for the high school calls for implementing an advanced placement and an advanced academic program at Grape Creek High School. The DIP also calls for the district to employ a full-time gifted and talented coordinator for the elementary campus and for the district to "implement new curriculum and instructional strategies in gifted and talented education and advanced academics for identified students in grades K-12."

The district participates in a Gifted and Talented Cooperative (GTC) with Region 15. Forty-two schools participate in this cooperative. Through this

agreement, schools receive the state-mandated training for gifted and talented certification and technical assistance. Region 15 held a Spring Authors Conference for students and a student seminar. In 2000-01, GCISD paid $2,634 to be a member of the GTC. This contract primarily allows teachers to receive state-required certification training. Though the contract stipulates that Region 15 will assist the district with program evaluation and planning, the center has not provided those services.

Other regional Education Service Centers have established cooperative relationships with neighboring districts. Region 17 has established an Advanced Academic Cooperative. As a member, districts receive training; legal updates, demonstrations, on-site technical assistance, and a resource library for gifted and talented education and advanced academics. Member districts also become members of the regional gifted and talented advisory council. Other services are also available and member districts pay a per-student fee ranging from $500 to $7,500, depending on services requested. Region 5 has also established a cooperative effort with area schools.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. Special Programs (Part 2)

In a TSPR survey of district staff, the gifted and talented program in the district received mixed reviews. Forty-nine percent of teachers and 22 percent of principals and administrators indicated that the gifted and talented program is not an effective educational program. Thirty-eight percent of teachers and 65 percent of support staff and administration felt that the district has an effective gifted and talented program.

Recommendation 8:

Ensure that the goals and objectives of gifted and talented education established in the District Improvement Plan are implemented.

Full implementation of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* will result in a cohesive program that effectively addresses the concerns expressed by both parents and teachers. This recommendation can be accomplished in a number of ways. One alternative is to actively pursue a relationship with neighboring districts to create an Advanced Academic Cooperative. Through the membership that already exists with Region 15, member districts should reassess the services that are needed and which services the Region is adequately providing. Region 15 should serve as a liaison between districts to establish relationships that go beyond the services currently provided by the Region. With an expanded agreement, districts could share teachers, curriculum and other resources. A summer exchange program would help gifted and talented teachers. The implementation strategies and fiscal impacts of this report are based on improving the district program without seeking a cooperative arrangement until the internal gifted and talented program is more effective.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent creates a district-level Advanced Academics advisory committee.	October 2001
2.	The Advanced Academics advisory committee conducts a needs assessment of the gifted and talented program.	October - November 2001

3.	The committee determines the extent to which each school in the district is implementing the recommendations in the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students.*	October - December 2001
4.	The superintendent and Region 15 review the contract for gifted and talented services and ensures that appropriate services are provided to the district.	October 2001
5.	The Advanced Academics committee develops a three- to five-year plan for achieving exemplary status as outlined in the state plan and secures staff and board approval.	Ongoing
6.	The Advanced Academics committee develops measures to ensure that the district follows the state plan and that principals incorporate these measures into campus improvement plans.	August 2002
7.	The superintendent approaches neighboring districts and Region 15 to create an Advanced Academics cooperative that would create the means for sharing teaching staff, services and expertise.	October 2001
8.	The Advanced Academics committee contacts other school districts with exemplary, cost-effective gifted and talented programs and other Regions that have Advanced Academic Cooperatives.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

To implement this recommendation, $1,200 would have to be set aside to cover travel expenses and the registration fees for one state conference or training session per year.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Ensure that the goals and objectives of gifted and talented education established in the District Improvement Plan are implemented.	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)

School to Career Education

Section 29.181 of the TEC requires school districts to provide a curriculum that gives each student the opportunity to "master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner; and for gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing their education at the post-

secondary level." The Texas Administrative Code (TAC), chapter 74 subchapter A, requires school districts to offer career and technology education courses selected from three of eight career and technology areas: agricultural science and technology, business, health science technology, home economics, technology/industrial technology, marketing, trade and industrial.

The *State Plan for Career and Technology Education 2000-02*, required under TEC Section 29.182, was developed as a guide to assist school districts in their efforts to offer effective career and technology education programs that prepare students for further education and eventual employment. The plan is based on the premise that a rigorous academic foundation contributes to success in school and in life, that all students should be provided equal opportunities for success and that career and technology education should complement and enhance academic preparation by enabling students to apply academic principles to a variety of community and career situations.

Exhibit 2-23 presents the number and percent of students enrolled in career and technology courses. GCISD has the third-lowest percent of students enrolled in career and technology courses compared to its peer districts. The district ranks last in expenditures per student compared to its peers, Region 15 and the state.

Exhibit 2-23
GCISD Actual Expenditures for Career and Technology
GCISD, Peer Districts, Region 15 and State
1999-2000

District	Number and Percent of Students Enrolled		Number and Percent of Career and Technology Education Teachers*		Actual Career and Technology Expenditures	Percent of Actual Expenditure	Per Student Expenditure
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount
Shallowater	300	24.4%	8.3	10.2%	$400,757	7.6%	**$1,336**
Hutto	190	17.9%	6.1	7.5%	$284,484	5.8%	$1,497
Troy	265	21.3%	5.6	6.4%	$277,346	5.5%	$1,047
Celina	176	17.2%	3.6	4.4%	$203,121	4.1%	$1,154
Grape Creek	**222**	**19.8%**	**1.3**	**1.6%**	**$107,158**	**2.3%**	**$483**

Region 15	**11,645**	**22.8%**	**213.1**	**5.5%**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**
State	**741,806**	**18.6%**	**11,445**	**4.3%**	**$759,455,669**	**4.0%**	**$1,024**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000 and PEIMS, 1999-2000.
*Reported in full-time equivalents.

GCISD's new Career and Technology Program offers courses in Agricultural Science and Technology and in Family and Consumer Science Education. **Exhibit 2-24** lists the course offerings of these two programs.

Exhibit 2-24
GCISD School-to-Career Program Offerings by Career Clusters
2000-01

Agricultural Science and Technology Cluster
Course Offerings
Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology
Applied Agricultural Science and Technology
Home Maintenance and Improvement
Animal Science
Equine Science
Wildlife and Recreational Management
Introduction to Horticulture Science
Floral Design and Interior Landscape Development
Landscape Design
Construction and Management
Introduction to Agricultural Mechanics
Agricultural Metal Fabrication Technology
Agricultural Electronics
Agricultural Cooperative Training
Family and Consumer Science
Course Offerings
Personal and Family Development
Apparel
Food Science and Nutrition
Consumer and Family Economics
Interior Design
Parenting and Child Development
Food Production Management and Services
Home Economics Cooperative Education

FINDING

While the district has some basic courses and programs already in place, it is actively pursing articulation agreements whereby higher education institutions and the district cooperatively provide instruction and potentially college-level course credit, distance learning opportunities and dual-enrollment opportunities with area colleges and technical schools. In 1999-2000, the district entered into an articulation agreement with Howard College and is developing relationships with other area colleges and organizations to serve students in the career and technology program. Now a program is offered by the GCISD Tech Prep program through local colleges. Qualified students can enroll in the local college and attend class during the school day at the student's high school and receive college credit as well as high school credit for the course. Students must pay tuition to attend this program.

In 2000-01, the district added a Cisco networking technology course that allows students to become Cisco Certified Network Associates. With this certification, students obtain the knowledge and skills to install and maintain Cisco-related networking equipment in a Local Area Network or Wide Area Network.

COMMENDATION

GCISD has made a commitment to develop, enhance and expand the career and technology program to include both traditional trades and technology education courses.

FINDING

Despite these efforts, GCISD still lacks a comprehensive career and technology education program. While the courses and course sequences offered at Grape Creek High School in Agricultural Science and Technology and Family and Consumer Science are comprehensive and students interested in pursuing a degree in these areas can obtain a good foundation by taking these courses, only a limited number of options exist for students interested in technology or other trade and industrial education other than concurrent enrollment programs. There are 22 different courses offered in Agricultural Science and Technology and Family and Consumer Science. No courses are offered in Tech Prep except dual enrollment courses offered with a local college or university.

The Technology Education Essential Knowledge and Skills adopted in 1997 are guidelines to assist communities in planning, developing and

implementing technology education programs. They provide a framework that describes what students should know and be able to do in six technology content areas and recommend a coherent sequence of courses for middle and high school programs. TEA defined these six areas as Bio-related Technology, Computer Technology, Construction Technology, Energy Power, Manufacturing Technology, and Transportation Technology. Sample trades include electric engineering technician, electrician, computer systems analyst, computer programmer and Computer Aided Design Drafter. Some of these courses are not available in GCISD.

Tech prep 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 Tech Prep courses is on teaching with real-world applications of learning and smaller class sizes that enhance faculty and student interaction.

Recommendation 9:

Expand the career and technology program by establishing more relationships with area colleges and trade schools and by sharing teachers and courses with neighboring districts.

GCISD can strengthen its existing technology program, which provides an enormous benefit to students, by actively pursing grant opportunities. Several Internet sites, beginning with Region 15 and TEA, provide useful links to a variety of institutions that provide grant-related information. In addition, GCISD should contact neighboring districts to establish cooperative agreements for sharing curriculum, courses and teachers. Grape Creek, for instance, can offer the Cisco Networking class to students in a neighboring district in exchange for Grape Creek students enrolling in a course or using a specialized teacher from another district.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	Counselors help students understand the benefits of tech prep courses.	November 2001
2.	The superintendent, high school principal and vocational director consider courses to be offered in each year based on course enrollment and subsequent education and work patterns of recent graduates.	March 2002
3.	The superintendent directs a change in course offerings.	April 2002
4.	The superintendent, high school principal and vocational director consider course enrollment and post-graduate plans to maintain	Ongoing

		an appropriate mix of school to career courses.	
5.		The superintendent and counselors develop an awareness campaign for students beginning middle school that promotes the advantages of technical training programs.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Compensatory Education

In addition to its regular classroom instruction program, GCISD provides special support for students at risk of dropping out and for students who are not performing at grade level.

The federal government provides funds for students who are not meeting performance standards. These Title I funds are sent to schools through TEA and are based on the number of economically disadvantaged students in the district. Economically disadvantaged students are typically those students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. The students served, however, are selected based on educational need, not economic status. The amended law allows a school to be designated as a Title I, Part A school-wide program if 50 percent or more of students at the school or in the attendance zone are in low-income families. In GCISD, the elementary school is designated as a Title I, Part A school-wide program.

FINDING

GCISD elementary school has a comprehensive support program with demonstrated results and uses federal Title I funds to support five instructional aides. The percent of economically disadvantaged students passing TAAS is much closer to the state average. Funds are directed to the Creative Education Institute reading lab, which targets kindergarten through grade 3 in a supplementary reading program.

In addition, GCISD elementary schools serve students in a summer reading enrichment program funded by Title I funds. A parental involvement program provides informational booklets on parenting skills to parents as well as sending teachers, an administrator and a parent representative to the state compensatory education conference. Of the 43 students registered for the summer enrichment program, 37 completed the four-week course.

Students identified as at-risk at the elementary level are placed in programs to address their needs. These programs include summer

enrichment, counseling, mentorship programs, special education and tutoring. Performance measures are indicated based on six-week grade reports, TAAS scores, other achievement test scores and year-end program evaluations.

As seen in **Exhibit 2-13**, the progress of students who have previously failed the TAAS, as measured by the TLI, exceeded the state and Region 15 gains for the last two years. In addition, Grape Creek Elementary also exceeded the gains of the elementary schools in the peer districts. As published in AEIS reports, this new measure examines the progress of students who had previously failed TAAS. A TLI of 70 is set as the passing standard for TAAS. The TLI generally ranges from 5 to 100, although this range may vary by grade level and subject matter.

COMMENDATION

GCISD elementary school has effective programs for increasing student performance for students who have failed TAAS.

FINDING

The district and campus improvement plans lack detail regarding the sources of funds for activities for students at-risk of dropping out required by state law and rule. Accelerated or compensatory education, as defined in Section 42.152 (c) of the Texas Education Code, is a program designed to improve and enhance the regular education program for students at risk of dropping out of school. In determining the appropriate accelerated or compensatory program, districts must use student performance data from state assessment instruments and other tests administered by the district. Based on needs assessments, district and school staff design the appropriate strategies and include them in the school and/or district improvement plan.

By law, the improvement plan must include the comprehensive needs assessment, measurable performance objectives, strategies for student improvement, resources and staff, timelines for monitoring each strategy, and formative evaluation criteria. Each district is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the locally designed program.

State funding for compensatory education is allocated based on the number of economically disadvantaged students in the district. The number of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a district is determined by averaging the six months with the highest monthly enrollment in the national school lunch program of free or reduced-price lunches for the preceding school year.

Compensatory Education and Title I funds are supposed to provide additional services to at-risk students, thereby supplementing the dollars that a district dedicates for regular educational programs. Districts are prohibited from using these dollars to supplant, or be used in lieu of regular education expenditures.

In general, GCISD's DIP entries under "Resources Needed" were often vague, with statements such as "TAAS objectives." One statement under "Resources Needed" describes "$500 for resource materials" without identification of the source of funds. It was difficult to ascertain if expenditures, which were often not included, were supplemental in nature.

Additionally, some of GCISD's performance measures are not appropriately stated nor was a needs assessment included to show how programs match students' needs.

Under the Evaluation heading, there were instances of more specific results such as "Improved TAAS writing performance by 3 points on TLI scores," although there is no such score. In other cases, statements under evaluation such as "improved attendance, reduced dropout rate" do not have specific objectives.

New statutory language passed during the 2001 77th Legislature in SB 702 may also create a larger incentive for districts to more accurately identify the use of Compensatory Education funds on regular campuses. Previously, districts could expend their total Compensatory Education allotment on Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs). The new law limits a district's use of Compensatory Education funds at DAEPs to 18 percent of the district's Compensatory Education allotment. Properly identifying accelerated and intensive compensatory education program resources and expenditures on regular campuses in their campus improvement plans will not only help the district more effectively evaluate particular compensatory education instructional strategies, it may also help the district meet the new statutory requirement regarding DAEP expenditures. Districts that fail to accurately report these measures could jeopardize state and/or federal funds.

Recommendation 10:

Incorporate performance measures for at-risk students into district and campus improvement plans.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and school principals develop campus improvement plans that contain sufficient fiscal information to determine supplement versus supplant issues.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent and principals include the results from needs assessments in the improvement plans.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent reviews each campus improvement plan to ensure that appropriate outcome measures reflecting student needs are included.	November 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

D. Health Programs

The National Association of State School Nurse Consultants recognizes that school nursing services are essential for the health, rehabilitation and well-being of students for them to benefit from educational programs.

Health services in GCISD provides a comprehensive program for all students. The district employs two registered nurses; one serves kindergarten through grade 8, the other serves grades 9 through 12. Both the elementary/middle school and high school have adequate nursing space, each with a minimum of two beds. Nurses administer medications; provide medical care for minor and major illnesses and injuries; maintain records of medical assessmentsand evaluations for students and staff; review immunization records; conduct yearly vision, hearing and scoliosis screening and counsel with parents. Nurses also perform additional tasks as needed.

The statewide children's insurance program, TexCare Partnership, provides health insurance for Texas' uninsured children. GCISD nurses provide information about the program and distribute application forms to all students. The nurses actively seek to enroll students by sending update letters to the parents of students who qualify for this insurance program.

TSPR's survey results show that 90 percent of parents said that students have access, when needed, to a school nurse. Only 4 percent said that students did not have access to a school nurse.

The high school nurse was selected as one of 20 candidates throughout the United States as a Johnson and Johnson Live for Life School Nurse Fellow. As a result of this award, GCISD applied and received a $1,000 grant for alcohol and drug prevention projects at the school.

FINDING

GCISD has implemented innovative preventive practices that improve the quality of health services delivered to students and staff. The nurse maintains a medical card for every student. When a student goes to the nurse's office, she records the visit in the daily log. In addition, the nurse also notes the reason for the visit on the individual student's medical card, which allows the nurse to track medical issues for all students and to detect patterns requiring additional parental or medical attention.

The high school nurse maintains a health sheet for every school staff member. In the event of a major medical emergency, or a school security shelter-in-place, the nurse can quickly access important medical information including blood type, previous heart attack, known allergies to medications and other important information, and can quickly assist the staff member and/or an EMS medical unit.

COMMENDATION

GCISD does an outstanding job providing health services to students and staff.

Chapter 2
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

E. Safety and Security

Chapter 37 of the TEC, adopted in 1995 and revised in 1997 and 1999, stipulates that schools will develop policies and procedures that define appropriate student conduct and establish alternative education programs to ensure discipline management. In addition, TEA collects and publishes data from school districts that describes the number, rate and type of violent and criminal incidents that have occurred on each of its campuses, as well as information about violence prevention and intervention policies used to protect students.

GCISD's board-approved policy says the "district shall attempt to ensure student safety through supervision of students in all school buildings, on all school grounds, and through special attention to the following:

- Maintaining a reasonably safe school environment;
- Observing safe practices in those areas of instruction or extracurricular activities that offer special hazards;
- Offering safety education to students enrolled in laboratory courses in science, shop courses health and physical education; and
- Providing first-aid care for students in case of accident or sudden illness."

The superintendent and principals at GCISD are charged with developing plans and procedures to ensure students are instructed in appropriate conduct and safety practices, as well as how to act in certain emergency situations. Board policy also describes prohibitions against possession or use of tobacco, specific substances and weapons, as well as assaults and disruptive behavior. District policy also describes the circumstances under which students may be interrogated and their persons or property searched. Guidelines for student discipline and managing the code of conduct are also outlined.

To address the growing levels of violence in schools, participants from all community sectors are beginning to work together more to reduce violence. In 1994, the TEA reported growing support for establishing partnerships among juvenile courts and probation, social agencies and school districts to improve interagency information-sharing, policies and procedures. In 1999, the Texas Legislature mandated that school districts begin reporting the number, rate and type of violent and criminal incidents occurring in each of its schools. This provides a benchmark for measuring

how well any given school district is performing as it tries to reduce the incidence of violence on its campuses.

An effective program of safety and security involves three elements: prevention, intervention and enforcement. Prevention is the planning phase, or foundation, of a school safety program. Intervention is the action taken to deter a crisis or disaster. And, enforcement is the administration of punishment for disobeying the rules. TSPR has designed and published a set of guidelines schools can use to develop a comprehensive program of violence reduction and crisis management. The success of this plan depends upon the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders, including the community.

FINDING

GCISD created a comprehensive crisis management plan as part of its district and campus improvement plans. It is designed to change the atmosphere of each school to what the superintendent calls a peaceable school environment. In addition, safety and discipline management are focuses of staff development training.

To date, the district has published its *School Safety and Emergency Resource Manual*, adapted from a model developed by the Texas Association of School Boards. The manual, which has a hot-pink cover for easy identification in a crisis, is a resource for those responsible for school safety. It includes an overview and framework for the plan, describes responsibilities at all levels, defines crises levels and types of incidents within each category, lists detailed steps for specific crisis situations and serves as a template for individual campus plans. The manual is distributed to all employees, who are instructed to keep it on their desks as ready reference. In addition, a bound flip-chart, modeled after the one developed by Region 15, complements the manual, providing quick access to key phone numbers and step-by-step instructions. **Exhibit 2-25** below illustrates the levels of crisis, the kinds of crises associated with each level and the personnel responsible.

Exhibit 2-25
Levels of Crisis Management

Level	Explanation	Kinds of Crises	Responsible Personnel
I	Personal tragedy, threatening incidents or operational crises affecting a student, teacher, or administrator, and a single site	Minor accidents to/from school; student assault; bomb threat; child abuses; power outage or climate control in extreme weather; vandalism	Campus crisis management team; law enforcement; school counselors; nurse or other health care provider; maintenance department
II	Major personal crisis, threat or disaster affecting several individuals and usually necessitating outside assistance	Major accidents; bomb found; gang altercations; mass involvement of students in large group crisis; hazardous materials release or spill; riot	Campus crisis management team; law enforcement; counselors; central administration; public information; media; nurse; emergency health care services
III	Terrorism; disaster or threatening disaster profoundly affecting one or more schools	Bomb, explosion or fire; death at school; emergency evacuation; tornadoes; hostage situation; sniper gunfire	Campus crisis team; central administration; law enforcement; counselors; public information; news media; health services

Source: GCISD School Safety and Emergency Resource Manual, September 2000.

In addition to publishing its comprehensive manual, the GCISD program for crisis management also involves staff and student development. The program calls for three levels of training: awareness, skills development and skill mastery, and specifies who should have what level of training. School district personnel, including the superintendent, principals, teachers and even substitutes, have already attended several staff development programs on sexual harassment, conflict resolution, motivating positive behavior, and other subjects. Several of these were co-sponsored by Region 15.

GCISD also participates in shelter-in-place drills and evacuations, and conducted one of each in May 2001. Planning for the drills was extensive and involved members of the community, including emergency personnel and law enforcement, as well as the district leadership committee,

administrators, faculty and support staff. The district conducted the shelter-in-place drill as if it were a real emergency, starting with the administration being notified, reporting the situation to local law enforcement and setting the responses in motion at the campus level. Once students were secured within the building, officers went from room to room checking for ways to improve procedures. Reports from all three campuses were favorable with few problems. A week later the district conducted a building evacuation drill, and transferred via school buses 900 students and staff to the high school stadium in less than 30 minutes. Such run-through drills better prepare staff and students to handle real-life emergency procedures. The entire process will be evaluated in order to refine it and further ensure the safety of students and staff.

COMMENDATION

GCISD has developed a comprehensive, five-year crisis management program that includes a manual with accompanying flip-chart, staff development activities and skills practice in order to create a more peaceable learning environment.

FINDING

GCISD requires students and parents to review and sign an acknowledgment page in their comprehensive student code of conduct indicating that they have read the material. The acknowledgment also grants or refuses parental permission for the student to use the school's electronic communication system. Failure to return the form with signatures constitutes agreement with the provisions in the *Handbook*, making enforcement easier.

The code of conduct was developed in response to requirements of Chapter 37 of the TEC and district board policy. It includes plans, materials and practices for ensuring the safety and security of students and staff and spells out expectations for student behavior, describes disciplinary consequences for engaging in prohibited conduct and defines specific infractions. Categories of offenses give students an opportunity to correct behavior and avoid more serious consequences.

Students who fail to comply with expected rules of conduct may be subject to any of the following, depending upon the nature of the violation:

- Corporal punishment;
- In-school suspension;
- Detention;

- Suspension from school, not to exceed three school days at one time;
- Formal removal from class by the teacher;
- Removal to an alternative education program; and/or
- Expulsion from school.

COMMENDATION

Requiring parent and student signatures on an acknowledgment page in the student code of conduct is an effective way to ensure that students and parents read and understand the district's expectations for appropriate student behavior.

FINDING

Although GCISD has developed crisis teams at each of its schools that consist of principals, counselors, nurses, maintenance personnel and site-based management staff, there are no members of the external community serving on these committees. While it is clear that individual campus crisis teams must be readily available in an emergency, using community members, even if only ex-officio, adds dimension to the safety effort.

Administrators, teachers and parents all agree that the relationship between the school district and local law enforcement has improved in the past year, and everyone interviewed indicated that they appreciated unannounced patrols and periodic surveillance by the Tom Green County Sheriff's Department.

Recommendation 11:

Develop a community-wide safety committee that includes members from law enforcement, fire safety, health care, social services and the community to share information, skills and resources related to school and public safety.

A community-wide safety committee involves citizens, businesses and health and social services of all types in a school district. This group, which should consist of at least 15 members, should meet at least once a month to exchange ideas about how to increase protection and expand safety awareness within the school and throughout the community. For example, sharing information on school floor plans with law enforcement, or getting advice on how to secure a school for improved safety, or participating in the "civilian rider" program with sheriff's deputies adds a dimension to a school's safety awareness and puts increased knowledge behind its efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and school principals meet and select appropriate school personnel to serve on the community-wide safety committee.	September 2001
2.	Principals ask teachers and staff to suggest persons within the community who would be appropriate as committee members. At the very least, membership should include representatives of law enforcement, fire safety, social/psychological services, emergency services, community health care and the clergy.	September 2001
3.	The superintendent contacts each referral and extends an invitation to participate, explaining the purpose and the potential value to the community.	October 2001
4.	The superintendent sets a meeting date and time and his designee sends out an appointment letter with the first meeting date.	October 2001
5.	The committee meets and the superintendent describes his vision for the committee and asks all participants to bring suggestions for safety improvement to the next meeting.	November 2001
6.	At the next meeting, brainstorming begins on ways all agencies can interact to improve existing safety practices, particularly in emergency management.	December 2001
7.	Meetings continue and sub-committees are formed as circumstances warrant. Practical ideas are implemented and those with associated costs are forwarded to the appropriate budget committee for further consideration.	January 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews Grape Creek Independent School District's (GCISD) financial management in the following sections:

A. Accounting and Financial Management
B. Budget Process
C. Asset and Risk Management
D. Shared Service Opportunities

Financial management in school districts involves effective planning, budgeting and managing, and the district's ability to maximize resources. A district's ability to perform these tasks affects its relationships with its employees, vendors, funding agencies and the local community. Financial management is most effective when resources are spent based on the district's established priorities, when internal controls are in place and operate as intended, when financial information is provided in a timely way and in useful formats, and when staff resources and technology are allocated efficiently to maximize results.

BACKGROUND

GCISD receives revenue from local, state and federal sources. It has budgeted general fund expenditures of $6,381,114 for 2000-01 and had an ending fund balance of $540,224, or approximately four weeks of operating expenditures, as of August 31, 2000.

The amount of state revenue provided to each school district is proportional, based on the district's property values. Districts with a property wealth per student greater than the state average receive less from the state because of their ability to generate revenue from property taxes, while districts with a per pupil property value of less than the state average receive more from the state or directly from a school district with higher property values. GCISD receives additional funds from Austin ISD based on an agreement between the two school districts and approved by the state. Austin ISD paid GCISD more than $908,000 for 2000-01. With the exception of Celina ISD, GCISD and three selected peer districts receive a greater percentage of their revenue from the state than from local sources (**Exhibits 3-1** and **3-2**).

Exhibit 3-1
GCISD and Peer District Revenue Sources
2000-01

District	Local/Other Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue
Celina	$5,095,531	$1,864,432	$5,000
Grape Creek	$1,279,100	$5,290,000	$5,000
Hutto	$2,335,030	$4,178,074	$0
Shallowater	$1,499,390	$5,649,843	$1,550
Troy	$1,799,000	$5,021,800	$10,000

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 3-2
GCISD, Peer Districts and State Revenue Sources
as Percentage of Total Revenues
2000-01

District	Local/Othe r Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue
Celina	73.1%	26.8%	0.1%
Grape Creek	19.5%	80.5%	0.1%
Hutto	35.8%	64.2%	0.0%
Shallowater	20.9%	79.0%	0.0%
Troy	26.3%	73.5%	0.2%
State	**53.1%**	**43.6%**	**3.4%**

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01. Note: Total may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Since 1997-98, GCISD's general revenue from the state has increased 26.5 percent, while local revenue has increased by 12.3 percent. GCISD's general revenue from all sources increased by 23.2 percent between 1997-98 and 2000-01 (**Exhibit 3-3**).

Exhibit 3-3
GCISD General Revenue Fund Sources
1997-98 Through 2000-01

Revenue	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent

Source					Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Local and Intermediate	$1,138,797	$1,128,930	$1,252,376	$1,279,100	12.3%
State	$4,181,202	$4,833,142	$5,448,160	$5,290,000	26.5%
Other resources	$17,134	$45,066	$26,495	$5,000	(70.8%)
Total	**$5,337,133**	**$6,007,138**	**$6,727,031**	**$6,574,100**	**23.2%**

Source: GCISD Audit Reports, 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and TEA, PEIMS, 2000-01.

