

Navasota Independent School District



LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
with
MGT of America, Inc.
June 2009

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

JUNE 2009

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LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

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June 30, 2009

Mr. Jennings Teel
Superintendent
Navasota Independent School District

Dear Mr. Teel:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Navasota Independent School District's (NISD) educational, financial, and operational functions.

The report's recommendations will help NISD improve its overall performance as it provides services to students, staff, and community members. The report also highlights model practices and programs being provided by Navasota ISD.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged MGT of America, Inc. to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John O'Brien", written over a horizontal line.

John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. John Price
Ms. Marilyn Bettes
Mr. Phillip Cox
Mr. Hollis Hood
Mr. Don Lemon
Mr. Kevin Clark
Mr. Danny Kniffin

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Navasota Independent School District's (NISD's) school performance review notes 10 commendable practices and makes 60 recommendations for improvement. This Executive Summary highlights the district's significant accomplishments and presents the review team's findings and recommendations. A copy of the full report is available at www.lbb.state.tx.us.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- NISD has a full-time grant coordinator who writes, submits, tracks, and reports grant-related funding for the district to supplement state and district revenue impacting instructional programs. NISD received more than \$330,000 in grant funds in school year 2007–08, and more than double that amount during school year 2008–09 by winning over nearly \$687,000. Over \$400,000 of these total funds in the past two years were awarded as a Rural Technology Grant. The district used the first Rural Technology Grant award to focus on math and reading using a computer-based after school tutorial program. In addition, the district tracks their grant funds with a detailed spreadsheet to ensure ongoing contracts are using the appropriate funds, especially as grant funds expire. The spread sheet also tracks the funds that can be used for equipment, software, and personnel. This process prevents NISD from spending operational funds on grant-related expenditures.
- NISD established an education foundation in 2002 as a vehicle through which tax-deductible donations could be made to the district to support education programs. The foundation primarily provides grants to teachers, ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars. Teachers apply for funds to assist with implementation of existing classroom projects or proposed projects that provide extensions to the regular instructional program. Since fall 2003, the foundation has funded grants in excess of \$226,000. Grants for fall 2008 and spring 2009 totaled nearly \$23,000 and were awarded to seven projects at five Navasota schools.
- NISD has developed an employee Human Resources handbook that serves as a guide for district actions related to personnel issues and is provided to

all new employees and available on the district's intranet for all employees to access. The 87-page handbook provides detailed directions regarding such information as employment contracts, time-off policies, benefit information, compensation and evaluation information, legal issues, and grievance procedures. Furthermore, the handbook helps lessen time spent by central office staff to answer personnel-related questions.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- A lack of transparency in financial management has created several discrepancies and unexplained financial or fiscal issues in the district.
- NISD does not have adequate internal controls for some of its business office processes.
- NISD's Business Office does not maintain adequate contract monitoring or evaluation procedures regarding all NISD contracted services.
- NISD's organizational chart does not accurately reflect how the central office is organized to conduct business and shows inappropriate alignment of some functions which does not support efficient and effective operations.
- NISD lacks a systemic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system, both horizontally and vertically.
- NISD lacks consistency of using differentiated instruction to decrease performance gaps among its various student groups.
- NISD does not project short and long-range enrollment, calculate school capacities and utilization rates and lacks educational specifications for district facilities.

SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

- **NISD should cooperate with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding the recommendation of the Legislative Budget Board that TEA conduct**

an investigation of NISD under the provisions of the Texas Education Code §39.074, On-Site Investigations, and §39.075, Special Accreditation Investigations. A lack of transparency in financial management has created several discrepancies or unexplained financial or fiscal issues in the district. Both district administration and the NISD board appear to have been involved in inadequate decision-making. NISD administration could not provide clear explanations and documentation regarding discrepancies about bond construction funds and the child nutrition program's fund balance discrepancies. In addition, the Board of Trustees approved a deficit budget for 2008–09 for an employee pay increase (a reoccurring expense) that places the district in a precarious financial position that may create future deficits, eventually eroding remaining reserves. Furthermore, while the district provides some data on budgets and finances on the NISD website, the information is not the most current data. For example, a 2006–07 budget summary and a 2007–08 budget comparison are published on the website; yet no current budget or expenditure data is published, nor is the district's check register available online to provide for additional transparency. Recommendations to assist the district in becoming more financially efficient, located in other areas of the report, include: documenting and reporting the district's performance in managing capital construction programs, developing a financial reporting format that is useful to the child nutrition director in making management decisions and assisting the business office in resolving discrepancies in the child nutrition program's funds, and developing and following a fund balance policy. The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) has requested a TEA investigation regarding these issues.

- **Reassign business office duties to improve internal controls.** The district does not have adequate internal controls for some of its business office processes. Internal controls play an important role in preventing and detecting fraud and protecting an organization's resources, both physical (machinery and property) and intangible (reputation or intellectual property, such as trademarks). Separation of duties is one of the key concepts of internal control and is the most difficult—and sometimes the most costly—to achieve. The review team observed two areas in which separation of duties is not adequately achieved. First, the accounting clerk

has custody of the district's supply of vendor checks, access to the check signature machine, and the ability to generate checks from the automated financial system. In addition, the accounting clerk has the ability to set up vendors in the payment system. Likewise, the payroll bookkeeper has access to the district's check stock and has the ability to establish new employees in the payroll system and adjust pay rates. Finally, the payroll bookkeeper is responsible for transferring bank funds to the district's payroll account and can establish electronic transfers of funds to individual employee bank accounts for payroll direct deposit transactions as part of the position's business-related duties. Establishing adequate controls can be difficult in small organizations such as NISD due to the limited number of staff members available to share duties. However, failure to reassign some duties may leave the district at risk of accounting irregularities. Furthermore, lack of sound controls could place employees in the position of unfairly being questioned in the event that an irregularity occurs.

CONTRACT OVERSIGHT

- **Develop contract monitoring procedures that clearly assign responsibility and specify steps necessary to ensure that the district is receiving the goods and services it contracts for at the appropriate prices.** NISD's business office does not maintain adequate contract monitoring procedures. In school year 2007–08, the district contracted for 14 percent of its total expenditures or \$4.4 million in contracts compared to \$31.5 million of total expenditures. While the business manager and central administration personnel are responsible for obtaining bids or quotations for contracted services, evaluating vendor responses, negotiating terms of the contracts, and providing adequate information to board members, interviews with staff indicated that the district lacks a formal process to ensure coordination and oversight of contract activities or evaluation processes for its contracts. The lack of such activities leaves the district vulnerable and unprotected. For example, the lack of specificity in the district's transportation contract, lack of performance expectations, and general lack of formal oversight of the transportation program, has repeatedly left NISD open to receiving poor services from their longstanding transportation provider. Furthermore, there are no

provisions or penalties for non-performance other than dissolution of the contract or binding arbitration. In addition, the district's lack of periodic review of a contract's language can impact the district's budget when there are no provisions to ensure the contractor cannot raise fees prior to the renewal of the contract. For example, the district's legal services contract does not stipulate the fees that will be paid to a partner, associate partner, or paralegal staff providing legal services to the district. Consequently, the business office staff charged with reviewing invoices for consistency with the board's understanding of the agreed upon fees cannot be certain if the invoice being reviewed is correct when the contract does not specify what fees are being charged for the work that was done. Recommendations located in various areas of the report regarding contract monitoring include: renegotiating the contract with Durham School Services to ensure there is a clear understanding of the level of service expected, conducting an annual review of legal services, and revising the legal services contract to include specific hourly rates for services that are outside the scope of those included in the annual retainer fee.

REORGANIZATION

- **Develop a new district organizational structure for central administration and implement the structure with board approval.** NISD's current organizational chart does not accurately reflect how the central office is organized to conduct business and shows inappropriate alignment of some functions. The district's official organizational chart has not been revised since 2005. Currently the district's organization shows the superintendent having 16 direct reports; assistant superintendent, business manager, director of Athletics, director of Technology, instructional technology specialist, five principals, five academic coordinators, and a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator. The superintendent is not only responsible for these 16 direct reports but also oversees the function of facilities construction. In addition, the organization also shows the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (assistant superintendent) as responsible for other functions; including maintenance, grants and child nutrition services. These functions are inconsistent with the

position's overall responsibilities as described in the position's job description. The district's organization further shows that the district math coordinator reports directly to the high school principal and may not be fully used districtwide to assist other campuses in mathematics. In addition, the district custodians are accountable in part to the business manager, director of Maintenance, and the principals. NISD's current organizational structure can lead to several major issues including: inappropriate alignment of functions among the central office staff resulting in poor coordination of services to staff, students, and the community; excessive number of direct reports for one individual with a potential to cause inefficient handling of responsibilities; organizational disconnect by assigning a position to the wrong supervisory position; an appropriate number of staff dedicated to a particular function; and duplication of efforts resulting in poor communication among staff. Recommendations located in various areas of the report regarding the reorganization of central administration include: expanding the existing organizational structure of the Human Resources department by establishing a coordinator position; creating a position of ombudsman and developing a strategic communications plan designed to provide a means for both internal and external stakeholders to openly discuss matters of concern; and finally, expanding the current part-time position of director of Maintenance to full-time to incur additional responsibilities of energy management.

CURRICULUM

- **Establish a process to formalize the district implementation plan for CSCOPE, including a strong implementation and evaluation component.** NISD lacks a systemic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system, both horizontally and vertically. In school year 2006–07, Navasota Intermediate and Navasota High School were both considered *Academically Unacceptable* according to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) accountability system, and failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards required under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). As a result, a decision was made to implement the curriculum management system, Curriculum Scope (CSCOPE), at these two campuses and introduce

CSCOPE to the rest of the campuses in spring 2008. In school year 2007–08 both campuses were rated *Academically Acceptable*, however, the high school *Missed AYP* for a second consecutive school year. In addition, district staff indicate that neither district campus administrators nor teachers are implementing CSCOPE in a systematic way either horizontally or vertically. Teachers are allowed to use their professional judgment in choosing either the CSCOPE concept-based lesson/units or materials developed locally. Campus administration and teachers are also unclear about district expectations regarding the use of CSCOPE as a management tool for all subjects or only the four core subjects. Finally, district academic coordinators are unable to monitor all teachers regarding the level of implementation of the curriculum management system and the district/campus improvement plans do not reflect clear implementation procedures, resources, timelines, or evaluation techniques to ensure successful implementation of CSCOPE. There is a need for written district implementation procedures for the CSCOPE process including an ongoing professional development component, a timeline for specific implementation, monitoring of implementation, and a formative evaluation process to ensure the horizontal and vertical alignment of the district's curriculum.

- **Design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to decrease performance gaps in student groups.** The district lacks consistency of using differentiated instruction to decrease performance gaps among its student groups. During interviews, administrators, academic/content coordinators, and the campus intervention team monitor stated that, in general, the teachers at NISD campuses do not individualize instruction through differentiation to close the gaps in student group performance. Through classroom observations and in meetings with teacher focus groups at each campus, the review team noted that teachers were aware of gaps among student groups, but did not identify differentiation as a method of addressing gaps. While the district and campus plans have an objective for improving student performance for all students and all student groups, the plans do not reflect consistent differentiation of instruction for the purpose of closing achievement gaps among student

groups. Achievement gaps among student groups, by subject and grade, in student performance as students progress through the system are particularly pronounced in mathematics and science. A review of student data reveals that NISD African-American, Economically Disadvantaged, and Hispanic students consistently scored below White students at NISD and their counterparts in the state and region. While the district has adopted Regional Education Service Center Region XVI Development Management of Assessment Curriculum system, the data tracking and disaggregation system, and CSCOPE as a core curriculum management system, teachers are not consistently using these tools for differentiated instruction to close the gaps in student achievement for student groups. The gaps in the scores must be addressed by focusing on individual students through differentiated instruction. Not all students are alike and no two students learn the same way, therefore, it is critical that the district differentiate instruction so that students have multiple options for taking information and making sense of ideas, adjusting the curriculum for learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves to the curriculum.

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

- **Develop short and long-range enrollment projections on an annual basis, establish a methodology to determine the capacity of schools, and create educational specifications prior to commencing new construction projects.** The district does not project short and long-range enrollment to calculate school capacities and lacks educational specifications for district facilities. Since the district does not project enrollments and does not know the capacity of its schools, it cannot project whether the schools will be overcrowded or underutilized in future years. In addition, staff interviews indicate no educational specifications were prepared to guide the design of the 2004 bond projects; instead the superintendent and the architect prepared the final designs which were approved by the school board. Current board policy for facility standards requires that all new facilities and major renovations require educational specifications with input from teachers, other school campus staff, and district program staff. Educational specifications for a school design project is the result of the collaborative process by

numerous stakeholders that details the educational goals of the district for the new school being built, the educational delivery system to be used, the community uses of the facility, the sustainability and energy efficiency philosophy of the building, and the number and types of rooms, the types of storage, and the information technology systems to be utilized. By providing short and long-range student enrollments, calculating the current and future utilization rates based on projected enrollments and incorporating educational specifications, the district can better plan facility needs and future bond programs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Navasota ISD, a rural district located in the southern part of Grimes County approximately 25 miles south of Bryan-College Station, serves the City of Navasota with an estimated 7,400 residents.
- Navasota became an independent school district in October 1947 and in 1964, a “Freedom of Choice” plan began the process of desegregating the district’s schools. By 1968–69, the plan was completed with the integration of Carver High School (an African American school) within Navasota High School.
- From school years 2003–04 through 2007–08, NISD student enrollment decreased by 2.5 percent. However, in school year 2008–09 the district added 26 students for a total of 2,945 students; up from 2,919 previously in school year 2007–08. The district’s student population is divided into three main ethnic groups, Hispanic (39.5 percent), White (32.6 percent), and African-American (27.5 percent) with a population of more than 72 percent Economically Disadvantaged in school year 2008–09.
- In school year 2007–08, Navasota ISD had 422.7 full-time equivalent staff members, with 62.9 percent or 218.8 identified as teachers.
- The district is ranked as *Academically Acceptable* in the state’s accountability system in school year 2008–09.
- In school year 2006–07, Navasota Intermediate and Navasota High School were both considered *Academically Unacceptable* according to TEA’s Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and failed to meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP)

standards required under No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

- In school year 2007–08, Navasota ISD had an overall (all tests taken) Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) passing rate of 61 percent compared to the state average of 72 percent, or 11 percentage points lower.
- The district has been rated *Superior Achievement* from fiscal years 2004–05 through 2006–07 in the state’s financial accountability system School FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas).
- The district is served by the Regional Education Service Center IV (Region 6) in Huntsville.
- Mr. Jennings Teel has been the district’s superintendent for the past four years.

SCHOOLS

The district has six schools, including the following:

- Navasota High School;
- Navasota Success Academy (an alternative Learning Center);
- Navasota Junior High School;
- Navasota Intermediate School (Grades 4 and 5);
- High Point Elementary School (Grades Pre–K through grade 5).
- John C. Webb Elementary School (Grades Pre–K through grade 3).

FINANCIAL DATA

- Total actual 2007–08 expenditures: \$31.5 million.
- Fund balance as a percent of total budgeted expenditures was 15.8 percent (2007–08) compared to the state at 19.4.
- Preliminary 2008–09 Tax Rate: \$1.268 (\$1.040 Maintenance and Operations and \$0.228 Interest and Sinking).
- Preliminary NISD total wealth per student: \$376,155 with wealth per WADA (2007–08) at \$295,768.
- In 2007–08, 44 percent of total actual expenditures were spent on instruction while 53.7 percent of actual operating expenditures were spent on instruction.

- Instructional expenditure ratio (general funds) was reported at 56.5 percent compared to the state at 64.1 percent.

The chapters that follow contain a summary of the district's accomplishments, findings, and numbered recommendations. Detailed explanations for accomplishments and recommendations follow the summary and include fiscal impacts.

Each chapter concludes with a fiscal impact chart listing the chapter's recommendations and associated savings or costs for 2009–10 through 2013–14.

Following the chapters are the appendices that contain the results from the district surveys conducted by the review team.

The following table summarizes the fiscal impact of all 60 recommendations in the performance review.

FISCAL IMPACT

	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Gross Savings	\$95,664	\$381,508	\$381,508	\$486,332	\$486,332	\$1,831,344	\$0
Gross Costs	(\$79,039)	(\$311,153)	(\$311,153)	(\$288,977)	(\$288,977)	(\$1,279,299)	(\$58,501)
Total	\$16,625	\$70,355	\$70,355	\$197,355	\$197,355	\$552,045	(\$58,501)

CHAPTER 1

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 1. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Navasota Independent School District (NISD) encompasses 360 miles and is located in the southern part of Grimes County. According to school year 2008–09 data, the district has a student population of 2,945 with a diverse student demographic distribution: Hispanic 39.5 percent, White 32.6 percent, African American 27.5 percent, Asian/Pacific Islander 0.3 percent, and Native American 0.2 percent. Students are served by Navasota High School, Navasota Junior High School, Navasota Intermediate School, High Point Elementary School, and John C. Webb Elementary School. In school year 2007–08 the district was ranked Academically Acceptable with one Recognized campus and four Academically Acceptable campuses. In addition, NISD houses the Grimes County Special Education Cooperative.

The assistant superintendent is responsible for the district curriculum program and the instructional programs at each campus are led by the principal and a full-time academic coordinator. Each campus has a full-time counselor, nurse, and librarian. District special services include Gifted and Talented (G/T), Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL), Title I, Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Special Education programs.