Texas has a court-approved school finance system for equalizing wealth among school districts that requires wealthy districts to pay money directly to poorer school districts or pay into a pool. That, together with additional state funds, subsidizes poorer districts. Wealthy districts are those with property values of at least $295,000 per pupil in weighted average daily attendance (WADA). GCISD's property value per pupil was $73,660 for 1999-2000.

In July 2000, Grape Creek ISD was able to recover $370,792 on an appeal of the 1999 property value study. The district hired a law firm to investigate the district's property values and to challenge the study. The law firm was hired on a contingent-fee basis and found that the original property value reported as $84,950,330 was actually $78,995,215. The reduction in property value increased the funding provided by the state by $370,792.

Exhibit 3-4 compares GCISD to its peer districts in terms of property value per pupil. GCISD has the second-lowest property value per pupil in its peer group. None of the peer districts exceed the state average or are considered a wealthy district. Hutto ISD has the highest property value per pupil.

Exhibit 3-4
GCISD, Peer Districts and State Average
Property Value per Pupil
1999-2000

District	Property Value per Pupil
Celina	$175,031
Grape Creek	**$73,660**
Hutto	$194,124
Shallowater	$68,192
Troy	$103,278
State Average	**$215,121**

Source: Comptroller's Office, Property Tax Division.

The state distributes payments to all districts based on WADA basic allotment. This allotment is adjusted according to the property wealth of the district. GCISD's basic allotment was $3,034 per student for 1999-2000.

The GCISD taxable property base consists primarily of residential property. Business property makes up 18.6 percent of the district's total property value compared to 40.6 percent for the state. More than 14 percent of the GCISD property value is land compared to 7.3 percent for the state (**Exhibit 3-5**).

Exhibit 3-5
GCISD and State Property Value by Category
As a Percentage of Total Property Value
1999-2000

Property Category	Grape Creek	State
Residential	62.9%	48.7%
Business	18.6%	40.6%
Land	14.6%	7.3%
Other	3.8%	0.6%
Oil and gas	0.1%	2.8%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

GCISD ranks first among its peer districts in property value from residential property **(Exhibit 3-6)** and last in land value.

Exhibit 3-6
GCISD and Peer Districts Property Value by Category
as a Percentage of Total Property Value
1999-2000

District	Land	Business	Residential	Oil and Gas	Other	Total
Celina	35.8%	12.5%	51.4%	0.0%	0.3%	100.0%
Grape Creek	**14.6%**	**18.6%**	**62.9%**	**0.1%**	**3.8%**	**100.0%**
Hutto	26.7%	24.2%	48.9%	0.0%	0.2%	100.0%
Shallowater	22.2%	13.3%	58.4%	5.1%	1.0%	100.0%
Troy	36.4%	24.3%	37.7%	0.0%	1.6%	100.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

GCISD's tax rate has increased 16.39 percent in the past four years due to the addition of an interest and sinking tax rate of $0.271to accommodate payment of its bonds. The purpose of an interest and sinking tax rate is to generate tax revenue and interest that is reserved for the repayment of bonds. (**Exhibit 3-7**).

Exhibit 3-7
GCISD Tax Rates and Tax Levy
1997-98 Through 2000-01

Tax Category	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
Maintenance and operations	$1.495	$1.495	$1.475	$1.469	(1.74%)
Interest and sinking fund	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.271	N/A
Total Tax Rate	**$1.495**	**$1.495**	**$1.475**	**$1.740**	**16.39%**
Total Tax Levy	**$951,992**	**$1,001,764**	**$1,152,971**	**$1,441,585**	**51.40%**

Source: GCISD Annual Financial Reports; GCISD 2000-01 Budget.

GCISD had the second-lowest property tax rate (**Exhibit 3-8**) of its peer group for 1999-2000, but now has the highest tax rate among its peers (Exhibit 3-9).

Exhibit 3-8
GCISD Adopted Tax Rate
Compared to Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Adopted Tax Rate
Celina	$1.633
Grape Creek	**$1.475**
Hutto	$1.559
Shallowater	$1.384
Troy	$1.560
State Average	**$1.510**

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-9
GCISD and Peer Districts Adopted Tax Rate
2000-01

District	Adopted Tax Rate
Celina	$1.59
Grape Creek	**$1.74**
Hutto	$1.62
Shallowater	$1.64
Troy	$1.54

Source: TSPR Peer Surveys.

The superintendent and the director of Business and Finance are responsible for cash and investment management at GCISD. The district's investments consist of certificates of deposit worth $24,971 as of August 31, 2000. In addition to its investments, the district has funds deposited with its depository bank, Bank of America, in San Angelo, Texas.

On August 31, 2000, the value of the district's deposits for all funds was $419,876. Cash and temporary investments of the general fund were worth $306,503 at August 31, 2000. The largest combined fund balance was $1,836,531 in March 2000. The district earned $18,590 on its general fund certificates of deposit and interest-bearing bank accounts and investments for 1999-2000. The district began investing with TexPool in February 2001.

Chapter 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Accounting and Financial Management

The director of Business and Finance for GCISD is responsible for managing the district's financial operations including financial reporting, budgeting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing and payroll. The organization chart is presented below (**Exhibit 3-10**).

Exhibit 3-10
GCISD Business and Finance Department
2000-01
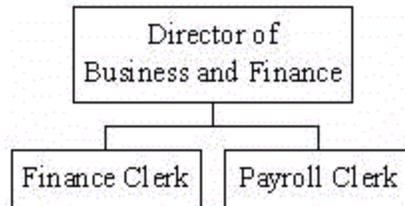
Source: GCISD Organization Chart, April 2001.

The district participates in a purchasing cooperative administered by Region 15 and Region 18. In addition, the district purchases computer equipment through the General Services Commission.

GCISD has a decentralized purchasing process. Purchase orders are required for all purchases, regardless of the amount of the purchase. Principals and department heads approve purchase orders before the orders are submitted to the superintendent.

Approved purchase orders are sent to the finance clerk. Invoices are matched to purchase orders. Accounts payable checks are printed weekly, usually on Tuesdays. The district's controls over purchasing are adequate to ensure purchases are made within state guidelines.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-11**, district budgeted expenditures have risen over the years, with one major dip in 1998-99.

Exhibit 3-11
GCISD Total Budgeted Expenditures by Function Code
1996-97 Through 2000-01

Function(Code)	1996-97	Percent of Total	1997-98	Percent of Total	1998-99	Percent of Total	1999-2000	Percent of Total	2000-01	Percent of Total
Instruction (11,95)	$2,128,674	47.5	$2,467,918	40.8	$2,427,899	43.8	$3,195,452	48.2	$3,438,055	47.5
Intructional Related Services (12,13)	$82,041	1.8	$118,736	2.0	$174,766	3.2	$109,673	1.7	$236,060	3.3
Instructional Leadership (21)	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0
School Leadership (23)	$244,162	5.4	$327,786	5.4	$389,021	7.0	$384,992	5.8	$418,084	5.8
Support Services Student (31,32,33)	$149,084	3.3	$205,488	3.4	$221,576	4.0	$210,074	3.2	$222,189	3.1
Student Transportation (34)	$161,754	3.6	$171,892	2.8	$191,163	3.5	$186,677	2.8	$203,750	2.8
Food Services (35)	$200,430	4.5	$285,472	4.7	$317,850	5.7	$304,655	4.6	$361,000	5.0
Cocurricular/ Extracurricular Activities (36)	$114,488	2.6	$152,274	2.5	$160,290	2.9	$262,774	4.0	$276,730	3.8
Central Administration (41,92)	$183,100	4.1	$223,757	3.7	$204,330	3.7	$235,803	3.6	$336,684	4.7
Plant Maintenance and Operations (51)	$272,799	6.1	$458,332	7.6	$455,772	8.2	$607,581	9.2	$662,550	9.2
Security & Monitoring Services (52)	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$0	0.0	$21,275	0.3
Data Processing Services (53)	$69,399	1.5	$86,134	1.4	$96,694	1.7	$100,302	1.5	$16,800	0.2
Other*	$875,751	19.5	$1,547,787	25.6	$897,971	16.2	$1,024,724	15.5	$1,040,687	14.4
Budgeted Total Expenditures	**$4,481,682**	**100.0**	**$6,045,576**	**100.0**	**$5,537,332**	**100.0**	**$6,622,707**	**100.0**	**$7,233,864**	**100.0**

FINDING

The district has not established written procedures for cash receipts, cash disbursements, accounts payable and payroll.

Comprehensive written policies and procedures are essential to districts for routine operations and to provide guidance to new staff. The former director of Business and Finance designed and implemented many of the policies and procedures and other internal controls related to the district's financial operations, but retired in June 2001. The incoming director of Business and Finance has limited school district experience, but assisted the former director and attended classes offered by Region 15 and the Texas Association of School Business Officials. However, written policies and procedures are essential to maintaining continuity of operations and preserving the internal control structure already in place.

Recommendation 12:

Develop and implement detailed, comprehensive, written procedures for cash receipts, cash disbursements, accounts payable and payroll.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business and Finance coordinates with the payroll clerk and the finance clerk to document existing procedures.	October 2001
2.	The director of Business and Finance presents a draft of financial operating procedures to the superintendent for review.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent reviews and approves or amends the procedures as necessary.	November 2001
4.	The director of Business and Finance prepares and makes final policies and procedures available to Business and Finance department staff.	December 2001
5.	The director of Business and Finance updates the policies and procedures as necessary.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Weak controls over check stock provide opportunities for unsupervised and unauthorized access to blank checks. Blank checks are stored in a lockable safe inside a lockable office until the checks are needed for processing. Although the location of the blank checks can be locked, it is not locked while the staff are there. When employees leave the administration building, the door to both the office and the safe is locked. However, anyone entering the administration building during office hours could gain access to the checks when Business Office staff are not present in their offices or are distracted.

Small districts have limited ability to segregate critical financial duties such as separating physical access and control from operational control due to small staffs. For example, it is often difficult for small districts to ensure that people with the authority to process disbursements do not have unsupervised access to blank checks.

Recommendation 13:

Store blank check stock in a locked cabinet or a locked office at all times and limit access to individuals with check-writing authority.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business and Finance places blank checks in a locked file cabinet or locked office.	October 2001
2.	The director of Business and Finance drafts written policies and procedures limiting access to the room or file cabinet.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. Budget Process

All Texas school districts must comply with state financial reporting guidelines as contained in TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG). The guide includes the accounting and financial reporting requirements for recognized generally accepted accounting principles, federally mandated auditing and financial reporting requirements and the specific accounting and financial reporting requirements of TEA. A district's annual audited financial statements must include all necessary financial information and related disclosures as prescribed by FASRG.

In school districts, the adoption of a budget implies that a set of decisions has been made by school board members and school district administrators that match a school district's resources with its needs. The budget also provides an important tool for controlling and evaluating a school district's funding sources and its other resources. With the assistance of the accounting system, administrators can control budgeted activities and evaluate performance, based upon comparisons between budgeted and actual operations.

Sound budget planning is important because the scope and diversity of school district operations makes comprehensive planning necessary for good decision-making. Through the budget, consensus is reached among citizens, school board members and district and campus staff on the future direction of a district's operations.

The link between planning and budget preparation in school districts gives budgets a unique role in these organizations. The public considers public school district budgets the ultimate policy document because they are the financial plans a school district uses to achieve its goals and objectives.

The budget should reflect:

- Goods and services the district will and will not produce;
- The district's priorities among the wide range of activities in which they are involved;
- Relative weight given to the influence of various participants and interest groups in the budget development process; and
- How the district has acquired and used its resources.

The budget is an intrinsically political document reflecting school district administrators' accountability and fiduciary responsibility to citizens.

Budgeting provides a vehicle for translating educational goals and programs into financial resource plans. Thus, instruction planning for attaining students' educational goals determines budgetary allocations. This link between instruction and financial planning is critical to effective budgeting. In addition, such a budgeting practice may enhance the evaluation of budgetary and educational performance because resource allocations are closely related to instructional plans.

Performance evaluations allow taxpayers to hold policymakers and administrators accountable for their actions. State laws and constitutions often explicitly require accountability to citizens, and accountability is a cornerstone of budgeting and financial reporting. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) recognizes its importance in its Concepts Statement No. 1 (Section 100.177):

- Financial reporting provides information to determine whether current-year revenues were sufficient to pay for current-year services;
- Financial reporting demonstrates whether resources were obtained and used in accordance with the entity's legally adopted budget. It also demonstrates compliance with other finance-related legal or contractual requirements; and
- Financial reporting provides information to assist users in assessing the service efforts, costs and accomplishments of the governmental entity.

Budgets must:

- Be balanced so current revenues are sufficient to pay for current services;
- Be prepared in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local legal mandates and requirements; and
- Provide a basis for evaluating a government's service efforts, costs and accomplishments.

Regulatory requirements, such as the Texas Education Code (TEC) also address records retention. Section 44.003 of TEC requires the retention of records including copies of all budgets. Records should be retained for five years after the completion of a project.

TEA sets legal requirements for school district budgets. In addition to these requirements, individual school districts may have their own legal requirements for budget preparation. Legal requirements also may be

imposed by state and federal grants. This section, however, deals only with state legal mandates, TEA's legal requirements and the local district's requirements for basic budget development and submission.

The responsibility for preparing district budget guidelines and the budget process lies primarily with district administrators and the superintendent. Because these guidelines and the related processes create a framework for the entire budget development process, their careful design is critical to an efficient and effective process.

As a small school district, GCISD's budget process is relatively simple. The superintendent works with staff, the board and the public every spring and summer to develop the next year's budget.

FINDING

The district does not have copies of prior budgets or a copy of the depository agreement with its depository bank. Additionally, support documentation for annual budget requests are not consistently maintained by the director of Technology and Operations, making it impossible to compare the allocated funding to the requested funding.

When the district employed the former director of Business and Finance in 1999, there were no records retention policies and procedures. Critical documents such as budgets and contractual agreements were not placed in secure, accessible storage.

Financial documents, including annual audit reports, annual budgets and supporting documentation, bank depository agreements and other important records for school districts are required to be included in the district archives. Section 44.003 of the TEC requires the superintendent to ensure that records are kept and that copies of all budgets, all forms and all other reports are filed on behalf of the school district at the proper times and in the proper offices.

Recommendation 14:

Develop and implement documented records retention guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent establishes records retention guidelines for GCISD and initiates the development of written policies and procedures.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent submits written policies and procedures to	November

	the board for approval.	2001
3.	The director of Business and Finance distributes written policies and procedures to all personnel involved in the archiving process.	December 2001
4.	Financial documents are archived annually in accordance with the established guidelines.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have formal, comprehensive, written budgeting procedures. The former director of Business and Finance had implemented comprehensive budgeting processes and developed a budget calendar at the beginning of each budget planning cycle, however, the procedures have not been documented in a written manual. When the director retired, the lack of written procedures has hindered GCISD.

Budget preparation guidelines normally include the following elements:

- A budget transmittal letter from the superintendent;
- A budget memorandum/overview;
- Fiscal limitations to be observed districtwide;
- A budget calendar of critical dates for budget development, submission and review;
- Instructions concerning which expenditure items are to be budgeted at the campus level and what level of detail is required for submission;
- A copy of standard budget preparation worksheets, submission forms and diskettes; and
- A list of the account codes necessary for the preparation of campus budgets.

El Paso ISD developed a comprehensive Campus Accounting Manual (CAM) that covers procedures for school district financial operations, including a variety of activity fund forms for principals and students to complete when making financial transactions. Examples of transactions contained in the manual include depositing vending machine proceeds and earned interest in a campus "general fund" and students generating money through fundraisers that is deposited in activity funds. The district determines the CAM goals, purposes and specific content; collects all necessary district accounting information; and distributes manuals to the schools.

Recommendation 15:

Develop written, detailed budgeting procedures that can be integrated with a comprehensive district financial manual.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business and Finance initiates the development of the district budgeting policies and procedures, and compiles and forwards them to the superintendent.	January 2002
2.	The superintendent approves the written budgeting policies and procedures and presents them to the board.	February 2002
3.	The board approves the written policies and procedures.	February 2002
4.	The director of Business and Finance distributes the written budgeting policies and procedures to all personnel involved in budget development, management and administration.	March 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Utilities and other overhead costs are centrally budgeted in the General Operating Fund and are not charged to campuses and cafeteria operations.

One reason utilities are allocated to the General Operating Fund is that the Food Service Department has had a deficit at the end of each operating year and must be subsidized by general revenue. This means that expenditures are already greater than revenues generated for this department, and that the General Operating Fund still will be required to support those costs. However, the matching concept, consistent with generally accepted accounting principles, requires that expenditures be matched to the revenues generated. From a management perspective, the true deficit for food service is not known because the full cost of operating the food service function is not tracked.

Tyler ISD developed a system for charging utilities, custodial and maintenance costs used for food service operations to the food service budget rather than to the general fund. It developed a cost allocation system enabling the district to recover costs for utilities and custodial maintenance services resulting from food service operations. Custodial and utility costs were developed on a per square-foot ratio, and costs were

transferred to the General Operating Budget from the Food Service Budget. Since 1996-97, the district saved $650,000 and expects to save nearly $1.1 million by 2000-01 by developing a food service cost allocation system.

Recommendation 16:

Allocate utilities, maintenance and janitorial costs to applicable departments and campuses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director and director of Business and Finance determine the portion of utilities and maintenance attributable to food service operations.	October 2001
2.	The Food Service director and director of Business and Finance develop a cost allocation methodology to identify, collect and transfer an equitable portion of utilities and maintenance attributable to food service operations.	November 2001
3.	The director of Business and Finance and the Food Service director develop detailed line-item budgets for maintenance and utilities.	November 2001
4.	The director of Business and Finance allocates applicable charges to food service operations each month, and provides reports of the allocations to the Food Service director.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

C. Asset and Risk Management

Texas school districts have a fiduciary responsibility to protect publicly financed assets. School districts should be protected against financial loss through sound cash and investment procedures, insurance programs and sufficient internal controls.

GCISD provides workers' compensation insurance through an interlocal agreement with the North Texas Educational Insurance Association Self-Insured Program for providing statutory benefits prescribed by Article 8309h of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.

The district entered into an interlocal agreement with the Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) Unemployment Compensation Group Account for providing unemployment compensation coverage.

The district provides property and casualty coverage through an interlocal agreement with the TASB Property/Casualty Joint Account. The district's coverage includes property, automobile liability, general liability, school professional legal liability and automobile physical damage.

In governmental fund accounting, which school districts use, districts purchase fixed assets with money currently available within a given fund (for example, the general operating fund or capital projects fund). Fixed assets are tangible items that typically have significant value. Therefore, it is critical that districts establish controls and accountability over these items. Typically, school districts determine an appropriate unit cost to capitalize items as fixed assets. The capitalization threshold is the value that an item must have for it to be tracked by the fixed asset inventory system.

According to the TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*, the emphasis in governmental accounting for fixed assets is on control and accountability. Accordingly, a school district must accumulate a variety of data relating to fixed assets to maintain control and ensure accountability. These data include quantity, location, condition and life expectancy.

Fixed asset records are necessary to designate who is accountable for the custody and maintenance of individual items and to assist in estimating future requirements. School districts generally control capital transactions that are used when acquiring fixed assets by using a well-defined

authorization procedure. Many federal programs require separate accountability for fixed assets.

Detailed subsidiary records maximize the control of fixed assets. These records include the following information as a minimum:

- The item purchased;
- Date of purchase;
- Purchase price;
- Life expectancy;
- Location number;
- Inventory number;
- Fund from which purchased; and
- Other information that may be useful for control.

Adequate accounting procedures and records for fixed assets are essential to protecting school property. In addition, an appropriate system:

- Designates responsibility for custody and proper use;
- Provides data for managing fixed assets; and
- Provides data for financial control, financial reports and adequate insurance coverage.

Of paramount importance is the security of the system. Any material change in the customary recording of distribution or disposal of fixed assets is a financial matter that should be decided by the school district's administration. Management must impose discipline throughout the organization so managers maintain an appropriate level of internal control to ensure fixed assets are adequately protected.

FINDING

GCISD and its employees will be affected by the new statewide school employee health insurance plan. Effectively managing this program may have a direct impact on the district's financial condition and the actual benefits derived by its employees.

The 2001 Texas Legislature established a statewide school employee health insurance plan for teachers and other employees of school districts. School districts with 500 or fewer employees-including GCISD and more than 80 percent of the state's school districts-will be required to participate in the new state insurance plan beginning in fall 2002. Districts with between 501 and 1,000 employees may join the plan, but must make this decision before September 30, 2001. Districts with more than 1,000 employees may join in 2005, unless the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Board, which will administer the plan, determines that an earlier opt-in is

feasible. Districts not joining the state insurance plan will still receive state support to continue their locally determined insurance programs. All districts, whether participating in the state insurance plan or not, will receive from the state $75 a month per covered employee contribution for the district and $1,000 a year "pass through" for each school employee.

There are some special provisions to the plan that deal with risk pools and self-insurance programs:

Risk pools: If a risk pool was in existence on January 1, 2001, districts with less than 501 employees in the pool may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Self-Insured: Districts with less than 501 employees who were individually self-insured on or before January 1, 2001, and have continued a self-insured program since then may elect not to participate in the state pool.

Furthermore, districts that are parties to a health insurance contract in effect on September 1, 2002 are not required to participate until the expiration of the contract period.

All full-time employees and those part-time employees who are members of TRS are automatically covered by the basic state plan, which is considered catastrophic coverage. Receiving higher levels of coverage will require additional district and employee contributions. To assist with these costs, the state will send each district $75 per month, per covered employee and will give each employee an additional $1,000 annually ($83 a month) to pay for additional employee coverage, dependent coverage, compensation or any combination of the above. Part-time employees who are not TRS members may participate if they or the district pays the full cost.

Districts are required to make a minimum contribution of $150 per employee per month. If they are not currently making that effort, over the next six years the state will help them pay that local district share. The state will phase out this hold harmless aid over the next six years. Districts reaching the Maintenance and Operations tax cap of $1.50 will also be held harmless for any tax effort over $1.50 required to reach their minimum district effort of $150 a month.

Districts contributing more than $150 a month per employee may use the difference between their current expenditure per employee per month and the required $150 a month minimum effort to provide additional insurance coverage or other employee compensation.

All of the details of the plan will be subject to contract negotiations with health insurance providers and actuarial estimates, as well as rules and guidelines set by TRS. TRS is distributing more information on this program so that districts with between 501-1,000 employees can make a decision regarding participation before the September 30, 2001 deadline for declaring their intent to participate. Consequently, within the next year, more than 80 percent of the districts in the state will be examining the options and making plans for a transition to the new plan.

Because the Legislature was concerned about the effect that the termination or bidding of insurance contracts during this final year of coverage would have on a district's ability to obtain competitive bids for health insurance, the state has exempted the smaller school districts from the competitive bid requirements for health insurance coverage for the coming year.

Because GCISD employs 153 staff, less than the 500-employee level, the district will automatically be enrolled in the state's health insurance plan, but will still have some decisions to make in 2001-02.

Recommendation 17:

Establish a committee of staff and administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the director of Business and Finance to establish a committee of representative teachers and other employees to research the options and prepare recommendations for how the district will approach the new employee health coverages in the coming year.	October 2001
2.	The director of Business and Finance selects a committee and begins to gather information from TRS, Region 15 and the state on the program.	November 2001
3.	The committee examines the information and prepares a plan of action to be presented to the board.	November - December 2001
4.	The superintendent and director of Business and Finance present the plan to the board for review and approval.	January 2002
5.	Upon approval, the committee communicates the plan to all members of the staff.	February 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's fund balance will only support four weeks of its operational expenditures. The fund balance is the difference between revenues generated, expenditures incurred and any other resources available to the fund. A fund balance is maintained to accommodate contingencies and unexpected variations in cash flows.

When the current superintendent was hired by the district in May 1999, the general fund balance had fallen dangerously low due to several factors, including changes in Tier II funding that reduced the level of state revenues GCISD received. Tier II funding consists of state revenues provided to a school district with low property values to enrich the district's basic education program.

The district also had obligations of $768,275 for a lease revenue bond, a bond issued to finance a lease in which bond payments are supported by future revenues. It also had a $77,218 contractual obligation payment and an $80,392 delinquent tax note payment. The district had already significantly reduced its general fund balance to meet its bond payment requirements during 1997-98. Although the district general fund balance increased 89.8 percent from 1997-98 to 1999-2000, the general fund balance is significantly below the optimum fund balance of $1,445,000 set by the district auditors on August 31, 2000. **Exhibit 3-12** contains a table of the general fund balances for 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-12
GCISD General Fund Balance
1997-98 Through 1999-2000

	1997-98	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**	**Percent Change 1997-98 to 1999-2000**
Beginning Fund Balance	$1,144,734	$284,680	$311,032	(72.8%)
Revenues	$5,337,133	$6,007,138	$6,727,031	26.0%
Expenditures	($14,735,357)	($5,885,077)	($5,720,614)	(61.2%)
Other	$8,538,170	($95,709)	($777,225)	(109.1%)

Resources/Uses				
Ending Fund Balance	$284,680	$311,032	$540,224	89.8%

Included in "Other Resources and Uses" ($8,538,170 in 1997-98) are the proceeds from the sale of lease revenue bonds. The revenue from these bonds also is reflected in the expenditure amount ($14,735,357). The purpose of these bonds was to provide funds for the acquisition of real property and the construction and equipment of a new high school.

In 2000-01, the district obtained two Instructional Facilities Allotment grants totaling $397,441 combined with $157,000 from the general revenue fund and $210,000 from its interest and sinking fund to pay the debt service for the year.

The district instituted a $0.271 interest and sinking tax rate to accommodate payment of its approximately $9.18 million in bonds. A schedule of projected tax revenues and bond payments follows (**Exhibit 3-13**).

Exhibit 3-13
GCISD Projected Fund Balance
Based on Application of Interest and Sinking Tax Rate
2001-02 Through 2003-04

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Projected Tax Revenues	$224,523	$224,523	$224,523
Projected Payments	$771,885	$770,105	$771,105
Projected Other Resources and General Fund Contributions	$547,362	$545,582	$546,582

The district received more than $1.6 million in excess of earned revenue from the State School Foundation program, a program entitling Texas public school districts to provide a basic education for each student funded through local property taxes and state revenues. The total amount of revenues the state contributes to the districts is based upon a model using a number of non-static projections including average daily attendance and

contact hours for special populations. When these projections are too high, the school district earns less state revenues than the model projects and the state contributes, and an over funding situation arises as has occurred with GCISD. In effect, the following year's state revenues are reduced to compensate for the over-funded portion.

Fund balance management must be a conscious part of the annual budgeting process, ensuring that revenue estimates are conservative and expenditure estimates are liberal.

Recommendation 18:

Develop a fiscal plan of action to replenish the general operating fund balance to optimum levels.

The plan should consider expenditure control, additional sources of revenue and budget amendments. For example, when proposals are brought to the board, the impact on the fund balance, whether positive or negative, should be included in the board's information packet.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and director of Business and Finance, with input from the board, determine the desired level of fund balance that will ensure the fiscal integrity of the district.	November 2001
2.	The superintendent and director of Business and Finance develop a five-year plan to attain the desired level of fund balance.	November 2001
3.	The director of Business and Finance monitors expenditures and revenues monthly to project year-end fund balance.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have comprehensive fixed asset policies and procedures. Prior to 1999, the district had not developed threshold limits for classifying purchases of equipment and furniture as fixed assets. When the former director of Business of Finance began employment, a line-by-line review was necessary to identify items that should be deleted based on age, dollar value and the physical inability to locate some items. The GCISD independent auditors manually developed an inventory list identifying all items that should be included in the accounting system.

GCISD uses Region 15 accounting software that includes an inventory module, but which staff have found difficult to update and manipulate.

The GCISD Technology Department has implemented an inventory tracking system that uses barcodes and a scanner to identify items in the system. The director of Business and Finance has expanded this system to record all of the district's fixed assets.

In June 1999, the *Governmental Accounting Standards Board* (GASB), the entity that sets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for governmental entities, issued Statement 34, *Basic Financial Statements and Management's Discussion and Analysis for State and Local Governments (GASB 34).* The statement was intended to help governments create more comprehensive and comprehendible annual reports. It established new financial reporting requirements for state and local governments, including capital assets. The state of Texas will be required to implement GASB 34 on September 1, 2001. The State Comptroller's Office offers a *Capital Asset Guide* on its Web site to help state and local governments implement the new reporting requirements in Texas. GASB 34 changes many of the regulations and procedures for capital asset classification, classification thresholds and asset valuation.

Recommendation 19:

Develop written fixed asset policies and procedures and distribute them to staff members involved in the accounting and management of fixed assets.

School district policies should address the use of fixed assets in a location other than that assigned. The policy should also address the off-site use of school district assets by employees.

The district should take annual fixed asset inventories at the end of the school term before the staff members leave. Schools should settle discrepancies between the fixed asset inventory list and what is on hand in a timely fashion. The policies and procedures must also address missing items so that staff members are held accountable for assets under their control.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Business and Finance initiates the development of the district fixed asset capitalization policies and procedures, and compiles and forwards them to the superintendent.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent approves the written fixed asset	November

	capitalization policies and procedures and presents them to the board.	2001
3.	The board approves the written policies and procedures.	December 2001
4.	The director of Business and Finance or a designee distributes written policies and procedures to all personnel involved.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

D. Shared Service Opportunities

The position of the school district business manager has evolved into a profession that is separate and distinct from that of the superintendent or principal. As a result, superintendents and principals in small school districts, who have been involved in school district operations, are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the rapidly changing requirements.

In addition, small school districts are unable to match the salaries of large school districts for highly trained and experienced business office personnel. Thus, these districts have more problems adjusting to changes in school finance and budgeting laws and in maintaining efficient business operations.

There are increasing reports of mistakes made by small district personnel that cause the district extreme hardships. A simple PEIMS reporting mistake can impact a district's funding for a number of years.

All school districts are required to perform an array of business services. In some manner, the business services listed in **Exhibit 3-14** must be performed by all school districts.

Exhibit 3-14
Business Services Performed in Most School Districts

• Accounting	• Preparation of Financial Report
• Purchasing	• Investment of School District Funds
• Invoice Processing	• Cash Flow Analysis
• Bank Reconciliations	• Food Service Accounting
• Fixed Asset Management	• PEIMS Reporting
• Purchasing	• Board Reporting

• Payroll Processing and Benefits Reporting	• State Aid Calculations
• Grant Reporting	• Student Enrollment Projections
• Budgeting	• Student Activity Fund Accounting
• Personnel Reporting	• Long Range Budgeting
• Managing and Supervision	• Tax Assessing/Collecting

Source: TSPR.

How well districts are able to accomplish these complicated tasks depends on the knowledge and expertise of the personnel that districts are having increasing difficulty hiring.

FINDING

Each of the five small districts in Tom Green County are uniquely challenged to provide the wide array of business services required of school districts in Texas.

In GCISD, the director of Business and Finance and the superintendent jointly have ultimate responsibility for many of the financial aspects of the district's operations. Supporting the director of Business and Finance are the finance clerk and the payroll clerk.

In June 1999, Regional Education Service Center XI (Region 11) in Fort Worth submitted a proposal to TEA for "Improving Texas School District Financial Management." One component of the proposal was the development of a model business support services cooperative to help smaller school districts and charter schools to perform any and all business functions. As part of this effort, Region 11 researched the use of cooperative financial services in and outside of Texas.

After reviewing and analyzing the various models from various states, Region 11 found six workable models for providing business services in small school districts and charter schools in Texas, which are summarized below:

Model I - Business Services Provided by School Districts or Charter Schools

- School districts or charter schools maintain their own business services departments.
- The Regional Education Service Center (RESC) in the area perform business services as needed using RESC staff, retirees or other contracted groups or individuals.

Model II - Business Services Provided by Each RESC

- School districts or charter schools contract with the RESC to perform all business services.
- Business services provided by the RESC are full time, part time, interim, or "as needed."
- RESC staff, qualified retirees, or the use of an incubator to directly train school district employees performs business services.

Model III - Business Services Provided on a Multi-Regional Basis

- School districts or charter schools contract with the RESC to perform business services.
- This model assumes that four "Mega-RESC's" will be appropriately staffed to fully perform all business services.
- Each multi-regional RESC will provide services to four other RESCs. These smaller RESCs may also provide some business services or may provide interface services for school districts or charter schools in their regions.
- Business services provided by the RESC are full time, part time, interim or "as needed."
- The RESC staff, qualified retirees, or the use of an incubator to directly train school district employees perform business services.
- This model tracks the original Multi-Regional Processing Centers that provided data processing services in the early 70s.

Model IV - Business Services Provided by Shared Personnel

- School districts or charter schools co-op business services between and/or among each other.
- These school districts or charter schools approve an inter-local governmental agreement, which specifies the responsibilities of the cooperative and the responsibilities of each of the school districts with the cooperative.
- The RESC can provide technical assistance to the cooperative including development of the agreement, housing and incubator, hosting and assisting with the cooperative board meeting, etc.

- A fiscal agent would be appointed (this could be one of the member school districts or the RESC), and the cooperative's employees would become employees of the fiscal agent.
- The incubator could be provided by the RESC or by the cooperative.

Model V - Business Services Provided by Shared Personnel (Minimum Enrollment Required by the State)

- School districts or charter schools co-op business services between and/or among each other in order to reach the minimum enrollment required by the state.
- The RESC could provide technical assistance, incubator training, or perform fiscal agent duties.
- This model is the same as Model IV; however, it requires a certain minimum aggregate enrollment for the participating school districts or charter schools.

Model VI - Privatized Business Services

- School districts or charter schools purchase business services from a private company.
- The RESC could provide technical assistance and/or incubator services in order to train school district employees.

Clearly the scenarios can be "mixed and matched" in any combination or format desirable to school districts, charter schools and service centers. The use of these models, in conjunction with business services provided by RESCs throughout the state, could be a viable option for school districts and charter schools to procure professional business services in a cost-efficient manner.

Recommendation 20:

Form a committee of superintendents, Regional Education Service Center representatives and representatives from the Texas Education Agency to explore the opportunities for shared financial services.

While this recommendation is directed toward districts in Tom Green County, other neighboring districts that could benefit from a shared services arrangement should also be invited to participate. Further, districts may find that they will benefit from some combination of scenarios and may wish to break off to work in smaller groups of two or three districts, rather than in a larger cooperative. All of these options should be thoroughly explored to ensure that the best interests of the districts are fully understood and protected.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 15 to set up a superintendent meeting with any interested districts in the Region, RESC staff and staff from TEA.	October 2001
2.	The superintendent attends the meeting and discusses a plan to fully explore the various options for cooperative financial services within Region 15.	November 2001
3.	The committee researches all of the options, with each superintendent regularly providing information and input about their respective district's operations, needs and board concerns.	December 2001 - March 2002
4.	The superintendent shares the various options with the board for final consideration and review.	April 2002
5.	The board reviews the options and determines the best course of action for the district in the coming year, approving any needed budget or staffing adjustments for the coming year.	May - June 2002
6.	The superintendent works with fellow superintendents and regional staff to implement the plan.	June - August 2002
7.	The district implements the new approach and closely monitors the district's participation to ensure the success of the plan.	August 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4
OPERATIONS

This chapter reviews the Grape Creek Independent School District's (GCISD's) operations and includes these sections:

A. Facilities Management
B. Computers and Technology
C. Transportation
D. Food Services

Efficient, effective school operations and quality student services are essential to the success of a school district's educational mission. For children to learn, facilities must be adequately planned to accommodate student enrollment, effectively managed to create an environment conducive to learning, and appropriately maintained to ensure student and employee safety. Pupil transportation must be safe and prompt. Food must be nutritious, appealing, and available to all children, regardless of economic status.

Chapter 4
OPERATIONS

A. Facilities Management

GCISD has a comprehensive facilities management program that guides facilities planning and use, maintenance and custodial and energy management. The program integrates facilities planning with all other aspects of school planning, including GCISD's strategic plan. Facilities management personnel are knowledgeable about operations and maintenance. Effective, clearly defined policies, procedures and activities accommodate changes in the district's resources and needs.

To support each school and department, the program:

- Plans to ensure that facilities data are gathered and used in effective education programs.
- Analyzes facilities use to ensure that it accommodates enrolled students, education requirements and school board and state-mandated regulations efficiently and effectively.
- Provides maintenance to ensure that facilities are safe and in working order, providing an effective learning environment for students.
- Administers custodial services to ensure facilities are clean and upkeep of the facilities is monitored.
- Develops an energy management program to ensure the efficient use of utilities through energy conservation and monitoring.

GCISD has three schools, two of which are part of the same facility. The elementary/intermediate school is the oldest facility, housing kindergarten through grade 8. In 1996, the district formed a public utilities corporation to issue $8.5 million of debt for a new high school. A public utilities corporation is a nonprofit legal entity used by school districts to obtain financing. The corporation issues the debt and leases the facility to the school district. The high school was completed in 1996-97. In 1999, GCISD sold $9.18 million in bonds to refinance this debt and lower payments. **Exhibit 4-1** profiles GCISD's facilities.

Exhibit 4-1
GCISD Facilities

Description	Year Constructed	Square Footage
Elementary/intermediate school	1960	51,274

Elementary/intermediate school addition (small schools cooperative building)	1998	1,622
High school	1997	85,128
Total		**138,024**

Source: Texas Association of School Boards Property Appraisal Packet, September 6, 2000.

The district also uses 10 portable buildings, all at the elementary/intermediate school. The Small Schools Cooperative owns three of the portable buildings.

A maintenance supervisor leads facilities management and reports to the director of Technology and Operations. Two full-time and two part-time maintenance staff report to the maintenance supervisor. Outside vendors maintain kitchen equipment, HVAC, plumbing and the water treatment plant. The district uses an outside custodial firm, as well, but has one in-house custodian who also performs light maintenance. **Exhibit 4-2** shows how the district's facilities management function is organized.

Exhibit 4-2
GCISD Facilities Management Organization
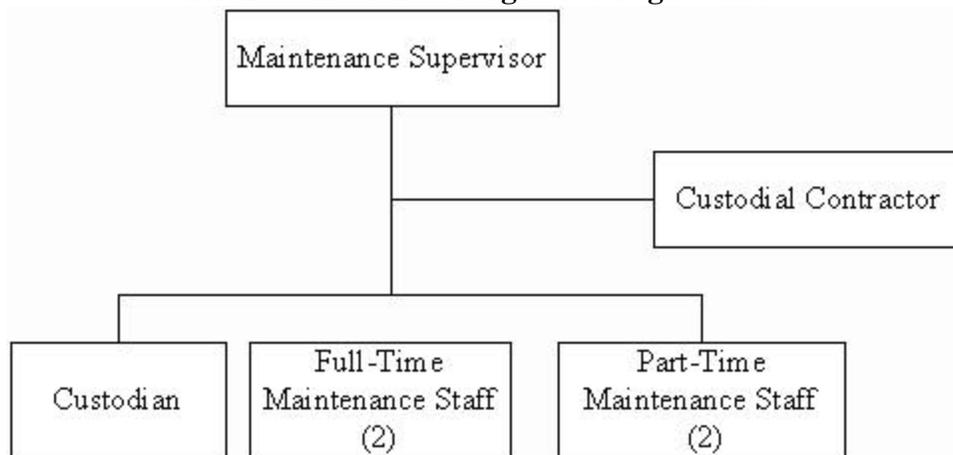
Source: GCISD facilities organization chart.

In 2000-01, the district budgeted $682,550 for plant operations and maintenance, up from $491,284 in 1999-2000. **Exhibit 4-3** shows the history of actual expenditures for 1996-97 through 1999-2000, and budgeted information for 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-3
General Fund Plant Operations and Maintenance Expenditures
1996-97 Through 2000-01

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01 (Budget)
Salaries and benefits	$154,578	$241,129	$230,755	$116,770	$114,650
Contracted services	$156,309	$347,697	$218,938	$317,232	$453,200
Materials and supplies	$134,310	$99,051	$102,785	$40,367	$70,000
Other operating	$27,973	$20,554	$16,396	$16,915	$24,700
Capital equipment	$24,526	$16,442	$8,702	$0	$20,000
Total	**$497,696**	**$724,873**	**$577,576**	**$491,284**	**$682,550**

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1996-97 through 2000-01 for function 51-plant maintenance and operations.

GCISD spends far less of its plant operations and maintenance funds per student than its peer districts. **Exhibit 4-4** shows plant maintenance and operations expenditures per student for 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-4
GCISD and Peer Districts' Plant Operations and Maintenance
Cost per Student
1999-2000

District	Expenditures per Student
Hutto	$831.59
Celina	$794.43
Shallowater	$725.35
Troy	$619.18
Grape Creek	**$437.86**

Source: PEIMS, 1999-2000 for function 51-plant maintenance and operations.

FINDING

GCISD's custodial contract saves money, but the service is inadequate.

In 1999-2000, GCISD selected a contractor to provide more efficient services. The district pays $9,658 a month, or $115,896 per year, to clean approximately 138,000 square feet. Savings from this effort exceed the contract's cost. For example, between 1998-99 and 1999-2000 the district reduced payroll-related expenses alone by $114,000, and it also is avoiding costs for materials and supplies. **Exhibit 4-3** above illustrates these savings as shown in the "materials and supplies" category.

However, about 50 percent of the teachers surveyed by TSPR were dissatisfied with school cleanliness. The maintenance supervisor monitors the contract and actual work at the schools. The contract specifies required tasks, but not performance measures.

GCISD's initiative shows outsourcing is feasible for small districts. The financial benefits of outsourcing are alleviating the district's difficult financial situation.

Recommendation 21:

Establish performance measures and a monitoring plan for the custodial services contract.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The maintenance supervisor develops performance measures for the maintenance contract and a plan for monitoring the contract.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent and maintenance supervisor meet with the contractor to review the performance measures and monitoring plan.	October 2001
3.	The maintenance supervisor modifies the maintenance contract to include the new performance measures.	October 2001
4.	The maintenance supervisor implements the monitoring plan.	October 2001
5.	The maintenance supervisor provides feedback to the contractor monthly and sanctions the contractor for noncompliance.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not have a comprehensive, up to date long-range facilities master plan. GCISD has no facilities planning committee, other than for the high school. The district's educational plans are not aligned with facility plans. The district experienced an enrollment increase of nearly 41 percent from 1996-97 to 2000-01. Unanticipated growth is straining the elementary/intermediate school; three years after the new high school was built, the elementary/intermediate school is overcrowded and under-maintained. Portable buildings accommodate the additional students, but the school's common areas were designed for a smaller student population.

In 1994, GCISD hired the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) to conduct a facilities evaluation and study of projected needs. Before GCISD decided to build a new high school, this study projected enrollment for 1999-2000 at 703 for kindergarten through grade 8, and 343 for high school. At that time, the elementary/intermediate school was operating at 83 percent of capacity without portables (accommodating a total of 757 students.) The actual 1999-2000 enrollment for kindergarten through grade 8, however, was 806 students.

Although the elementary/intermediate school is now operating at only 6.5 percent more than capacity, still another factor is contributing to the stress on facilities. In 1995-96, before the new high school opened, the district's student-to-teacher ratio was 15.8 students to one teacher. In 1999-2000, it was 13.8 students to one teacher. GCISD's downsizing of class sizes by 13 percent districtwide created the need for more classrooms. While this approach may have educational benefits, smaller classes have had more of an effect on facilities use than higher enrollment.

The facilities problem is the source of many of the GCISD's safety and security problems. The elementary and intermediate schools are together at one site, and it is unclear to visitors where one school ends and another begins. The facility is congested, and offices are not readily identifiable to casual visitors or strategically located for supervision. Principals and teachers monitor the halls between classes, but during class, the halls are vulnerable to intrusion by visitors who may not have registered with the office. Visitors can enter through several doors, only one of which is near an office where they must register.

The parking lot at Grape Creek High School is dangerous. It is not paved or well lit, and parking spaces are not delineated. The parking lot is also at the back of the school, making it hard for the administrative offices in the front of the school to supervise entrances and exits at the back doors.

Some portable buildings are located across a public street from the school, and children must pass in front of or behind buses to reach classes.

Although teachers are in the area when classes change and after school, children can disappear from view behind the buses and are vulnerable to accidents or abductions. Also, some school doors do not lock automatically from the outside, leaving the school vulnerable to intrusion during the school day.

The district has tried to accommodate the growing enrollment by adding a principal at the elementary/intermediate school, placing arrows on sidewalks and hall floors to direct pedestrians and providing videos for students who eat in their classrooms due to cafeteria overcrowding. However, these measures are only temporary.

The 1994 TASA study included an assessment of facilities conditions. The elementary/intermediate school received an overall score of 720 out of 1,000, which is 20 points higher than the minimum acceptable score. Below 700 indicates a "substantial need for rehabilitation." While there has been no assessment since 1994, the elementary/intermediate school has likely dropped into this lower category because there have been no significant facility rehabilitation efforts at the elementary/intermediate school in the past seven years.

Teachers are frustrated with this problem. More than 62 percent of GCISD teachers surveyed by TSPR believe that the district does not plan far enough into the future with respect to facilities.

Recommendation 22:

Conduct a facilities study and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.

The district should contract with an outside firm for a facilities study, and create a planning committee to oversee the study and develop a master plan. The committee should be permanent, with a rotating, volunteer membership of community members, board members and teachers.

Contracting with an outside firm for the study will allow the committee to focus on longer-term issues and develop a sound master plan that ensures long-term needs are met.

Besides considering the facilities study, the master plan should take into account the resources required by the district and campus improvement plans, with a particular focus on the student-to-teacher ratio. The district should make every effort to eliminate classes that have low numbers of students.

The facilities master plan should also consider short-term alternatives to relieve the elementary/intermediate school, such as moving grade 8 to the high school and selling the portable buildings. The plan should also address safety and security. GCISD should consider suggestions from the community-wide safety committee on improving facilities and incorporate them into recommendations in the master plan.

The Council of Educational Facility Planners, International recommends a model for facilities planning that guides consultants and school districts.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board creates a facilities planning committee and solicits volunteers to serve on the committee.	September 2001
2.	The board appoints committee members, establishes committee goals and sets a timetable for results.	October 2001
3.	The superintendent solicits bids for a facilities planning study and recommends a vendor to the committee and board for approval.	November 2001
4.	The facilities planning committee oversees the planning study and incorporates results into a long-term facilities master plan.	March 2002
5.	The facilities planning committee updates the master plan annually.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated cost of a facilities study by an outside firm is $8,000. Water Valley ISD spent $4,000 on its study in 1999, but the cost for GCISD is expected to be higher because of inflation and GCISD's larger size.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Conduct a facilities study and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.	($8,000)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

GCISD has not taken advantage of available funding to make needed renovations. The 1994 TASA facilities study identified significant renovation needs for the elementary/intermediate school, but with no significant investments by GCISD, these needs have intensified. The TSPR review team observed these facilities to be in poor condition.

TEA is accepting and reviewing applications for the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program. QZAB is a federally funded program created by the federal Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, providing federal tax credits to lenders who purchase bonds from issuing school districts. The tax credits allow the authorized district to obtain interest-free funding; the district does not pay interest, only the amount borrowed.

Using the example provided in **Exhibit 4-5**, if the district obtained approval for $8 million, it would repay only $8 million over 12 years and would not pay the $2.9 million in interest.

Exhibit 4-5
Estimated Amortization Schedule for $8 Million QZAB Allocation
1999-2000

Issue Year	Principal Payments	Interest Rate*	Annual Interest	Tax Credit Granted By QZAB To Bondholders
1	$666,666	5.631%	$450,480	$450,480
2	$666,666	5.631%	$412,940	$412,940
3	$666,666	5.631%	$375,400	$375,400
4	$666,666	5.631%	$337,860	$337,860
5	$666,666	5.631%	$300,320	$300,320
6	$666,666	5.631%	$262,780	$262,780
7	$666,666	5.631%	$225,240	$225,240
8	$666,666	5.631%	$187,700	$187,700
9	$666,666	5.631%	$150,160	$150,160
10	$666,666	5.631%	$112,620	$112,620
11	$666,666	5.631%	$75,080	$75,080
12	$666,674	5.631%	$37,540	$37,540
Totals	**$8,000,000**		**$2,928,120**	**$2,928,120**

Source: Calculated based upon maximum allocation and maturity available through the QZAB program administered by the TEA.
*Rate for 20-year bonds estimated from an average of the 10-year bond

and 30-year
bond rates of 5.582 percent and 5.679 percent, respectively, as reported
for October 23, 2000
on the SmartMoney.com Web site.

From 1998 through 2000, the state of Texas received QZAB allocations for $32.8 million, $34.8 million and $32.5 million, respectively. In 1999, Congress and the President extended the program through 2001 to support an additional $400 million in school improvements. There is an $8 million limit per QZAB application and the debt must be repaid within 12 years. A district is entitled to only one application per calendar year. Any funding not allocated by December 31 of each year is rolled over into the next year for new applications.

To apply for QZAB, the district superintendent must complete the application and include a written assurance from a business "partner" designating a contribution of 10 percent to the total project to create a new academic program at the qualified school. The 10 percent contribution may include cash, property, equipment, professional services or volunteer services. The school may partner with a single private entity or with several entities to reach the 10 percent threshold. The bond proceeds must benefit an individual school located within a federally designated Empowerment Zone, a federally designated Enterprise Community or any other school with at least 35 percent of its student population eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. GCISD has 46.7 percent of its students classified as economically disadvantaged.

The application may be made for a bond, a personal property lease purchase agreement or a time warrant (loan). Bonds must be authorized and issued under the authority of Texas Education Code Chapter 45 subchapter A. A lease purchase must be qualified under Local Government Code section 271.005 pertaining to personal property. A time warrant must meet the requirements under Texas Education Code section 45.103. QZAB-approved funds must be used for renovating or repairing a classroom facility or purchasing equipment such as computers and networking hardware used to enhance an academic program.

To achieve QZAB designation, a district must meet the program's proof of eligibility, provide an assurance of a private business contribution and submit the district's program intent. The application must be filed and the designation must be approved prior to the district issuing its QZAB debt. The application process takes approximately 30 days from the date of submission to TEA to final approval. Upon receipt of QZAB designation, the district will have 180 days to issue the bonds. The QZAB designation will lapse if the bonds are not issued within the allocated time.

Recommendation 23:

Pursue Qualified Zone Academy Bond funding for renovation of the elementary/intermediate school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent obtains information from the Texas Education Agency regarding the QZAB program and begins the application process.	January 2002
2.	The superintendent works with other administrators and the board to identify rehabilitation and repair projects that will be presented for funding through QZAB bonds.	March 2002
3.	The superintendent presents the QZAB application and proposal to the board for approval.	April 2002
4.	The superintendent submits the QZAB application to TEA.	April 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. If the district is granted QZAB designation, it will obtain interest-free financing on the bonds issued for the projects included in its application. Assuming that the district applies for and receives the maximum allocation of $8 million and issues $8 million in a single 12-year bond issue yielding 5.631 percent annually, the district could save $2.9 million in interest over the life of the bond issue.

FINDING

The district does not track maintenance work orders, and maintenance falls short of user expectations. The maintenance supervisor oversees two full-time maintenance workers who work on grounds and maintenance, two part-time maintenance workers and one custodian. The part-time employees assist in transportation and crossing guard duties.

GCISD does not have an automated system for requesting maintenance. Work requests are usually written on forms and turned into the maintenance supervisor. Emergency requests are phoned in. The maintenance supervisor dispatches personnel to respond based on his assessment of the priority. Requestors have to call someone to learn the status of their work orders.

A TSPR teacher survey drew many negative responses about the quality and timeliness of maintenance. Emergency maintenance was the only category that received a largely favorable response. **Exhibit 4-6** shows survey results.

Exhibit 4-6
Teacher Survey - Facilities Management

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	1.9%	41.5%	11.30%	34.0%	11.3%
50. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	3.8%	43.4%	11.30%	32.1%	9.4%
51. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	3.8%	71.7%	7.50%	13.2%	3.8%

Source: TSPR teacher survey, March 2001.

Many districts use automated systems to manage maintenance work orders, and GCISD is considering automating work orders. Facility managers can use these systems to control maintenance resources effectively. Such a system makes it easier to fill work orders, schedule preventive maintenance, control inventory and track equipment.

School districts also use these systems to track information about work orders that is not usually tracked in manual systems including:

- Work order number;
- Location requesting the work;
- Date received;
- Personnel assigned;
- Description of work;
- Priority ID number;
- Warehouse supplies used;
- Supplies purchased;
- Labor to complete request;
- Vehicle driven;
- Miles driven;
- Action taken; and
- Authorized signature.

With an automated system, maintenance managers, supervisors and requestors can track work orders through stages of completion based on prioritization. **Exhibit 4-7** lists sample priority codes.

Exhibit 4-7
Sample Work Order Priority Codes

Code	Definition	Description
1	Emergency	Danger to life or property
2	Priority	Possible danger
3	Routine	Daily maintenance/repairs
4	Improvement	Changes to facility
5	Summer work	Summer request
6	Rejected	Request Rejected
7	Deferred for study	Future consideration

Source: Fort Bend ISD Maintenance Department work order priority codes.

Recommendation 24:

Implement an automated system to manage work orders, and develop priority codes.

The district can develop a simple work order tracking system using an Excel spreadsheet. Having a simple tracking system and priority codes will improve maintenance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The maintenance supervisor, director of Technology and Operations and school principals define requirements for a work order management system and develop a spreadsheet that will track required information.	October 2001
2.	The maintenance supervisor and director of Technology and Operations define work order priority codes and implement the work order system.	November 2001
3.	The maintenance supervisor trains maintenance staff and requestors to use the system.	December 2001

4.	The maintenance supervisor generates management reports and uses them to manage the quality and efficiency of maintenance.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

GCISD has not implemented energy conservation measures recommended by the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) in 1998.

With a new energy-efficient high school, the district's average utilities cost per square foot declined to $1.29 in 1999-2000. The cost of utilities at the elementary/intermediate school is almost double that of the high school, even though it is a smaller facility. The energy-inefficient portable classrooms contributed to a utilities cost of $2.26 per square foot in 1996-97. **Exhibit 4-8** shows utilities costs at GCISD since 1996-97.

Exhibit 4-8
Utilities Costs
1996-97 Through 1999-2000

Year	Amount	Square Feet	Cost per Square Foot
1996-97	$116,271	51,274	$2.26
1997-98	$182,843	138,024	$1.32
1998-99	$183,216	138,024	$1.32
1999-2000	$177,878	138,024	$1.29

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

In September 1998, SECO analyzed GCISD's utilities use as part of the "Energy Efficient School Partnership Service." SECO estimated that the district could save $26,500 per year if it spent $168,000 on retrofits and other conservation measures, providing a payback on its investment in 6.5 years. SECO recommended several routine maintenance and operations procedures (such as changing air filters more often, installing weather-stripping, installing locks on thermostats, establishing a districtwide energy conservation policy and turning off lights when leaving a room). Three major capital expenditure projects were also recommended-replacing the HVAC system, replacing lamps and ballasts and replacing the electric cooking equipment.

The district has not acted on SECO's recommendations or pursued its guaranteed loan program for energy conservation measures that are paid for by energy savings. A guaranteed loan program is one where if the borrower doesn't save energy, the state pays the debt service through its guarantee.

Recommendation 25:

Update energy audit and participate in the State Energy Conservation Office energy conservation loan program.

The district should pursue the SECO loan program to identify cost-effective conservation measures.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts SECO to update its energy management audit.	September 2001
2.	SECO updates the audit and revises recommendations and estimated savings for energy efficiency.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent requests approval from the board to issue debt to finance the energy conservation measures recommended.	December 2001
4.	The superintendent tracks and reports energy use and cost statistics based on square feet.	Each month beginning January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

With the updated SECO energy audit, resulting savings may not have a payback in less than five years; the current report shows a 6.5-year payback. However, while the payback will be long-term, no fiscal impact is anticipated over the next five years.