The district is implementing a districtwide scope and sequence in the content areas combined with the use of a district management assessment and curriculum system to address improvement in student performance.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- NISD has a full-time grant coordinator who writes, submits, tracks, and reports grant-related funding for the district to supplement state and district revenue, impacting instructional programs.

FINDINGS

- NISD lacks a comprehensive, planning process for the development of the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) as required in board policies and state statutes.
- NISD lacks a systemic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system, both horizontally and vertically.

- Navasota High School lacks a school improvement process to ensure improved student performance.
- The district lacks consistency of using differentiated instruction to decrease gaps in student group performance.
- The NISD Gifted and Talented Program lacks a process for identifying and serving G/T students, evaluating the program, and sharing information with the appropriate stakeholders as required by board policies.
- NISD lacks a plan to provide professional development, information sharing, and data analysis to ensure the monitoring and analysis of student performance.
- NISD lacks a clearly defined Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that outlines the program's expectations and ensures coordination among the district's counseling staff.
- The Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) lacks an effective instructional delivery plan for students assigned to the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Revise the district and campus planning process to ensure that the plans give clear direction and are used to guide district operations that will lead to improved student performance.**
- **Recommendation 2: Establish a process to formalize the district implementation plan for CSCOPE, including a strong implementation and evaluation component.**
- **Recommendation 3: Identify and implement a research-based high school improvement process designed to improve student performance.**
- **Recommendation 4: Design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to decrease performance gaps in student groups.**

- **Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a Gifted and Talented program evaluation process that ensures students are appropriately identified for services and that stakeholders are kept abreast of the program's progress.**
- **Recommendation 6: Develop a professional development plan and process for the analysis and use of student data to decrease performance gaps in student groups.**
- **Recommendation 7: Create a Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that establishes the program's expectations and includes a requirement for coordination with the district's counselors.**
- **Recommendation 8: Conduct an extensive needs assessment that includes the six best practice components essential to quality alternative programs and use the results from the needs assessment to develop a written plan that focuses on teaching and learning at the DAEP.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

EFFECTIVE GRANT FUNDING

NISD has a full-time grant coordinator who writes, submits, tracks, and reports grant-related funding for the district to supplement state and district revenue, impacting instructional programs.

The grant coordinator authors or co-authors grant submissions for the district. As shown in **Exhibit 1-1**, NISD received \$330,222 in grant funds in school year 2007–08, and more than double that amount during school year 2008–09 by winning over \$686,600 in grant funding. Over \$400,000 of these total funds in the past two years was awarded as the Rural Technology Grant. The district used the first Rural Technology Grant award to focus on math and reading. NISD started an after-school supplemental computer-based tutorial program using computer labs in the secondary schools. Students volunteer to receive individualized help with specific math objectives; during the month of February 2007, more than 250 students signed up for assistance. Interactive whiteboards, which allow for interactive technology in the classroom, were also purchased for all nine math classrooms in the junior high.

In addition to the rural technology grant funding, NISD received the Read Now Power Up!, grant for reading, which

is a program that combines small group instruction, computer programs, and reading materials for struggling readers. The district purchased 24 computers to create a new lab, four new document cameras, and language art technology with this grant during the first year.

The district is planning to use the most recent allocation of the Read Now Power Up! grant for science and social studies at the secondary level. Furthermore, the district has plans to use state funds to purchase additional computers for the elementary schools later this year.

The grant coordinator researches grant opportunities for the district on an ongoing basis. Part of this research is based on teacher, school administrator, or district-level requests related to specific needs. Additionally, the coordinator communicates with counterparts either through the Regional Education Service Center VI, (Region 6) or through the Brazos Valley Council of Governments as a participant with Grimes County. These communications allow the coordinator to gather ideas on funding opportunities for NISD.

In addition to receiving these grants, the coordinator tracks the funds with a detailed spreadsheet that is sent to the business manager; this detailed spreadsheet shows the amount of monies that can be used for equipment, software, and personnel. The personnel portion of the spreadsheet depicts the related amounts by month, which assists the district in ensuring that these are not considered recurring funds. Several school districts across the country omit this critical step and find themselves in budget shortfalls since teaching staff are under contracts and are not necessarily notified when sources and terms of grant funds for their positions have ended.

The district has uniquely captured two best practices by actively pursuing grants and tracking their funding. NISD uses grants to enhance the district's educational services with some funds being used for technology-related projects. Additionally, the grants coordinator tracks specific details for the business manager to ensure ongoing contracts are using the appropriate funds, especially as grant funds expire. This process prevents NISD from spending operational funds on grant-related expenditures.

**EXHIBIT 1-1
GRANT FUNDS
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 THROUGH 2008–09**

GRANT TITLE	GRANT USE	2007–08	2008–09
Rural Technology Grant	R-TECH - Supplemental Education	\$200,000	\$0
Intensive Technology Pilot Grant	Supplemental Education using Technology	0	40,450
Literacy Through Libraries Grant	Library Materials and extended hours	0	293,231
College Board Chinese Exchange	Cultural Exchange	15,000	0
Flipp Flippen Leadership Academy	Scholarship for 2 employees	3,000	0
Chinese Language Acquisition	Chinese Class with Texas A&M	45,000	0
Algebra Training	Texas A&M Math Staff Development	20,000	0
Rural Technology Grant - Cycle 2	R-TECH - Supplemental Education	0	200,000
Grimes County - SRO for High Point	School Resource Officer	0	38,000
Gaining World Knowledge	Literacy Materials	4,779	0
Science is Fun!	Science lab Equipment for Intermediate	5,000	0
Reading, Writing, and Real Life	Reading Materials	4,944	0
Sheltered Instruction Strategies	JR High materials for SIOP Classes	4,940	0
High School SIOP Classes	Materials for HS SIOP Classes for ESL	4,990	0
High School Model UN	Model UN Program for students	4,960	0
Graphing Calculators	Graphing Calculators	4,800	0
Transition to the Future	Computer Program to Evaluate Careers	3,678	0
Kids Learn Math by Seeing Math	Supplemental Math Curriculum	4,864	0
Reading is Fun!	Supplemental Reading Curriculum	4,267	0
Technology Training	Training for Teachers	0	5,000
Music Library System	Storage System for Music	0	4,960
Learning to Love Literature	ESL Literature Materials	0	3,300
Save Our Streets	Drug Awareness and Bullying Program	0	1,900
Aquarium Educational Experience	Field Experience for Students	0	4,466
Disaster & Emergency Preparedness	Care Kits for Special Ed Classrooms	0	1,500
We Both Read	Reading Buddies	0	1,799
Mini Grant	HS Science	0	500
Mini Grant	Intermediate Time Magazine - Class 1	0	500
Mini Grant	Intermediate Time Magazine - Class 2	0	500
Mini Grant	Intermediate Teacher Training	0	500
Community Foundations of Texas	Amarr Garage Door Grant	0	90,000
Totals		\$330,222	\$686,606

SOURCE: Navasota ISD, Technology Department, 2009.

DETAILED FINDINGS

**DISTRICT AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNING
(REC. 1)**

NISD lacks a comprehensive, planning process for the development of the District Improvement Plan and the

Campus Improvement Plans as required in board policies and state statutes.

NISD lacks a comprehensive planning process that begins with the development of the DIP and is followed by the development and alignment of the CIPs. At the time of the site visit, only one campus improvement plan was posted on

the district website and the posted plans were from school years 2006–07 and 2007–08. During interviews with central office administrators, campus administrators, academic coordinators, and teachers, it was evident that the planning process does not drive the district instructionally or programmatically. Several district and campus administrators commented that planning “isn’t what it should be” and that after plans are developed they are rarely reviewed until the following planning cycle. This lack of urgency in the planning process is evidenced by the fact that as of March 9, 2009, (the time of the onsite review), the school year 2008–09 DIP had not been presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Since the time of the onsite work, this plan has been approved by the Board of Trustees and it, as well as all of the campus plans for this same year for all campuses except Navasota High School, have been posted on the website. NISD’s practice of posting the DIP and the CIPs on the website is beneficial in that it provides the staff and community with easy access to goals, objectives, strategies and timelines for district programs. This provides direction to the staff and transparency to the community; however, the tardiness of the plan development and posting detracts from the effectiveness of the entire process.

NISD board Policy BQA (LEGAL) states that the district “shall 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.” District policy reflects the Texas Education Code (TEC) 11.252 by stating that 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 the academic excellence indicators.” An examination of the district plan posted on the website during the site visit, as well as the one most recently approved by the Board of Trustees, provides no evidence that the plan achieves the required purpose of “guiding campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups.” Interviews with staff revealed that the NISD planning process begins with the development of the campus plans and that those plans drive the district plan, as opposed to the reverse which is required by policy and best practice.

Board Policy BQ (LEGAL) states that the DIP will include the following:

- a comprehensive needs assessment that provides for disaggregation of scores by student groups;

- measurable district performance objectives;
- strategies for improvement of student performance;
- strategies for providing middle, junior, and high school students information about higher education admissions and financial aid opportunities;
- resources needed to implement identified strategies;
- staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy;
- timelines for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of each strategy; and
- formative evaluation criteria for evaluating strategies.

The format of the NISD district plan is one that is used across the state of Texas and reflects the categories of policy requirement (i.e., goals, objectives, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timeline and evaluation). Unfortunately, the information provided is not specific and the objectives and strategies do not address district needs, as evidenced by disaggregated Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) results, nor do they provide the specificity needed to implement and assess success of implementation. Disaggregated data indicate that there are large gaps in student performance between White students, Hispanic students, and African American students, the district, and state averages in specific content area. There is no clear direction in the district plan for differentiated approaches and interventions to address these student performance gaps.

For example, district strategies related to improved student performance for all students and student groups include:

- schedule accelerated learning courses during the school day;
- monitor student academic progress; and
- offer full-day kindergarten.

In general, the strategies support the goals; however, the strategies do not provide the campuses with enough specifics to determine which strategies are campus-level strategies and which strategies are district-level strategies. The plan does not indicate what campuses or grade levels will be implementing the specific strategies, nor does it provide general directions/ steps for strategy implementation.

A significant curriculum change (i.e., the implementation of CSCOPE, which has been in process since fall of 2007)

appears as one strategy with no implementation steps. This is a major implementation strategy which requires a great deal of communication with staff, professional development and a large budget expenditure; however, the strategy is stated as though it is new in school year 2008–09 and provides only the following, general direction:

- Plan, develop, and implement an aligned districtwide curriculum for all students that reflects the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) skills and local, state, and national standards (CSCOPE).

The resources, timelines, and evaluation techniques are equally vague. For example, as a part of the CSCOPE strategy, the district plan states that resources will be Region 6, workshops, presenters, and professional staff. Those resources seem to be appropriate for professional development; however, it is unclear when, where, or how they will be used, and doesn't address resources for "planning, developing, and implementing."

Campus plans are modeled after the district plan in that they are lacking in specific direction. In fact, the Navasota Intermediate School plan has a campus cover sheet but the subsequent pages in this plan refer to the district plan. There is also no evidence of a comprehensive campus plan for Navasota High School; however, the required School Improvement Plan (SIP) for academically unacceptable schools is posted on the website. All campus plans reflect lack of specificity in strategies, resources, timeline, and evaluation. There are numerous strategies under each goal; however, there are no steps or list of tasks to ensure the strategy will be implemented.

Below are examples of vague strategies provided by NISD schools for **Objective 1.1 All students, and student groups, will score 80 percent or better on all Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests** (common in campus plans):

- **High Point Elementary**
 - The teachers will conduct small group reading sessions
 - Language Arts (LA)/science/Math Nights
- **John C. Webb Elementary**
 - Organized celebration activities post-TAKS
 - Plan, develop, and implement an aligned districtwide curriculum (CSCOPE) for all students that reflect the TEKS and local, state, and national standards

- **Navasota Intermediate School**
 - Schedule in school enrichment classes
 - Offer Title I, Migrant Assistance (if needed)
- **Navasota Junior High**
 - Integrate technology into classroom activities
 - Schedule advanced classes during the day

As in the district plan, these strategies are generally related to the objective, but there is not enough specificity to ensure implementation or the relationship between the strategy and the success of the objective. This is particularly important given the large and growing gaps of performance between student groups.

Planning and evaluation of programs are part of the foundation of school success. If the specificity issues in strategies, timelines and evaluation are not addressed in the NISD planning process, there will be little structure to guide the student performance improvement process and no way to predict or measure the effectiveness of programs. An example of specificity might be that every strategy includes a set of tasks, with a matching timeline, and a formative evaluation. The school year 2008–09 NISD district plan objective 1.1 anticipates that "all students and student groups will score 80 percent or better on all TAKS tests." Without a comprehensive, specific plan, NISD will not be able to close the gaps in student performance growth to achieve or exceed the 80 percent goal.

Thomas P. DiNapoli, New York State Comptroller who is responsible for school accountability, offers a planning model that supports the planning process required by NISD policies by asking a series of questions:

- Needs Assessment: "Where are we now?"
- Goals: "What result do we want?"
- Objectives: "What deliverables (products or services) are we providing?"
- Strategies: "How do we want to do it?"
 - Action Plan (specific tasks under each strategy): "How are we going to do it?"
- Monitor and adjust (evaluation) "How are we doing? Are we meeting goals?"
 - If the answer is yes—ask the question "How does that impact our vision about where we want to be next year?"

The SMART model for developing objectives fits well with the DiNapoli process as it ensures that the important step of writing the objectives is comprehensive. **Exhibit 1-2** provides the driving questions for each dimension of the SMART model.

NISD should revise the district and campus planning process to ensure that the plans give clear direction and are used to guide district operations that will lead to improved student performance. NISD should have a planning process which incorporates the requirements of board Policies BQ (LEGAL) and (LOCAL), BQA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL), and BQB (LEGAL) and (LOCAL). These policies provide the specifics for both district and campus planning based on both the TEC and the Texas Administrative Code and will ensure compliance with the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) planning expectations. Policies for both district and campus planning require the direct involvement of the District Improvement Committee (DIC) and the Campus Improvement Committee (CIC) in the respective planning processes.

The district planning process should begin with the Board of Trustees approval of annual goals no later than February of each year. The process should include a checklist for the development of the goals, objectives, strategies, resources, timelines, and evaluation. This checklist should seek answers to straightforward questions about the success of the plans (i.e., does this objective support the achievement of the goal; does this strategy support the achievement of this objective; do the steps under the strategy ensure the implementation/success of the strategy) and a summative and formative evaluation process. The design should also have a planning timeline that requires that the district plan be completed annually by March and campus plans should be completed prior to the end of the school year. All planning should be completed and anticipated expenditures should be considered prior to the annual budget hearing. Plans should be distributed and reviewed with faculty and staff during the beginning of each school year and at least once during each grading period. The assistant superintendent should model

the importance of the DIP by referring to it regularly with instructional and administrative staff and principals should model for their teachers by using the CIP as a guide and a living document.

There is no fiscal impact to the district for this recommendation. The recommendation is based on redirection of current staff time.

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT PROCESS (REC. 2)

NISD lacks a systemic process for implementing and monitoring the adopted curriculum management system, both horizontally and vertically.

In school year 2006–07, Navasota Intermediate and Navasota High School were both considered *Academically Unacceptable* according to TEA’s Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and failed to meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards required under No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). As a result, a decision was made by the assistant superintendent, academic coordinators, and campus principals to implement the curriculum management system, Curriculum Scope (CSCOPE), at these two campuses. The management system was implemented at Navasota High School and Navasota Intermediate in the fall of 2007. In school year 2007–08 both campuses were rated *Academically Acceptable*, however, the high school *Missed AYP* for a second consecutive school year. During the spring of 2008, CSCOPE was introduced to the remaining three campuses, and in the fall of 2008, the curriculum system was implemented at High Point Elementary, Webb Elementary, and Navasota Junior High. While there is a district Curriculum Assessment and Instructional Design and Delivery Manual as required by board Policy EG (LOCAL) with detailed and specific procedures, there is no evidence that it was used to assist in the evaluation or selection of CSCOPE, nor is there evidence that the District Improvement Committee, established in board Policy BQA (LEGAL) was a part of the decision to implement CSCOPE as required by the Texas Education Code (TEC) 11.251.

**EXHIBIT 1-2
DIMENSIONS OF SMART OBJECTIVES**

SPECIFIC	MEASURABLE	ACHIEVABLE	RELEVANT	TIME FRAME
What exactly is going to be done and with whom?	Is it measurable [does the district/campus have the capacity to do so]?	Can it be done in the timeframe/in this political climate/with this amount of money?	Will this objective lead to the desired results?	When will the action be accomplished/completed?

SOURCE: www.rapidbi.com/created/WriteSMARTObjectives.html.

CSCOPE, developed by Texas Regional Education Service Centers and a team of content experts, is described as “a comprehensive, customized, user-friendly curriculum management system built on the most current research-based practices in the field . . . focused on impacting instructional practices . . . which includes three key components operating seamlessly together: curriculum and assessment, professional development, and innovative technology.”

The key components of the CSCOPE curriculum are:

- a K–12 systemic model in the four core content areas;
- common language, structure, and process for curriculum delivery;
- aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- clarified and specified Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)/Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) expectations assembled in a vertical alignment format to eliminate multiple interpretations;
- customizable instructional plans that allow district resources to be integrated into the system;
- lessons in both English and Spanish; and
- customizable systemic curriculum model components include:
 - vertical alignment documents;
 - instructional focus documents (scope and sequence);
 - online model instructional units (concept-based) and instructional plans (research-based);
 - year-at-a-glance planning tool;
 - integrated unit assessments which mirror TAKS; and
 - full benchmark assessments.

Key components of professional development include:

- leadership professional development;
- onsite modeling of instructional delivery;
- video conferencing and web-casting;
- modeling of research-based, best practice lessons, strategies, and interventions;

- technical assistance; and
- ongoing support by content area specialists in a variety of delivery modes.

In addition to the initial training provided to Navasota High School and Navasota Intermediate School in 2007, a three hour overview was offered to the other three campuses during the spring of 2008. Campuses had the opportunity to review the system during the spring semester and each campus received one day of formal implementation training by Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6) during the first week of school in August 2008.

Campus-level academic coordinators are available to assist teachers with implementation concerns; however, district staff indicate that neither district campus administrators nor teachers are implementing CSCOPE in a systemic way (either horizontally or vertically). Central office expectations are that science, math, and social studies teachers use the management system. The district expects that teachers follow scope and sequence with rigor; however, teachers are allowed to use their professional judgment in choosing either the CSCOPE concept-based lessons/units or materials developed locally. Data did not show how many content area teachers are actually using the system. Interviews with campus administrators and teachers indicate that they are unclear about district expectations with regard to the use of CSCOPE. In addition, there is not a clear understanding that CSCOPE is not used for the entire curriculum, but rather a management system for the four core subjects tested on TAKS with lessons tied to TEKS to ensure mastery of the state curriculum.

While academic coordinators are knowledgeable and helpful to campus teachers, they are unable to monitor all teachers for the level of implementation of CSCOPE. In addition, the district/campus plans do not reflect clear implementation procedures, resources, timelines, or evaluation techniques to ensure successful implementation of the management system. Board Policy EG (LOCAL) states that the “curriculum component shall be an integral part of the district’s long-range planning process . . . an environment to support curriculum delivery must be created and maintained by all functions of the organization.” NISD does not have processes and personnel in place to ensure there is specific and sustained monitoring of the implementation and the effectiveness of CSCOPE.

The need for a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum tied to learning standards is a generally accepted fact in today’s educational community and supports NISD’s

decision to adopt CSCOPE. As quoted in *A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum: Taking a Closer Look*, Robert Marzano (2003) concluded that a viable curriculum is the most powerful school-level factor in determining overall student achievement. From this same publication, Fenwick English (2006) concludes that the only way to ensure educational equity among students is for there to be a tight alignment between the taught and tested curriculum. He believes that without alignment, student and community demographics will continue to be the most powerful predictors of student test results. Districts must ensure that the intended curriculum (in Texas, the TEKS and identified district curriculum) is implemented consistently by all teachers.

The developers of CSCOPE state that “having CSCOPE is not enough. The most valuable impact of CSCOPE will be in the ongoing curriculum and instruction, discussions around vertical alignment, instructional focus, lesson planning, and pedagogy.” They further state that to “support implementation of this detailed curriculum, districts must have processes and personnel in place to ensure that there is sustained monitoring of the curriculum and its implementation.”

In *Evaluating for Success: An Evaluation Guide for Districts and Schools*, published by McREL, the authors state that an evaluation design “should provide information to all stakeholders about progress toward stated program goals and about the impact and outcomes realized.” Because many outcomes take time to emerge, it is recommended that the evaluation design maintain a continuous flow of evaluative information which allows for corrections and adjustments along the way. The evaluation guide offers four guidelines for good evaluation designs:

- Examine process and impact. The evaluation should provide feedback to decision makers and participants about needed program modifications and improvements.
- Create a flexible design. If a program element does not seem to be working well, it must be possible to adjust the evaluation plan to obtain the needed evaluative information.
- Keep design realistic. The evaluation plan should be as comprehensive and rigorous as possible, yet realistic in scope and demand given available resources.
- Establish an evaluation team. A small, core team of staff members should be established, and opportunities for

discussion and coordination throughout the building/district should be frequent and planned. (Cicchinelli and Barley, retrieved 4-13-09 from www.mcrel.org)

Authors of *Evaluation Whole-School Reform Efforts: A Guide for District and School Staff* stress the importance of the fourth guideline: establish an evaluation team. They believe that the greatest benefits from evaluation are realized when the school takes ownership of the evaluation and uses the findings to stimulate change that makes a difference. An internal evaluation team, made up of representatives from the whole school community, will increase the likelihood that the evaluation plan will be administered well. (Yap, Aldersebaes, et.al, retrieved 4-13-09 from www.nwrel.org/national/)

The district should establish a process to formalize the district implementation plan for CSCOPE, including a strong implementation and evaluation component.

There is a need for written district implementation procedures for the CSCOPE process which include an ongoing professional development component, a timeline for specific implementation, monitoring of implementation, and a formative evaluation process.

The CSCOPE developers have created a template for implementation, shown in **Exhibit 1-3** that can be revised as a checklist or used as a planning/monitoring template. That template, or one like it, should be used to create the history of the implementation process, next steps, timeline, resources, and formative evaluation. Adding a link to the current website would make that information available to all administrators and teachers and would allow program staff to maintain it as a living document.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PERFORMANCE PROCESS (REC. 3)

Navasota High School lacks a school improvement process to ensure improved student performance.

Interviews with the superintendent, assistant superintendent, campus principals, the high school academic coordinator and a focus group of high school teachers and department chairs revealed that the majority of those interviewed identified a need and support for the development of a focused school improvement process for the high school. As a partial response to this need, district leadership continues to provide the services of an experienced, knowledgeable academic coordinator and has required the academic coordinator to make TAKS and benchmark scores available to administrators and teachers using the Development and

**EXHIBIT 1-3
SAMPLE PAGE OF CSCOPE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

ACTION STEP	EVIDENCE OF ACTION TAKEN	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT	FOLLOW-UP/STILL NEED TO DO
Identify which administrators and staff need a CSCOPE Overview, CSCOPE developer training, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of staff identified - Dates, location and agenda for scheduled overview training sessions - Identify who will provide training 	Provide information as to who understands the system, who needs in-depth training, etc.	Schedule in-depth component training sessions
Share implementation structure with campus principals	Provide districtwide planning structure	Evaluate consistency of districtwide implementation	Review planning structure to determine progress/revision needed
Identify current districtwide resources	List of programs/resources	Evaluate whether teachers are using districtwide resources within appropriate time frame during year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the program/resources to determine effectiveness - Identify new resources needed - Identify programs/resources that need to be eliminated

SOURCE: Regional Education Service Center Region XX, 2009.

Management of Assessment and Curriculum system (DMAC), a data tracking and disaggregation system. The district has further identified and required the implementation of a curriculum management system, CSCOPE. Additionally, the district hired a math coordinator in school year 2008–09 to focus on student improvement in high school math scores.

However, the lack of focus on instructional programs is evidenced by state accountability ratings of *Academically Unacceptable* and *Academically Acceptable* at Navasota High school in school years 2006–07 and 2007–08, respectively. The continued discrepancy between campus scores and state

and regional scores, along with discrepancies in student achievement among campus student populations is evidence that the campus lacks a process to reach state achievement expectations. The following exhibits reflect the gaps between White students, Hispanic students, and African American students.

Exhibit 1-4 shows that Hispanic and African American students’ mathematic scores have been from 16 to 33 percentage points below White students’ scores in the five year period from school year 2003–04 through 2007–08. All three groups have failed to maintain academic gains over the five year period.

**EXHIBIT 1-4
AEIS DATA MATHEMATICS SUM OF HIGH SCHOOL
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

9–12TH GRADES	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State	67%	72%	75%	77%	80%
Campus Group	58%	64%	62%	68%	69%
Navasota District	57%	64%	67%	68%	69%
Navasota HS All Students	49%	56%	60%	59%	56%
Navasota HS White	64%	69%	74%	75%	73%
Navasota HS African American	40%	42%	38%	41%	40%
Navasota HS Hispanic	35%	51%	59%	50%	49%
Navasota HS Economically Disadvantaged (ECD)	38%	44%	49%	48%	46%
Navasota HS Rating	AA	AA	AA	AUnA	AA

NOTE: AA stands for Academically Acceptable; AUnA stands for Academically Unacceptable.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

Exhibit 1-5 indicates that Hispanic and African American students' science scores have been from 24 percentage points to 38 percentage points below White students' scores in the five year period from school years 2003–04 through 2007–08. White students' scores have been static, ranging from 76 percent to 85 percent. Hispanic students' scores have ranged from 43 percent to 61 percent and African American students' scores have declined from 53 percent to 38 percent in the five year period.

During interviews, a representative group of faculty stated that there is a lack of instructional leadership from both district and campus administrators, lack of communication from administrators to faculty, a lack of opportunity for collaboration among departmental staff and from department to department, and a general lack of focus. Comments indicate that there is no common instructional vision or direction.

Interviews with district administrators and the campus intervention team monitor reveal the perception that there is a lack of academic rigor, low student expectations, lack of differentiation for individual students, and a general lack of urgency to change among the high school faculty.

Exhibit 1-6 shows the performance review team student survey results. Ninety-four junior and senior students responded to the NISD performance review student survey and, of these, 56 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that the district provides a high quality education and nearly 44 percent disagreed that the district has high quality teachers.

During interviews with staff across the district, including high school staff, there is evidence of the perception that the high school is not meeting the academic needs of students.

Continued lack of a school improvement process may again result in the campus receiving an *Academically Unacceptable* rating and continuing to fail to meet AYP requirements. Since the campus has *Missed AYP* for two consecutive school years (2006–07 and 2007–08), failure to meet the AYP requirements in 2008–09 could result in the campus being identified for School Improvement as required by NCLB.

Exhibit 1-7 provides AEIS 2010 Preview which indicates that the district will be low performing in that year because of the failure to address the academic needs of African American students on the campus.

Navasota High School could benefit from identifying and implementing a twenty-first century high school model with components similar to *High Schools That Work (HSTW)*.

**EXHIBIT 1-5
AEIS DATA SCIENCE SUM OF ALL HIGH SCHOOL
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

9–12TH GRADES	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State	60%	66%	70%	71%	74%
Campus Group	63%	65%	64%	68%	70%
Navasota District	53%	58%	66%	68%	66%
Navasota HS All Students	61%	63%	67%	68%	61%
Navasota HS White	76%	77%	83%	85%	82%
Navasota HS African American	49%	53%	48%	49%	38%
Navasota HS Hispanic	43%	53%	61%	56%	50%
Navasota HS ECD	44%	52%	57%	53%	51%
Navasota HS Rating	AA	AA	AA	AUnA	AA

NOTE: AA stands for Academically Acceptable; AUnA stands for Academically Unacceptable.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 1-6
STUDENT SURVEY: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The district provides a high quality education.	4.26%	19.15%	20.21%	35.11%	21.28%
The district has high quality teachers.	8.51%	21.28%	26.60%	27.66%	15.96%

SOURCE: Performance Review Team survey results of respondents answering survey, 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 1-7
AEIS DATA SUM OF ALL HIGH SCHOOL, ALL TESTS TAKEN
NAVASOTA ISD 2010 PREVIEW**

9-12TH GRADES 2008 STANDARD	MATH	SCIENCE
State	78%	74%
Campus Group	66%	70%
Navasota District	68%	66%
Navasota HS All Students	55%	61%
Navasota HS White	72%	82%
Navasota HS African American	38%	38%
Navasota HS Hispanic	49%	50%
Navasota HS ECD	45%	51%
Navasota HS SE	12%	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

NOTE: The data is provided as a preview of performance in 2010, which will include performance on at TAKS (Accommodated) assessments.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2007-08.

HSTW is an effort-based school improvement initiative founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic and career/technical studies if school leaders and teachers create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) website describes HSTW as the nation’s first large-scale effort to engage state, district, and school leaders in partnerships with teachers, students, parents and the community to raise student achievement in high school and the middle grades. It is based on the simple belief that most students become “smarter” through effort and hard work. School leaders and teachers can motivate students to achieve at high levels when they:

- expand students’ opportunities to learn a rigorous academic core;
- create supportive relationships between students and adults;
- work as teacher advisers with parents and students; and
- focus school leadership on supporting what and how teachers teach.

Exhibit 1-8 offers best practices from the HSTW model.

NISD should identify and implement a research-based high school improvement process designed to improve student performance. Campus leadership should develop a process that includes the identification of a faculty and student

**EXHIBIT 1-8
KEY PRACTICES: HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK**

High expectations	Motivate more students to meet high expectations by integrating high expectations into classroom practices and giving students frequent feedback.
Program of study	Require each student to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration.
Academic studies	Teach more students the essential concepts of the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging them to apply academic content and skills to real-world problems and projects.
Career/technical studies	Provide more students access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies in high-demand fields that emphasize the higher-level mathematics, science, literacy and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and in further education.
Work-based learning	Enable students and their parents to choose from programs that integrate challenging high school studies and work-based learning and are planned by educators, employers and students.
Teachers working together	Provide teams of teachers from several disciplines the time and support to work together to help students succeed in challenging academic and career/technical studies. Integrate reading, writing, and speaking as strategies for learning into all parts of the curriculum and integrate mathematics into science and career/technical classrooms.
Students actively engaged	Engage students in academic and career/technical classrooms in rigorous and challenging proficient-level assignments using research-based instructional strategies and technology.
Extra help	Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content.
Culture of continuous improvement	Use student assessment and program evaluation data to continuously improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning.

SOURCE: www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/background/keypractices.asp.

committee that will systematically investigate high school models that have research-based, successful best practices with student demographics matching Navasota High School, while they review the current practices at the campus to determine which practices are working and which should be eliminated. This review should be conducted through a filter of academic rigor, high expectations for all students, and

urgency to improve student performance. Current student performance and the 2010 Preview data emphasize the urgent need to increase rigor with the process in place while continuing to develop a customized Navasota High School model. Key to the development and implementation of the model should include a discussion on change management and the dynamics of team building.

Development of the model identification process will have no fiscal impact on the district. An actual cost of implementation cannot be determined until the committee selects a model.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION (REC. 4)

The district lacks consistency of using differentiated instruction to decrease gaps in student group performance.

During interviews, administrators, academic/content coordinators, and the campus intervention team monitor stated that, in general, the teachers at Navasota campuses do not individualize instruction through differentiation to close the gaps in student group performance.

This perception was confirmed through the review team's classroom observations and in meetings with teacher focus groups at each campus. These indicated no evidence of a consistent effort to differentiate instruction in the classroom. Teachers were aware of performance gaps among student groups, but did not identify differentiation as a method of addressing gaps. While the district and campus plans have an objective for improving student performance for all students and all student groups, the plans do not reflect consistent differentiation of instruction for the purpose of closing achievement gaps among student groups.

Exhibits 1-9 through **1-21** reveal the growing achievement gaps among student groups, by subject and grade, in performance as students' progress through the system. These gaps are particularly pronounced in mathematics and science. A review of selected grade levels at NISD's student performance on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) for all grades tested in reading, mathematics, science and social studies from school years 2003–04 through 2007–08, showed that student performance for all students and subgroups were below state, region, and comparative group averages.

A review of student data reveals that NISD African American, Economically Disadvantaged, and Hispanic students consistently scored below White students at NISD and their counterparts in the state and region. **Exhibits 1-9 through**

1-21 summarizes this data of student performance in reading and mathematics in Grade 3, reading, mathematics and science in Grade 5, reading, mathematics and science in Grade 8, and ELA, mathematics and science in Grades 10 and 11, respectively.

Grades 3, 5, 8, 10, and 11 are particularly significant as they are part of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) which requires that students in these grade levels pass specific tests to be promoted to the next grade or receive a diploma at the high school level. The tests required for these grade levels are:

- Third Grade must pass reading TAKS;
- Fifth and Eighth Grades must pass reading and mathematics TAKS; and
- Eleventh Grade must pass exit level exams.

As indicated in **Exhibit 1-9**, NISD African American students in the third grade scored below the state, region, and district averages with the exception of the school year 2004–05. In that year, African American students scored above the state and region averages and were at the district-level in reading. In school year 2005–06, African American students' reading scores fell below the state, region and district averages and have remained below in the subsequent academic years. In 2005–06, African American students' reading scores fell 14 percentage points to 79 percent. In school year 2006–07, African American students' reading scores declined again to 67 percent, 22 percentage points below the state, 24 percentage points below the region, 19 percentage points below the district averages, respectively. Over the five year period African American students' reading scores were also 15 to 26 percentage points below comparative districts. In school year 2007–08, African American students' scores rose slightly; however, they continued to score below the state, region, district and comparative district scores. The gaps range from 21 percentage points when compared to the region and comparative district scores (Liberty ISD) to 11 percentage points when compared to the district scores.

Exhibit 1-10 shows that African American students scored below the state, region, district and comparative district scores in mathematics in school year 2003–04. In school year 2004–05, African American students' scores in mathematics fell to 76 percent. African American students' scores remain 23 percentage points below the state, 25 percentage points below the region, 17 percentage points below the district and from 10 to 26 percentage points below comparative district scores. Hispanic and ECD students' scores are trending below 80 percent, while state, region and comparative district

**EXHIBIT 1-9
MET STANDARD READING BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

3RD GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	91%	89%	90%	89%	89%
Region VI All Students	92%	91%	91%	91%	92%
Navasota All Students	85%	93%	88%	86%	82%
El Campo All Students	92%	92%	96%	93%	91%
Aransas Pass All Students	78%	84%	86%	82%	74%
Liberty All Students	91%	86%	92%	87%	92%
Navasota White	82%	92%	94%	96%	96%
Navasota African American	82%	93%	79%	67%	71%
Navasota Hispanic	90%	93%	90%	88%	79%
Navasota ECD	82%	94%	84%	82%	78%
Navasota Special Education	78%	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	>99%	95%	96%	83%	81%

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 1-10
MET STANDARD MATHEMATICS BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

3RD GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	90%	82%	83%	82%	85%
Region VI All Students	92%	85%	86%	86%	88%
Navasota All Students	86%	87%	89%	77%	76%
El Campo All Students	97%	86%	87%	88%	93%
Aransas Pass All Students	85%	83%	66%	66%	73%
Liberty All Students	91%	76%	74%	82%	85%
Navasota White	93%	91%	96%	87%	87%
Navasota African American	77%	76%	80%	60%	67%
Navasota Hispanic	88%	90%	88%	79%	74%
Navasota ECD	82%	86%	85%	73%	73%
Navasota Special Education	78%	67%	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	96%	92%	96%	73%	65%

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

scores are trending above 80 percent. However, Hispanic and ECD students are closer to state, region, district and comparative district averages than are African American students.