FINDING

Directional signs at the elementary/intermediate school are poorly placed and difficult to see. For example, it is hard to tell how to enter the parking lot and where the front entrance is. It is also easy to walk past the intermediate school principal's office, missing it entirely because the area around the office is often overcrowded and the sign is small. Further, the elementary school principal's office is near the center of the main facility and not convenient to the side entrance where parents drop off and pick up children.

For signs to be effective, they must be visible and positioned so that they catch the attention of the intended audience. For example, signs indicating how to enter the parking lot and where to drop off and pick up students should be visible from the street, as should signs marking entrances. Signs on external doors should be at eye level and clearly visible. Signs indicating the location of each principal's office should be at least six feet off the ground to be clearly visible over students' heads.

Recommendation 26:

Create signs that direct visitors to the parking lot, student loading and unloading zones, school entrance and main offices for each campus.

High school students in the metal shop or wood shop could make most of these signs for the cost of materials.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, all school principals, high school art and shop teachers and maintenance supervisor meet to determine where to place signs.	September 2001
2.	The principals and teachers develop basic specifications so signs are consistent throughout the complex.	October 2001
3.	The high school art teacher assigns a sign design project to art students as a competition. This may or may not be a group project.	October 2001
4.	The designs are selected and art students work with shop students to determine which materials would work best.	November 2001
5.	The shop students create the signs.	December 2001
6.	The maintenance personnel work with principals and one or two students to install signs.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4
OPERATIONS

B. Computers and Technology

The Texas Legislature has long recognized technology's importance in education and administrative support. Many Texas grant programs support school technology, and each district is required by the Legislature to create a plan for its technology infrastructure. Each district's technology program varies according to district size, school and district office geography, technology capabilities and funds available. Some districts divide technology into two areas-administrative and instructional-but most smaller districts can afford only one department to handle most administrative and business computing including accounting, budgeting, payroll, human resources, fixed asset management, food services, library operations and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data entry and submission to TEA. Many technology departments also help develop their districts' technology goals and budgets.

For reliable administrative and business computing over the long term, the district's technology program must address:

- Organization and management of technology support;
- Technology planning and funding;
- Hardware and software infrastructure,
- Required technical support and associated skills,
- Development of district staff including administrators and teachers.

GCISD has the following hardware and software infrastructure:

GCISD's hardware consists of:

- 140 computers, mostly Pentium I (processor speed 133 Mhz or lower).
- 45 Pentium II computers (processor speed 400 Mhz or higher) obtained through a TIF/PS-6 grant and positioned in two high school labs, and 50 Pentium III computers (processor speed one Ghz) coming in through a TIF/PS-9 grant opportunity.
- 45 Intel 486-processor, stand-alone classroom computers (not network-connected) that support the Accelerated Reader program.
- One distance learning center established through a grant and located at the high school. In addition to VTEL video teleconferencing capability, sufficient hardware is available to establish broadcast capability to all existing classrooms.

- One Cisco network/router system for student use and configuration in the CISCO Network Academy.
- One Internet-connected computer in each classroom (used by the teacher for e-mail and student projects) and two other computers, usually supporting the Accelerated Reader program.
- All classrooms wired for 100-megabyte (bandwidth) fiber optic backbone and cable TV, and two schools linked by a one-gigahertz (bandwidth) fiber optic backbone.
- District offices connected to GCISD's servers by two ISDN lines because the district's fiber optic backbone cannot cross under the Texas 87 highway to district offices.

GCISD's software consists of:

- Applications supporting education, including the Athena Library Management System with access to GALENET, the cafeteria management system (SNAP-DOS) version and Grade Speed;
- Business and student management software supported by Region 15 under the Regional Service Center Cooperative Computer System on a fee basis; and
- PCs/servers that run a variety of operating systems from Windows 3.1.1 95/98 on personal computers to Windows NT 4.0 and Novell on servers/workstations.

FINDING

The GCISD technology organization maximizes its use of funds by assigning multiple functions to staff. The organization charts of most small districts like GCISD are simple, with limited staff handling multiple assignments. **Exhibit 4-9** shows the GCISD Technology and Operations organizational chart.