Fifth grade African American students, as shown in **Exhibit 1-11**, have improved reading scores from 48 percent in school year 2005–06 to 67 percent in school year 2007–08. However, when compared to state, region, district and

comparative district results, African American students score below the respective groups. In school year 2006–07, African American students were 23 percentage points below the state, 25 percentage points below the region, 19 percentage points below the district and from 14 to 18 percentage points below the comparative district scores. In school year 2007–08, African American students narrowed the gap, scoring 18 percentage points below the state, 20 percentage points

EXHIBIT 1-11
MET STANDARD READING BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

5TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	80%	75%	81%	83%	85%
Region VI All Students	81%	79%	84%	85%	87%
Navasota All Students	70%	61%	69%	79%	78%
El Campo All Students	71%	71%	70%	74%	82%
Aransas Pass All Students	77%	65%	78%	74%	82%
Liberty All Students	76%	87%	76%	78%	89%
Navasota White	83%	79%	85%	91%	87%
Navasota African American	60%	50%	48%	60%	67%
Navasota Hispanic	64%	51%	70%	78%	78%
Navasota ECD	64%	52%	61%	76%	71%
Navasota Special Education	*	33%	60%	80%	*
Navasota LEP	*	13%	50%	29%	70%

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

below the region, and 11 percentage points below the district. ECD students have made incremental gains during the period reviewed. Nevertheless, in school year 2007–08, the ECD students remained 14 percentage points below the state, 16 percentage points below the region and from 11 to 18 percentage points below comparative district averages.

Exhibit 1-12 shows that gaps continue in school year 2006–07 as NISD African American students in the fifth grade were 22 percentage points below the state, 24 percentage points below the region and 17 percentage points below the district. African American students' scores were also from 12 to 17 percentage points below the comparative district mathematics scores. In school year 2007–08, African American students gained slightly when

EXHIBIT 1-12
MET STANDARD MATHEMATICS BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

5TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	82%	80%	82%	86%	86%
Region VI All Students	84%	82%	84%	88%	88%
Navasota All Students	83%	74%	74%	81%	81%
El Campo All Students	76%	81%	77%	78%	84%
Aransas Pass All Students	82%	73%	76%	76%	78%
Liberty All Students	71%	71%	75%	81%	79%
Navasota White	91%	85%	88%	89%	93%
Navasota African American	70%	63%	55%	64%	65%
Navasota Hispanic	86%	71%	73%	83%	83%
Navasota ECD	78%	71%	66%	77%	76%
Navasota Special Education	*	33%	83%	>99%	*
Navasota LEP	60%	44%	50%	58%	90%

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

compared to state, region and district scores, all of which remained static. However, when compared to the comparative district scores, the gaps increased from 14 to 19 percentage points.

While state, region, district and comparative district scores remain above NISD's African American students' reading scores, **Exhibit 1-13** shows that NISD African American students made significant gains in reading from school years 2003–04 through 2007–08. African American students gained 15 percentage points in the five year period, while state and region scores increased five percentage points. District scores have risen 11 percentage points over the same

period. Two of the three comparative districts also made comparative gains to African American, Hispanic and ECD students in Navasota. Hispanic and ECD students' scores are similar to African American students' scores over the period reviewed.

Exhibit 1-14 shows eighth grade African American students, Hispanic students and ECD students have made gains ranging from 21 to 40 percentage points in mathematics over the five year period reviewed. The most significant gains occurred in school year 2007–08 when eighth grade African American students scored two percentage points below Hispanic and ECD students. During that same year African

**EXHIBIT 1-13
MET STANDARD READING BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

8TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	90%	84%	84%	89%	95%
Region VI All Students	91%	87%	86%	91%	96%
Navasota All Students	78%	76%	71%	84%	89%
El Campo All Students	91%	86%	86%	91%	98%
Aransas Pass All Students	81%	71%	82%	87%	96%
Liberty All Students	83%	82%	83%	81%	96%
Navasota White	88%	91%	85%	94%	97%
Navasota African American	69%	66%	59%	78%	84%
Navasota Hispanic	72%	63%	64%	78%	84%
Navasota ECD	72%	69%	63%	79%	86%
Navasota Special Education	*	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	25%	<1%	*	40%	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 1-14
MET STANDARD MATHEMATICS BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

8TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	67%	62%	68%	73%	79%
Region VI All Students	73%	67%	73%	77%	84%
Navasota All Students	52%	56%	49%	61%	75%
El Campo All Students	67%	63%	67%	67%	91%
Aransas Pass All Students	53%	51%	72%	69%	82%
Liberty All Students	53%	51%	62%	55%	71%
Navasota White	69%	76%	61%	75%	81%
Navasota African American	29%	33%	42%	49%	69%
Navasota Hispanic	50%	47%	41%	57%	71%
Navasota ECD	43%	47%	42%	55%	71%
Navasota Special Education	*	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	25%	<1%	*	20%	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

American students' scores were 10 percentage points below the state and 15 percentage points below the region, while Hispanic and ECD students scored below the state by 8 percentage points and the region by 13 percentage points.

Exhibit 1-15 shows that NISD African American, Hispanic and ECD ninth grade students scored below state, region and comparative district levels in mathematics. From 2003–04 to 2007–08, African American students scored from 31 percent to 37 percent in mathematics. Hispanic students scored from 33 percent to 51 percent and ECD

students scored from 33 percent to 42 percent, respectively.

Exhibit 1-16 shows that NISD African American students scored from 26 to 37 percentage points below the state level in mathematics from school year 2003–04 through 2007–08. When compared to the region, the student scores are even lower, with the gaps ranging from 31 to 46 percentage points. NISD African American scores also are below the comparative district data. Hispanic students scored 25 percent in school year 2007–08, with a 41 percentage point gap compared to the state, 47 percentage

**EXHIBIT 1-15
MET STANDARD MATHEMATICS BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

9TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	61%	58%	58%	61%	64%
Region VI All Students	67%	66%	65%	68%	71%
Navasota All Students	46%	49%	55%	44%	52%
El Campo All Students	61%	59%	59%	57%	56%
Aransas Pass All Students	61%	55%	58%	69%	60%
Liberty All Students	65%	52%	48%	54%	50%
Navasota White	63%	59%	74%	59%	70%
Navasota African American	31%	36%	35%	37%	34%
Navasota Hispanic	38%	44%	43%	33%	51%
Navasota ECD	33%	40%	42%	39%	42%
Navasota Special Education	17%	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	9%	24%	10%	<1%	13%

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 1-16
MET STANDARD MATHEMATICS BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

10TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	64%	59%	62%	65%	66%
Region VI All Students	67%	68%	67%	71%	72%
Navasota All Students	51%	41%	54%	60%	43%
El Campo All Students	67%	65%	48%	62%	65%
Aransas Pass All Students	72%	67%	51%	54%	69%
Liberty All Students	41%	57%	62%	56%	52%
Navasota White	65%	61%	62%	77%	61%
Navasota African American	32%	22%	36%	32%	38%
Navasota Hispanic	46%	32%	58%	52%	25%
Navasota ECD	42%	27%	48%	42%	34%
Navasota Special Education	*	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	*	*	22%	*	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

point gap compared to the region and from a 27 to 44 percentage point gap when compared to the comparative district scores. ECD students also scored below the state, region and comparative district scores in mathematics. In school year 2007–08, ECD students scored 34 percent. This was 32 percentage points below the state, 38 percentage points below the region and from 18 to 35 percentage points below comparative district scores.

While NISD Hispanic and ECD students scored between 64 and 70 percent on the school year 2007–08 mathematics assessment, as shown in **Exhibit 1-17**, NISD African American students scored 46 percent, a loss of four percentage

points when compared to school year 2006–07. When compared to the state, region, and comparative district results, in 2007–08 African American students were below the state by 34 percentage points, below the region by 38 percentage points and below the comparative districts from 27 to 34 percentage points.

Exhibit 1-18 shows that in fifth grade science, NISD African American students scored below 50 percent in four of the five years reviewed. In school year 2007–08, African American students scored 56 percent, which was 26 percentage points below the state, 28 percentage points below the region and from 9 to 17 percentage points below the comparative district

**EXHIBIT 1-17
MET STANDARD MATHEMATICS BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

11TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	85%	81%	78%	81%	80%
Region VI All Students	88%	84%	82%	84%	84%
Navasota All Students	79%	83%	66%	73%	72%
El Campo All Students	90%	82%	72%	77%	75%
Aransas Pass All Students	87%	86%	83%	82%	80%
Liberty All Students	86%	66%	77%	84%	73%
Navasota White	89%	86%	81%	88%	85%
Navasota African American	68%	80%	40%	52%	46%
Navasota Hispanic	68%	80%	69%	72%	71%
Navasota ECD	66%	76%	53%	59%	64%
Navasota Special Education	*	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	*	*	43%	20%	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 1-18
MET STANDARD SCIENCE BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

5TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	70%	64%	76%	78%	82%
Region VI All Students	73%	69%	79%	82%	84%
Navasota All Students	59%	50%	65%	71%	74%
El Campo All Students	56%	49%	63%	58%	65%
Aransas Pass All Students	63%	47%	61%	61%	67%
Liberty All Students	68%	68%	65%	74%	73%
Navasota White	78%	71%	87%	86%	91%
Navasota African American	36%	43%	34%	49%	56%
Navasota Hispanic	59%	38%	66%	69%	71%
Navasota ECD	50%	41%	53%	66%	70%
Navasota Special Education	*	33%	60%	*	*
Navasota LEP	*	30%	50%	25%	70%

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

averages. During the same year, Hispanic and ECD students scored 71 percent and 70 percent, respectively. These scores reflect an 11 to 13 point deficit in Hispanic scores and a 12 to 14 point deficit in ECD scores when compared to state and region scores. Hispanic and ECD students scored higher than two of the three comparative districts and only slightly below Liberty ISD.

In eighth grade science, NISD African American students' scores ranged from 38 percent in school year 2005–06 to 59 percent in school year 2007–08, as shown in **Exhibit 1-19**. Hispanic student scores ranged from 56 percent to 59

percent. ECD students scored from 49 percent to 66 percent. African American students were 10 percentage points below the state in 2007–08, 15 percentage points below the region, and from 3 percentage points above to 10 percentage points below the comparative district scores.

Exhibit 1-20 shows that in tenth grade science, NISD African American students scored below the state, region and comparative district scores. African American students' scores, which were at 34 percent in 2006–07, dropped 12 percentage points to 22 percent in 2007–08, the latter 43 percentage points below the state average, 49 percentage

**EXHIBIT 1-19
MET STANDARD SCIENCE BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

8TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	**	**	72%	71%	69%
Region VI All Students	**	**	76%	74%	74%
Navasota All Students	**	**	56%	68%	72%
El Campo All Students	**	**	64%	64%	63%
Aransas Pass All Students	**	**	72%	70%	56%
Liberty All Students	**	**	59%	63%	58%
Navasota White	**	**	72%	86%	94%
Navasota African American	**	**	38%	56%	59%
Navasota Hispanic	**	**	56%	59%	59%
Navasota ECD	**	**	49%	57%	66%
Navasota Special Education	**	**	25%	*	*
Navasota LEP	**	**	*	20%	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

**No TAKS Science Test Administration.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 1-20
MET STANDARD SCIENCE BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

10TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	65%	55%	61%	59%	65%
Region VI All Students	71%	62%	69%	66%	71%
Navasota All Students	63%	46%	60%	58%	43%
El Campo All Students	66%	50%	56%	58%	61%
Aransas Pass All Students	64%	51%	49%	50%	61%
Liberty All Students	49%	50%	56%	55%	62%
Navasota White	80%	67%	78%	80%	68%
Navasota African American	46%	36%	37%	34%	22%
Navasota Hispanic	53%	30%	49%	41%	32%
Navasota ECD	49%	35%	48%	42%	35%
Navasota Special Education	*	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	*	*	*	*	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

points below the region average and 39 to 40 percentage points below the comparative district scores. African American students' scores, during the five year period reviewed, ranged from 46 percent in school year 2003–04 to 22 percent in school year 2007–08. Hispanic students' scores also dropped in school year 2007–08 to 32 percent from 41 percent in school year 2006–07. In school year 2007–08 the Hispanic students' scores are below the state, region and comparative district scores, 33 percentage points below the state, 39 percentage points below the region and from 29 to 30 percentage points below the comparative district scores. NISD ECD students also scored below state, region and comparable district scores, 30 percentage points below the state, 36 percentage points below the region and from 26 to 27 percentage points below the comparable district scores.

Finally, **Exhibit 1-21** shows in eleventh grade science, in school year 2007–08, NISD African American students gained five percentage points when compared to school year 2006–07. However, African American students were 19 percentage points below the state, 23 percentage points below the region and from 12 to 17 percentage points below the comparable district scores. Hispanic students gained 11 percentage points in school year 2007–08 when compared to school year 2006–07. Hispanic students are one point below the state and five percentage points below the region. Hispanic students are from one to six percentage points above the comparable district scores. ECD students gained

18 percentage points from school years 2006–07 through 2007–08. NISD ECD students scored six percentage points below the state, 10 percentage points below the region, and were from one point above to four percentage points below the comparable districts' scores.

While the district has adopted Regional Education Service Center Region XVI DMAC system, the data tracking and disaggregation system, and CSCOPE as a core curriculum management system, teachers are not consistently using these tools for differentiated instruction to close the gaps in student achievement for student groups. The gaps in the scores must be addressed by focusing on individual students through differentiated instruction.

Not all students are alike and no two students learn the same way. Tracey Hall, Senior Research Scientist at the National Center on Accessing General Curriculum, explains that we must differentiate instruction so that students have multiple options for taking information and making sense of ideas. We must be flexible in our methods of teaching and adjust the curriculum for learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Hall explains that differentiated instruction recognizes students' varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, interests, and reacts responsively. (Hall, retrieved 4-2-09, from http://www.cast.org/publications/ncaac/ncaac_diffinstruc.html) A fuller definition of differentiated instruction is that a teacher proactively plans varied

**EXHIBIT 1-21
MET STANDARD SCIENCE BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

11TH GRADE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
State All Students	85%	81%	76%	78%	81%
Region VI All Students	88%	85%	81%	83%	85%
Navasota All Students	79%	84%	72%	73%	82%
El Campo All Students	88%	76%	60%	76%	76%
Aransas Pass All Students	74%	85%	71%	73%	74%
Liberty All Students	81%	66%	78%	76%	79%
Navasota White	90%	86%	88%	85%	94%
Navasota African American	72%	80%	58%	57%	62%
Navasota Hispanic	62%	83%	67%	69%	80%
Navasota ECD	64%	76%	63%	57%	75%
Navasota Special Education	*	*	*	*	*
Navasota LEP	*	*	43%	20%	*

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2003–04 through 2007–08.

approaches to what students need to learn, how they will learn, how they will learn it, and/or how they can express what they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or she can as efficiently as possible (Tomlinson, 2003, p 151).

Hall further provides five guidelines for teachers to ensure the success of differentiation in the classroom:

- *Clarify key concepts and generalizations* to ensure that all learners gain powerful understandings that serve as foundation for future learning.
- *Use assessment as a teaching tool to extend versus merely measure instruction* which occurs before, during, and following the instructional episode, and helps to pose questions regarding student needs and optimal learning.
- *Emphasize critical and creative thinking* as a goal in lesson design. The tasks, activities, and procedures for students should require that students understand and apply meaning – this may require supports, additional motivation, varied tasks, materials, or equipment for different students in the classroom.
- *Engage all learners* by varying tasks within instruction as well as across students. In other words, the lesson should not consist of any single structure or activity.
- *Provide a balance between teacher-assigned and student-selected tasks* by providing students choices in their learning.

The district should design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to decrease performance gaps in student groups. The process should include ongoing required professional development to ensure that all teachers learn diagnostic techniques which assist in identifying specific student weaknesses in the core areas, using, at a minimum, district benchmark tests and CSCOPE assessments. In addition, the professional development should provide supplemental training on CSCOPE and provide training for differentiation techniques. The process should include the identification and implementation of group interventions for students before school, during school, after school, on Saturdays and extended year. Tools for differentiated instruction are available to teachers, but are not being used consistently. District training on use of the tools should be redirected to ensure teachers understand how the tools support differentiation and how to use them to do so.

There is no fiscal impact to the district for this recommendation; staff development funds should be redirected to address this issue.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM (REC. 5)

The NISD Gifted and Talented Program lacks a process for identifying and serving G/T students, evaluating the program, and sharing information with the appropriate stakeholders as required by board policies.

The NISD Board of Trustees has approved both a legal and local policy to serve the G/T students in the district. Board Policy EHBB (LEGAL) states that the “district shall establish a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level.”