Exhibit 4-9
GCISD Organization of Technology and Operations

April 2001

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │    Board of Trustees    │
                    └────────────┬────────────┘
                                 │
                    ┌────────────┴────────────┐
                    │     Superintendent      │
                    └────────────┬────────────┘
   ┌─────────────────┐           │
   │  Administrative │───────────┤
   │    Assistant    │           │
   └─────────────────┘           │
                    ┌────────────┴────────────┐
                    │  Director of Technology │
                    │      & Operations       │
                    └────────────┬────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────┴──────────────────┐
   ┌──────────┴──────────┐             ┌─────────────┴─────────┐
   │  Network Systems    │             │      Maintenance      │
   │     & Projects      │             │      Supervisor       │
   └─────────────────────┘             └───────────┬───────────┘
                                       ┌───────────┴───────────┐
                                       │  Facility & Grounds   │
                                       │   Maintenance Staff   │
                                       └───────────────────────┘
```
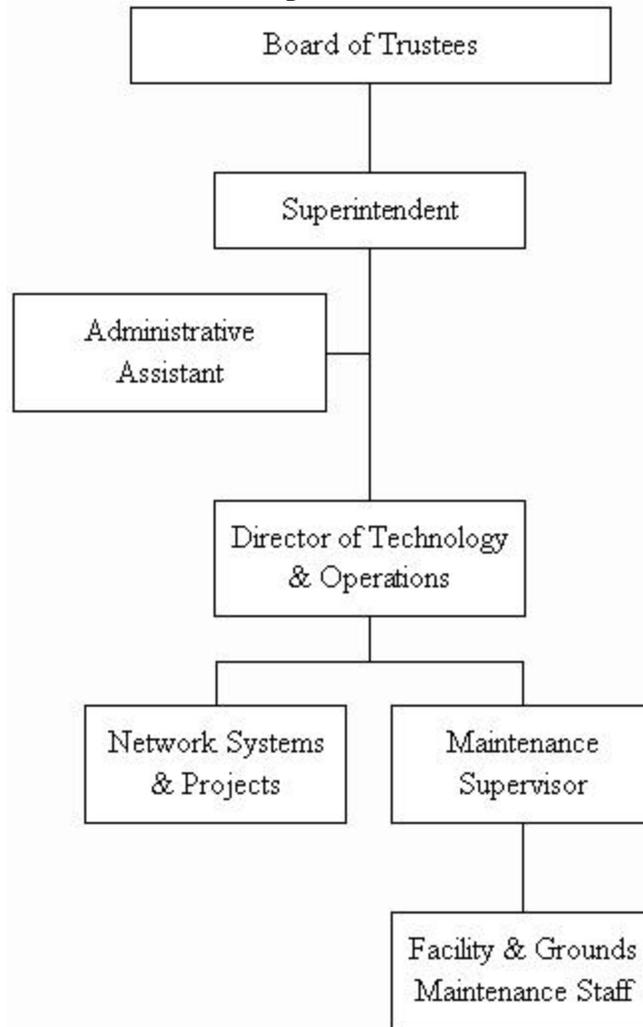
Source: GCISD Technology Department, April 2001.

The director of Technology and Operations must function as a visionary to make sure the district's information system requirements are stated clearly, formulated economically and based on a "return on taxpayer resources" for students, staff and the community. The director is responsible for the district's technology plan, grant requests, budget input and hardware and software specifications. Other functions include participation in numerous committees and study groups such as the GCISD Technology Task Force, support of daily district and school events and reporting on issues at school board meetings. A technology team supports the director, consisting of the district and high school librarian (who is also the district's Web master), the technology integrator (available for one year under the GCISD TIE4 grant) and the technology specialist for the elementary and intermediate schools (who is also the distance learning coordinator and T-Star contact).

To save money and streamline operations, the GCISD technology team has:

- Tested and integrated the student bar code fare card for the SNAP cafeteria system with Athena library management software;
- Provided each student with a single bar code card to obtain meals, check out library books and receive and return textbooks;
- Partitioned the library inventory system database to provide number codes for GCISD's hardware for junior high and high school textbooks;
- Developed a process that involves scanning bar-coded meal cards for student and staff identification and scanning bar-coded textbooks and hardware with RF scanners;
- Greatly reduced the manual effort to issue, track and receive textbooks and do periodic hardware inventories; and
- Ensured accountability for lost books.

COMMENDATION

The GCISD technology team has used software and hardware technology wisely to reduce administrative costs.

FINDING

The GCISD technology team has successfully applied for and received grants for technology projects, acquiring $527,862 in grant funds as shown in **Exhibit 4-10.**

Exhibit 4-10
GCISD Grant Funds for Technology

1998 Grant Source	School	Amount	Purpose
HEB	Intermediate	$750	Grade 8 outdoor education project
TIE-TEA	District	$100,000	Distance learning lab
TEA/Learn & Serve	Intermediate	$1,380	Grade 8 outdoor education project
TEA/Optional Extended Year	Intermediate	$16,100	Middle school optional extended year program
Total		**$118,230**	
1999 Grant	School	Amount	Purpose

Source			
Jordan Fundamentals	Intermediate	$2,500	Grade 8 outdoor education project
TIF/PS6	Elementary	$78,726	Computer purchase
TEA/Title VI	Elementary	$15,703	Class size reduction
TEA/Learn & Serve	Intermediate	$3,572	Grade 8 outdoor education project
Total		**$100,501**	
2000 Grant Source	**School**	**Amount**	**Purpose**
TEA/AP/IB Equip	High school	$3,000	Books for AP courses
TEA/Optional Ext. Yr.	Intermediate school	$12,270	Middle school optional extended year program
TEA/Pre-K 2nd Cycle	Elementary	$72,274	Renovations/new furniture for Pre-K classrooms
TEA/TIE	District	$53,000	Technology integration
Wray Trust	Intermediate school	$1,200	Grade 8 outdoor education project
TEA/Title I	Elementary	$76,770	Improving basic programs
TEA/Title VI	Elementary/intermediate school	$6,379	Library books
TEA/Title VI CRP	Elementary	$16,865	Class size reduction
TEA/Accelerated Reading	Elementary	$28,500	Reading improvement strategies
Gifts In Kind Intl.	District	$1,500	District software purchases
TEA/Carl D. Perkins	High school	$7,637	Vocational/technical education
Learn & Serve	Intermediate school	$3,564	Grade 8 outdoor education project
Learn & Serve	District	$9,967	Grade 8 outdoor education project
Concho Valley	High school	$3,368	Vocational training

Tech Prep			
TEA/Optional Ext. Yr.	Elementary/intermediate school	$9,412	Middle school optional extended year program
Total		**$305,706**	
2001 Grant Source (April 2001)	**School**	**Amount**	**Purpose**
TWC/Tech Prep	High school	$3,425	Math/science AP instruction
Total		**$3,425**	
Total 1998 to April 2001		**$527,862**	

Source: GCISD Grants and Public Information Department, April 2001.

The district has also created a new director of Public Information and Grants position to develop additional funding sources for the district.

COMMENDATION

The GCISD technology team has actively sought grants to help expand technology capabilities.

FINDING

The director of Technology and Operations is responsible for many functions, but those functions have not been prioritized as a component of the district's technology plan. The director of Technology and Operations is also the network systems and projects manager and the district's operations manager. The director prepares the district's technology plan, grant requests, budget inputs and purchase requisitions including developing required hardware and software specifications.

The director of Technology and Operations also performs all information system daily backups on the five servers, orders parts for the repairs the director can perform, orders commercial repairs when necessary and troubleshoots hardware and software including distance learning technology and the Cisco Networking Academy classroom hardware for student levels 1 and 2 certification. The Cisco Networking Academy is a joint effort of Cisco Systems and education, business, government, and community organizations worldwide. The academy teaches students to design, build and maintain computers, prepares them for the 21st Century

workplace and is a model for e-learning. GCISD participates in the academy's curriculum, which teaches Internet and technology literacy and specific network skills.

Recommendation 27:

Evaluate the job description for the director of Technology and Operations and prioritize primary functions in conjunction with the technology plan.

By prioritizing the director's functions, items that the director does or does not accomplish can be more easily identified and better evaluated.

Prioritization can provide the director more time to build an objectives-oriented budget, research new technology on the market, and consult with other districts on common problems. There will also be more time to work on the GCISD technology plan, research and write grant requests and work on technology tasks.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Technology and Operations updates and submits a new draft of GCISD's technology plan.	October 2001
2.	The director of Technology and Operations prioritizes the key functions of the position and submits the recommended prioritization to the superintendent for approval.	November 2001
3.	The superintendent reviews and discusses the recommended prioritization with the director, and adjusts priorities and functions as appropriate.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

GCISD's 1999-2002 technology plan is in its last year and it does not reflect the district's latest technology vision. It is not tied to the strategic plan and it is not up-to-date on ongoing initiatives such as the Technology Integration in Education (TIE) and Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grants requested or received. More specifically, the plan does not address the loss of computer labs in the elementary/intermediate school to provide more classroom space, or the possibility of replacing lost technology capabilities with three portable systems (such as

Earthworks/Wireless Network Systems or comparable brands) for use in any classroom.

The district's Technology Task Force consists of district employees from all campuses, as well as parent representatives and student representatives. The task force reviews technology needs, but is not responsible for the technology plan.

Texas requires an up-to-date and accurate technology plan under Texas Education Code, Section 11.252, to guide spending on technology. A properly coordinated plan is a key document in the use of technology. It provides a sound footing for making budget requests and for justifying resource requirements and spending. It is a benchmark for progress on the technology skills essential for students' success in a technology-driven society. Finally, the technology plan is an essential element in stewardship of public resources.

School district technology plans often include:

- A technology assessment maintained to reflect communications and hardware configurations;
- Identification of district software used and planned upgrades (such as Microsoft Windows 2000 upgrades) or strategies to reduce costs, such as a concurrent-user licenses;
- Teacher/staff technology enrichment programs, requirements and support; and
- District goals for technology and computer improvements, such as plans and requirements to reach a specific computer-to-student ratio.

Recommendation 28:

Require the Technology Task Force to update GCISD's technology plan and tie it to the district strategic plan.

The GCISD Technology Task Force should be responsible for revising the technology plan and conducting a quarterly review of the status of projects in the plan. This can help ensure timely project planning and efficient implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Technology Task Force reviews and updates the existing technology plan to reflect the district's technology vision.	September 2001
2.	The Technology Task Force presents the draft technology plan	October

	for review and comment, as appropriate, by staff, teachers, board and parent-teachers association, at a minimum.	2001
3.	The director of Technology and Operations, with the help of the Technology Task Force as needed, finalizes the draft plan based on direction and comments received, and submits it for approval.	December 2001
4.	The Technology Task Force meets to review the status of technology projects and initiatives and adjust plans as necessary.	April 2002
5.	The Technology Task Force meets quarterly thereafter to perform follow-up reviews.	Ongoing quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

GCISD's hardware and software infrastructure does not have sufficient disaster recovery protection on its servers.

The district's five servers are not supported by a Redundant Array of Information Devices (RAID) storage disks to reinforce rapid and reliable recovery in the event of a catastrophic server hard disk failure. The Technology and Operations department's data and file recovery capability is limited to two different types of backup tapes performed at the server site at the high school and redundant backups of critical files by users on zip or floppy disks. Unfortunately, tape backups are successful only 90 to 95 percent of the time in restoring data and files after a disk failure. Several factors affect the tape success rate including tape quality, storage conditions such as temperature, light and humidity, and tape drive head alignment during creation of a backup tape. User backups with zip or floppy disks are time-consuming, infrequent and usually incomplete.

Servers store critical data, files and software for student, teacher and staff use. Many of these files contain historical district performance data, financial records and budgets, e-mail archives and current messages, and student information that would be difficult, if not impossible, to recreate in the event of a catastrophic hardware failure. Four of GCISD's five servers provide significant support that would affect GCISD adversely in a catastrophic hardware failure.

A RAID employs a special controller, which all of GCISD's servers have, and from four to five hard drives per server. During server operation the

RAID controller distributes data across the installed drives and mirrors the data such that the loss of one hard drive in a four-or-more hard drive RAID configuration will cause server failure and the need to reload software and data files. After repair or replacement of the damaged disk, the RAID software automatically rebuilds the hard drive's data from its mirrored records. RAID backup provides a 99 percent recovery rate.

RAID backup does not eliminate the need for daily tape or other media backups, though. For example, a server room fire would probably destroy all hardware in the server room, including the RAID system. After hardware replacement, the remotely-stored tape backups might well be the only recovery source for restoration of district data and files.

While school district technology resources vary, it is an accepted practice to install RAID systems for the servers to assure data recovery in the event of a hard disk failure.

Recommendation 29:

Upgrade four of GCISD's five servers with a hard disk system that supplements tape backups.

Employing a RAID system on its servers will help GCISD avoid a potentially time-consuming or even failed recovery of critical district data and lost staff time due to a disk failure on one of GCISD's servers. Four of GCISD's five servers provide significant information. In the event of a catastrophic hardware failure, a loss of this information would affect GCISD adversely.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Technology and Operations identifies the quantity, size and type of additional RAID hard drives to install on the four servers.	September 2001
2.	The director of Technology and Operations prepares requisitions for RAID hard drives, seeks technology or district discretionary funds and required approvals and initiates purchase.	September 2001
3.	The director of Technology and Operations implements backups to both tape (verify readability) and hard disk using a replication (cloning) software (such as Ghost) before activating the RAIDs.	October 2001
4.	The director of Technology and Operations installs or has a contractor install the additional hard drives and activates RAIDs.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

The maximum estimated fiscal impact would be a one time cost of $3,500, including:

- A maximum of 16 hard drives (20-gigabyte minimum), at a cost of $125 each, for a total of $2,000 ($125 x 16);
- 20 hours of contractor labor at a cost of $75 per hour, for a total of $1,500 (20 hours x $75 per hour).

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Upgrade four of GCISD's five servers with a hard disk system that supplements tape backups.	($3,500)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

The director of Technology and Operations initiates daily tape backups of the district's five servers, but backup tapes may remain in the server room for up to a week before being moved off-site for storage. Storing the latest backup tapes in the server room subjects the tapes to the same risk of fire that the tapes are supposed to counter.

Recovery capability is limited to tape backups performed at the server site at Grape Creek High School and redundant backups of critical files can be created by users on zip or floppy disks. The simultaneous destruction of server hardware, resident data files and backup tapes would leave the district without the latest software and data files needed to restore operations. Using an older, off-site backup tape would mean the loss of up to a week's worth of the district's information, which would have to be researched and entered back into data files.

Wall ISD and San Angelo ISD store their daily backup tapes outside of the immediate server area. This way, a catastrophic fire will not destroy both the servers and the daily backup tapes.

Recommendation 30:

Store backup tapes at an off-site location to ensure the integrity of the disaster recovery process.

GCISD would benefit from establishing a backup tape location away from the high school. However, even a location at the opposite end of the high school would improve the probability of backup tape survival in the event of a server room fire. A server room fire or similar catastrophe would result in the loss of irreplaceable district data.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The director of Technology and Operations develops a daily backup and alternate site storage procedure.	November 2001
2.	The director of Technology and Operations trains staff and implements the backup and alternate site storage procedure.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4
OPERATIONS

C. Transportation

Transportation is a significant investment for Texas school districts, even though state law does not require a district to provide regular student transportation. The Texas Education Code (TEC) provides guidance to districts in providing transportation for students between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations, for co-curricular activities and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that school districts provide transportation to students with disabilities.

The Texas Legislature establishes funding rules for transportation, and TEA administers the funding. Local funds must pay for transportation costs that the state does not cover. TEA reimburses districts according to a formula based on linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily on standard routes to the number of route miles operated daily for those standard routes. TEA uses this ratio to assign each school district to one of seven groups, with each group receiving a different per-mile reimbursement. TEA evaluates group assignments every year. To assign groups and funding for the next biennium, TEA calculates linear density using operations data from the first school year of the previous biennium.

In 1999-2000, GCISD was in the fourth highest linear density group, which entitled the district to reimbursement of 97 cents per mile for regular education route miles. The district's actual cost for regular education transportation was $1.10 per mile in 1999-2000. The Legislature set a maximum rate of $1.08 a mile for reimbursement for special education transportation. This reimbursement rate is higher than GCISD's actual cost of 69 cents per mile for special education transportation in 1999-2000.

Co-curricular transportation takes students to activities that are considered part of the student's required curriculum and usually take place during school hours. Extracurricular transportation takes students to events during and after school and on weekends, mostly athletic events and interscholastic league competition. No state funding is provided for extracurricular transportation.

Each school district is responsible for the capital cost of school buses. Districts may purchase school buses through the Texas General Services Commission under a state contract or use a lease-purchase method.

GCISD's Transportation Department transported an average of 457 students a day between school and home on regular routes, and 18 students a day on special education routes. GCISD has 11 regular school buses and four special education buses. In 1999-2000, GCISD tallied a total of 131,052 miles for regular transportation and 55,978 miles for special education transportation. The district's operating expenditures (net of debt service) were $144,413 for regular transportation and $38,486 for special education transportation.

The TEA School Transportation Operations Reports for 1995-96 through 1999-2000 gives a five-year history of the transportation costs and mileage. These reports are intended to track all costs and mileage related to transportation, including services not funded by the state. **Exhibit 4-11** compares transportation operations costs from 1995-96 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-11
GCISD Regular and Special Program Transportation Operation Costs
1995-96 Through 1999-2000

Item	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change 1995-96 to 1999-2000
Total Operating Costs						
Regular program	$118,986	$110,185	$145,585	$146,486	$144,413	21.4%
Special program	$55,929	$82,289	$61,080	$42,578	$38,486	(31.2%)
Total	**$174,915**	**$192,474**	**$206,665**	**$189,064**	**$182,899**	**4.6%**
Annual Miles						
Regular program	94,096	133,144	88,316	118,001	131,052	39.3%
Special program	43,071	47,176	72,896	58,438	55,978	30.0%
Total Miles	**137,167**	**180,320**	**161,212**	**176,439**	**187,030**	**36.4%**

GCISD's total transportation operating costs increased 4.6 percent, and total miles increased 36.4 percent between the 1995-96 and 1999-2000 school years.

For the regular program, costs increased 21.4 percent and miles increased 39.3 percent. This increase occurred in 1996-97, and was due primarily to the addition of a new high school in the district. Before 1996-97, GCISD high school students attended schools in other districts.

For the special program, costs decreased 31.2 percent and miles increased 30 percent. Annual miles have declined since 1997-98 due to increased participation in the special education cooperative. Wall ISD is the fiscal agent in the cooperative, and in this role incurs and reports special education transportation costs related to the co-op. TEA's Academic Excellence Indicator System reports that 17.4 percent of GCISD students are special needs children, compared to the statewide rate of 12.1 percent.

Exhibit 4-12 shows total budgeted transportation costs by expenditure type for 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-12
GCISD Budgeted Transportation Costs by Type of Expenditure
2000-01

Object	Total Budgeted Expenditure
Salaries and benefits	$138,950
Purchased and contracted services	$22,800
Supplies and materials	$36,000
Other operating expenses	$6,000
Total Operating Expenditures	**$203,750**
Capital outlay	$2,000
Total Expenditures	**$205,750**

Source: GCISD 2000-01 Budget.

Extracurricular miles increased 339 percent from 1995-96 to 1999-2000. The largest increase was 155 percent from 1995-96 to 1996-97.

Extracurricular miles increased 72 percent in the four years between 1996-97 and 1999-2000.

The Grape Creek Transportation director told TSPR the increase is due to a change in University Interscholastic League alignment, requiring long trips to competitions. In 1999-2000, the GCISD extracurricular miles were 24 percent of total odometer miles. This is consistent with peer school districts, as reflected in **Exhibit 4-13**.

Exhibit 4-13
GCISD and Peer Districts Comparison of Extra-Curricular Mileage
1999-2000

District	Extracurricular Miles	Total Odometer Miles	Percent Extracurricular
Shallowater	27,600	81,339	34%
Hutto	30,800	105,353	29%
Grape Creek	**46,942**	**187,030**	**25%**
Celina	16,834	90,630	19%
Troy	28,083	158,230	18%
Peer Average	**25,829**	**108,888**	**24%**

Source: GCISD School Transportation Operations Report, 1999-2000.

Before 2000-01, some students living within two miles of their home schools were provided transportation to and from school. This practice was discontinued at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year because of student population growth exceeding bus fleet capacity.

The district trains drivers to obtain their commercial drivers licenses (CDLs) and sends them to state-required, 20-hour training conducted by Region 15. This certification course includes instruction in each of the 10 units that make up the *Course Guide for School Bus Driver Training in Texas,* developed by Southwest Texas Quality Institute.

GCISD recently contracted with a San Angelo contractor to provide eight additional hours of driver safety training.

FINDING

GCISD does not have a regular bus replacement schedule. There are 15 buses in the school bus fleet. The fleet was 16 buses in 1999-2000, but one

bus was destroyed by fire. GCISD requires 11 buses for routes between home and school. The fleet of 15 buses provides a 36 percent spares ratio, which is the number of buses not required for peak demand divided by the number of buses required for peak demand. **Exhibit 4-14** is an inventory of the GCISD school bus fleet.

Exhibit 4-14
GCISD Mileage Summary
1999-2000

Bus Number	Capacity	Model	Purchase Price	Age of Vehicle	Mileage
6	71	Ford B700 1981	$29,885	20 years	115,645
8	71	Ford B700 1984	$31,315	17 years	153,066
10	65	International 1986	$31,906	15 years	175,412
9	65	International 1986	$31,906	15 years	117,364
18	11	Ford E350 1989	$ 5,500	12 years	93,737
15	71	International 1989	$32,702	12 years	97,063
2	71	International 1992	$37,492	9 years	122,181
16	16	International 1990	$32,013	11 years	170,179
1	16	International w/Lift 1991	$28,492	10 years	172,102
4	71	International 1992	$37,492	9 years	80,395
3	16	GMC 1992	$25,080	9 years	220,224
5	78	Bluebird 1996	$62,712	5 years	54,257
7	78	Bluebird 1996	$62,712	5 years	51,349
17	78	Bluebird 1999	$58,155	2 years	16,339
12	78	Bluebird 1999	$58,155	2 years	21,236

Source: GCISD Vehicle Inventory Report.

Exhibit 4-15 lists the GCISD school bus fleet by year of purchase. The average age of a school bus in the GCISD fleet is 10.2 years.

Exhibit 4-15
GCISD Fleet Age
As of March 2001

Year	Number of Buses
1981	1
1984	1
1986	2
1989	2
1990	1
1991	1
1992	3
1996	2
1999	2
Average Age	10.2 years

Source: GCISD Inventory Report. The industry accepted life of a school bus is 200,000 miles of service. If a school district operates each school bus on average 20,000 miles per year, the typical service life is 10 years. In 1999-2000, GCISD operated a total of 131,000 regular program odometer miles. The fleet of 11 regular program buses average almost 11,900 miles per bus. GCISD also operated 56,000 special program odometer miles in 1999-2000. The fleet of four special program buses averaged 14,000 miles per bus. The average number of miles per school bus in the GCISD fleet was 12,500 miles.

Many factors other than age and miles can affect the useful life of a school bus. Not all buses operate the same number of miles each year. Some types of service (routes with many stops and many daily student riders) may cause more wear and tear on a bus. GCISD does not have an aggressive preventive maintenance program, so buses are not expected to provide a longer service life. The cost of maintenance per vehicle can also be monitored to determine when a vehicle should be replaced to save operating costs.

If the industry accepted life of a school bus is 200,000 miles of service and GCISD buses operate 11,900 to 14, 000 miles per year, then it would take the average bus 14 to 17 years to operate 200,000 miles.

Districts often use a fleet procurement plan to replace a specified number of buses every year. Such a plan is based upon several criteria including age, miles and cost, and provide several advantages. For example, if a new bus is introduced

into the fleet each year, then annually, the bus with the highest cost of maintenance can be replaced. Regular purchase of buses requires a smaller annual budget allocation rather than a large capital requirement every few years. A procurement contract often includes a multi-year purchase of buses.

Recommendation 32:

Adopt a fleet procurement plan to replace one bus annually based on miles operated, years of service and cost of maintenance.

A 15-year replacement plan is appropriate for GCISD. This represents one bus replacement per year. The bus to be replaced each year should be determined based on years of service, total miles operated and the cost of maintenance. Some buses may be retired in 14 years, while other buses may be kept in active service up to 17 years.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and Transportation director develop a fleet procurement plan to be approved by the board. September 2001
2.	The board approves the plan and the Transportation director implements the plan. October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4
OPERATIONS

D. Food Services

School food services are responsible for providing students and staff an appealing and nutritious breakfast and lunch at a reasonable cost in a safe, clean and accessible environment. They must carry out these responsibilities in compliance with federal and state regulations and local board policy.

Several factors are routinely used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of school food services including meals per labor hour (MPLH), food costs, breakfast and lunch participation rates, and student and staff surveys.

GCISD food services are organized under the Food Services Department. The director of Food Services reports to the director of Business and Finance. Food Services operates two cafeterias, one at the elementary/intermediate school and one at the high school. The elementary school cafeteria employs six full-time staff and the high school cafeteria employs five, including the cafeteria manager. **Exhibit 4-16** shows the organization of GCISD Food Services.

Exhibit 4-16
GCISD Food Services Department
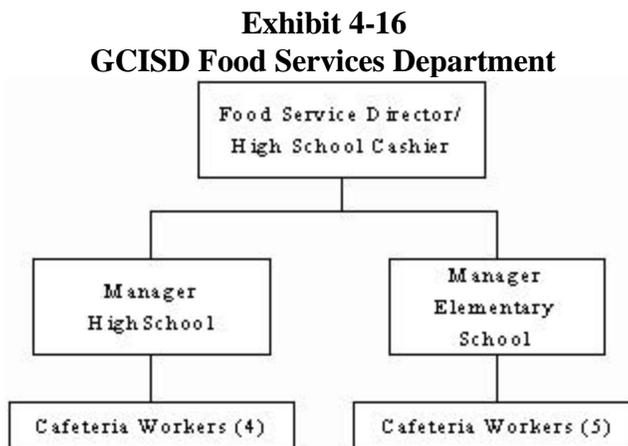
2000-01 *Source: GCISD Food Services director, April 2001.*

GCISD participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The NSLP and SBP are the primary school nutrition programs sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). They offer free and reduced-price meals to eligible populations based on family incomes in relation to the federal poverty level. Participating districts are reimbursed for every free and reduced-

price meal served. **Exhibit 4-17** summarizes the reimbursement rates for 2000-01. School districts are responsible for identifying eligible families and informing them about the programs.

Exhibit 4-17
Reimbursement Rates
2000-01

Reimbursement Rates
Reimbursable Lunches: • Full price: $0.19 • Reduced-price: $1.62 • Free: $2.02
Reimbursable Breakfasts: • Full price: $0.21 • Reduced-price: $0.82 • Free: $1.12
Breakfast-Severe Needs Schools: • Reduced-price: $0.21 • Free: $0.21
Reduced-Price Meals (Maximum Allowable): • Lunch: $1.62 • Breakfast: $0.82

Source: TEA School Food Services Department, 2000-01.

Exhibit 4-18 shows the amounts GCISD charges for lunch and breakfast prepared at the schools.

Exhibit 4-18
GCISD Food Services Department
School Lunch and Breakfast Price Schedule

	Full Price	Reduced-Price
Lunch		
Adults	$2.00	N/A
Pre-K through grade 5	$1.25	$0.40
Grade 6 through grade 12	$1.50	$0.40
Breakfast		
Adults	$0.50	N/A
Pre-K through grade 5	$0.50	$0.30
Grade 6 through grade 12	$0.50	$0.30

Source: GCISD Food Services Department.

Exhibit 4-19 compares GCISD student lunch participation rates to expected rates. GCISD exceeds the expected participation in both cafeterias. One reason is the district's closed-campus policy, which limits competition from local food vendors.

Exhibit 4-19
Expected and Actual GCISD Lunch Participation Rates
By Grade Level

Grade Level	Expected Participation Rate	GCISD Participation Rate	Percent Difference: Expected vs. Actual GCISD
Elementary/intermediate school	65%	76%	11%
High schools	50%	65%	15%

Source: Pannell, School Food Services Management, 4th Edition and GCISD Food Services Department.

Student participation in the National School Lunch Program is shown in **Exhibit 4-20.** This program is also frequently called the free and reduced-price lunch program.

Exhibit 4-20
Participation by School Type in Free and Reduced-Price Lunch
Programs
October 2000

	Eligible	Participation	Percent Participation
Elementary/intermediate school	459	373	81.3%
High school	94	71	75.5%
District	**553**	**444**	**80.3%**

Source: GCISD Food Services Department, October 2000.

Students receive GCISD's free and reduced-price anonymously. Eligibility is determined through distribution of forms through students to parents. Notes sent to parents via students, fliers and public announcements notify parents the forms are being distributed, and forms are also available from the Food Services Department. On the form, parents must attest that the family is eligible for the program and provide estimated annual family income, family size and ages of children in the household.

The Food Service director compares data on the completed forms to the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Programs Income Eligibility Guidelines and enters the data for eligible students into the School Nutrition Accounts Program System (SNAPS). SNAPS identifies students who receive free and reduced-price meals via magnetic swipe cards issued to students. The food service director or director's secretary swipes students' cards as they pass through the cafeteria line, and software confidentially recognizes students who can receive a free or reduced-price meal, records the meal, and provides a summary of all meals served by price paid: full price, reduced-price and free.

FINDING

The cafeteria for the elementary/intermediate school is too small to accommodate the student population. Some students carry trays back to the classrooms to eat. They consider this a privilege and enjoy eating in the classrooms with their classmates. Since students are served on the same disposable trays used in the cafeterias, sanitation is not a problem.

Eating outside the cafeteria is not an option due to the lack of covered seating and protection from the weather.

COMMENDATION

The district has devised an innovative solution to overcrowding by allowing students to eat in their classrooms.

FINDING

GCISD does not actively encourage parents to complete eligibility forms for free and reduced-price meals. Advertising and incentive award programs are not used and the principals do not play an active role in the identification of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Identifying those students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches and breakfasts through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program is a tedious and time-consuming process. Some parents are reluctant to fill out the necessary forms. With some parents it is a matter of pride; with others it is a matter of literacy. Some students are hesitant to participate in the program, especially at the secondary levels, because it is not "cool" to be identified as poor. Principals are often so overloaded with paperwork of all kinds, it is sometimes difficult to find time to pay much attention to these forms.

What many school district officials forget, however, is that federal Compensatory and Title I funding flows to a school district based on their number of economically disadvantaged students. And, economically disadvantaged is defined as students identified as eligible for free or reduced-price meals. These funds are funneled to districts so that they can provide additional services to students at risk of dropping out of school. While not all economically disadvantaged students are considered at risk, the number of economically disadvantaged students closely tracks the number of at-risk students. The federal government therefore, uses this figure as its criteria.

In most Texas school districts, the district receives about $500 - $700 per child, per year, in Compensatory and Title I money for every child identified for free and reduced-price meals. In 2000-01, GCISD's 46.7 percent of economically disadvantaged students provides $604 in Compensatory and Title I federal funds per student eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

While every school business official knows this relationship exists, few are aggressively involved in assisting the food service staff and schools to streamline the process, educate the parents and students to the benefits of the program, or launch campaigns to encourage participation.

A separate form must be completed for each child in the program. Some school districts using a single family application have reduced the amount of labor and paper handled during the process. Other districts have also increased identification through the convenience of one application form per family.

Some of the most successful programs use the following techniques:

Family identification - If a parent fills out a form for one child, all of the siblings in the same household are automatically qualified;

Direct certification - Some districts do not require families to complete an application for the federal free and reduced-price meal programs if they are pre-certified as eligible by the Texas Department of Human Services through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program;

Incentive awards - Giving prizes to students and parents for completing an eligibility application. Houston ISD placed all of the applicants' names in a hat, and drew for prizes, with the top prize a television. Some of the prizes were donated by local businesses, and some were purchased from the food services budget;

Advertising campaigns - Billboards, posters, and flyers extol the virtue of the free and reduced-price meal program, and encourage participation;

Campus-based at-risk budgeting - Principals are encouraged to aggressively qualify eligible students because funds for at-risk programs in their campus budget depend on the number of identified students. In the Texarkana ISD, for example, principals are motivated to identify every eligible child for the program because their campus' Compensatory and Title I budget is linked directly to the number of children identified in the program; and

Parental assistance - Providing all parents a user-friendly form and campus-based assistance to complete the forms. This approach can be critical for non-English speaking or illiterate parents. The El Paso ISD provides applications in both English and Spanish. Other districts have staff available during registration and the first days of school to help parents read and complete paperwork.

Recommendation 33:

Aggressively seek to identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Using family application forms would allow a family to complete one application for all their children enrolled in GCISD and can help to increase the number of students identified for free or reduced-price meals, increasing the federal funds received by the district. The family application would reduce handling, the possibility of errors due to multiple processing and labor time involved.

Parents should be provided with campus-based assistance for completing the forms. This will include sufficient staffing during registration and the first day of school to help parents read and complete paperwork to reduce errors that could hinder the approval process.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, director of Business and Finance and the director of Food Services meet to discuss ways to aggressively increase the identification of students for free and reduced-price meals.	September 2001
2.	The superintendent, director of Business and Finance and the director of Food Services discuss the possibility of using an advertising campaign or prize incentives to increase certification of students for free and reduced-price meals.	September 2001
3.	The director of Business and Finance and the director of Food Services design a family application form that can be scanned into a computer.	October 2001
4.	The director of Food Services implements the use of the family application forms.	January 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

In 2000-01, GCISD's enrollment was 1,151 students. If 2 percent, or 23 students (1,151 students X .02) were identified as eligible through aggressive follow up and streamlined certification processes, the district would receive $13,892 in additional Compensatory and Title I funding based on $604 per student (23 students x $604 = $13,892).

Because compensatory education enrollment is based on the prior-year six-month average of eligible students, new eligible students would not entitle the district to additional compensatory funds on those students until 2002-03.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Aggressively seek to identify all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.	$0	$13,892	$13,892	$13,892	$13,892

FINDING

Only 20 percent of GCISD students eat breakfast on campus. **Exhibit 4-21**provides breakfast participation rates for the district.

Exhibit 4-21
GCISD Breakfast Participation Rates By School
October 2000

Grade Level	Average Daily Attendance	Participation	Participation Rate
Elementary/intermediate school	831	178	21.4%
High school	306	50	16.3%
District	**1,137**	**228**	**20.1%**

Source: GCISD Food Services Department, October 2000.

Several studies prove breakfast is good for students. One of the most quoted is a 1998 study by Tufts University School of Nutrition Science researchers. It showed that children who participated in the National School Breakfast Program performed better on standardized tests, and attended school and arrived on time more often than children who did not participate. Also, studies by the Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the state of Minnesota found that children who ate breakfast performed better academically and socially.

Even some districts that do not provide a daily breakfast program make a point to provide breakfast to all students on days when they take the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test.

Several districts offer breakfast programs. Aldine ISD has an innovative program at two high schools where students pick up breakfast bags after the first period and eat breakfast during the first few minutes of the next period, which are reserved for announcements and administrative tasks. Mount Pleasant ISD, a district with more than 4,000 students, offers a

second-breakfast program during the activity period, which added $1,371 a month during the first year of the program.

Recommendation 34:

Develop strategies to increase breakfast participation at both campuses.

GCISD could provide elementary school students with breakfast during the first half-hour of the day which is usually used for administrative tasks by teachers, or during the second period, as at Aldine ISD. Secondary students may be best served through a "grab and go" type program where sack meals are available in kiosks or in home room.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director works with principals and administrators to determine the best method for increasing breakfast participation.	September 2001
2.	The Food Service director prepares and distributes menus and notices to parents and students about the new breakfast programs.	October 2001
3.	The principals announce the breakfast programs to all students and encourage participation.	October 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

Overall breakfast participation is estimated to increase by at least 10 percent from its average daily participation of 228, or 22 additional breakfast meals (228 x .10). Assuming that 46.7 percent of the additional students participating in the breakfast program would be eligible for free or reduced-price breakfasts, 12 students would pay full price ($.50) and 10 students would pay the reduced-price ($.30). This would generate $1,611 annually from direct student payment: $1,074 from students paying full price (12 students x $.50 x 179 days) plus $537 from students paying the reduced-price (10 students x $.30 x 179 days).