The G/T Plan provided by the district states that implementation of the program is as follows:

- At Navasota Primary School, all students in kindergarten and first grade attend regularly scheduled enrichment classes conducted by a certified G/T teacher to provide enrichment experiences in all four core areas. Identified G/T students will receive additional instruction in the foundation subjects outside the regular classroom from a certified G/T teacher.
- At Webb Elementary School, a team of two certified teachers work only with G/T students, one-half day with a language arts focus and the other half day with a math, social studies, and science focus.
- At Navasota Intermediate School, G/T students are serviced with a pull-out program addressing the four core subject areas.
- At Navasota Junior High School and Navasota High School, students are provided G/T programs through open enrollment pre-AP/AP and/or dual enrollment classes in the four core subject areas.

The plan does not indicate when (or if) it was approved by the board, as required in policy, nor does it have a comprehensive set of goals, objectives, strategies, timelines, or evaluation process. Some campus plans include general strategies that is, “students who qualify will be offered Gifted and Talented services” and “ensure teachers are updating their accreditation (annual progress, G/T updates, ESL updates etc.)” The Gifted and Talented Plan is a summary of the information provided in policy with a brief description of

services provided by each campus. While individual campuses have forms and processes that are used for identification and screening, there is no evidence of districtwide written procedures, curriculum direction, or supervision of the program.

Board Policy EHBB (LOCAL) states that the “gifted program shall be evaluated periodically, and evaluation information shall be shared with board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community.” However, there is no evidence of an evaluation plan, there are no specifics in the G/T plan regarding the evaluation, nor do the district or campus plans have specific strategies or activities to ensure the evaluation is conducted.

The Texas State Plan for Education of Gifted/Talented Students states that equity in G/T education exists when “the population of the gifted/talented program reflects the population of the total district or has for two of the past three years.” **Exhibit 1-22** shows that based on this definition, NISD minorities are underrepresented in the NISD Gifted and Talented Program.

As evidenced in the AEIS, **Exhibit 1-23** shows that the district identifies and serves less than half the state average percentage of G/T students. In addition, the district spends a fraction of the dollar amount per student than the state average expenditure per student as shown in **Exhibit 1-24**.

AEIS further reports, as is reflected in **Exhibit 1-24**, NISD spends \$3.00, or less than one percent, of all funds for each G/T student, while the state average expenditure is \$87.00 per student.

The foreword of *The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, states:

Texas faces many formidable tasks as we enter the twenty-first century. Success in meeting those responsibilities can be achieved only if all Texas students are educated to their maximum capabilities. By focusing on the goal of this plan—that gifted students develop “innovative products and performances that are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment”—we can assure that Texas meets the future with confidence that all its students have been challenged to work at the highest levels.

Without a G/T program that is driven by state requirements, best practices, and equity to all students, NISD will be unable

**EXHIBIT 1-22
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT IDENTIFICATION/PARTICIPATION
IN G/T BY STUDENT ETHNICITY
SCHOOL YEAR 2007–08**

PERCENTAGE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE
District	*	36.6	28.1	34.8
G/T Program**	*	25.2	7.3	66.7

*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
Consultant calculations using district data.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS and Navasota ISD Curriculum Department, March 2009.

**EXHIBIT 1-23
PERCENT OF NAVASOTA ISD STUDENTS SERVED BY CAMPUS,
DISTRICT, AND STATE
SCHOOL YEAR 2007–08**

CAMPUS	NUMBER STUDENTS SERVED	CAMPUS PERCENT	DISTRICT PERCENT	STATE PERCENT
High Point Elementary	7	2.4%	3.1%	7.5%
Webb Elementary	9	1.0%	3.1%	7.5%
Navasota Intermediate	20	6.4%	3.1%	7.5%
Navasota Jr. High	33	5.5%	3.1%	7.5%
Navasota High	26	3.3%	3.1%	7.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS and Navasota ISD Curriculum Department, March 2009.

**EXHIBIT 1-24
COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT
SCHOOL YEAR 2007–08**

DISTRICT	PERCENT OF STUDENTS SERVED BY G/T PROGRAM	PERCENT OF ALL FUNDS ALLOCATED TO G/T PROGRAM	DOLLAR AMOUNT EXPENDED PER STUDENT*
Liberty ISD	8.1	0.6	\$41.00
El Campo ISD	10.2	0.3	\$19.00
Aransas Pass ISD	7.1	0.3	\$20.00
Navasota ISD	3.1	0.0	\$3.00
Statewide	7.5	1.5	\$87.00

*All funds.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2007–08.

to meet the challenges of its G/T students in the twenty-first century.

Development of an evaluation plan is one of the most critical elements for the success of any instructional program. Evaluation should be built into the original program plan to ensure that offered services can be evaluated formatively (while the program is being implemented) and summatively (conducted after the program is fully implemented) to determine the degree to which the program is accomplishing its goals and objectives. *The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented* (www.gifted.uconn.edu/calltoml.html) offers the following guidelines for program evaluation:

- Make evaluation procedures a part of planning from the earliest stages of program development and develop a specific plan for the use of evaluation findings.
- Develop clear program descriptions and goals utilizing multiple data sources (e.g., teachers, parents, students, administrators, school board members).
- Clearly identify all audiences who have an interest in or need for evaluation results and involve them in the evaluation process.
- Develop or select assessment tools that address the complex issues of measurement that characterize outcomes of gifted programs.
- Use a variety of data gathering methods designed to reflect the unique structure and program goals for gifted learners (i.e., out-of-level testing, portfolio assessment, product rating with demonstrated inter-rater reliability).
- Disseminate reports to all appropriate audiences in a timely fashion and with recommendations designed to encourage follow-through.

The TEA provides three simple self-assessment instruments on its website that can be used as part of the self-assessment portion of an evaluation. These instruments include an assessment of guiding principles (which include student equity issues), evidence of achievement, and a plan of action for success of the principles.

The district should develop and implement a G/T program evaluation process that ensures students are appropriately identified for services and that the stakeholders are kept abreast of the program's progress.

The process should consider the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented program evaluation guidelines as well as TEA's self-assessment instruments. The process should include, at a minimum:

- a review of the vertical and horizontal alignment of programs across the district;
- a review of the nomination and identification process as it relates to equity for all students;
- a review of all policies and procedures and the inclusion of those in a districtwide procedure handbook;
- development of a process for ensuring that all staff working with gifted and talented students receive appropriate training and that the records of the training be maintained in a centralized data base;
- an examination of the annual evaluation process and uses of the results; and
- development of procedures for integrating the annual evaluation results and strategies of implementation in the district and campus plans.

The district has a total of five academic coordinators (one for each school). The job description for these five coordinators should be revised to include serving on a committee to create an evaluation plan for the G/T programs and to conduct an annual evaluation of the programs. The coordinators should also tap into the G/T resources provided by Region 6. The only fiscal impact of this recommendation is the additional time needed to create and evaluate the five schools' G/T programs.

DATA ANALYSIS (REC. 6)

NISD lacks a plan to provide professional development, information sharing, and data analysis to ensure the monitoring and analysis of student performance.

In school year 2005–06, NISD implemented a web-based software DMAC to assist administrators and teachers in making smart data-driven decisions. The system has multiple web-based applications which include the ability to access student data anywhere an Internet connection is available. Student data in core areas is stored in a central location and can be viewed immediately by users. Student data are longitudinal and include benchmark and TAKS data from school years 2005–06 through 2008–09 for the last four years for students who were in attendance since school year 2005–06.

Through the DMAC system all teachers and campus administrators have access to data appropriate to their work (i.e., teachers have access to the data related to students in their classrooms). Principals and academic coordinators also have access to all student data for their assigned campus. The academic coordinators are responsible for printing student data from the DMAC system, as appropriate, for teachers and the principals after each benchmark test. Principals are responsible for preparing benchmark test results for the Board of Trustees and some principals meet with their teachers to review the benchmark results.

Interviews with administrators, academic coordinators, and teachers reveal that while academic coordinators do make DMAC data available to teachers after benchmark testing, there is no evidence that a significant number of teachers know how to use the data to modify instruction in the classroom. Nor is there evidence that teachers meet regularly to share their expertise and engage in discussions about data used to improve instruction. The district continues to perform below state and regional averages and there are significant performance gaps between White, Hispanic, African American, ECD, LEP and Special Education students.

While the district has implemented DMAC and academic coordinators are available to assist classroom teachers, there is no ongoing and consistent professional development plan to ensure that teachers are receiving the training necessary to use the student performance data that is being provided. The district lacks an ongoing professional development plan that provides regular opportunities for teachers, by campus and by campus grade level or department, to meet with the instructional technology specialist and the campus academic coordinator to receive training on analysis and use of the DMAC data, and to discuss what the data reveal about current and future instructional practices. Increasing the teachers' understanding of the systematic use of diagnostic data to modify instruction in the classroom could assist in improving student performance.

Many districts and campuses have created campus-based professional development plans that include teams who learn and plan collaboratively to address the academic needs of students. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) discusses this practice in its standards for learning communities in the statement that "the most powerful forms of staff development occur in ongoing teams that meet on a regular basis, preferably several times a week, for the purposes of learning, joint lesson planning, and problem solving." NSDC

includes the following as some of the priorities of learning teams:

- Hold day-to-day professional conversations focused on instructional issues;
- Concern themselves with practical ways to improve teaching and learning;
- Take responsibility for the learning of all students of team members; and
- Assist one another in reviewing standards students are required to master, planning more effective lessons, and critiquing student work.

Implementation of the fourth NSDC priority particularly lends itself to the integration of the needed data analysis with professional development.

The district should develop a professional development plan and process for the analysis and use of student data to decrease performance gaps in student groups. The professional development plan should focus on teacher use of student data analysis. This plan should be developed by a group of stakeholders, including representatives of the District Advisory Council. The plan should focus on the use of data to improve student performance (particularly data available through DMAC), be campus based, led by the principals and academic coordinators, have specific objectives, specific timelines, and formative and summative evaluation components. Further, the initial training should include an overview of the characteristics, functions, norms, and other aspects of professional learning communities.

There would be no fiscal impact to the district for this recommendation other than additional staff time.

COUNSELING PLAN (REC. 7)

NISD lacks a clearly defined Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that outlines the program's expectations and ensures coordination among the district's counseling staff.

NISD employs six counselors for five campuses. According to the assistant superintendent, there are two counselors at the high school and one at each of the other four schools. The counselors report to the principal and the assistant superintendent. Counselors do not have testing responsibilities; however, their duties vary widely from campus to campus. Two examples are that one of the high school counselors is responsible for the Career and Technology

program at that campus and the responsibilities of the Webb Elementary counselor include discipline. A review of documents and interviews with campus staff, academic coordinators and the assistant superintendent indicate that there are no districtwide written programmatic expectations of the counselors and no formal coordination among the counselors. In addition, there is no evidence of a written Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program as required by TEC Section 33.005.

The following exhibits show that the parents and students who responded to the performance review team survey have a negative perception of the district’s counseling services. **Exhibit 1-25** shows that 35.42 percent of parents disagree/strongly disagree that the district has an effective career counseling program, 37.50 percent disagree/strongly disagree that the district has an effective college counseling program, and 47.91 percent do not believe the district has an effective parent and student counseling program. As shown, 40 to 50 percent of the respondents had no opinion about the counseling program.

Similarly, **Exhibit 1-26** shows that 45.74 percent of junior and seniors in high school disagree/strongly disagree that the district has an effective career counseling program and 54.26 disagree/strongly disagree that the district has effective college counseling. In addition, 30.85 and 22.34 percent have no opinion about the programs, respectively.

In addition to the needs of all students in today’s schools, the changing academic requirements and the graduation plan

options in Texas make it essential that students and parents be knowledgeable about the details of each graduation plan, courses required for each plan, and what each plan means to college entry. Specifically, students and parents, in collaboration with counselors, need to fully understand the course requirements for the Distinguished, Recommended and Standard graduation plans. These plans will determine class rank and higher education opportunities following high school graduation. For students to be prepared for post high school experiences the student/parent/counselor collaboration needs to begin in elementary school, with the clear purpose of designing an individual education plan to maximize post-secondary opportunities for students. It is essential that each school district have a consistent process for counseling students (and parents) as they progress through elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools.

The importance of a comprehensive counseling program is reflected in a statement in The Texas Counseling Association’s position paper *Professional School Counselors*, “counselors are the critical link in reducing dropout rates, improving academic performance and increasing participation in postsecondary schools.” Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun found that students “attending high schools that offered fully implemented Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and Programs received higher grades, reported that career and college information was readily available, indicated school was preparing them well for life and felt their campus was safe and orderly, (*Journal of Counseling and Development*, 75, 292-302) TEC 33.005 states that a school counselor shall

**EXHIBIT 1-25
PARENT SURVEY: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

SURVEY QUESTION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The district has an effective career counseling program.	2.08%	12.50%	50.00%	18.75%	16.67%
The district has an effective college counseling program.	2.08%	16.67%	43.75%	22.92%	14.58%
The district has an effective counseling program for parents of students.	2.08%	10.42%	39.58%	20.83%	27.08%

SOURCE: Performance Review Team survey results of respondents answering survey, 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 1-26
STUDENT SURVEY: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

SURVEY QUESTION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The district has an effective career counseling program.	4.26%	19.15%	30.85%	25.53%	20.21%
The district has an effective college counseling program.	6.38%	17.02%	22.34%	29.79%	24.47%

SOURCE: Performance Review Team survey results of respondents answering survey, 2008–09.

work with the school faculty and staff, students, parents, and the community to plan, implement, and evaluate a developmental guidance and counseling program. The counselor shall design the program to include:

- a guidance curriculum to help students develop their educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives;
- a responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
- an individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational career, personal, and social development; and
- a system to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

The district should create a Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that establishes the program's expectations and includes a requirement for coordination with the district's counselors. The TEA has created a model entitled *A Model Comprehensive, Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools: A Guide for Program Development Pre-K-12 Grade*. The model program may be downloaded from the TEA website (www.tea.state.tx) for no charge or it may be ordered from the Texas Counseling Association (www.txca.org) for a \$10.00 printing fee. Among other sections, the model guide includes a scope and sequence for a guidance curriculum and a process for implementing and evaluating the implementation of the program. The model program should be made available to all counselors and administrators in the form of a written plan for NISD and placed on the website for transparency for students and parents. There should be no fiscal impact to the district. District staff should direct the process.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (REC 8)

The Disciplinary Alternative Education Program lacks an effective instructional delivery plan for students assigned to the program.

The district's DAEP is designed to provide students with an opportunity to continue their studies while fulfilling disciplinary requirements in lieu of being suspended for rule

infractions. The intent of the DAEP is to provide a supervised educational setting for students in grades 7–12 who violate the student code of conduct or commit serious or illegal acts as described in the TEC. Students may also be removed from class and placed in DAEP by the principals or assistant principals for conduct outside of school and off school property. The student may be placed when it is reasonably believed the student's presence in the regular classroom or at the home campus presents a danger of physical harm to the students or to other individuals.

NISD students sent to the DAEP are required to spend a period of time at the center completing their disciplinary requirements. Requirements are as follows:

- 1st placement—30 days (review at 20 days)
- 2nd placement—45 days (review at 35 days)
- 3rd placement—60 days or remainder of the semester

If a student is still assigned to the DAEP at the end of the school year, their placement for the next year will be determined by the campus principal.

In interviews with the review team, district staff and community members indicated that the DAEP program has many issues including a need for instructional improvement and an adequate method that ensures a transition of assignments from the home campus to students in DAEP. The district indicated that improvements were addressed and provided the review team a copy of the October 25, 2008 board meeting minutes where the superintendent indicated that the DAEP was operating in a better learning environment (at the high school) with access to teachers of record. The report also noted that telephones and technology were in place and cited that the person in charge of the DAEP was an excellent administrator. Additionally, beginning in school year 2008–09 department chairs at Navasota Junior High School and Navasota High School were given an extra conference period to ensure that student work was delivered to DAEP students and collected when the work was completed.

Despite these actions by the district, teachers of record report that students are not completing assignments and the program is ineffective. Teachers further stated that assignments are often not returned or incomplete. Interviews during the site visit supported the belief that the program is ineffective when compared to the objectives of the program. Administrative and faculty comments included:

- Concept is good but the implementation isn't working
- The process for assignments by the teacher of record is not being implemented successfully
- Students get away with just sitting there
- Big problem—lots of teachers don't send the work
- Students need a daily schedule and more structure
- Administrators there need to get out of their chairs
- Teachers at the facility are not leading the instruction
- We don't get work back and when we do they guess at answers
- They don't do the work because there are no consequences, students choose not to do their assignments
- It needs to be a place they don't want to go instead of a place they can go and do nothing
- They don't follow a class schedule—they need to spend time each day doing core work
- Not a lot of engagement of students at the DAEP

Further, during the site visit to the DAEP, the review team observed the following:

- The center had two sections to accommodate junior high and high school students.
- Approximately 15 students were in each section—junior high and high school.
- About ten percent of the students were writing papers.
- Remaining students were either asleep or had their heads on their desks.
- Little teacher-student interaction was observed.
- No text or other books were observed.

The district's DAEP handbook, revised August 2, 2008, clearly states that

- Students will be sent assignments from their home campus teachers of record. DAEP teachers will administer those assignments and assist students as needed. The assignments will be returned to the home campus teachers for assessment. Our goal is for DAEP students to be able to return to the home campus without missing any instruction.
- Instruction/assignments will be provided based upon each student's schedule. TAKS preparation will also be provided for any student still needing to take TAKS tests.