Additional federal funds would be provided to the district based on the breakfast reimbursement rates shown in **Exhibit 4-17**. This fiscal impact again assumes that 12 students would pay the full price and 10 students would be eligible for free or reduced-prices. The federal reimbursement rate for full-price breakfasts is $.21 per meal and $.82 for reduced-priced breakfasts. The total additional annual revenue would be $1,919: $451 for the full price reimbursements (12 students x $.21 x 179 days) plus $1,468 for the reduced-price reimbursements (10 students x $.82 x 179 days).

Total additional revenue would be $3,530 ($1,611 + $1,919). Additional costs would be approximately 40 percent of sales based on district food cost analysis, or $644 ($1,611 x .40).

Annual net revenue would be $2,886 ($3,530 - $644 = $2,886).

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Develop strategies to increase breakfast participation at both campuses.	$2,886	$2,886	$2,886	$2,886	$2,886

FINDING

Excessive labor costs have caused the GCISD Food Services to operate at a deficit, as shown in **Exhibit 4-22.** GCISD must use local funds to support Food Services operations.

Exhibit 4-22
Food Services Revenue and Expenditures
1997-1998 Through 1999-2000

Revenues	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Category			
Revenues			
Local revenue	$123,142	$116,651	$110,248
State matching	5,200	5,000	4,800
Federal revenue	176,541	180,209	185,351
Total Revenues	**$304,883**	**$301,860**	**$300,399**
Expenditures			
Payroll	$120,593	$121,163	$121,878
Purchased and contracted services	5,797	4,988	4,003
Supplies and materials	198,466	199,549	200,317
Other operating expenses	1,971	691	319
Capital outlay	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	**$326,827**	**$326,391**	**$326,517**
Profit/(Loss)	**($21,944)**	**($24,531)**	**($26,118)**

An analysis of meals per labor hour (MPLH) identified excessive labor costs. MPLH is a standard performance measure for food services in schools, hospitals, restaurants and similar operations. MPLH is the number of meal equivalents served in a given period of time divided by the total hours worked during that period. Meal equivalents are lunches plus an equivalent number of breakfasts and a la carte sales. GCISD uses the following conversion rates for meal equivalents.

- A la carte Elementary school $1.35 in sales = one meal equivalent
- A la carte High school $1.55 in sales = one meal equivalent
- A la carte Adult $1.90 in sales = one meal equivalent
- Breakfast All locations Two breakfasts = one meal equivalent

TEA does not set standards for meal equivalents for school districts or pre-approve meal equivalent rates. School districts set their own meal equivalent rates. The average daily meal equivalents served by GCISD Food Services is 1,017, as shown in **Exhibit 4-23**.

Exhibit 4-23
GCISD Average Daily Meal Equivalents
2000-01

Meal Equivalents (Breakfast)	Meal Equivalents (A la Carte)	Meal Equivalents (Lunch)	Total Meal Equivalents
211	150	656	1,017

Source: GCISD Food Services director, April 2001.

Exhibit 4-24 shows the cafeteria workers that perform Food Services operations at the campus level.

Exhibit 4-24
GCISD Cafeteria Staffing
2000-01

Position	Hours per Day
High School	
Food services director	8.0
Manager/main line server	8.0

Snack bar manager	6.5
Snack bar prep/server	7.5
Bread cook/cashier	7.0
Meat cook/server	7.0
Total High School	**44.0**
Elementary/Intermediate School	
Manager/server	8.0
Secretary/elementary cashier	7.0
Meat cook/server	7.5
Vegetable cook/server	7.5
Bread/dessert cook/server	7.5
Dishwasher	7.5
Total Elementary/Intermediate School	**45.0**
Total District	**89.0**

Source: GCISD Food Services director, April 2001.

TSPR used the guidelines in **Exhibit 4-25** to evaluate GCISD's staffing structure. The conventional system includes preparing food from raw vegetables on the premises, using some bakery bread and prepared pizza and washing dishes. The convenience system uses the maximum amount of processed food and disposable items. GCISD employees use the convenience system.

Exhibit 4-25
Recommended Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)
December 2000

Number of Meal Equivalents	Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)	
	Conventional System	Convenience System
	Low/High	Low/High
Up to 100	8/10	10/12
101-150	9/11	11/13
151-200	10-11/12	12/14
201-300	13/15	15/16

301-400	14/16	16/18
401-500	14/17	18/19
501-600	15/17	18/19
601-700	16/18	19/20
701-800	17/19	20/22
801-900	18/20	21/23
901+	19/21	22/23

Source: School Foodservice Management for 21st Century, 5th Edition, Dorothy Pannell-Martin

If the MPLH rate is higher than the recommended rate shown in the exhibit, either the number of meals served is low or the number of hours worked is high. The number of hours worked is a function of two variables: the number of staff employed and the hours per worker. Both variables are controllable.

With 89 hours worked per day, GCISD Food Services is staffed to serve a much higher number of meal equivalents than the 1,017 it averages per day, as shown in **Exhibit 4-26**.

Exhibit 4-26
GCISD Meals Per Labor Hour
December 2000

School	Total Meals Served	Total Hours Worked	MPLH	Industry Standard MPLH	MPLH Variance +/(-)
High school	3,485	616	5.65	14	(8.35)
Elementary/intermediate school	10,855	630	17.23	18	(0.77)
Total All Schools	**14,340**	**1,246**	**11.51**	**N/A**	**(9.12)**

Source: GCISD Food Services director, April 2001; Dorothy V. Pannell, Controlling Costs in the Food Services Industry.

The district does not monitor its MPLH. To do so, it could use standards recommended by numerous experts, led by Dorothy Pannell-Martin in

School Food Services Management, 5[th] edition, and including *Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence* and *Food Services Management by Checklist: A Handbook of Control Techniques*.

To achieve a MPLH within accepted standards, a school food services operation might have to reduce the number of staff or the hours worked per employee. **Exhibit 4-27** shows the number of hours worked at each school compared to industry-recommended hours for the midpoint between the "low" and "high" ranking of the conventional system of 14 MPLH for the high school cafeteria and 18 MPLH for the elementary/intermediate school cafeteria. As the exhibit shows, the district employs four excess FTEs for the number of meals served.

Exhibit 4-27
GCISD MPLH Comparison
December 2000

School	Meals Served Daily	Hours Worked Daily	Allowable Hours at Standard MPLH	Hours Above (Below) Standard	Equivalent FTEs @ 7 Hours
High school	249	44	18	26	4
Elementary/intermediate school	775	45	43	2	0
Total	**1,024**	**89**	**61**	**28**	**4**

Source: GCISD Food Services director, April 2001; Dorothy V. Pannell, Controlling Costs in the Food Services Industry.

Recommendation 35:

Increase employee productivity and reduce associated payroll costs.

To do this, Food Services can:

- Establish employee productivity standards for each cafeteria to achieve 14 meals per labor hour.
- Replace full-time food services positions with part-time positions where feasible.
- Expand the use of prepared items versus scratch cooking.
- Implement a hiring freeze and also rely on natural attrition to achieve the recommended staffing level.

- Provide more self-serve options for high school students.

GCISD should be able to prepare 1,024 meals with 61 labor hours. This would save the district 28 hours per day. MPLH should be monitored annually to determine the staffing levels required at each cafeteria.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director monitors the MPLH at each school and compares this to recommended rates.	October 2001
2.	The Food Service director establishes a staffing plan for each school based on the MPLH.	October 2001
3.	Through attrition, transfers, or hiring, the Food Services director establishes the required staffing pattern to serve the necessary meal equivalents.	November 2001 - May 2002
4.	The Food Service director monitors the MPLH monthly to ensure adequate, but not excessive staffing.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated savings from staffing reductions is based on the comparison of GCISD's MPLH with the most conservative "low" ranking of the conventional system, shown in **Exhibit 4-25**. The actual savings achieved could be greater once the district develops its own MPLH.

Reducing staff to industry-recommended standards would reduce labor costs by $27,817 for salaries ($5.55 per hour x 7 hours per day x 179 days x 4 employees). Employee benefits would be $9,672, which includes unemployment of $26 ($27,817 salaries x .00093) and workers compensation of $9,646 ($2,411.40 per employee x 4 employees).

The total annual savings would be $37,489 ($27,817 salaries + $9,672 benefits). The first year savings are estimated at one-half of the annual savings while the district transitions to the appropriate staffing levels ($37,489 / 2 = $18,745.)

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Increase employee productivity and reduce associated payroll costs.	$18,745	$37,489	$37,489	$37,489	$37,489

FINDING

The district does not have an equipment replacement plan.

Most of the equipment in the elementary/intermediate school cafeteria is more than 20 years old. Though usable, the equipment is inefficient and increases production time for cafeteria workers. The district cannot afford to replace all of the old and inefficient equipment.

Newer, more efficient equipment would increase productivity, reduce operating costs and enable cafeterias to prepare menu items that present equipment does not accommodate. For example, ranges with only surface heat cannot be used for baking, and small mixers increase the hours needed to prepare large quantities.

Recommendation 36:

Establish an equipment replacement plan based on priority.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director and the director of Business and Finance coordinate to identify food preparation equipment that is most critical to the efficiency of Food Services operations and is in need of repair and replacement.	October 2001
2.	The Food Service director and the director of Business and Finance estimate costs to replace or repair equipment and present it to the superintendent as part of the annual budgeting process.	March 2002
3.	The superintendent and director of Business and Finance consider the overall needs of the district and prepare a capital outlay budget priority list including the Food Services equipment.	April 2002
4.	Food Services equipment is repaired or replaced, as funds are available.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

Understanding the district's fiscal constraints, the food services budget should reflect at least a minimal contribution each year for the repair and replacement of aging equipment. An amount of $2,000 annually is estimated to begin the process. As the food service fund becomes self sufficient, this amount should be increased according to the available fund balance in the food service account.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Establish an equipment replacement plan based on priority.	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)

FINDING

GCISD does not survey students, parents or faculty routinely about food quality, quantity, prices, or other food services operations issues.

TSPR conducted community meetings in GCISD and received negative comments about Food Services. As shown in **Exhibit 4-28**, in a TSPR survey of students, teachers and parents about Food Services operations, respondents said the food does not look or taste good, students do not have enough time to eat, and they wait in line longer than 10 minutes.

Exhibit 4-28
Food Services Survey Results
March 2001

Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.			
Teachers	20.8%	24.5%	54.7%
Parents	22.3%	20.6%	57.1%
Students	6.1%	34.7%	59.2%
Students have enough time to eat			
Parents	38.9%	8.7%	52.4%
Students	24.4%	2.0%	73.6%
Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes			
Teachers	56.6%	15.1%	28.3%
Parents	47.7%	32.5%	19.8%
Students	24.5%	8.2%	67.3%

Source: TSPR Surveys, March 2001.

Recommendation 37:

Conduct surveys of students, parents and faculty about food quality, quantity, price, variety, nutrition and other areas of food operations and implement corrective action where needed.

Food Services staff could have students, parents and faculty conduct taste tests to provide feedback on the menu. Schools could place comment boxes in each cafeteria. Also, schools could give students and faculty short questionnaires to take home or to class.

Based on survey results and suggestions, GCISD's Food Service director and cafeteria managers should develop and implement corrective action and do follow-up surveys to learn whether actions taken were appropriate and adequate.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Service director prepares a short survey for students, parents and faculty.	November 2001
2.	The Food Service director distributes the survey to students at the first class period and gives it to parents and faculty via the district mail system.	November 2001
3.	The Food Service director and the cafeteria managers compile the surveys to determine changes needed or wanted in food quality, quantity, variety, and price.	December 2001
4.	The Food Service department makes adjustments that are feasible and affordable and solicits feedback from students, parents and faculty.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district does not formally recognize cafeteria workers who obtain certification from the Texas School Food Services Association certification program. Cafeteria workers can take courses to obtain certification at the following levels:

- Level 1 Apprentice
- Level 2 Technician
- Level 3 Specialist

- Level 4 Manager
- Level 5 Supervisor
- Level 6 Coordinator
- Level 7 Administrator

Cafeteria staff are encouraged to obtain and advance in their levels of certification, but the district does not reward the staff who obtain certification, which requires considerable time and effort from the Food Services worker and benefits the district by providing operations efficiency, cross-training and better food.

San Angelo ISD provides the following incentive pay scale for food services workers who obtain the advanced certifications listed above. Certification pay is distributed to employees who provide a copy of their certificate to the Food Services office. Payments are distributed once per semester.

Level 1 $ 50
Level 2 $100
Level 3 $150
Level 4 $200
Level 5 and above $250

Recommendation 38:

Develop and implement a plan to recognize cafeteria staff who obtain certification.

The recognition plan should include monetary stipends upon completion of classes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Food Services director, cafeteria managers and the Human Resources department develop incentives to recognize cafeteria staff who obtain certification.	November 2001
2.	The Food Services director implements the incentives.	December 2001

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is dependent upon the number of cafeteria staff that complete certification programs annually. The estimated annual cost for providing a $100 stipend to one-half of the 12 cafeteria workers would be $600.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Develop and implement a plan to recognize cafeteria staff who obtain certification.	($600)	($600)	($600)	($600)	($600)

FINDING

Individual cafeteria managers are not provided with profit-and-loss statements and do not know whether their cafeterias are profitable. They are not held accountable for the financial operations of Food Services at their schools.

Dorothy Pannell-Martin, in *Controlling Costs in the Food Services Industry, 1998*, recommends five financial and operating reports to distribute to cafeteria managers so they can monitor and evaluate operations and take corrective action needed:

1. Budget: spells out management's ideals, goals and objectives in financial terms.
2. Profit-and-loss statement: accumulative report that shows how the operation has been doing financially over a period of time.
3. Balance sheet: provides a snapshot of how the operation is doing at a specific time, tells what the operation is worth and describes its assets (facilities and equipment).
4. Cash flow statement: shows the cash inflow and outflow for a period of time.
5. Performance ratios and trends, including:
6. Food cost as percentage of sales
7. Labor cost as percentage of sales
8. Break-even point
9. Inventory turnover
10. Participation rates
11. Average daily labor costs
12. Average daily food costs.

The key to profitability in food services is to control costs. Managers need to know what the costs are, what they should be and how to keep them low.

Recommendation 39:

Compile and distribute accurate, detailed and useful school-specific financial and performance reports to cafeteria managers on a quarterly basis.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	he Food Services director meets with the director of Business and Finance to develop detailed budgets and financial reports for each school.	November 2001
2.	The Food Services director and the director of Business and Finance meet with cafeteria managers to explain the budget reports that will be provided and solicit feedback about other useful managerial reports.	December 2001
3.	The Food Services director and cafeteria managers hold quarterly meetings to review performance, discuss corrective actions needed and share best practices.	Quarterly

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Appendix A
PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS

As part of the review process, the review team held a public forum to obtain input. During a public forum, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members participated by writing personal comments about the major topics of review; and in some cases, talking in person to review team members.

The comments below illustrate community perceptions of GCISD and do not reflect the findings and opinions of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team. The following contains comments received by focus area.

PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS (PART 1)

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- I have lived in the district for 24 years and had children in the school systems on and off for 16 of those 23 years - beginning in 1977 and still have children that will be in the school system for another 7 years. I have seen the district go though several ups and downs during this time. We have always felt our children receive a quality education and if given the choice would not want them to go any place else.
- We have had major (positive) changes in organization. The Master Teachers have been a wonderful asset to everyone (esp. middle school). The superintendent is seen often on the campuses and stays involved with our day-to-day object: Teaching. He goes to the SA State Park (every trip) and H.E.B. camp. He puts in a tremendous effort to run and manage our district.
- I believe that the business office is very efficient & does a great job.
- We have the most caring, supportive School Board. Our teachers are very comfortable visiting with them on any issue necessary. They always have our students' needs first in every decision they make. Our superintendent is a "go-getter" and supports his staff. He is a true leader for the district. Our principals are fantastic campus leaders who have the students and staff at heart. This is a wonderful district to be involved in.
- Very well organized. We have a site-based member at each grade level that we contact if we need something. It is then taken to the campus site based - district site based school board. Very well organized & managed.
- Very impressive & detailed org. chart & line of authority.

- All ok
- I don't believe you could find a superintendent who loves kids more than him. We have a <u>working</u> site-based.
- One of the "finest" school boards I have ever been involved in. I believe every member on our board has a true concern for our children!
- District seems to be well organized & I believe we now have much better management & admin. Our school board is great & our superintendent is the best.
- District Leadership Committee provides an invaluable communication between all departments and the administration. Site-based decision-making committees, Technology Task Force, School Health advisory Council and Leadership Committees provide many opportunities for community, business and staff input. Staff, as a whole, is not comfortable approaching the administration with problems, suggestions or complaints.
- Mr. Ickles (superintendent). Very active in the district. He constantly strives to improve the school district. He plays by the rules.
- Feel some site-based decisions should be school board decisions.
- This seems pretty organized. Sometimes, I feel the superintendent doesn't listen to what people want & does what he wants.
- District on right track in organizing district.
- I have no problems with this.
- Administration has no clue as to daily functions of schools - micromanagement misses overall goal.
- Very happy with the superintendent, principals, & administrative personnel. Strategic planning & board goals are used for decisions - this will help the district in the long run.
- I am satisfied with district management for the most part. When attending board meetings, I am disappointed in the amount of information for the general public.
- Our district office does a wonderful job keeping faculty informed of critical information.
- I feel that before we had this new superintendent, Mr. Ickles, the district was not very well organized & managed. Since his arrival, the district has been very well organized & managed. I think there are still problems with finance, but improvements are being made. I feel that the administration is doing its best.
- The district seems to be organized. There are many places for the community members to participate. Some require the public to come to the school to see what is available. Mr. Ickles is always open to hearing from the community & is usually able to answer any questions or address concerns brought to him.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- Teachers in GCISD really care about our students and put in a tremendous group effort to teach and train. TAAS performance has been extremely high (90%-100%) in recent years. Curriculum is being aligned vertically and horizontally.
- District's Special Education Inclusion program is second to none. Our children receive more one-to-one and small group instruction than anywhere else - and stay in the classroom. I feel it's the teachers & how they work together that makes the difference; but, in any case, our children are successful and seem to need less help as they get older.
- Regular Ed Teachers at the middle school work extremely well with Special Ed students in the classroom.
- Additional AP classes. Gifted exceptional programs (suitable instructions).
- Foreign language classes offered - TX scholar equals 3 yrs. Language. French is not offered 2000-01 year - maybe not for 2001-02 year. How do kids expect diploma for scholars & not the opportunity for class scheduling? Class scheduling is a real problem. Correcting schedules takes weeks.
- TAAS preparation for 5 months then examination. My child hates to write now. Never had this trouble before & now writes in journal and practices for TAAS, etc. Burn out for students.
- Excellent TAAS scores. Strong special programs. Curriculum online - nice for staff.
- Our district has fabulous group of staff that know what to teach and how to reach each student. They are well educated and well informed of the new trends in education. They are willing to learn and are very flexible with the curriculum.
- Great education service. This is our trial year for our curriculum. It will be wisely used and adjusted as necessary across grade levels. Services for special ed. & G/T are provided and done well.
- I have a concern for our I.S.S. program. It is in a totally separate building from the school without any connection by intercom or teachers coming and going to the school. It bothers me that one or two students and a teacher are so totally alone together in a tiny room in a large building. For safety reasons and for many issues that could make this a dangerous situation. Also I feel there is a better way to do I.S.S. The students also get lunches cold and sitting around waiting for time to eat - food is delivered, but they are not allowed to eat until allotted time. Salmonella comes to mind. My solution=an I.S.S. room inside the school area - room with access to other teachers if needed - a better program for the kids to do while in I.S.S. Why did they get into trouble - a counselor in room to talk or the kids first sent to counselor. If this is not possible at least get the kids back in the school area. Is this program working now?

- Sub-teachers need assistance for the first 10 or 15 minutes of a class from someone who is familiar with the kids and how they "should" behave in class - especially older kids 10 or up. Investment into a video camera to show teachers and parents how the kids (especially the over active ones) act in a classroom with a sub-teacher or even a regular teacher.
- Inclusion program is well handled in middle school. <u>Resource classes</u> help with students who would not "survive" in regular math/LA classes.
- Title IV during football! What is opposite football for female?
- All ok. We could always use a better GT program.
- I'm very proud of our staff. They do great things with our children with small amounts of money. They care what happens to our children.
- We have always been known for the excellent job our school does with Special ed. We have even had people move into our district for that purpose.
- It appears that, even with the past and present problems the school district has faced, the students' scores are high, which indicates that the campus leaders and faculty are doing an admirable job. The school has some wonderful students and it is with great pride that I read about their successes.
- I would like to see more consistent grading practices, i.e., in each class daily work counts the same, tests the same etc.
- Very strong teaching methods, especially at the elementary, with attention paid to those in special need of extra help. Inclusion program . . . it works! Check the TAAS scores! Character Education Program at the elementary sets a basis for students before they get to the secondary level. Lack of proper counseling at the high school level both for students with problems and for students seeking career or work options. The gifted and talented program at the MS and HS levels is lacking. Those seeking to go directly into the workforce upon graduation are not adequately prepared to do so. There should be more vocational courses made available to these students. Academically gifted students are not challenged, especially in technology. They become bored and begin exhibiting behavior problems.
- More attention has been taken towards Special Ed. I would like to see more time & ideas stressed towards the gifted & talented.
- TAAS scores are outstanding. Teachers & students work well together to achieve academic goals.
- They have been good to place students who are at the head of their class in advanced classes. They know when a student has the ability to do more and excel in their class and put that student in a class that challenges that student.
- Education curriculum, TAAS, etc. . . . is good.

- I believe educational service delivery is good, there are always areas of improvement, but I believe our administration does try to stay on top.
- This is good for such a small school. We seem to do well in TAAS & it just seems to get better.
- New curriculum, TAAS performance great. Need work on GT.
- I do feel we do an exceptionally good job on this.
- Qualifications for coaches teaching of academic subjects? Not experienced esp. TX history/American history. Gifted program basically non-existent. Not fulfilling needs of children - M.S. & H.S.
- I believe curriculum matches or exceeds that of same size & demographically proportioned student bodies. Our TAAS scores are very good again compared to like school districts. I believe there could be some minor improvement in above level programs. I have a child with a hidden disability and feel the teachers need training in this area. When they hear things such as ADD or ADHD, etc. they automatically assume the child cannot learn or will be a discipline problem. I think this could be corrected with required training in this area, not optional training.
- I am satisfied.
- Middle school has a wonderful caring staff and do the best they can with what they have.
- Inclusion concept for special ed. students has given all students the opportunity to be more successful and retain a high self-esteem. Gifted and talented program needs to continue to improve - it is better than last year but needs more content.
- My feelings are that they are providing as many education resources as they can with the limited financial resources they have. I know it is lacking but I am content with it.
- Curriculum on the elementary level is good - strong GT program, large spec. ed. program. I do feel TAAS is too stressed & taught. It keeps the teachers restricted for fear of low performance on TAAS. Some other method of evaluation is desperately needed! Curriculum in middle school is about the same as elementary. Dyslexia is addressed a little in elementary & not at all in middle school. If a parent is not aware or know what dyslexia is the school will probably not do much. If the parent doesn't push for modifications, etc. they won't be done or offered.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- We do have parents at the school but that could always be more. The San Angelo State Park visits the 8[th] graders is a great teaching tool. The project is well managed and organized. (The Director of

Grants and Public Information) does a great job of communicating our accomplishments to the media, and internally to staff.

- We need more community involvement across the district at all events, not just sports.
- We have planned an Outdoor Education Program for our students, the community has truly been a blessing to us with our project. The PTA has also been SUPER! During our UIL District meet the community members & parents helped so much. (Food, Sponsors, & Decorations.)
- Community relations have improved tremendously in the last year. Communication is excellent between school & community.
- Strong community involvement & pride in their school.
- I think that Grape Creek ISD really cares about the community & encourage parental involvement.
- We could always use more parent support.
- The committees that have been formed from community members I believe have been a great success.
- Elementary also provides a weekly newsletter to every student in relating to everything going on in the district which is so helpful in keeping the parents informed of what is going on in the district.
- The school district has been great to the community to use the school facilities for church functions, as well as the Little League Assoc. and for community meetings of all kinds.
- Wonderful community involvement. Our school welcomes everyone out here & hosts events to draw us together.
- Strong community involvement at all levels. Students are recognized for achievements on the district's website and print publications. The district has made great strides in bringing the community together over the past few years. The district doesn't meet the community's needs as far as adult education or improvement classes.
- I feel the school district continually tries to involve the parents & community.
- It is difficult to get much parental involvement due to the fact that most parents work in San Angelo.
- Community Involvement good in most activities.
- Public and parent involvement is good, awareness is better now that we went through a bond election.
- It is getting better but there is a need for a better way of communicating and getting information to the public.
- Community Relations needs a little work. Public meetings would be good.
- District tries to involve community wherever possible.
- Excellent, especially the Grape Creek Education Foundation.
- We try to involve the parents all the time but it seems the only ones to come are always the same ones.

- We have excellent community involvement for most things the children are doing. The parental involvement is not as good for information meetings. The school district tries very hard to keep the community informed. They publish a free mini-newspaper "The Eagle Express." The elementary principals also send home a weekly newsletter.
- Community involvement is probably the biggest asset the school has. All school officials are available to the public. Very open.
- Community involvement I feel is on an uphill climb. We have more elem. involvement than M.S. & H.S.
- As a community member, I am kept well informed through district newsletter mailed to my home address. Board mtgs., always offer a time to address the board. PTA very supportive of all campuses. Great parent volunteers assist all campuses. Parenting classes for pre-K and kindergarten were creative and informative.
- The school & the community interact very positive. The parents of the community are very involved in all aspects of their children's activities.
- Community involvement is fair. Some community members support the school & its events. Business school partnerships could be better. Since our community businesses are so limited, it would be nice to have San Angelo businesses involved since we spent money at their businesses. Communication from elementary to parents is excellent - weekly newsletter & notes from teacher. Middle school & high school communication to parents does not exist. We as parents have no communication from principals on upcoming activities, etc. I would like to see this dealt with on a frequent basis immediately. Communication between admin. & principals is good but there needs to be communication between admin. directly with department heads - not info going through principals. Info going through principals gets distorted & teachers do not get info as it is intended by admin.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Our teachers deserve a higher pay than the state minimum.
- Staff Development has met our needs as a district. The staffing is wonderful.
- Staff development this year has been excellent speakers that build on similar concepts. Even though salaries are state base, GCISD offers a working environment that is well worth the difference.
- Excellent staff. Plenty of opportunities for staff development. Great for teachers & their instruction of students.
- Great H.S. personnel. Always available & helpful. Much appreciated. Elementary personnel useless - not helpful - does not return calls.

- Thorough, honest & fair. Staff development is great.
- Is there a way to develop a consistency in staff? High turnover cases lack of consistency makes it hard it for students.
- How can a band director be paid what he is (high) and get away with poor behavior, class management, shrinking band numbers, lack of respect from upcoming students, etc.
- Teaching slots should not be filled with coaches who cannot perform their teaching duties when students are in the classroom.
- All jobs are advertised. Shortages occur in some areas. Coach /teacher create problems when they leave for sports.
- The changes in staff seem to have improved all aspects of bus maintenance.
- Salary for office people could be increased, especially for years experience.
- Non-professional staff is underpaid & work many hours.
- Number of children in elementary is just continually growing and I believe the <u>staffing</u> in some areas could possibly be looked into. Teachers, aides, special ed teachers and both principals do such an excellent job, however, I sometimes feel they are still under-staffed.
- Staffing and salary structures need to be improved as far as the PEIMS operators. Each year the state has come up with more and more criteria, and more and more operators are leaving the school system due to pay being so low with the stress and pressure that goes with this job. I believe they need to be paid on a higher pay scale. A PEIMS operator is a very stressful job and has long hours.
- Personnel mgmt. Wish we could afford more incentives to keep good teachers. Wish current admin., maybe some day we can.
- Employees are well trained in discipline, special needs areas, safety, etc. Teachers are unwilling to commit to working after hours or during the summer. This severely limits extended year opportunities.
- Salary needs to be more competitive, I think too many friends & family (who you know) are hired. We need better recruitment ideas, better incentives.
- I have been pleased with our Staff Development this year. It has been varied & interesting.
- More than adequate Staff Development.
- Overall I feel our teaching staff is excellent.
- Hiring could use some work. <u>Don't</u> hire people that are <u>not qualified</u>.
- District trips recruit highest personnel possible. Need to work on salaries.
- Need to hire more minorities as reflected by our population breakdown. More Hispanic staff to meet the needs of the 30+% Hispanic students.

- Salaries are very low which makes morale low. Over the last 3 years my small raise has gone to the insurance increases.
- Pay and benefits could be better to retain and recruit new employees.
- I feel Grape Creek has some of the best-qualified teachers.
- Programs exist (such as the band program) that are not being adequately staffed. If we are going to go to the expense of having a program, we should care enough to have the staff to support it. We need 2 competent band directors (one being an asst.).
- I don't work for the school district so I cannot say what is lacking on this.
- I would like newly hired teachers to have some experience as opposed to being freshly out of college. It would be nice for them to bring some experience with them.

Appendix A
PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS

PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS (PART 2)

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- Middle school needs major renovations or a new building. We are bursting at the seams; no spare space at any time for individual attention or special projects. Maintenance keeps up with things to be fixed, but custodial services still need work (not being thoroughly cleaned.)
- The elementary & middle school are in desperate need of remodeling (new facilities).
- Our facilities are nice. The custodial service we have now has kept the building clean.
- New facilities for K-8. Improve custodial services. New gym for increased athletic programs.
- Elem./middle school is extremely over-crowded. As the school population is growing, our facilities have pretty much stayed the same.
- Need more space at MS & elem.
- Business office administration has improved immensely in last year. Also, computer upgrades are getting better.
- No personnel in maintenance to do all the work; they are very understaffed.
- I think we are doing a great job with the facilities we have. We just need more space.
- The district has had some major obstacles to overcome due to rapid growth; the addition of a high school campus; poor management by the prior administration. The facilities are grossly inadequate, and the voters should bear a great deal of this responsibility for not passing a bond issue at a time when they could have gotten "more bang for the buck?" Instead, every attempt to pass a bond was blocked. Consequently, a new high school was built with "creative" financing that nearly put the school district in financial ruin because it had to be passed for the district to remain solvent at a much greater cost and with much less facility than could have been achieved if the community had been more supportive.
- I truly believe we're on the right track now.
- Wonderful high school facility. Middle School and Elementary Schools are physically inadequate.
- Maintenance strives to take care of all problems. (A maintenance worker) is a new asset that takes care of business & his employees.

- Changes need to be made to M.S. & elem. campuses. M.S. & Elem. need more room!
- Our school facilities are great and kept in good shape, but there just isn't enough room for the growing # of students. Our class alone has 120 students and is still growing! In most of my classes I have 30+ students and it is always so crammed; there just isn't any room.
- Overcrowding in elementary and middle school. Cafeteria and classrooms. Restrooms in middle school and elementary are dirty.
- Custodial services - very poor and inadequate. Middle school & Elementary - need cafeteria, more classrooms, and a new air conditioning-heating system.
- Middle school needs more room. Expand, build, do something.
- Due to gaining population, facilities need to be looked at.
- The elementary/middle school cafeteria facilities are the worst, as we are very short on space.
- The school needs to expand the elem/middle school cafeteria area. We have students eating early & late as well as students eating in the classrooms. Again, I know this is due to the rapid growth and may take time to correct/adjust.
- The facilities are probably over-used for what we have.
- We are in desperate need of facilities for Elem. & M.S. Maintenance does a good job. Our custodial service can be hit or miss.
- Crowded at middle school and elementary complex. Playground too small for size of student population. Parking lot at middle school/elem. Too small to meet needs of staff and parent visitors.
- We have one elem. building that is far from the rest of the elem. kindergartners through 5th grade must walk a long way to go to music. This building would better be utilized for older students.
- Facilities in elem. & middle are very inadequate in size. I think we are in the process of taking care of the middle school needs to be housed on high school campus - meaning new construction. Facilities at elem. & middle schools need to be renovated immediately! As facilities are renovated, energy-saving techniques can be put in place.

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Cheaper insurance for district employees. Most employees can't afford the insurance for their families and get it elsewhere.
- I'm pleased the district has kept Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance even if we have to pay some ourselves; it is worth it.
- Improve health insurance for all school employees.
- Our health insurance is better than some. We would like to be considered state employees.

- Hopefully, the group health insurance rates can be reduced & the state take on more funding for schools.
- Health insurance is great, as coverage is excellent, but expensive to employees.
- I would like for the district to pay 100% of the health insurance for the employees.
- I don't have enough information to comment.
- I feel the claims are taken care of in a timely manner for worker's compensation. Health insurance premiums are high, but seem to be competitive with other districts.
- Good insurance.
- Bond issue was an eye opener for the community as far as what really goes on. Would like more open school board meetings.
- This is as good as possible at this time.
- District tries to manage money efficiently.
- In the past, spending was not at its best, but over the last 3-4 years it has been fine.
- No comment. Do not know enough about it.
- Insurance is way too high.
- We are beginning to see an increase in our fund balance. Investments are right on schedule. The financial consultant has been a great help in selling the bonds & saving us money. The bond issue was a real experience! With that behind us, we should slowly improve our financial situation. Health insurance benefits seem good but are awfully expensive. You would think with as many educators in the State of Texas, better rates could be received.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Superintendent Ickles has improved financial management of GCISD tremendously in the last year. Clear budget & financial procedures have also been implemented.
- Since Don Ickles has been here, we have worked with a budget.
- Don Ickles has made many improvements "overall" since taking the position of superintendent and he is very concerned about costs & keeping expenses down in all departments.
- I believe the district is very frugal and conservative with the taxpayers' money now.
- That being in the past, and with current administration, the district seems to be moving in a more positive direction. Grape Creek ISD is no different than a great many schools in the State of Texas that are experiencing financial difficulty. Schools are expected to pay their teachers more, put "more money in the classroom," meet other mandates; all with less funding. Texas schools can hardly operate on State and local revenues. They have to apply for grants,

seek "partners in education" (and there are not many), and be innovative and creative in maximizing their funds.

- Well maintained, wish it was bigger, but we built as big as we thought we'd need. Never foresaw the incredible growth we've had.
- Excellent financial team that is always looking for alternate means of support, including grants.
- The Director of Business and Finance has done a wonderful job and has improved this department drastically.
- Don't know much about.
- Internal audit reveals district is moving forward.
- No problems in the past 3-4 years.
- District working hard to be fiscally responsible.
- Budgets have been tight but will begin to loosen as the fund balance improves.

PURCHASING

- I really like the co-op purchasing the district does, it has saved us a lot of money.
- Textbook purchases are handled very well. We choose as a grade level what we want. We then turn it into our principal.
- Purchasing - I'm getting supplies for class, the staff has been very easy to work with in accommodating my needs. Prompt processing and follow up. Eager to answer questions.
- Students are carrying too many textbooks back and forth from school. 5[th] grade and younger carry up to 50 lbs. of books or they are expected to. Lockers in the teachers rooms for each class to hold each child's own books might be a solution. Teacher has key for each locker in her (his) room.
- Little storage space available. Textbook purchases worked very well.
- We use competitive bids to secure materials.
- Textbooks are good with no problems with quantity.
- I believe we are trying to be more competitive in our purchasing. We need more textbooks so kids don't have to share.
- I feel the bid process Grape Creek uses is very fair.
- Don't know much about.
- This is great.
- District tries to use competitive bids.
- The purchasing of our school supplies has never been a problem that I have seen in my 6 years of employment.
- Don't know enough to comment.
- I'm not aware of the steps entailed in purchasing.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Our school is behind in technology. We need up-to-date technology to better prepare our children for the world. This needs to be throughout the district K-12.
- Computer training has proved to be invaluable to the teachers. We have a very supportive technology group.
- Computers need updating & more access needed for students. Earthwalk looks promising.
- O.K. Systems/teachers need to understand computers more so they can at least semi-understand what the kids know & are capable of.
- Very impressed w/tech & opportunities for students.
- We have been really blessed with our technology. At the middle school we have more computer/Internet availability than most schools, even those in larger districts.
- Technology is wonderful for teachers. Need more space to encourage more for students.
- The Middle School needs computer labs & space for labs.
- I would like to see keyboard classes in elementary.
- I feel these are adequate at our school.
- Computer labs are not made available to elementary or middle school students. As a result, students are not being taught technology skills at the lower levels. They are reaching high school unable to use a keyboard correctly or navigate the web.
- I believe they are very current with the times.
- Excellent support given, when a problem arises it's taken care of in a timely manner. Business Office continues to get wonderful compliments.
- The district is working on improving technology as it is definitely needed.
- Technology server could be better.
- Most classes have access to computers.
- Need more technology in classroom.
- Our technology needs to be upgraded more. We are on the right track.
- G.C. needs to be technology advanced with up-to-date computers in all classrooms. I would like to see the district get back to that; focusing in the elementary area, so start technology early.
- All of the classes are technology-based.
- Computers current.
- Technology is inadequate - especially on elementary & middle school level. Students come to high school without any keyboarding classes - keyboarding needs to be offered.
- I appreciate having a computer and Internet in the classroom for teacher use. E-mail is a great way to communicate to staff. Staff is prompt in fixing problems and has been wonderful helping us with networking, grade speed, and Internet.

TRANSPORTATION

- We are in need of some more buses. The transportation department has made tremendous improvements and is running efficiently. They are doing an excellent job.
- Needs are more buses! Bus safety is a priority as problems are dealt with quickly.
- Bus transportation is organized, but we need more buses.
- Transportation is real efficient. The bus drivers reinforce bus safety.
- Need more buses. Just can't afford them.
- Things are improving every day to be more efficient.
- Transportation continually improves. The supervisor has stepped in with new ideas and constantly strives to improve the transportation dept.
- Our bus driver is great. The bus gets to the house sooner than I could pick up the kids.
- Bus fleet outdated, needs upgrading.
- Transportation stretched to maximum.
- We could use more buses.
- My children ride bus #9 and it is always on time and my children love the bus driver.
- My child rides the bus and so far this has worked for us, I have no complaints. The bus drivers are friendly & really watch the children & they follow all safety as far as I know.
- Safety is an issue when putting elementary students 3 to a seat. All buses should have a cell phone for emergency purposes.
- Bus drivers are not trained properly. We need to watch where the bond election money is going to be spent.

FOOD SERVICES

- Food service is poor - menus are unappetizing. Not enough service in H.S. Kids leave hungry. Especially athletics kiddos. Serving lines are long.
- Middle school children having to eat lunches in the classroom. Need more cafeteria space or a better lunch schedule for all students to eat in a food area. Desks are not clean enough for students to be eating off of every day.
- M.S./elem. cafeteria too small to serve our needs. M.S. must eat lunch in classrooms that often results in a mess. Food quality OK, but a choice would be nice due to food allergies, and, even likes/dislikes. Often rather greasy/spicy.
- Possibly a larger variety of food choices, not just the same menu repeated every other month.

- The food is too high in starch & fat. There is variety, but we need more healthy choices.
- Food service is really good. They serve very nutritious meals daily. The quality is very good.
- Cafeteria too small! Quality of food could use improvement.
- Cafeteria food is okay, but M.S. cafeteria needs to be enlarged.
- Cafeteria food is not very good. Larger portions for h.s. students & m.s students.
- Cafeteria could stand a little bit of improvement as far as quality of food.
- The quality of the food that is served in the cafeteria needs some improvements. The middle school kids complain every day about the lunch service. Maybe they should bring back the snack bar for the older kids (6th 7th 8th grades). They are more into sports and need to eat something for lunch than going without.
- Need more nutritional lunches & a longer lunch time, or split it up
- I feel the Food Service tries to improve, but you can't please everyone all the time.
- Definitely needs improvement, as is not appealing to kids or adults.
- Better food. The food they have is sometimes good. They sometimes have overcooked food.
- Nutrition could be better.
- We need better food! All the food here tastes the same, it doesn't matter what it is. None of the food is real and our parents wonder why we don't eat lunch.
- The food is good, but I don't really like it when the menu changes and we (the parents) don't get notified, They do good to let us know by the month, but if they change it, they don't let no one know.
- Cafeteria - overcrowded. Some meals are not good - taste wise. It's clean and run efficiently.
- Not nutritional - food quality is poor.
- M.S. needs work. Kids eat in their classrooms. Food could be much better.
- Question amount, is balanced diet?
- I have heard complaints about the quality of the food. Have heard this in many different school districts. The middle school does have to eat in the classrooms because the cafeteria is not large enough.
- Food lacks a lot.
- Meals served contain too much fat & starch & aren't varied enough. Portions served do not increase as older children come through the line. I am very concerned at the use of foam trays & their negative environmental aspects. I would rather spend money on a proper dishwashing system & personnel rather than fill the landfill with foam trays.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- We have safety as a good policy in place to keep students in a safe and secure environment. However, at M.S., too many rooms open to outside and campus is spread out. Staff knows how to handle situations and diffuse conflicts between students.
- We need a districtwide discipline policy and our teachers are in the process of creating one.
- Student discipline is excellent. Problems handled quickly, parents notified. Fairview provides excellent alternative program. Strong leadership by campus principals & staff.
- Consistency needs to be established and upheld throughout!
- All these areas are under control. Our safety plan is under construction.
- We have a very good security program in our school. Policies are made & reinforced. Our local law enforcement is readily available if need be.
- I feel the principals & teachers have a good discipline program. I wish it could be a little stricter. I think we have a good relationship with our local law enforcement. I love our school. We've had our problems, but I believe we are really on the right track now. If this community lost this school, I don't believe the community would last. Our school is the best of the community.
- There are few violent incidences among students. "No Tolerance" policy on fighting and other major discipline problems. Students are immediately moved to an AEP. In times of crisis situations, the staff and administrators have come together, kept their heads and have handled the situations very well with the students' welfare at the top of the priority list.
- The district strives on safety & security, the policies are invoked, safety & security with the children & employees is of utmost importance.
- Student discipline inconsistent. Good support from law enforcement.
- If the kids are in trouble and have to go to ISS it should not be fun at all. All they do is sit there all day and do nothing. The day should be filled with work or something other than sit there.
- Our middle & elementary schools are so spread out with portables it's hard to control security. Relations with law enforcement are good. Overall I'm proud of our school and support the staff 100%.
- Getting better.
- Administration works cooperatively on policies. Security concerns with building. There is cooperation with law enforcement.
- I feel that the safety and security at our school district is good on all levels. As an employee and parent, I have no complaints on this issue.

- I am somewhat concerned with the grade school office being on the middle of the campus.
- Discipline is handled timely and is fair to each student. Safety issues are a concern as widespread as our M.S. & Elem. campus is. Local law enforcement, when called, is always great.
- There is a real safety issue in where the elem. music room is located this year. There's no intercom and it's impossible to get through to the office on the phone a large part of the time. In a real crisis situation, I'm afraid this building would be subjected to unreasonable risk. Also, the ISS room this year is even further away (in the church) & also has inadequate communication.
- I really feel that this school really stresses safety for all the students in all the campuses. Every morning when I drop/leave my child at school they have teachers monitoring the halls, classrooms, the outside of the campus, around the crosswalks & around the bus zones. I really feel that all students are well taken care of.
- Sheriff's dept. is very cooperative. Student discipline is not consistent from student to student with the same situation. Consistency is a joke - especially on the high school level.

Appendix B
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/ Survey Questions

Demographic Data
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 126

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer
		36.5%	55.6%	7.9%

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		76.2%	0.0%	7.9%	0.0%		11.9%

3.	How long have you lived in Grape Creek ISD?		1-5 years	6-10 years	11 or more	No Answer
			34.9%	20.6%	44.4%	0.0%

4.	What grade level(s) does your child(ren) attend?	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third
		3.2%	13.6%	11.2%	16.0%	12.0%
		Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
		12.0%	12.8%	13.6%	14.4%	18.4%
		Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth	
		12.0%	8.0%	10.4%	12.8%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	7.9%	42.1%	41.3%	7.1%	1.6%
2.	School board members	9.5%	34.1%	39.7%	12.7%	4.0%

	Survey Questions					
	listen to the opinions and desires of others.					
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	18.3%	41.3%	31.7%	5.6%	3.2%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	15.9%	38.9%	35.7%	6.3%	3.2%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	10.3%	49.2%	15.1%	22.2%	3.2%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	6.3%	46.8%	31.7%	11.1%	4.0%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	6.3%	30.2%	34.9%	19.8%	8.7%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	4.0%	30.2%	41.3%	19.0%	5.6%
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	15.1%	69.8%	6.3%	7.1%	1.6%
	b. Writing	8.7%	70.6%	8.7%	9.5%	2.4%
	c. Mathematics	12.7%	70.6%	6.3%	6.3%	4.0%
	d. Science	11.9%	67.5%	7.9%	9.5%	3.2%
	e. English or Language Arts	11.9%	69.0%	8.7%	8.7%	1.6%
	f. Computer Instruction	7.1%	55.6%	15.9%	17.5%	4.0%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	7.9%	71.4%	11.1%	7.1%	2.4%

	h. Fine Arts	8.7%	53.2%	18.3%	15.9%	4.0%
	i. Physical Education	12.7%	69.8%	8.7%	4.8%	4.0%
	j. Business Education	5.6%	38.1%	36.5%	19.0%	0.8%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	6.3%	28.6%	40.5%	18.3%	6.3%
	l. Foreign Language	4.0%	41.3%	34.1%	16.7%	4.0%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	11.9%	55.6%	12.7%	17.5%	2.4%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	7.1%	45.2%	23.8%	19.0%	4.8%
	c. Special Education	11.9%	46.8%	27.0%	11.1%	3.2%
	d. Head Start and Even Start programs	7.9%	36.5%	45.2%	5.6%	4.8%
	e. Dyslexia program	3.2%	20.6%	62.7%	8.7%	4.8%
	f. Student mentoring program	6.3%	34.1%	41.3%	15.1%	3.2%
	g. Advanced placement program	4.8%	31.0%	49.2%	12.7%	2.4%
	h. Literacy program	4.8%	36.5%	49.2%	8.7%	0.8%
	i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	4.0%	19.8%	54.8%	11.1%	10.3%
	j. Summer school programs	4.8%	38.9%	37.3%	18.3%	0.8%
	k. Alternative education programs	6.3%	22.2%	46.8%	16.7%	7.1%
	l. "English as a second language" program	2.4%	23.8%	63.5%	7.9%	2.4%
	m. Career counseling program	4.0%	21.4%	48.4%	18.3%	7.9%
	n. College counseling program	4.0%	19.0%	48.4%	15.9%	12.7%

	Survey Questions					
	o. Counseling the parents of students	6.3%	24.6%	34.9%	22.2%	11.9%
	p. Drop out prevention program	4.0%	15.1%	59.5%	11.9%	9.5%
11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	13.5%	25.4%	32.5%	17.5%	11.1%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	6.3%	34.1%	28.6%	25.4%	5.6%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	7.9%	34.9%	20.6%	24.6%	11.9%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	5.6%	42.1%	16.7%	30.2%	5.6%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	13.5%	58.7%	13.5%	11.9%	2.4%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	11.9%	44.4%	17.5%	22.2%	4.0%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	27.8%	63.5%	3.2%	4.8%	0.8%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	14.3%	44.4%	30.2%	10.3%	0.8%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	13.5%	50.0%	17.5%	14.3%	4.8%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	15.1%	43.7%	19.0%	17.5%	4.0%

C. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	11.1%	44.4%	12.7%	23.0%	8.7%

	Survey Questions					
22.	District facilities are open for community use.	12.7%	47.6%	24.6%	13.5%	1.6%
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	6.3%	40.5%	17.5%	27.0%	8.7%

D. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	8.7%	36.5%	31.7%	15.9%	7.1%
25.	Schools are clean.	15.1%	68.3%	4.0%	8.7%	4.0%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	11.1%	65.1%	11.1%	10.3%	2.4%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	10.3%	54.8%	22.2%	11.1%	1.6%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	7.9%	41.3%	12.7%	34.1%	4.0%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	7.1%	52.4%	36.5%	3.2%	0.8%

E. Asset and Risk Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	6.3%	42.1%	15.1%	24.6%	11.9%
31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the	8.7%	23.0%	27.8%	23.8%	16.7%

	use of tax dollars.					

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	6.3%	28.6%	50.8%	13.5%	0.8%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	3.2%	23.8%	51.6%	19.0%	2.4%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	1.6%	21.4%	50.8%	20.6%	5.6%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	5.6%	31.0%	49.2%	10.3%	3.2%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	7.9%	75.4%	10.3%	4.8%	1.6%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape.	8.7%	73.8%	10.3%	4.0%	3.2%
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	12.7%	56.3%	8.7%	15.1%	7.1%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly

		Agree		Opinion		Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	19.8%	53.2%	4.8%	14.3%	7.9%
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	13.5%	64.3%	17.5%	4.0%	0.8%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	4.0%	18.3%	20.6%	27.8%	29.4%
42.	Food is served warm.	4.8%	44.4%	23.0%	18.3%	9.5%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	1.6%	37.3%	8.7%	27.8%	24.6%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	5.6%	58.7%	11.1%	14.3%	10.3%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	5.6%	42.1%	32.5%	13.5%	6.3%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	8.7%	65.9%	16.7%	5.6%	3.2%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	8.7%	42.1%	29.4%	13.5%	6.3%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	9.5%	61.9%	18.3%	4.8%	5.6%

I. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	15.1%	23.0%	21.4%	21.4%	19.0%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	14.3%	22.2%	49.2%	7.9%	6.3%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is	8.7%	34.1%	49.2%	6.3%	1.6%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	reasonable.					
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	14.3%	39.7%	42.1%	2.4%	1.6%
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	13.5%	40.5%	41.3%	4.0%	0.8%
54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	15.1%	42.1%	39.7%	1.6%	1.6%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	14.3%	39.7%	42.1%	3.2%	0.8%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	11.1%	27.0%	51.6%	6.3%	4.0%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	12.7%	31.7%	46.0%	7.9%	1.6%
58.	Buses are clean.	7.1%	32.5%	49.2%	9.5%	1.6%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	13.5%	40.5%	43.7%	0.8%	1.6%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	9.5%	25.4%	62.7%	1.6%	0.8%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	15.9%	68.3%	3.2%	11.1%	1.6%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	8.7%	71.4%	11.1%	7.1%	1.6%
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	12.7%	54.0%	16.7%	12.7%	4.0%
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	4.8%	34.1%	21.4%	29.4%	10.3%
65.	Vandalism is not a	5.6%	51.6%	17.5%	21.4%	4.0%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	problem in this district.					
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	6.3%	31.0%	56.3%	4.0%	2.4%
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	5.6%	30.2%	57.9%	4.8%	1.6%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	9.5%	66.7%	23.8%	0.0%	0.0%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	6.3%	61.1%	7.9%	14.3%	10.3%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	3.2%	43.7%	34.1%	15.1%	4.0%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	7.1%	45.2%	33.3%	9.5%	4.8%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	6.3%	55.6%	23.0%	11.9%	3.2%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	5.6%	43.7%	23.8%	21.4%	5.6%
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills	4.8%	25.4%	35.7%	27.8%	6.3%
75.	Students have easy access to the internet.	7.9%	37.3%	36.5%	12.7%	5.6%

Appendix B
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of parent survey respondents of Grape Creek Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team.

- My son sits in Band Class and does nothing. The instructor sits in his office during class. My son has watched movies in Band such as *Austin Powers* and *Happy Gilmore*. My son also sat in the hall for two weeks when the "instructor" was sick. My son has not been taught anything new in Band. [T]he instructor never attends the school open house and is not available for teacher conference days.
- I have heard several children say that they have been screamed at by some of the teachers. I don't think screaming at a child in front of other children does anything but hurt the child....
- High school athletic director dominates high school superintendent‑he has too much power and puts too much emphasis on high school football. The school and all other programs have suffered because of this.
- As a parent of a child with Attention Deficit Disorder, I do not feel that the teachers and other school personnel have enough training and information regarding ADD I feel this is not just a problem in GCISD, but many public schools.
- Food: The menu is always changing, they put something on the menu and then fix something else. They do not go by the menu at all! This makes is hard for a parent to know if they should fix their child lunch for that day.
- ISS: The kids that go to this need to be doing more than sitting there bored. I believe if a child has to go to should have something (they really don't like) to do all day. They go to this classroom and just sit. Wow, what discipline...!
- Teacher's Workshops: Why do teachers have to go to workshops during school? I work in a day care and we have to our workshop hours on our *own time* on our *own money*! Teachers go to workshops all year round (not so much in the summer though!) and not around here. They go as far as Houston and stay for days while the school pays for them. Wouldn't it be cheaper for the school to have a workshop here, on a Saturday.... I have to give up a Saturday for the state, why can't they!
- We really love this school and most of the time it is great.

- Our district passed a bond [issue] to save our high school and they (school board) [said] that we would get a bigger cafeteria. My child eats lunch in her classroom.
- Too much emphasis on athletics over academics-too many coaches considered first over strength in teaching skills. Favoritism [toward] athletes.... So sad [that] competitive sports overrule academics, sportsmanship, and respect.... All students need to be prepared to hold a job, balance their checkbook, have computer skills, and know responsibilities as a citizen of the United States.
- First year of education was fine and a learning experience.
- The dress code for teachers should be improved.
- School crossing guards should be monitored for job performance... {One} guard...is always late and not tending to business because of visiting with friends.... All employees, whether teachers or day workers, should be evaluated regularly.
- I feel the biggest concern...at this time is that my child's teachers are not all certified to teach the particular subject they are teaching and that the school puts so much pressure on the kids [concerning] TAAS. They make the teachers in electives-Art, Music, Band & Choir-along with the other educational classes spend 20-30 minutes working on TAAS before they teach [their own] subject....
- The other problem is the cafeteria food. It's not what I would consider a balanced meal. Nutrition is essential in the growth and development of our children. This may for some be the only decent meal they have. We need to feed these students well.
- The schools lack competent school counselors for both academic needs as well as...chemical dependency (alcohol, drugs, violence at home/school). I would strongly like to see the school have a LCDC (Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor) available for our students and their families. These problems are there, the teachers are just not able to recognize or deal with them.
- Most children will not finish their meal[s]. They may have a balanced meal but what good is it if they will not touch it. Send menus home with kids-let them help tell the schools what they would eat.
- Everything is TAAS-generated.... If the TAAS was used for grades 11th and 12th it would be a great tool. It puts too much stress on children in the 4th through 9th grades. The school will not allow teachers to reach...children that learn in different ways. [The] TAAS test...probably is the reason for kids snapping thereby starting a child down the path of severe depression followed by tragic events such as Columbine. This test has ruined our schools.... Children who are dismissed from the TAAS test are not helped. They are the ones this test was supposed to find and help. But if the TAAS scores are too low, the school loses federal funding. Boy, if that is not a catch 22, I don't know what is.... If a

school has low scores they need more funding after an investigation. I have seen kids who have a fifth-grade reading level graduate from Lake View High, Central and Grape Creek. This survey will fall on deaf ears and blind eyes anyway. And until we all stand up, nothing else will change. God save us all.

- I believe not only children should take the TAAS, but also teachers to see if and how they are still qualified. {We should spend] less time and money on GT programs and more on equal and fair opportunities to boost child morale as a whole. Need more and better communication between children and teachers and parents. More money needs to be spent on buses and busing....

- The lunch program is in desperate need of help. My children skip lunch several days a week because of cold, leftover food.

- Students should be able to use the restroom when needed. Three bathroom breaks are not enough for all children.... The child should be able to talk a little and use restroom when needed.

- The special education [program] is very crowded.... Also, the bus my child rides is not prompt, runs [stop] sign[s], and has not used any signals on numerous occasions. The bus has left children that were half a block away walking towards it.

- It takes too long...for your child to receive services or evaluation[s] for special education in this district.

- We...are very happy with the quality of our children's education. However, I feel this school district favors the child[ren] from parents who have money (if you have no computer at home, your children are at a disadvantage).

- The food provided is not enough to keep the children going and punishment is not equal and consistent.

- I feel our school is a good school.

- There was a leak in the elementary hallway and the ceiling tiles were yellowed and mildewed for months. It was an air conditioner leak. The restroom smell[s] so bad [that] my son waits to use the restroom until he comes home.

- [Y]elling in the cafeteria is very loud.... I don't like this at all. It is upsetting to stomachs.

- The teacher who takes care of second graders during lunch has bad manners with children. She...is always yelling at them.

- The biggest problem I have with the school is the school nurse. I feel she needs to go back to school and update her skills.

- The two teachers my son has had at GCISD have been excellent teachers. The principal has always been helpful. However, the counselor has been argumentative and rude. The bus my son rides is overcrowded (five students per seat) and frequently breaks down. The discipline of students on buses is inadequate. My son is regularly bullied by a teenager on the bus and does NOT feel safe. I have discussed this to no prevail.

- The only thing I would have to complain about is [the] lunch menu-if you listen to menus in the AM on any radio station, Grape Creek's is not up to par and other school districts our size. My children eat at school if it's something that appeals to them; and if not, snack bar here he comes, and we know what...a good menu the snack bar has.
- Grape Creek has wonderful teachers [but] a lot of elementary teachers leave after their first year. These are excellent teachers so I am concerned as to why they don't stay. My child has had a "new" teacher every year. They've been great but they don't stay. Money?
- The high school needs to place more emphasis on college preparation and start getting...students taking the required courses. More emphasis needs to be placed on this. Also, more electives need to be offered. Teacher turnover is high, possibly because of salary. Too many teachers...are not certified. Absenteeism among teachers is high-possibly [the school should] have [a] stricter absentee policy.
- Teachers need to be more knowledgeable about the areas they teach. Many of the teachers spend time on their computer and are not teaching as they should. We should have more emphasis on high achievement and good-quality teachers.
- Students are not treated equally. Sport players, cheerleaders, and staff's children get special treatment.
- For two years my children have been there. My children are not going to this school next year. The principal is a rude and hateful man. He does not care what the parents think and he is racist.
- The principal is rude, mean to my daughter, thinks I am stupid! Kids that play sports, cheerleaders and staff's children get special treatment. The principal accuses children of things that he has no evidence to support. I am glad [my] girls will not be going there next year.
- _____ is an excellent math teacher and the TAAS scores prove this. But the administration will not let him teach math his way. This is a huge mistake.
- Morale among teachers and staff is horrible. I'm not sure why.
- Our community came together and fought to save our school district. There is a fierce pride that we have in providing our children with the best education in a district that has others taking notice. We've got a good thing going in Grape Creek, where it's still small enough to be personal. Our teachers are our neighbors and friends....
- I feel that the school board does the best job they can. The school is overcrowded and the elementary/middle school is not adequate. The cafeteria is entirely too small and does not serve the students/faculty as [it] should....

- I believe [that] overall the school system does an exceptional job. They try to do what is best for the student. If they have a problem...the teachers try to work with each child and try different things if the normal methods don't work. I have been pleased with the teachers my children have had. All have been good, some exceptional, but have not found but a couple I didn't care for. They are no longer there. There are a four worth there weight in gold. I thank Ms. Bratton for allowing her teachers to try different things when normal methods don't work.
- I am strongly opposed to children having to carry their lunches back to their classrooms to eat. Food and school desks don't mix.
- My children have been sick off and on and I never once received a phone call telling me my child was not in school.
- The ISS program is carried out in a church building totally isolated form the school and any contact with other teachers or students in a tiny 9 x 9 room.
- I believe better classes for slow readers and learners are needed.
- Students in K-5th grade would like to have access to computers. My child is in first grade and he loves to get on the computer at home. The [district] need[s] more computers so each class can have one.
- I think most of the teachers at the middle school are unqualified to teach children.... My son tells me they don't like to answer questions and don't want to be bothered. They single [out] certain kids and "black ball" them.... My seventh-grade son is ADHD, has failed continuously throughout the year, no special services have been rendered, but they are quick to assign [him to] detention or ISS. I get the feeling it's just a job for the teachers...[they] do as little as possible [and] dismiss the kids with certain "problems." There's no "heart" involved. If possible, I [will] leave the district!
- I have been satisfied with the teachers my boys have had. I have [met] with them and feel they are educated enough for the [areas] they teach.
- We are homeowners in this district pay high taxes, yet my 3 yr. old will not qualify for Pre-K. This in my opinion is discrimination. My child does not receive the benefits that we help pay for. Also, the summer enrichment program would benefit my children but they do not qualify. As for my 3 yr. old, I send her to daycare so she may get the Pre-K experience. This means I must work at the school to pay the day care. I feel all children, regardless of race, sex or income, should enjoy the benefits we help pay. I would not feel taxes were high if my children benefited.
- I believe the elementary and middle school[s] have problems with teachers who need improvement, but as for the high school I believe they are doing a good job and my children are doing very well and are very proud of their school.

- Grape Creek ISD has several severe issues that should be attended to. [T]he BCIS program is the most horrible program I've ever seen. Absolutely no education takes place in that class and the same in English. Your teachers are good teachers, but many of them seem to strongly lack the basic skills for teaching and have absolutely no control over student misbehavior. I think student discipline should be taken control of, there [are] more than enough unnecessary outbursts in class. Your school unfortunately has a lot of to work on. Your students have discipline to learn, your classes lack requirements [for] each grade level and the band program is awful.
- I have volunteered, substituted and student-taught in this district. I am seriously considering transferring my children to a new district to meet their needs more adequately. I feel Grape Creek ISD has the potential to be a good educational facility, but nobody knows how to structure it.
- I think that we have a great school district and I am proud my two daughters had the opportunity to go to school here. The high school is wonderful and I believe one day will be a role model for other districts. My family and I are very supportive of Grape Creek school district. We wouldn't want to be anywhere else but Grape Creek. We are very satisfied.
- I feel as a single mom that there are some teachers and coaches who discriminate against those of us who have no money.... Coaches don't want to play those kids whose parents have little or now money or who have to work long hours to make a living and cannot devote all of their time to the schools. Education and sports are supposed to be for everybody, not...just those who are well off financially. Plus we have too many inexperienced teachers, [and] when you try to call the elementary and middle school, all you get is [an] automated system...not a live person.... And because I am a single parent and have to work, I have not had the time to become involved in the schools as I would like to and I feel that this has hurt my children in the long run.
- We have been and are still satisfied with...Grape Creek.
- My daughter loves the Grape Creek school [but] before we moved here my daughter was in the Gifted and Talented program at Crockett Elementary. We had hoped that she would continue in this program but only her reading abilities have been challenged. My daughter is...in the first grade and her teacher feels that it is unnecessary to give homework assignments. I strongly disagree. The discipline of doing homework should in my opinion be instilled in our children at...early stages of their academic careers. My hopes for my daughter are that she attend a reputable school like MIT or Harvard, but she won't unless she is challenged now.

- Since our new superintendent [arrived], we have slowly become a more efficient school. Discipline has gotten better and we have a great open relationship between teachers, students and parents.
- Need more computers.
- Sometimes food looks good and is warm, sometimes not.
- Many discipline problems are not handled [in a] timely [fashion] or fairly by principal. [The] principal is often off-campus and not able or...willing to handle discipline problems.... I feel that the teachers are excellent but the administration desperately needs to change.
- An emphasis on spelling and writing skills as well as grammar skills is needed to improve poor student abilities.
- I feel the school is well equipped for the students except some of the teachers are a little overbearing in how much a student needs to learn in one year. They push the students too hard and it burns them out.
- In the cafeteria, the kids now get less food (bad food at that), less time to eat it and one of my children eats in a classroom everyday. He tells me that the food is brought down from another campus-served cold and not fully cooked. He refuses to eat their food.
- Discipline in PE seems to be a problem. That seems to be the time of day when the mean kids can "get to" the good kids-and get away wit it. The coaches always seem to be looking the other way.
- Group punishment bothers me a lot. Why should all children be punished for the wrongs of others?
- At Grape Creek, it seems that the "squeaky wheel always gets the oil." The average kid that doesn't excel or get in trouble goes unnoticed. What's wrong with that picture?
- Our superintendent doesn't see the "big picture" and it's way past time for a new school board.
- Gifted and Talented program either doesn't exist (middle school campus) or is a joke (elementary school campus).
- There needs to be more funding for buses. We live almost 2 miles away for the school but my children can't ride the bus to or from school. There are several other mothers that would like or need to have a bus take our kids to school!!
- I feel that computers are well taught in elementary, but less in the middle school and even less at the high school level where it should be most important....
- I feel our superintendent...is doing a wonderful job in raising the educational [services] offered on the budget that he has to work with. Our district is a "property-poor" district due to the [fact that] trailer houses...on rented spaces are not taxed like "brick and mortar" or "wood-frame" homes. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by our Texas Legislature.
- I feel confident in the teachers, but...enrollment increases every year and [the schools are] overcrowded. The library, cafeteria, and

amount of classrooms are inadequate. The teachers do well with what they have to work with and as a parent, I try to help where I can.

- [W]e've experienced poor fiscal management [and] inadequate supplies.... Some rules for students are antiquated. [such as] banning pagers/cell phones-I understand they should be turned off during class, but as a single Dad, the only way I can contact my son at lunch or after school is via cell phone.... Three teachers in particular...are unfair in grading practices. My son brought home his math test paper and that of another student in the same class-same test-same class--the other child had two more wrong but received a better grade than my son. The teacher's answer was [that the other] child is trying harder and is at a disadvantage so we cut him some slack. What kind of "standard" is this?
- A lot of students are required to eat in their classrooms.
- On a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest) the elementary school library owes 2 points. That's right, I give it a -2. Library really does need looking into!!! All books are older than the dust that covers them and older than dirt. Library needs "updated"!!!!
- Someone needs to tell coaches here [that] running laps "everyday" is not a program. We need new coaches here badly.
- I cannot express deeply enough how the Grape Creek administration is allowing the athletic program to run this school. And someone needs to investigate it. I believe without a doubt that athletics are good for morale, but not at the expense of education. And that is exactly what is happening here.
- [O]ur elementary school library is in poor shape at best.
- I have sat on numerous committees in the past-a thing I am no longer allowed to do because I am so outspoken against the athletic "gods." While on these committees, I spoke with numerous teachers [and] they all said the athletic budget is way too high [but] they fear for their jobs if they should speak out on the matter. Sad, very sad! Furthermore. I have been told that my child's education would suffer, should I speak out on this matter.... As of next school year, my child will be enrolled into private school. I have had enough! But that will not help those I leave behind . As for the kid's who are not athletic enough to be on "THE TEAM"! All they get to do, day in, day out. Is to run boring ole laps around the school. Why not an intramural program? I'll answer that: THE COACHES ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THOSE KIDS!