Yet when teachers of record were interviewed, they reported numerous instances of failure of students to complete or return required assignments. One staff member interviewed mentioned that they had even created a tracking sheet with directions on the assignments sent to the student in the DAEP, however, the tracking sheet was sent back with the uncompleted assignment. Based on information gathered, the DAEP appears to not be accomplishing its objectives. Students who are placed in the program may miss a considerable amount of instruction especially if they are there for a 60 day placement.

Educational researchers Jeong-Hee Kim and Kay Ann Taylor, in an article in the *Journal of Educational Research* stated that "Public alternative schools presently run by school districts struggle with negative stigmas as dumping grounds or warehouses for at-risk students who are falling behind, have behavioral problems, or are juvenile delinquents." Researchers Frank D'Angelo and Rob Zemanick believe that school officials must address alternative education program challenges by "thinking outside of the box and creating alternative education settings that acknowledge the fact that not everyone can learn in the traditional classroom setting." (*Preventing School Failure, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 211*)

The following six components are judged essential to quality alternative programs:

- Procedures for conducting functional assessment of academic and nonacademic behavior
- Flexible curriculum that places emphasis on functional academic, social, and daily living skills
- Effective and efficient instructional strategies
- Transition programs and procedures that link the alternative program to mainstream educational settings and the larger community
- Comprehensive systems for providing students both internal alternative educational services and external community-based services
- Appropriate staff and adequate resources to serve students with disabilities (*Preventing School Failure, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 7*)

NISD should conduct an extensive needs assessment that includes the six best practice components essential to quality alternative programs and use the results from the needs assessment to develop a written plan that focuses on teaching and learning at the DAEP. The needs assessment should include input from students, faculty, administrators, and parents and include a component specific to the receipt and completion of assignments.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE- TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
1.	Revise the district and campus planning process to ensure that the plans give clear direction and are used to guide district operations that will lead to improved student performance.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2.	Establish a process to formalize the district implementation plan for CSCOPE, including a strong implementation and evaluation component.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3.	Identify and implement a research-based high school improvement process designed to improve student performance.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4.	Design and implement a professional development process to ensure differentiation of instruction is being used throughout the district to decrease performance gaps in student groups.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5.	Develop and implement a Gifted and Talented program evaluation process that ensures students are appropriately identified for services and that the stakeholders are kept abreast of the program's progress.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6.	Develop a professional development plan and process for the analysis and use of student data to decrease performance gaps in student groups.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7.	Create a Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program that establishes the program's expectations and includes a requirement for coordination with the district's counselors.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8.	Conduct an extensive needs assessment that includes the six best practice components essential to quality alternative programs and use the results from the needs assessment to develop a written plan that focuses on teaching and learning at the DAEP.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

CHAPTER 2

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 2. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The goal of effective governance and management of school districts is to perform appropriate planning for the district, to provide adequate resources for district operations and to ensure that the district complies with all applicable laws and regulations. Board members serve as policy makers; approving goals and policies that guide program initiatives, establish performance expectations, and allocate limited resources. The board also hires the chief executive officer of the district, the superintendent. The superintendent and staff use these goals and policies to operate the district and develop detailed planning to accomplish these goals in a cost effective framework and staffing.

Navasota Independent School District (NISD) is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees elected at-large who serve three-year staggered terms and are assigned by place to determine the order of election. As shown in **Exhibit 2-1**, the terms expire for two members in 2009, three members in 2010, and two members in 2011. In May 2007, two first-time members were elected, while two additional first-time members were elected in May 2008. There are only two members with more than five years of experience on the board.

A review of district documentation showed that all first-time board members have participated in a local and state

orientation program and all members of the board have exceeded the number of state required training hours.

NISD's Board of Trustees holds regular session meetings on the 3rd Monday of each month, special meetings as called, and scheduled Saturday morning work sessions with the superintendent (initiated in the fall of 2008). In school year 2008–09, the board established three standing committees and each board member is appointed to at least one of the committees. The three standing committees cover facilities management, planning and academics, and finance. Each committee has a stated purpose and meetings are properly advertised with activity reported to the full board at regular meetings. All meetings, including standing committee meetings, are open to the public and meet the legal requirements pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Government Code Chapter 551. Additionally, interview responses and a review of documentation and the district website revealed that potential conflict of interest matters are addressed appropriately and affected board members file the necessary disclosure forms in compliance with Texas Chapter 176 Local Government Code.

NISD's superintendent, who is hired by the Board of Trustees, oversees daily operations of the district. The superintendent's responsibilities include but are not limited to: assuming administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the education programs, services, and facilities; assuming administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all personnel; managing the day-to-day operations; preparing and submitting to the Board of Trustees a proposed budget; and organizing the district's central administration. These responsibilities and more are detailed in the superintendent's job description and his employment contract dated April 1, 2006. This contract was for a three-year term which would have ended on June 30, 2009, but during the January 21, 2009, Board of Trustees meeting, the employment contract was extended for one year with a 2 percent pay increase.

With the support of the board, in September 2007 the superintendent commissioned Dr. Peter Tarlow to conduct a review of the school system to assist in identifying actions that the board and superintendent might initiate to address perceived system and system-to-community issues. Dr.

**EXHIBIT 2-1
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

NAME	PLACE	TERM EXPIRATION	POSITION ON THE BOARD***
Phillip Cox	5	2011	Member
Don Lemon	4	2011	Member
Kevin Clark	2	2010	Member
Hollis Hood	1	2010	President
John Price	3	2010	Member
Marilyn Bettes*	6	2009	Secretary
Jack Hall**	7	2009	Vice-President

*Retained position on the board after the May 9, 2009 election.
 **Danny Kniffin will replace Jack Hall as a result of the May 9, 2009, election.
 ***Effective for school year 2009–10, new board officers include: President John Price; Vice President Marilyn Bettes; and Secretary Phillip Cox.
 SOURCE: Navasota ISD Office of Superintendent, March 2009.

Tarlow was selected to facilitate this process because he had recently worked with the City of Navasota, and was familiar with NISD's situation.

FINDINGS

- NISD's organizational chart does not accurately reflect how the central office is organized to conduct business and shows inappropriate alignment of some functions which does not support efficient and effective operations.
- NISD lacks an overall strategic plan designed to embrace and prioritize all initiatives.
- The superintendent's administrative council lacks guidelines or a clearly defined role for the team to ensure a systematic focus on district improvement and organized planning.
- NISD's Board of Trustees lacks a process to regularly review and update its policies.
- NISD's Board of Trustees holds an excessive number of regular and special board meetings during the year.
- NISD employees do not perceive the district's climate as healthy.
- The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager use district e-mail to expedite effective and timely communications; however, they devote excessive time each day to responding to messages with varying priority levels.
- NISD's learning walkthroughs are not organized to follow prescribed guidelines that relate to the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) initiatives or other important goals and objectives of the district.
- NISD's Board of Trustees's approved contract for legal services does not specify the hourly rates to be charged for work outside the range of retainer fee provisions.
- NISD lacks an evaluation process to ensure legal costs to the district are at an efficient level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 9: Develop a new district organizational structure for central administration and implement the structure with board approval.**

- **Recommendation 10: Develop a comprehensive strategic planning document that includes established goals and provides measurable criteria for prioritizing and evaluating accomplishments.**
- **Recommendation 11: Develop clearly defined goals for the administrative council and reorganize the total membership.**
- **Recommendation 12: Develop a process to regularly review and update board policies.**
- **Recommendation 13: Reduce the number of board meetings to a maximum of 12 regular meetings and 12 work sessions, for a total of 24 meetings each year.**
- **Recommendation 14: Conduct an organizational climate survey and prepare related recommendations to be incorporated in the proposed strategic planning document.**
- **Recommendation 15: Provide alternate e-mail addresses for the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager to delegate routine e-mail to respective administrative assistants or secretarial staff.**
- **Recommendation 16: Formalize the existing school walkthrough process and related procedures as a means to provide data to support the accomplishment of goals and identify actions for improvement.**
- **Recommendation 17: Revise the legal services contract to include specific hourly rates for services that are outside the scope of those included in the annual retainer fee.**
- **Recommendation 18: Review and evaluate the district's legal services.**

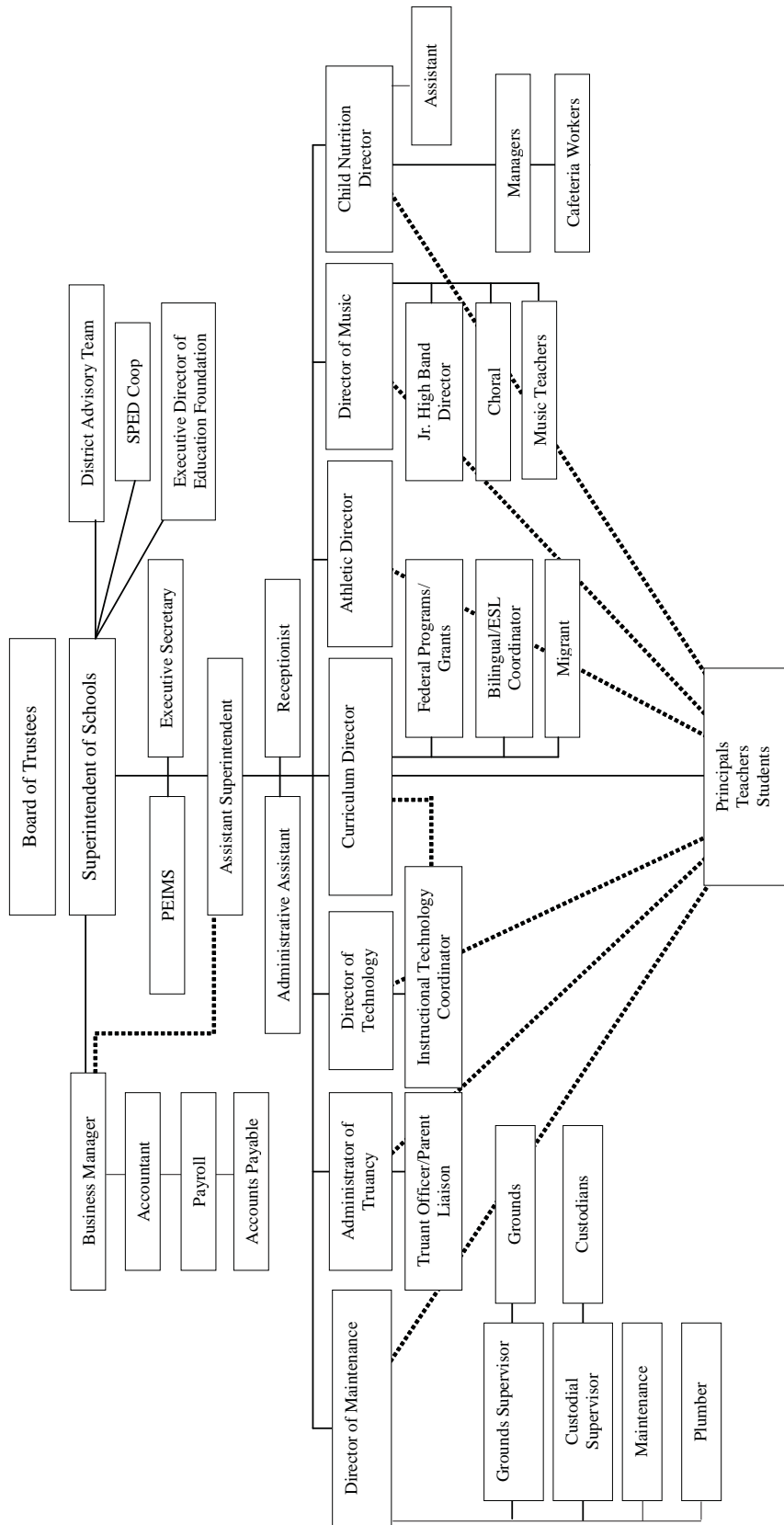
DETAILED FINDINGS

ORGANIZATION (REC. 9)

NISD's organizational chart does not accurately reflect how the central office is organized to conduct business and shows inappropriate alignment of some functions which does not support efficient and effective operations.

Exhibit 2-2 shows the district's organizational chart of record, approved by the Board of Trustees on August 15, 2005. This chart is not reflective of how the central

**EXHIBIT 2-2
PROVIDED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
AS APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUGUST 15, 2005**



SOURCE: Navasota ISD Office of Superintendent, March 2009.

organization is currently conducting business and the lines of authority are not clearly stated in other documents to support this structure.

As a result, the review team identified a need to create an organizational chart as shown by **Exhibit 2-3** reflective of the way the district was operating at the time of the fieldwork. The organizational chart was a result of interviews with administration and staff and does not include all of the positions in the district's organizational chart of 2005.

Currently the district's organization shows the superintendent having 16 direct reports; assistant superintendent, business manager, director of Athletics, director of Technology, instructional technology specialist, five principals, five academic coordinators, and a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator. The superintendent is not only responsible for these 16 direct reports but also oversees the function of facilities construction.

In addition, the organization also shows the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (assistant superintendent) as responsible for two other functions; maintenance and child nutrition services. These functions are inconsistent with that position's overall responsibilities as described in the job description. This organizational structure further shows that the district math coordinator, who was hired in school year 2008–09, reports directly to the high school principal. In addition, the district custodians are accountable in part to the business manager, director of Maintenance, and the principals.

The actual organizational structure as shown in **Exhibit 2-3** can lead to several major issues including:

- Inappropriate alignment of functions among the central office staff and administrators with particular emphasis on the assistant superintendent's area of responsibilities. This situation results in poor coordination of services among maintenance, facilities construction, and custodial services and lack of effective controls by the business manager over child nutrition services.
- An excessive number of direct reports to the superintendent creating a significant overload that can result in inefficient handling of responsibilities.
- An organizational disconnect by assigning the instructional technology specialist position to

the superintendent rather than the director of technology.

- Inappropriate alignment of the academic coordinators being assigned to the superintendent rather than to the assistant superintendent, who is assigned primary responsibility for curriculum and instruction, and/or the principals for whom they work directly with at the campus level.
- District employees could waste time and effort identifying proper channels for effective communications and decisions.
- Overall confusion related to who is accountable for specific functions.

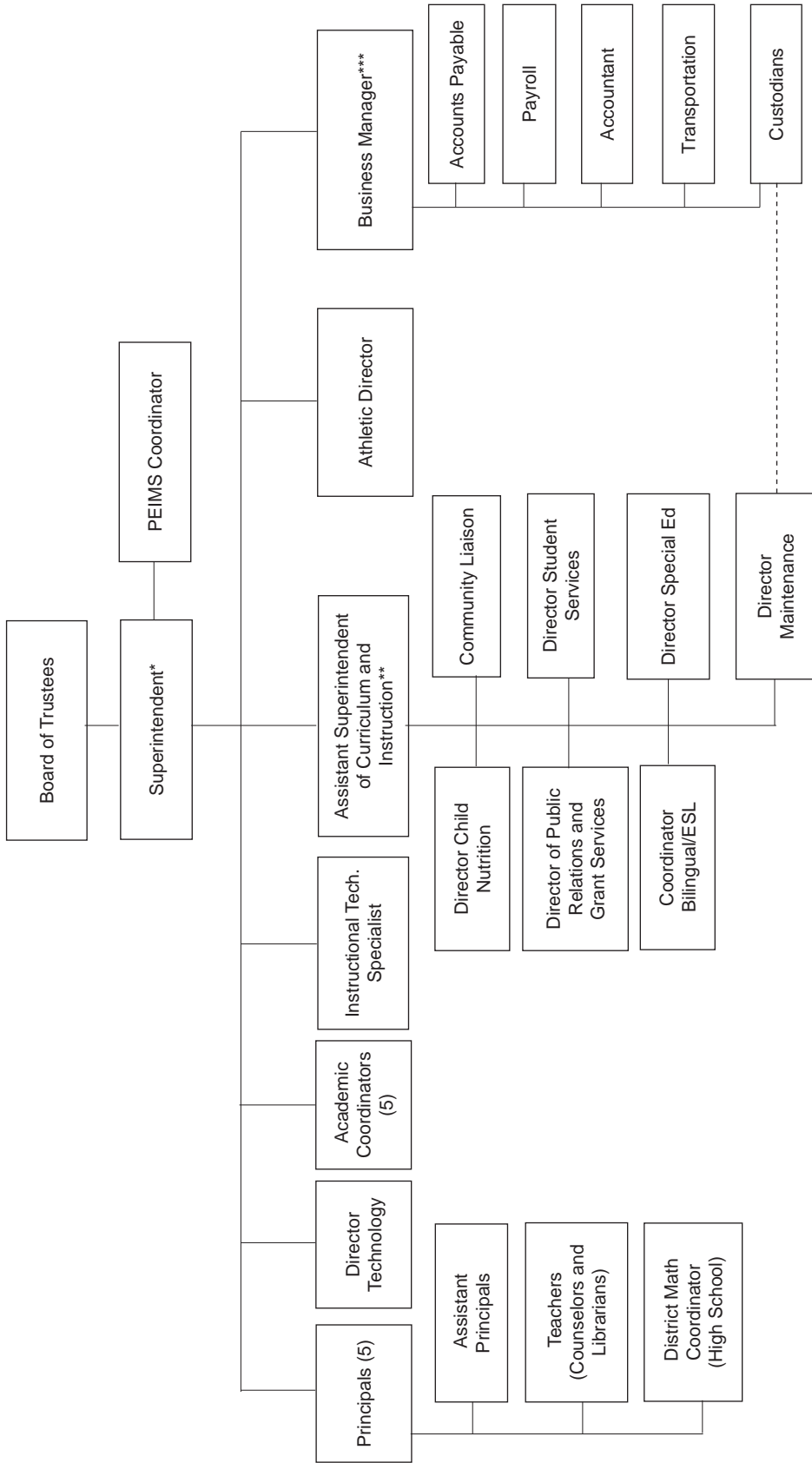
Additionally, interviews with staff and administrators, as well as observations during the onsite review, reveal that coordination of administrative activity is very informal. This situation requires the assistant superintendent and the business manager to meet regularly throughout the day, to ensure appropriate coordination and minimize duplication of efforts.