- Why is it that our middle school students are required to have lunches in their classrooms? Wonder why? We just passed an enormous tax increase for the school district. Someone better watch it or the majority will go to the Athletic Department once again...
- Improve cafeteria food. It is really greasy.

- As a volunteer I have spent many hours in the school. During my many hours in the school I have seen children watch WAY TOO MUCH TV. When I was in school watching a movie was a RARE and special treat. On a day when we could not go outside for recess we played games. I think the school should watch LESS TV.
- The food in the cafeteria needs some drastic improvement. My children used to eat in the cafeteria, but now they carry their lunch. I feel for the price we pay for lunches the kids should have better food. They should have a few more minutes to eat also.
- I do not feel that this school is taking care of students like they should. My son is in danger of not graduating because of this. I...would not recommend anyone putting their child in this school! I know that nothing will be done about this because I have spoken to the principal and the superintendent. They have no cares or worries about this. (Son is a senior)
- I am concerned with the size of the classroom. The ratio of 21 or 22 students to one teacher is too [large]. The kindergarten classroom is too small for the children to...to move around, especially when one child is in a wheelchair. The teacher is spread too thin to help all the children adequately.
- [O]ur...school...showed preferential treatment to certain students that are in basketball or football but not in tennis or golf. Grape Creek has too many sacred cows and shows too much prejudice.

Appendix C
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/ Survey Questions

Demographic Data
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 45

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer
		22.2%	66.7%	11.1%

2.	Ethnicity Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		73.3%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	2.2%	15.6%

3.	How long have you been employed by Grape Creek ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer
		73.3%	15.6%	6.7%	0.0%	2.2%	2.2%

4.	Are you a(n):						
	a. administrator	13.3%	b. clerical staffer	8.9%	c. support staffer	71.1%	No Answer	6.7%

5.	How long have you been employed in this capacity by Grape Creek ISD?					
	1-5 years	79.5%	6-10 years	9.1%	11-15 years	6.8%
	16-20 years	0.0%	20+ years	0.0%	No Answer	4.5%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	28.9%	42.2%	26.6%	2.2%	0.0%

	Survey Questions					
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	33.3%	44.4%	13.3%	8.9%	0.0%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	33.3%	48.9%	6.6%	11.1%	0.0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	35.6%	46.7%	11.1%	6.7%	0.0%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	28.9%	51.1%	15.5%	2.2%	2.2%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	28.9%	46.7%	20.0%	4.4%	0.0%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	17.8%	57.8%	17.8%	4.4%	2.2%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	31.1%	46.7%	6.6%	15.6%	0.0%
9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	15.6%	46.7%	28.8%	8.9%	0.0%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	11.1%	40.0%	22.2%	24.4%	2.2%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	6.7%	46.7%	24.4%	17.8%	4.4%
12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					

a. Reading	20.0%	62.2%	11.1%	6.7%	0.0%
b. Writing	15.6%	62.2%	13.3%	8.9%	0.0%
c. Mathematics	17.8%	62.2%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%
d. Science	6.7%	68.9%	15.5%	8.9%	0.0%
e. English or Language Arts	15.6%	64.4%	15.5%	4.4%	0.0%
f. Computer Instruction	6.7%	46.7%	20.0%	24.4%	2.2%
g. Social Studies (history or geography)	8.9%	71.1%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%
h. Fine Arts	6.7%	57.8%	22.2%	13.3%	0.0%
i. Physical Education	17.8%	57.8%	17.8%	4.4%	2.2%
j. Business Education	4.4%	57.8%	24.4%	11.1%	0.0%
k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	6.7%	53.3%	33.3%	6.7%	0.0%
l. Foreign Language:	6.7%	53.3%	28.9%	11.1%	0.0%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:				
a. Library Service	22.2%	64.4%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	17.8%	46.7%	13.3%	20.0%	2.2%
c. Special Education	35.6%	53.3%	6.6%	4.4%	0.0%
d. Head Start and Even Start programs	15.6%	46.7%	31.1%	6.7%	0.0%
e. Dyslexia program	6.7%	37.8%	40.0%	13.3%	2.2%
f. Student mentoring program	13.3%	55.6%	24.4%	6.7%	0.0%
g. Advanced placement program	8.9%	37.8%	33.3%	20.0%	0.0%
h. Literacy program	8.9%	51.1%	33.3%	6.7%	0.0%
i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	8.9%	31.1%	42.2%	13.3%	2.2%

	j. Summer school programs	4.4%	60.0%	20.0%	15.6%	0.0%
	k. Alternative education programs	11.1%	40.0%	35.5%	11.1%	2.2%
	l. English as a Second Language program	8.9%	51.1%	31.1%	4.4%	4.4%
	m. Career counseling program	2.2%	40.0%	28.9%	20.0%	8.9%
	n. College counseling program	4.4%	28.9%	31.1%	26.7%	8.9%
	o. Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	35.6%	31.1%	26.7%	6.7%
	p. Dropout prevention program	4.4%	28.9%	46.6%	13.3%	6.7%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	13.3%	26.7%	28.8%	26.7%	4.4%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	4.4%	35.6%	28.8%	24.4%	6.7%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	6.7%	37.8%	33.3%	15.6%	6.7%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	6.7%	53.3%	28.8%	8.9%	2.2%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	2.2%	28.9%	35.6%	26.7%	4.4%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	2.2%	33.3%	46.6%	17.8%	0.0%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	13.3%	46.7%	22.2%	13.3%	4.4%
21.	The student-teacher ratio is reasonable.	11.1%	44.4%	22.2%	20.0%	2.2%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	31.1%	55.6%	13.4%	0.0%	0.0%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	8.9%	48.9%	28.8%	8.9%	4.4%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	31.1%	24.5%	33.3%	11.1%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	4.4%	46.7%	33.4%	11.1%	4.4%
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	4.4%	31.1%	26.6%	31.1%	6.7%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	2.2%	44.4%	26.7%	22.2%	4.4%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	4.4%	37.8%	35.6%	17.8%	4.4%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	11.1%	37.8%	33.4%	13.3%	4.4%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	22.2%	51.1%	20.0%	6.7%	0.0%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	2.2%	35.6%	37.8%	17.8%	6.7%
32.	Employees who perform	4.4%	28.9%	42.3%	20.0%	4.4%

	below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.					
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	4.4%	42.2%	42.2%	8.9%	2.2%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	6.7%	35.6%	33.3%	17.8%	6.7%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	17.8%	46.7%	20.0%	11.1%	2.2%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	8.9%	44.4%	15.5%	24.4%	6.7%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	4.4%	33.3%	15.5%	40.0%	4.4%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	13.3%	53.3%	28.9%	4.4%	0.0%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	13.3%	44.4%	28.8%	13.3%	0.0%
40.	The architect and	8.9%	35.6%	48.9%	6.7%	0.0%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.					
41.	Schools are clean.	13.3%	37.8%	15.5%	24.4%	8.9%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	11.1%	42.2%	17.7%	22.2%	6.7%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	13.3%	40.0%	22.2%	15.6%	8.9%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	22.2%	40.0%	24.4%	11.1%	2.2%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	13.3%	42.2%	35.5%	8.9%	0.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	4.4%	51.1%	28.8%	15.6%	0.0%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	2.2%	53.3%	31.1%	13.3%	0.0%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	13.3%	37.8%	42.2%	6.7%	0.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need	15.6%	31.1%	31.1%	20.0%	2.2%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	it.					
50.	Purchasing acquires the highest-quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	13.3%	42.2%	26.6%	17.8%	0.0%
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	13.3%	31.1%	33.3%	20.0%	2.2%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	8.9%	42.2%	26.6%	20.0%	2.2%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	13.3%	57.8%	24.4%	4.4%	0.0%
54.	Textbooks are in good shape.	8.9%	57.8%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
55.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources for students.	17.8%	48.9%	24.4%	8.9%	0.0%

H. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	15.6%	35.6%	26.7%	20.0%	2.2%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	6.7%	15.6%	26.6%	42.2%	8.9%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	6.7%	22.2%	17.7%	44.4%	8.9%
59.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	11.1%	35.6%	40.0%	8.9%	4.4%
60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by	6.7%	26.7%	57.8%	6.7%	2.2%

	the students they serve.					
61.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	24.4%	60.0%	11.1%	4.4%	0.0%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	11.1%	42.2%	15.5%	22.2%	8.9%

I. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	20.0%	42.2%	20.0%	15.6%	2.2%
64.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	17.8%	44.4%	22.2%	13.3%	2.2%
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	17.8%	51.1%	15.5%	13.3%	0.0%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	17.8%	55.6%	15.5%	8.9%	2.2%
67.	The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	15.6%	33.3%	31.1%	15.6%	4.4%
68.	The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	8.9%	24.4%	40.0%	20.0%	6.7%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	20.0%	48.9%	31.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Appendix C
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Comments

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of administrative and support staff survey respondents of Grape Creek Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team.

- Our elementary principals do not discipline at all the way they should. Sometimes things are not handled at all.
- The classrooms and cafeteria are not kept clean.
- As a substitute for numerous schools I feel that the administration is a joke. The principal acts like an immature child herself. The counselor has even told the students that she has come to expect them to fail. The teachers are in tears half of the time.
- Grape Creek does not provide pay raises for employees with 20 years or more.
- The insurance plan is too [costly] for teachers.
- Good teachers are not paid enough to keep them in our district.
- Administration is not consistent or strict enough with discipline techniques.
- Our plumbing is outdated.
- The needs of high-level students are not being met.
- Grape Creek ISD is providing the best education [it] can for our children with the resources [it has]. The Board of Trustees attends workshops to improve their knowledge and ability to do the best they can for the district. The district works with and encourages community participation in all areas. More classrooms are needed, but the money is not available.
- Curriculum - keyboarding is needed in the 4th, 5th and 6th. More computer fundamentals for 7th and 8th - of course HS could always use more computers for research projects. Speech in 7th and 8th.
- Non-college students need more guidance and help in preparing for job[s] and what is required for the work force and daily living.
- College-bound students need more help with college selection and scholarship or financial help.
- The state needs to help districts that grow too fast to keep up with buildings and equipment. Taxes and state funds are always a year behind after the children enter the school.
- Grape Creek ISD has recently gone from a K-8 district to K-12 district and is experiencing "growing pains." The current

administration is making great strides in financial management and also improvement the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Grape Creek ISD has a bright future.

- I am a retired teacher who subs regularly at Grape Creek ISD. I have been impressed with the quality of education I have observed there. I did not retire from this school system so I have been able to compare it with others and feel they have a good thing going and are working hard to improve the educational opportunities for their students.
- I believe that Grape Creek ISD student performance demonstrates the high commitment to academic education for all students. This district outperforms the state and regional averages in all AEIS indicators. Our special population students perform higher than other state and regional school districts and yet we have fewer exemptions on TAAS than other schools! GCISD does an excellent job educating students in this community.
- I believe that quality education for students is [goal] number 1 at Grape Creek ISD.
- I feel confident that my child is getting a good education from this school district.
- The superintendent continually looks for ways to improve our district. He is a vital individual that...is making a difference with our school.
- I feel it should be the law for all schools to have one adult aide and one adult bus driver on every bus, for the safety of our children.
- I live and substitute in San Angelo, which pays $52.00 per day as opposed to Grape Creek's $45.00 per day. I enjoy substituting at Grape Creek because aides come in and out of the rooms and...the substitute has a lot of positive support.
- I recently moved to this district with my 3rd grade daughter. I feel they are definitely meeting the educational needs of my daughter, although I would like them to give elementary students more computer classes (i.e. math and writing labs) and art classes as well as music-they have no art class and only go to music once a week. These classes don't seem important but they do get a child's creative juices flowing.
- I think the instructional aides at GCISD are sorely unappreciated. Not just by their salaries, but also by the fact that since they have no contract[s] they pull all the "other duties as assigned" designates. Yes, most of them don't have a college degree, but that doesn't mean they are less important than a teacher is. The morale among the instructional aides has been steadily decreasing for several years now. Over the last few years or so our so-called step salary increases have gone to increasing insurance cost. Most of our instructional aides work with groups of children and are just as responsible for the children's lessons as a teacher. The aides get no

conference period because they are in the copy room making copies.... This year, our elementary instructional aides are not only doing lunch duty for their grade level but also cover one lunch duty for middle school. The middle school students eat in their classroom and their aren't enough middle school aides to cover all the classrooms so the elementary aides are pulled away from our student's instructional time to cover the middle school lunches. Instructional aides are not covered by any TEA teacher laws so most of them are afraid to speak up for fear of being fired because they are not covered by a contract. I understand that working for a school district has its perks, i.e. summers and holidays off, etc. I know teachers aren't paid an extremely high salary but when you look at our aide's salaries of about $800.00 a month our school district should be ashamed! Our aides all attend the same in-services as the teachers and most of them attend summer workshops to better themselves also. Most of them also do their own lesson plans (with the teacher's approval) for the children they work with, and many times they are pulled when no substitute is available and teach the class for the entire day, and still have to do their lunch duty. When this happens the aide doesn't get a lunch period-they eat while doing their lunch duty. I hope things change very soon before we lose some very good aides to other jobs where they are appreciated and paid better.

- I would like to see the district and the administrators support (financially and physically) the fine arts programs as much as they do the athletic programs. Teacher morale is dangerously low. We as teachers would like the school board trustees to have a better understanding of what each of the campuses' strengths and weaknesses are. We would like to be able to communicate directly with the trustees and not be afraid of...repercussions [from] our campus administrators. Experienced and seasoned teachers that leave the district are never replaced with experienced teachers but with recent graduates. Much time is lost by having to train new teachers. The district should have incentives to attract experienced teachers.

- The district does not meet the needs of very intelligent and gifted students or those bound for technical or workforce jobs at the high school level. The district's support staff and paraprofessionals are underpaid. Facility maintenance, community input and lack of school violence and vandalism are high points.

- There is no security at school.

- Too much money is spent on athletics [such] as for grass seed to keep baseball fields green year round. Maintenance people do not do maintenance work...work is outsourced, plumbing, electrical, a/c, heating. Bus maintenance is also outsourced.... Not enough backup bus drivers.

- Transportation Department needs a lot of work done to make it run efficiently. Money is being wasted every day on these buses. We need to hire a full-time mechanic instead of putting these buses in a garage for every little thing that goes wrong with them. A lot of money would be saved.

Appendix D
PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 5

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer		
		60.0%	40.0%	0.0%		

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Angelo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

3.	How long have you been employed by Grape Creek ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
		80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%

4.	What grades are taught in your school?	Pre K to 5th	K to 5th	6th to 8th	9th to 12th
		40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3.	School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6.	Central administration is efficient.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
7.	Central administration supports the educational process.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
8.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
13.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
14.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

#						
15.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
16.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	Reading	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Writing	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Mathematics	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Science	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	English or Language Arts	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Computer Instruction	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Social Studies (history or geography)	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	j) Business Education	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	l) Foreign Language	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
17.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	Library Service	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Special Education	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Head Start and Even Start programs	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Dyslexia program	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Student mentoring program	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Advanced placement program	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Literacy program	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Summer school programs	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Alternative education programs	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	"English as a second language" program	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Career counseling program	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	College counseling program	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Counseling the parents of students	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%
	Drop out prevention program	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
18.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
19.	Teacher turnover is low.	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
20.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
22.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
23.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers. television	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	monitors, science labs, and art classes.					
24.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
25.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%
27.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
28.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
29.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
30.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
31.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
32.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
33.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	promotion.					
34.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
35.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
36.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
38.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
39.	District facilities are open for community use.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
42.	Buildings are properly	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	maintained in a timely manner.					
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
47.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
48.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
49.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
50.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
51.	The district provides	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Survey Questions					
	teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.					
52.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
53.	Textbooks are in good shape.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
54.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
56.	Food is served warm.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
57.	Students have enough time to eat.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
58.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
59.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
60.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
61.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
62.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

I. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
64.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
66.	Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
68.	School disturbances are infrequent.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
69.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
70.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
71.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
72.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
73.	Security personnel are	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	respected and liked by the students they serve.					
74.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
75.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
76.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77.	Students regularly use computers.	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
78.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%
79.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
80.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%
81.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%

83.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%

NARRATIVE RESPONSES

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of principal and assistant principal survey respondents of Grape Creek Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team.

- In spite of our over crowded facilities at the elementary and middle school, our schools academically are doing well. Financially we have a tight budget, yet funds are available for instruction. This past year has shown tremendous growth in technology at this campus. A technology cart with the ability to have distance learning in the classroom is now available. Each classroom has two computers with Internet access. We still need additional computers to meet the technology needs. Space is a hideous. We have very dedicated teachers and a central office that supports what we try to do.
- The Middle School faculty/staff is very caring and works hard to meet the needs of the 6th, 7th and 8th graders. I believe they do an exemplary job!

Appendix E
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 53

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer	
		5.7%	88.7%	5.7%	

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Angelo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
		90.6%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%

3.	How long have you been employed by Grape Creek ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer
		56.6%	20.8%	5.7%	1.9%	7.5%	7.5%

4.	What grade(s) do you teach this year?	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third
		1.9%	20.8%	18.9%	18.9%	11.3%
		Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
		13.2%	0.0	18.9%	17.0%	18.9%
		Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth	
		20.8%	22.6%	20.8%	17.0%	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. District Organization And Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	13.2%	43.4%	37.80%	5.7%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	17.0%	47.2%	22.70%	13.2%	0.0%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	18.9%	49.1%	28.30%	3.8%	0.0%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	13.2%	49.1%	17.00%	20.8%	0.0%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	22.6%	34.0%	15.10%	22.6%	5.7%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	28.3%	35.8%	18.90%	13.2%	3.8%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	17.0%	50.9%	13.20%	17.0%	1.9%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	18.9%	45.3%	20.80%	11.3%	3.8%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	13.2%	37.7%	35.80%	9.4%	3.8%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	24.5%	56.6%	3.80%	13.2%	1.9%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	17.0%	50.9%	5.70%	24.5%	1.9%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	13.2%	30.2%	20.80%	28.3%	7.5%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	7.5%	26.4%	30.20%	32.1%	3.8%

14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	22.6%	64.2%	3.80%	7.5%	1.9%
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	15.1%	52.8%	15.10%	13.2%	3.8%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	11.3%	41.5%	15.10%	26.4%	5.7%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	22.6%	58.5%	11.30%	5.7%	0.0%
	b. Writing	17.0%	50.9%	17.00%	13.2%	1.9%
	c. Mathematics	18.9%	64.2%	5.70%	11.3%	0.0%
	d. Science	17.0%	56.6%	9.40%	15.1%	1.9%
	e. English or Language Arts	18.9%	62.3%	13.20%	5.7%	0.0%
	f. Computer Instruction	7.5%	22.6%	17.00%	41.5%	11.3%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	18.9%	52.8%	18.90%	7.5%	1.9%
	h. Fine Arts	11.3%	45.3%	15.10%	24.5%	3.8%
	i. Physical Education	17.0%	62.3%	17.00%	1.9%	1.9%
	j. Business Education	5.7%	47.2%	35.80%	11.3%	0.0%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	3.8%	28.3%	34.00%	32.1%	0.0%
	l. Foreign Language	3.8%	34.0%	35.80%	20.8%	5.7%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	11.3%	62.3%	15.10%	7.5%	3.8%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	3.8%	34.0%	13.20%	41.5%	7.5%

	c. Special Education	24.5%	56.6%	3.80%	11.3%	3.8%
	d. Head Start and Even Start programs	3.8%	47.2%	43.40%	0.0%	5.7%
	e. Dyslexia program	0.0%	30.2%	28.30%	35.8%	5.7%
	f. Student mentoring program	5.7%	45.3%	30.20%	17.0%	1.9%
	g. Advanced placement program	3.8%	28.3%	45.30%	18.9%	3.8%
	h. Literacy program	1.9%	20.8%	67.90%	7.5%	1.9%
	i. Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	7.5%	30.2%	35.80%	24.5%	1.9%
	j. Summer school programs	9.4%	47.2%	20.80%	13.2%	9.4%
	k. Alternative education programs	7.5%	32.1%	41.50%	18.9%	0.0%
	l. "English as a Second Language" program	7.5%	43.4%	30.20%	18.9%	0.0%
	m. Career counseling program	1.9%	24.5%	39.60%	30.2%	3.8%
	n. College counseling program	3.8%	18.9%	45.30%	22.6%	9.4%
	o. Counseling the parents of students	1.9%	22.6%	35.90%	32.1%	7.5%
	p. Drop out prevention program	5.7%	15.1%	52.90%	24.5%	1.9%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	11.3%	39.6%	17.00%	28.3%	3.8%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	0.0%	34.0%	11.30%	37.7%	17.0%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	9.4%	39.6%	15.10%	32.1%	3.8%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	9.4%	43.4%	30.20%	13.2%	3.8%
23.	Teachers are rewarded	1.9%	17.0%	15.10%	52.8%	13.2%

	Survey Questions					
	for superior performance.					
24.	Teachers are counseled about less-than-satisfactory performance.	1.9%	37.7%	26.40%	32.1%	1.9%
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	13.2%	67.9%	13.20%	5.7%	0.0%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	9.4%	39.6%	13.20%	28.3%	7.5%
27.	The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	13.2%	47.2%	5.70%	32.1%	1.9%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	26.4%	39.6%	13.20%	20.8%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	20.8%	15.10%	43.4%	18.9%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	13.2%	58.5%	9.40%	17.0%	1.9%
31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	3.8%	30.2%	28.30%	35.8%	1.9%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	1.9%	30.2%	34.00%	30.2%	3.8%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	3.8%	26.4%	41.50%	24.5%	3.8%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	11.3%	58.5%	7.50%	18.9%	3.8%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	24.5%	73.6%	0.00%	1.9%	0.0%
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.0%	15.1%	26.40%	47.2%	11.3%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	3.8%	24.5%	39.60%	30.2%	1.9%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	5.7%	28.3%	43.40%	15.1%	7.5%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	13.2%	30.2%	7.50%	32.1%	17.0%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	13.2%	67.9%	5.70%	11.3%	0.0%
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	9.4%	47.2%	17.00%	20.8%	5.7%
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	1.9%	24.5%	18.90%	47.2%	7.5%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	17.0%	45.3%	28.30%	9.4%	0.0%

E. Facilities Use And Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	1.9%	18.9%	17.00%	50.9%	11.3%
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	5.7%	43.4%	24.50%	22.6%	3.8%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	1.9%	26.4%	69.80%	1.9%	0.0%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	7.5%	52.8%	32.10%	5.7%	1.9%
48.	Schools are clean.	7.5%	34.0%	7.50%	34.0%	17.0%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	1.9%	41.5%	11.30%	34.0%	11.3%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	3.8%	43.4%	11.30%	32.1%	9.4%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	3.8%	71.7%	7.50%	13.2%	3.8%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to	11.3%	34.0%	34.00%	17.0%	3.8%

	Survey Questions					
	extend the involvement of principals and teachers.					
53.	Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	9.4%	41.5%	41.50%	7.5%	0.0%
54.	Financial reports are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	5.7%	34.0%	18.90%	37.7%	3.8%

G. Purchasing And Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	9.4%	45.3%	5.70%	37.7%	1.9%
56.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	7.5%	52.8%	24.50%	13.2%	1.9%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	7.5%	28.3%	13.20%	50.9%	0.0%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	9.4%	58.5%	30.20%	1.9%	0.0%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	9.4%	35.8%	20.80%	28.3%	5.7%
60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	17.0%	58.5%	13.20%	11.3%	0.0%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape.	13.2%	71.7%	9.40%	5.7%	0.0%
62.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other	7.5%	62.3%	9.40%	17.0%	3.8%

		resources.					

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	1.9%	18.9%	24.50%	34.0%	20.8%
64.	Food is served warm.	1.9%	54.7%	13.20%	22.6%	7.5%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	5.7%	67.9%	7.50%	17.0%	1.9%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes	9.4%	47.2%	15.10%	26.4%	1.9%
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	9.4%	62.3%	11.30%	11.3%	5.7%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	5.7%	41.5%	24.50%	24.5%	3.8%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	7.5%	64.2%	15.10%	13.2%	0.0%

I. Safety And Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	15.1%	67.9%	1.90%	11.3%	3.8%
71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	11.3%	56.6%	20.80%	11.3%	0.0%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	1.9%	43.4%	11.30%	41.5%	1.9%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.5%	32.1%	20.80%	37.7%	1.9%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with	9.4%	28.3%	60.40%	1.9%	0.0%

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	principals and teachers.					
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	5.7%	28.3%	64.20%	1.9%	0.0%
76.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	28.3%	66.0%	5.70%	0.0%	0.0%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	15.1%	32.1%	3.80%	30.2%	18.9%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	1.9%	50.9%	15.10%	26.4%	5.7%

J. Computers And Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	7.5%	39.6%	3.80%	37.7%	11.3%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	3.8%	37.7%	11.30%	32.1%	15.1%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	9.4%	54.7%	7.50%	26.4%	1.9%
82.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	7.5%	62.3%	9.40%	17.0%	3.8%
83.	The district meets students' needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	5.7%	20.8%	17.00%	37.7%	18.9%
84.	The district meets students' needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	1.9%	22.6%	35.80%	22.6%	17.0%

85.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	15.1%	56.6%	1.90%	20.8%	5.7%

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of teacher survey respondents of Grape Creek Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team.

- Older portable buildings need to be replaced. The students need access to more restrooms.
- The staff is always helpful to each other and there is never any Pturmoil between teachers. Our school is very safe and the Tom Green County Sheriff's office is always here if we need help. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this district.

Appendix F
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 49

1.	Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response
		57.1%	42.9%	0.0%

2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Response
		71.4%	0.0%	18.4%	2.0%	6.1%	2.0%

3.	What is your classification?	Junior	Senior	No Answer
		36.7%	63.3%	0.0%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	6.1%	67.3%	14.3%	10.2%	2.0%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	6.1%	61.2%	26.5%	6.1%	0.0%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a. Reading	14.3%	65.3%	10.2%	10.2%	0.0%
	b. Writing	10.2%	69.4%	10.2%	10.2%	0.0%
	c. Mathematics	28.6%	59.2%	12.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	d. Science	16.3%	67.3%	8.2%	8.2%	0.0%
	e. English or Language Arts	20.4%	69.4%	6.1%	4.1%	0.0%

	f. Computer Instruction	8.2%	71.4%	12.2%	2.0%	6.1%
	g. Social Studies (history or geography)	10.2%	71.4%	10.2%	8.2%	0.0%
	h. Fine Arts	20.4%	51.0%	18.4%	10.2%	0.0%
	i. Physical Education	18.4%	61.2%	14.3%	6.1%	0.0%
	j. Business Education	8.2%	46.9%	32.7%	12.2%	0.0%
	k. Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	6.1%	38.8%	36.7%	12.2%	4.1%
	l. Foreign Language	8.2%	53.1%	32.7%	6.1%	0.0%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a. Library Service	22.4%	67.3%	6.1%	2.0%	2.0%
	b. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	8.2%	44.9%	28.6%	12.2%	6.1%
	c. Special Education	8.2%	55.1%	34.7%	2.0%	0.0%
	d. Student mentoring program	4.1%	22.4%	53.0%	18.4%	2.0%
	e. Advanced placement program	10.2%	55.1%	24.4%	8.2%	2.0%
	f. Career counseling program	8.2%	34.7%	44.9%	10.2%	2.0%
	g. College counseling program	10.2%	44.9%	30.6%	12.2%	2.0%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	32.7%	59.2%	4.1%	4.1%	0.0%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	12.2%	59.2%	10.2%	14.3%	4.1%
7.	The district provides a high quality education.	10.2%	57.1%	18.4%	14.3%	0.0%
8.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	12.2%	38.8%	30.6%	16.3%	2.0%

B. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	12.2%	75.5%	10.2%	2.0%	0.0%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	16.3%	75.5%	6.1%	2.0%	0.0%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	12.2%	38.8%	28.6%	20.4%	0.0%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled in a timely manner.	16.3%	51.0%	28.6%	4.1%	0.0%

C. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	20.4%	53.1%	4.1%	22.4%	0.0%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	26.5%	61.2%	10.2%	2.0%	0.0%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape.	18.4%	61.2%	8.2%	8.2%	4.1%
16.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	32.7%	53.1%	10.2%	2.0%	2.0%

D. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available	26.5%	57.1%	12.2%	4.1%	0.0%

	Survey Questions					
	to all children.					
18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0.0%	6.1%	34.7%	36.7%	22.4%
19.	Food is served warm.	2.0%	42.9%	30.6%	20.4%	4.1%
20.	Students have enough time to eat.	2.0%	22.4%	2.0%	49.0%	24.5%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	12.2%	69.4%	12.2%	6.1%	0.0%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	10.2%	14.3%	8.2%	34.7%	32.7%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the schools cafeteria.	2.0%	46.9%	36.7%	10.2%	4.1%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	10.2%	51.0%	28.6%	4.1%	6.1%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	4.1%	51.0%	38.8%	4.1%	2.0%

E. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	4.1%	4.1%	28.6%	16.3%	46.9%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	6.1%	6.1%	79.6%	6.1%	2.0%
28.	The length of the bus ride is reasonable.	8.2%	10.2%	79.6%	0.0%	2.0%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	14.3%	10.2%	75.5%	0.0%	0.0%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	12.2%	8.2%	77.6%	0.0%	2.0%
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our	10.2%	10.2%	77.6%	2.0%	0.0%

	home.					
32.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	4.1%	8.2%	85.7%	2.0%	0.0%
33.	Buses arrive early enough to eat breakfast at school.	10.2%	10.2%	77.6%	2.0%	0.0%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	6.1%	8.2%	73.5%	12.2%	0.0%
35.	Buses are clean.	6.1%	6.1%	73.5%	10.2%	4.1%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	8.2%	10.2%	77.6%	2.0%	2.0%

F. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	12.2%	69.4%	16.3%	0.0%	2.0%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	10.2%	59.2%	20.4%	10.2%	0.0%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	26.5%	63.3%	8.2%	2.0%	0.0%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	4.1%	22.4%	24.5%	34.7%	14.3%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	6.1%	32.7%	30.6%	28.6%	2.0%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	6.1%	55.1%	34.7%	2.0%	2.0%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	4.1%	49.0%	36.7%	8.2%	2.0%
44.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the	6.1%	65.3%	26.5%	0.0%	2.0%

	Survey Questions					
	district.					
45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	4.1%	57.1%	20.4%	14.3%	4.1%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	6.1%	44.9%	36.7%	10.2%	2.0%

G. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	20.4%	42.9%	10.2%	24.5%	2.0%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	16.3%	65.3%	6.1%	8.2%	4.1%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	18.4%	69.4%	2.0%	8.2%	2.0%
50.	The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	10.2%	51.0%	14.3%	16.3%	6.1%
51.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	6.1%	46.9%	20.4%	18.4%	8.2%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	16.3%	46.9%	8.2%	22.4%	6.1%

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of student survey respondents of Grape Creek Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team.

- As a whole I believe the school is a good one. I've been in school at GCISD since I was in kindergarten. However, I think some of the staff does need more experience and knowledge. Most consider quite a few of them "push-overs" because of the lack of discipline.
- Grape Creek ISD has a great educational performance.
- I feel that the discipline, and officials "in charge" are lacking in understanding, where drastic measures are taken for small misconduct infractions, little is done to those students who have a reputation for misconduct.
- I feel that this is a good school but students are not treated fairly or respected when it comes down to discipline.
- I feel there needs to be more emphasis on mathematics, English, and gifted and talented programs. Students often dread going to English classes because the teacher teaches with a strong Spanish accent. She is hard to understand and is frequently irresponsible with students' papers. Students, when in her class, feel they actually digress through the year with her.
- I'm a senior, but for the underclassmen coming up right now and in the future I would like to see more computer and technology related educational opportunities available to them. If they can get that accomplished then GCHS will be on the right track toward providing a well-rounded education for the kids.
- Inadequate computer teachers. Teachers have low knowledge of computers.
- It's a small town school. So I think that they treat it differently than large schools. It's "simple" at best.
- Priorities are placed in the wrong areas.
- Some of our teachers help us for college and are excellent teachers. Some other teachers don't even seem like they know what they are doing. However, one of the teachers I feel aren't doing very well, do excellent in the other subjects they teach. I just think our administrators need to make sure that all of our teachers are fair and can teach the subject they are supposed to.
- Teachers sometimes care whether or not you pass or not. Some give us a few questions and then leave most of the class period! Sometimes don't enforce discipline in the classroom.
- The school needs better cafeteria food. A school-to-work cooperative program should be established. Most of all, trouble makers (class clowns, thugs) should be dealt with.