A curriculum management audit was conducted by the Texas Curriculum Management Audit Center of the Texas Association of School Administrators in 2005; it recommended restructuring district roles and responsibilities to improve operational effectiveness and accountability for student performance. While their proposed organization differs somewhat from the proposed organization, it was designed to accomplish the same objectives.

Exhibit 2-4 presents the proposed organizational structure that clarifies relationships and provides for an immediate understanding of which position is accountable for assigned functions. The proposed organization accomplishes the following:

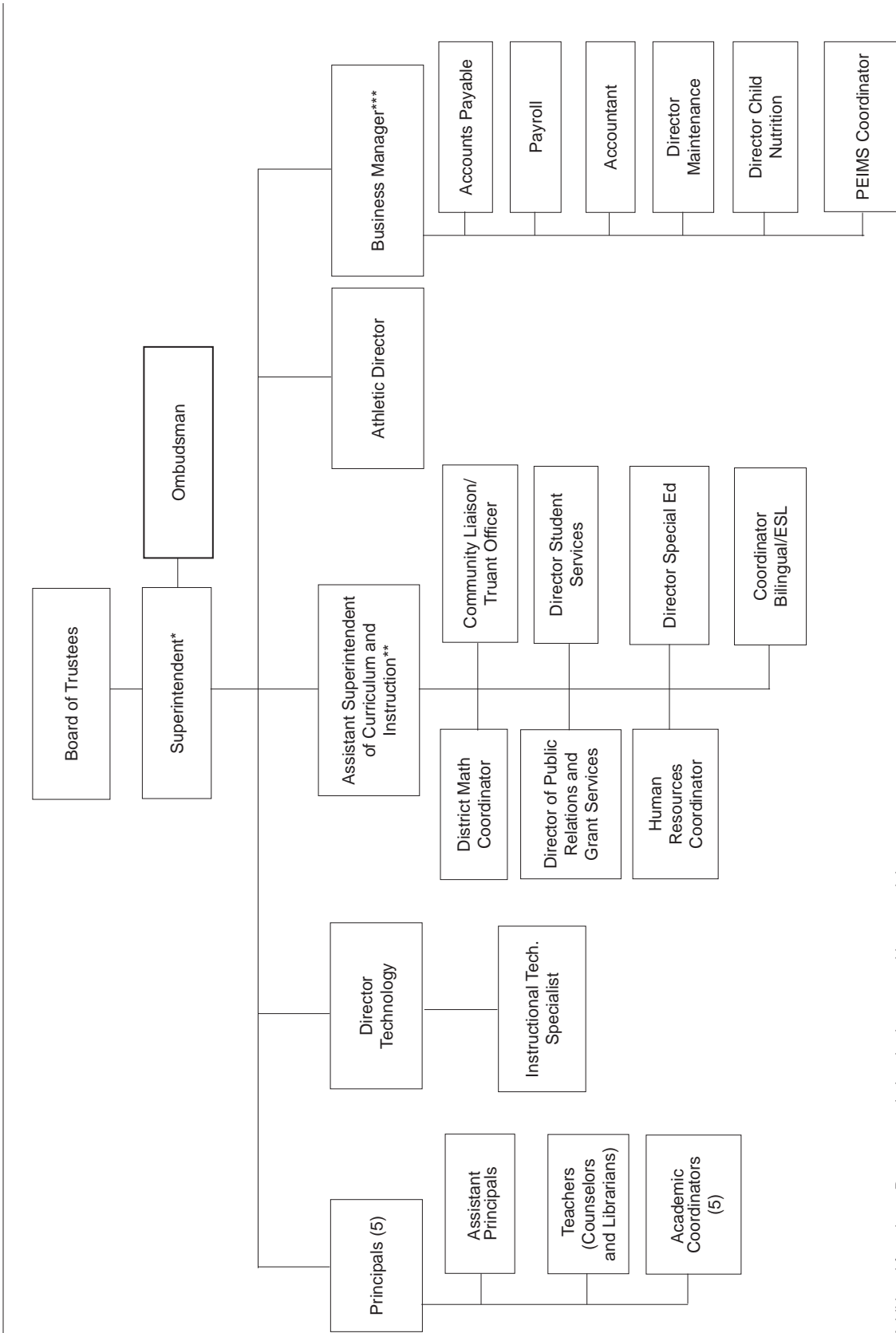
- Reduces the span of control for the superintendent from 15 to 10, but leaves athletics and facilities construction under the superintendent's control to ensure balance of responsibilities between the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the business manager.
- Assigns the academic coordinators to the principals of their respective schools.
- Assigns the instructional technology specialist as a direct report to the director of technology.

**EXHIBIT 2-3
ACTUAL ORGANIZATION
MARCH 2009**



*Additional functions: facilities construction.
 **Additional functions: human resources, maintenance, and G/T.
 ***Additional functions: contract management (transportation), safety and security, child nutrition, and custodians.
 SOURCE: Created by the Performance Review Team from Navasota ISD staff interviews, March 2009.

**EXHIBIT 2-4
PROPOSED ORGANIZATION SHOWING DIRECT REPORTS, NEW POSITIONS, AND CHANGES IN REPORTING STRUCTURE
MARCH 2009**



*Additional functions: Recommended ombudsman position oversight.
 **Additional functions: Recommended oversight of: Human Resources Coordinator, district Math Coordinator.
 ***Recommended oversight of: director of Maintenance, director Child Nutrition, PEIMS Coordinator.
 SOURCE: Created by the Performance Review Team, March 2009.

- Reassigns child nutrition services and maintenance from the assistant superintendent to the business manager.
- Assigns the district math coordinator to the assistant superintendent.
- Clarifies responsibilities, reducing the need for the assistant superintendent and business manager to meet routinely during the work day to ensure they are not duplicating efforts and are effectively dealing with daily issues as well as long-term matters.

The district should develop a new district organizational structure for central administration and implement the structure with board approval using **Exhibit 2-4** as the guideline. The board should approve and implement the reorganization and direct the superintendent to notify all staff involved with this reorganization. **Exhibit 2-5** presents each recommended change and the rationale for the change. This organization will serve to restructure district roles and responsibilities to improve operational effectiveness and accountability for student performance. There is no cost directly associated with this recommendation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING (REC. 10)

NISD lacks an overall strategic plan designed to embrace and prioritize all initiatives.

While NISD meets Texas planning requirements and has a formal mission, goals, objectives, board expectations, and district and school-level improvement plans, a district strategic plan does not exist.

The district has adopted a mission statement with the following documents in support of the mission:

- Six goal statements addressing student academic proficiency, limited English learners, highly qualified teachers, learning environments, graduation rates, and parental participation in school activities.
- Seven board expectations including demonstrating measurable academic progress, providing career and academic curriculum, providing safe and secure campuses, demonstrating and supporting a positive attitude, promoting pride in district facilities, maximizing district and community communications and parental involvement, and developing efficient operations to minimize funding needs.

- A district improvement plan reflecting the six primary goals and providing ten measurable objectives.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) performance goals, performance indicators and targets designed to meet the requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Long-range master plan for facilities.

Discussion of the plans targeting student performance is provided in the Educational Service Delivery chapter of this report.

Because NISD is a small district with limited administrative and staff resources, many of the details in various plans cannot be effectively implemented. For example, in the area of campus and facilities maintenance, goals are difficult, if not impossible, to meet because of the lack of personnel who can implement preventive maintenance programs on a consistent basis. These symptoms suggest that an overall strategic plan linking the district's needs and plans in one document with identified priorities would increase NISD's efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategic planning is a proactive process of envisioning the future and developing the necessary strategic actions to bring that vision to fruition. In essence, a good strategic plan serves as a map for school districts to guide business actions towards meeting educational goals. In addition, planning moves school districts from a reactive to a proactive mode by connecting goals, strategies, performance measures, and action plans to an overall resource allocation process. School districts that link these elements through the planning process are much more likely to achieve identified goals and enhance their overall organizational effectiveness.

Experts in strategic planning, research on best practices, and consultant's experience, reveal that an effective multifaceted, inclusion-based approach to school district strategic planning incorporates the following key practices:

- Acquire a broad and detailed understanding of the school district's environment.
- Gain a thorough understanding of all major stakeholder issues by using a bottom-up approach that maximizes involvement of the affected parties throughout the planning process.
- Include all major community leaders and groups in each phase of the strategic planning process.

EXHIBIT 2-5

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED POSITION ASSIGNMENTS

CURRENT OR RECOMMENDED POSITION	RECOMMENDED CHANGE	RATIONALE
Superintendent	Decrease the number of direct reports to the superintendent from 15 positions to 10. This would remove from this position's direct report the instructional technology specialist and the five (5) academic coordinators.	This change reduces the span of control for the superintendent, but leaves athletics and facilities construction under the superintendent's control to ensure balance of responsibilities between the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the business manager.
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction	Remove from this position's direct report the director of Child Nutrition and the director of Maintenance and assign them to the Business Manager.	Placing these two operational functions under the business manager would result in more effective operations in this area and reduce the assistant superintendent's responsibilities allowing this position to focus on curriculum and instruction as outlined in the positions job description.
Instructional Technology Specialist	Assign this position to report to the director of Technology.	This change is organizationally appropriate as these individuals work together on technology related issues in the district and would also reduce the number of reports to the superintendent.
Academic Coordinators	Assign the academic coordinators to the principals of their respective schools.	This change would also reduce the number of reports to the superintendent and more importantly, align these individuals with the principals at their campus which is more appropriate for their job duties.
Business Manager	Assign the director of Child Nutrition and the director of Maintenance to directly report to the Business Manager.	This change would reduce the number of reports to the assistant superintendent and align these two operational functions in the district with the Business Manager who is responsible for the financial aspects of the programs.
District Math Coordinator	Assign the district math coordinator to directly report to the assistant superintendent.	As the district math coordinator, it is more appropriate for this position to report to the assistant superintendent rather than solely to the High School Principal. By aligning this position to the assistant superintendent the coordination of math instruction will be a more focused approach districtwide.
PEIMS Coordinator	The PEIMS coordinator job description indicates that this position reports to the Business Manager, rather than the superintendent as revealed during on-site review.	This change aligns this position as a direct report to the Business Manager as indicated in the PEIMS coordinator job description.
Human Resources Coordinator*	Create a position for a Human Resources coordinator to directly report to the assistant superintendent.	This new position would allow for an administrative position dedicated solely to human resource functions. The absence of an administrative position exclusively dedicated to the human resources function in the school district places a great deal of responsibility for this function on the payroll bookkeeper, administrators in other departments, and school-based administrators.
Ombudsman*	Create a position for an Ombudsman to directly report to the superintendent.	This new position would serve as an independent resource to assist the district in resolving employee problems, complaints, conflicts, and other school-related issues.

*The recommendation for this position is detailed in the Human Resources Chapter of this report.

SOURCE: Created by the performance review team, 2009.

- Build on community relationships to disseminate and collect information.
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis to derive recommendations from various alternatives.
- Ensure that every finding is linked to a specific recommendation and its corresponding benchmark

to increase the success of recommendation implementation.

- Develop a solid method of evaluating success and making the necessary changes to attain success in the future.

- Create a system to update the plan as the environment changes and goals are met.

The first two key practices, understanding the environment and understanding major stakeholders, create the basis for a strategic plan. A school district’s needs and current position provide the context in which a strategy is developed. A school district must know where it is and where it wants to be in order to meet strategic goals. Involving major stakeholders, community members, and other experts incorporates the experience of numerous viewpoints and serves as a forum for exploring alternative objectives and methods. Instead of assuming that opinion is sufficient to determine a course of action, cost-benefit analysis is performed to explore possible alternatives. The linkages made between findings, recommendations, and benchmarks ensure that the strategic plan can be implemented and updated as an evaluation occurs.

Evaluation provides the necessary information to know when to update the plan and how to respond to environmental changes. It is necessary in strategic planning to update processes because rapidly increasing cycle changes are now

the norm. Updates serve as the primary mechanism for allowing the plan to respond to a school district’s changing environment.

Exhibit 2-6 summarizes the high-level summary for the major components of best practice methodology for school district strategic planning. The basis of the methodology is finding the answers to four key questions:

- Where do we want to be?
- Where are we now?
- How do we get there?
- How do we measure our progress?

NISD should develop a comprehensive strategic planning document that includes established goals and provides measurable criteria for prioritizing and evaluating accomplishments. Examples of best practices can be obtained from Norfolk City Public Schools, Norfolk, Virginia and Prince William City Schools (PWCS), Virginia. PWCS has a model strategic plan that is fully developed with a revision cycle and institutionalized procedures for monitoring and holding personnel accountable for assigned elements.

**EXHIBIT 2-6
METHODOLOGY FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**

AREA OF REVIEW	COMPONENT PLAN	SPECIFIC FOCUS OF THE REVIEW
Where Do We Want To Be?	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Identifies the School District’s uniqueness, when combined with the Mission and Principles ➢ A Compelling Image of the Desired Future
	Mission and Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Broad Comprehensive Statement of the School District’s Purpose ➢ Core Values, Actions to Achieve Mission ➢ Employees and Management Involvement
	Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The Desired Result ➢ Specific and Measurable Targets for Accomplishment ➢ Leads to Quality Initiative Goals and Objectives
Where Are We Now?	Internal/External Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Situation Inventory/Environmental Scan ➢ Customer Analysis ➢ Quality Assessment and Benchmarking ➢ Strategic Issues
How Do We Get There?	Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Activities to Accomplish Goals and Objectives ➢ Detailed Work Plans ➢ Leads to Resource Allocation
How Do We Measure Our Progress?	Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ensures Accountability and Continuous Improvement-linked Performance Targets
	Monitoring and Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Methods to Measure Results ➢ Systems to Monitor Progress ➢ Compilation of Management Information ➢ Maintains Plan on Track Toward Goals

SOURCE: Created by the Performance Review Team, 2004.

PWCS's strategic plan can be accessed from http://www.pwcs.edu/Departments/accountability/strategic/strategic_opener.html.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and at no additional cost to the district. Implementation should result in a realistic list of prioritized items related to established goals, designed to be implemented as efficiently and effectively as circumstances will permit. **Exhibit 2-6** provides an implementation methodology that could be used to guide the process. The superintendent should establish and chair a strategic planning group with representation from teachers, principals, central office and school-level support staff, high school student leadership, and community members and parents. This group should examine all planning documents and synthesize them into an overall plan to be presented to the Board of Trustees for their review and approval.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (REC. 11)

The superintendent's advisory team lacks guidelines or a clearly defined role for the team to ensure a systematic focus on district improvement and organized planning.

Interviews with administrative and support staff reveal that the superintendent meets monthly with an advisory team to discuss issues and resolve problems related to the district, however, because this is an informal team there are no clear guidelines or roles. This team includes the assistant superintendent, business manager, director of technology, all principals, and other personnel. There is no evidence of a prepared agenda or report of activity; however, interviews reveal that important problems are examined and items to be presented to the board are reviewed. Planning-related discussions are typically focused on immediate matters such as facilities, student management, or academic performance. Indicative of the need to improve team effectiveness is the need for the business manager and assistant superintendent to meet informally, sometimes repeatedly, each day to ensure that various tasks and issues are managed.

In addition, interviews and onsite observations reveal that the superintendent may be handling some matters without the knowledge of one of the key team players, causing duplication of effort, inefficient activity, and lack of accountability. Informal and non-inclusive meetings lack a central organized focus that could easily be remedied by developing a series of guidelines designed to govern team activity. Regional leadership and experienced superintendents, supported by research on effective schools, indicate that the

most effective decisions are those that are made closest to the implementation level in the organization.

In *The Organization of the Future*, Richard Beckhard profiles the healthy organization and notes that the heart of an organization is its overall organization and management. The health of the organization can be determined in a number of ways including a review of the organization structure and its management. He reports that a healthy, well-managed organization exhibits the following characteristics:

- Defines itself as a system and the organization's stakeholders includes its owners and staff, its suppliers, intermediate customers, the ultimate customers of the product or service, the media, and the communities in which the organization operates.
- Has a strong system for receiving current information on all parts of the system and its interactions (system dynamics thinking).
- Possesses a strong sense of purpose.
- Operates in a "form follows function" mode—work determines the structures and mechanisms to do it and consequently it uses multiple structures (formal pyramidal structures, horizontal structures and teams, project structures, and temporary structures [as when managing a major change]).
- Respects customer service both to outside customers and to others within the organization, as a principle.
- Is information-driven and information is shared across functions and organization levels.
- Encourages and allows decisions to be made at the level closest to the customer, where all the necessary information is available.
- Has communication systems which are relatively open throughout the school district.
- Operates in a learning mode and identified learning points are part of the process of all decision-making.
- Explicitly recognizes innovation and creativity and has a high tolerance for different styles of thinking and for ambiguity.
- Has policies which respect the tensions between work and family demands.

- Gives sufficient attention to efficient work, quality and safety awareness in operations, and identifying and managing change.
- Is generally managed with and guided by a strong executive officer employing a variety of work groups composed of individuals possessing appropriate skills and complementary traits.

The superintendent should develop clearly defined goals and reorganize the existing advisory team into an administrative council to include the assistant superintendent, business manager, director of technology, and five school principals. This team should focus on consensus building to achieve important goals and objectives. Decisions and activities should be effectively communicated to impacted parties through copies of meeting activity and e-mail requiring confirmation of receipt.

In addition, long and short-term planning should become the centerpiece of activity of the administrative council with the responsibility for ensuring that all related planning and effective plan monitoring are ongoing processes. The development of this process should drive the district's planning and implementation processes.

With the implementation of the proposed organizational plan in this chapter and realignment of functions, the administrative council should meet twice monthly to perform the following functions:

- Coordinate all plan development and ensure that plan elements provide the needed focus to guide school improvement and improving student performance.
- Review enrollment projections and alternative “what if” analyses, as part of long- range planning.
- Establish and maintain focus on mission, goals, and related initiatives of the system.
- Analyze and interpret data to ensure that decisions are based upon accurate and complete information.
- Monitor internal communications to ensure effective communication of decisions and related information.
- Communicate the vision of the organization to all stakeholders.
- Guide program evaluation.
- Identify and participate in training designed to ensure that the team functions effectively.

- Engage in orchestrating the specific and purposeful abandonment of obsolete, unproductive practices and programs.
- Maintain focus on continuous district and school improvement.
- Monitor the district's organizational climate.
- Coordinate the development and equitable allocation of resources (fiscal, personnel, facilities, technology, etc.).
- Ensure that staff are prepared for regular and special meetings of the board, providing the board with information necessary to making appropriate decisions.

Decisions should be based upon the best information available and appropriate input should be solicited during the administrative council meetings. Day-to-day operational decisions should rest with the administrators responsible for their respective units and departments. Within the proposed organizational plan, the council members should maintain effective, frequent communications (almost daily) to ensure consistency and effective monitoring of activities. The superintendent should continue to maintain daily communications with various administrators, but should begin a process of systematically sharing control with all members of the council.

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the district and should result in more effective and efficient planning, monitoring, and administration of NISD.

BOARD POLICIES (REC. 12)

NISD's Board of Trustees lacks a process to regularly review and update its policies.

A review of NISD's policy manual shows that some policies have not been reviewed or updated since 1996. For example, board Policy DNB (LOCAL) related to evaluation of other professional employees was originally issued on November 15, 1996, and there is no documentation indicating that this policy has been reviewed or updated since that time. The district subscribes to the Texas Association of School Board's (TASB) policy service for updates; however, the Board of Trustees does not have a systematic method for policy review.

While NISD has established three standing committees, none are assigned responsibility for policy development or revision. **Exhibit 2-7** shows the standing committees and

**EXHIBIT 2-7
BOARD OF TRUSTEE COMMITTEES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

COMMITTEES	RESPONSIBILITIES
Facilities Management	Evaluate the conditions of facilities and develop a prioritized list of major concerns and make recommendations to the board.
Planning and Academic	Evaluate the district academic conditions and develop plans to address both short and long range needs.
Financial	Evaluate the financial status of the district. This committee will meet regularly with the superintendent, business manager and other staff the superintendent deems necessary.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Office of the Superintendent, March 2009.

their assigned responsibilities. A review of the responsibilities for each committee shows that policy development and revision is not assigned to a board committee.

The Board of Trustees, pursuant to Texas statute, is responsible for maintaining up-to-date policies and procedures of the school district. Districts who successfully implement a process for a regular review of their board policies divide their policy manual into multiple sections and plan to review each section at a scheduled time, either annually, quarterly or whatever meets the district's needs. Updates to policies are documented in the footer of the policy and show the last date the policy was revised.

The board should develop a process to regularly review and update board policies. The board may consider using the existing board committee structure to implement this recommendation by assigning this task to one of the established committees. This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the district and results in an organized process for developing and updating policies.

EXCESSIVE MEETINGS (REC. 13)

NISD's Board of Trustees holds an excessive number of regular and special board meetings during the year.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-8**, from January 2008 through December 2008, the board scheduled 49 meetings on 42 different dates. Four of the 49 meetings were conducted on

**EXHIBIT 2-8
BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MEETINGS
CALENDAR YEAR 2006 THROUGH 2008**

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS	NUMBER OF DAYS SCHEDULED	NUMBER OF SATURDAY MEETINGS
2006	36	31	0
2007	42	37	0
2008	49	42	4

SOURCE: Navasota ISD website BoardBook, March 2009.

Saturdays. During 2007, a total of 42 meetings were scheduled on 37 different dates; however, no Saturday meetings were held. During 2006, the board scheduled 36 meetings on 31 separate dates.

An examination of BoardBook, the electronic system for maintaining board meeting agendas and minutes, for calendar year 2008 meetings shows that four meetings failed to impanel a quorum and one was canceled due to inclement weather. The Saturday meetings were initiated for the purpose of discussing a variety of issues in a more relaxed atmosphere and to provide more effective direction to the superintendent.

Interviews with personnel and minutes of meetings reveal that each meeting requires the preparation of an agenda, support documents, and subsequent meeting minutes. A further examination of meeting minutes shows that the length of meetings varies from as short as a few minutes for some required public hearings, to as long as six hours for regular meetings.

The amount of time administrators (particularly the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager) and related support staff commit to meeting preparation and follow-up is extensive because of the large number of meetings. This time can include agenda preparation and review (often confirming meeting times and dates with each of the seven trustees as well as issue clarification and discussion with various trustees or last minute development of additional information), and finally, preparation of board packets (providing additional supporting data for all agenda items).

School boards of similarly enrolled school districts typically schedule one regular meeting per month and an average of one work session each month. Examples of this practice may be found in NISD peers including Aransas Pass, El Campo, and Liberty Independent School Districts. **Exhibit 2-9** shows that NISD has annually exceeded the number of Board of Trustees meetings as compared to peer districts. The exhibit

**EXHIBIT 2-9
PEER COMPARISON OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
CALENDAR YEAR 2006 THROUGH 2008**

DISTRICT	TOTAL MEETINGS 2006	TOTAL MEETINGS 2007	TOTAL MEETINGS 2008
Aransas Pass	15	15	15
El Campo	29	32	21
Liberty	Not available	18	27
Navasota	36	42	49

SOURCE: Aransas Pass, El Campo, Liberty, and Navasota ISD’s website, March 2009.

shows that from calendar year 2006 through 2008, peer school boards met as few as 15 and as many as 32 times annually.

The board should reduce the number of board meetings to a maximum of 12 regular meetings and 12 work sessions, for a total of 24 meetings each year. The number of meetings could be reduced through more careful planning of activities and the development of work sessions to supplement the annual regular meeting calendar. In addition, more effective short- and long-term planning would allow for a significant reduction in the number of board meetings.

The board should consider scheduling their work sessions prior to the regularly scheduled meeting which could also assist in reducing the number of meetings. The district should continue the Saturday meetings as needed to ensure a good working relationship between the board and the superintendent. Saturday meetings may be scheduled as part of the 12 recommended work sessions.

There should be no cost associated with implementing this recommendation; however, it is expected that the superintendent, assistant superintendent, business manager, and related support staff should be used more efficiently and effectively by reducing the number of meeting preparations and follow-up activity.

SCHOOL DISTRICT CLIMATE (REC. 14)

NISD employees do not perceive the district’s climate as healthy.

A review of the workloads created by the number of board meetings, the lack of an organized human resources department, the excessive number of grievances, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint under investigation during the time of the onsite review, poorly

articulated organizational pattern and assignment of responsibilities within the central office, fiscal constraints, and other intervening factors appear to contribute to the perception of an unhealthy district climate.

In addition, the lack of stable leadership at the Navasota High School also contributes to the perception of an unhealthy school district climate. In school years 2000–01 through 2008–09, the high school has had 10 different individuals to serve in the role of principal. Interviews with district and campus staff revealed that this has contributed to a lot of the negative perception in the district. Comments heard during onsite review echoed that “this is really a good district, except for the high school”. Although there was no documentation revealing the specific reasons for the constant change at the high school, it is perceived that NISD is used as a “stepping stone” for individuals in administrative positions. **Exhibit 2-10** shows the principals assigned to Navasota High School since 1988. As shown, the last principal to serve more than two years at the school left the position in January 2001. It should be noted that since the time of the onsite review the district has permanently hired a high school principal.

When employees were asked about the status of the organizational health or climate, most replied “What is that?” or were unable to provide observations that supported that the NISD district is “healthy” in terms discussed in the research on effective organizations.

Interviews with administration and staff reveal that there is no concerted effort to understand the health or climate status

**EXHIBIT 2-10
NAVASOTA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
SCHOOL YEARS 2000–01 THROUGH 2008–09**

PRINCIPAL	LENGTH OF SERVICE
Don Lightfoot	1988 – January 2001
David Faltys	January 2001 – September 2002
David Young	September 2002 – 2003–04
John Slaton	2004–05
Fred Brent	July 2005 – May 2006
Brent Rumbo	2006–07
Cory Buckley/ Charles Hebert	2007–08
Shawn Elliott/ Charles Hebert	July 2008 – December 2008
Amy Jarvis*	February 2009 (still serving)

*Previously served as the principal of the Navasota Junior High and the Navasota High School, simultaneously.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Office of Superintendent, March 2009.

of NISD and its employees. Surveys of central office administration, principals/assistant principals, and teachers were conducted. When presented with the statement the morale of central administration staff is good, approximately 20 percent of the responding central office administrative and support staff indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed and 27 percent offered no opinion.

If this issue is not effectively managed, the overall morale of employees can deteriorate resulting in an inability to accomplish important established goals and objectives, including improving the community's perceptions of the school district.

Andrew Halpin, a pioneer in identifying organizational dimensions and measuring them, reported in the Halpin and Croft book, *Theory and Research in Administration*, and supported by Richard Beckhard stated that organizational dimensions should include:

- **Goal Focus:** Degree that goals of the organization are clearly defined and accepted, achievable with existing resources, and congruent with the demands of the environment.
- **Communication:** Degree that communication within the system is distortion-free in all directions (vertically, horizontally and across boundaries); degree that organization has information needed to function effectively.
- **Optimal Power Equalization:** Distribution of influence is relatively equitable across the organization. Inter-group struggles are kept to a minimum.
- **Morale:** Degree that individuals feel a sense of well being, satisfaction, and accomplishment; support given to individuals to achieve the goals of the organization.
- **Innovation/Adaptation:** Degree of change, variety, and emphasis on new approaches; ability of the organization to invent new procedures to accomplish goals.
- **Autonomy:** Degree of independence to make effective decisions; degree of self-sufficient behavior in daily functions.
- **Managing Productive Systems:** Process and methodology of decision-making; level of productivity and control; establishment of accountability systems.

- **Commitment:** Degree of concern for and commitment to organization; sense of identity and belonging.
- **Safety/Environment:** Degree of satisfaction with working conditions; establishment of an orderly, safe and secure learning environment.
- **Achievement:** Degree of emphasis on student achievement.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA: <http://my.nasa.gov/home/index.html>) has contributed much to the understanding of effective teams and organizational climate and can provide guidance on instruments that can be utilized in assessing an organization's status and lead to developing strategies to improve organizational health and climate. Additional information related to organizational climate can be obtained from the National School Boards Association (NSBA), of which TASB is an affiliate.

NISD should conduct an organizational climate survey and prepare related recommendations to be incorporated in the proposed strategic planning document. Upon selection, the district should follow the protocols for the instrument and proceed with implementation and development of strategies resulting from the findings. This recommendation can be implemented using existing staff and technology at no additional cost to the district.

E-MAIL (REC. 15)

The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager use district e-mail to expedite effective and timely communications; however, they devote excessive time each day to responding to messages with varying priority levels.

Each of these administrators has a district e-mail address and responds to all messages received each day. A quick review of the quantity of e-mail shows that often they must respond to 30 or more daily. Many responses require additional follow-up and administrative and support staff time. These administrators do not delegate the opening of e-mail to their respective support staff, nor do they have a separate e-mail address that could be used by a selected list of district personnel, board members, and essential community, regional, or state contacts. With the rapid increase in the use of e-mail as a routine method for communicating, these high-level administrators are devoting more time processing this correspondence. This practice results in dealing with

many matters that could easily be handled by subordinate personnel on a routine basis.

Interviews with administrative support staff indicated that the administrators spend a lot of time responding to emails. It was suggested that the administrative support staff could assist with the review if they had access to the administrators' email accounts.

As the volume of e-mail increases, it is likely to impact daily task management and the administrators' ability to concentrate on strategic and long-term matters for which they have primary responsibility.

While many best practices exist for time management, the managing of e-mails has been effectively addressed by recommending a two-tiered solution. First, opening and processing all of the administrators' e-mail is delegated to their respective administrative assistants or secretarial staff. These staff sort through this e-mail and respond to messages that do not require the administrators' review and when they receive messages to which they are unable to respond, they can forward these e-mails to the appropriate administrator.

Second, administrators are assigned an alternate e-mail address provided only to those who must communicate directly with them. Such persons could include board members, the leadership staff, and other selected persons. This action could result in freeing the administrators for important work while still providing necessary access by selected persons.

Winchester City Public School, Virginia has implemented this solution effectively. Additionally, the superintendent of Roanoke City Public Schools, Virginia used this two-tiered strategy and reduced the amount of valuable administrative time devoted to processing e-mails.

The district superintendent should direct the director of Technology to provide an alternate e-mail address for the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager which should be used for individuals that need to communicate directly with them. All other emails should be handled by these individuals' respective administrative assistants or secretarial staff. The superintendent, assistant superintendent and business manager should develop guidelines for how this process will work and communicate it with their support staff, the Board of Trustees and other personnel as deemed necessary. This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the district.

LEARNING WALKTHROUGHS (REC. 16)

NISD's learning walkthroughs are not organized to follow prescribed guidelines that relate to the CIP initiatives or other important goals and objectives of the district.

The district implemented a process called learning walkthroughs in school year 2008–09 where the campus administrators visit each others schools and walkthrough the classroom making observations. After the walkthroughs are conducted, the principals, academic coordinators and assistant superintendent meet in the library at the middle school to discuss what was observed. The administrators interviewed considered this a positive process with a step toward better alignment between schools. This process also helps each administrator understand what goes on the other campuses. At the time of onsite review the district had conducted these walkthroughs twice this school year.

Although the walkthroughs are an effort towards improvement, this process is not guided by procedures that are an outgrowth of the District Improvement Plan (DIP), CIP, or other planning documents prepared by the district. Consequently, the data or observations are difficult to quantify and apply as either benchmarks or accomplishment data.

The current practice of learning walkthroughs provides valuable qualitative information and affords the superintendent and other administrators an opportunity to meet and discuss various issues with the principal and other campus staff. However, this process is not organized in such a manner as to target district and CIP identified needs and does not constitute the best and most efficient use of valuable administrative time and efforts.

In January 2005, the Norfolk Public Schools, Virginia published its Walkthrough: A Key to Success document describing its strategy for supporting school improvement and reaching for world class status. The process is guided by a series of standards and expectations, a detailed walkthrough purpose, and statements of when walkthroughs should be conducted, including the following guidelines:

- To explore a genuine focusing question, meaning a question that cannot be answered by using other means.
- To explore a narrow focusing question when the school has a focusing question that is both narrow (sharply focused) and powerful (critically related to one or more key components of teaching and learning).

- To look at classroom practices through four lenses simultaneously: teacher practice, student activity, student work products, and classroom environment.
- For a qualitative, experiential investigation when the focusing question requires it.
- For collegial feedback when a fully collegial, non-supervisory relationship exists between visitor and visited.
- To explore depth and breadth of complex instructional practices.
- For a brief snapshot of classroom activities when needed as a starting point to investigate a focusing question.

The process structure guidelines carefully detail all aspects of the walkthrough from preplanning to implementation and conclusion, including team membership and all related details.

NISD should formalize the existing school walkthrough process and related procedures as a means to provide data to support the accomplishment of goals and identify actions for improvement.

Implementation of this recommendation should involve the following steps:

- The superintendent should appoint a task group chaired by the assistant superintendent and composed of an elementary and secondary principal, representative teachers from each school level, and three school-based academic coordinators representing elementary, middle, and high schools.
- The superintendent should establish a deadline for developing and submitting for approval the procedural document.
- The committee should request a copy of the walkthrough manual from Norfolk Public School Division, Norfolk, Virginia and consider using it as a template for the development of an NISD procedures document.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and at no additional cost to the district. Implementation should result in valuable information for evaluating progress in accomplishing established goals and objectives and a more efficient and effective use of administrative time and effort.

LEGAL SERVICES (REC. 17)

NISD's Board of Trustees' approved contract for legal services does not specify the hourly rates to be charged for work outside the range of retainer fee provisions.

NISD's contract for legal services dated March 7, 2008 includes a fixed and stated annual retainer of \$1,000. The retainer fee includes the following services:

- Free, unlimited telephone consultation, with the Board of Trustees' President, Superintendent, Special Education Director, or designee pertaining to questions arising out of the general operation of the board.
- Reduced rates for additional legal work, although the specific hourly rates are not included in the contract.
- Free subscriptions to firm publications.
- E-mail updates on legal issues.
- Reduced rates on all firm in-services, including training.

Interviews with district staff and a review of invoices show that hourly rates for services are \$180 and \$235 for associate and partner attorneys, respectively.

Without a stated fee schedule included in the contract, it is difficult for staff charged with reviewing invoices to determine if charges are consistent with the board's understanding of the agreed upon fees. Additionally, the contract does not address how fees will be determined for paralegal activity if rendered as a part of legal services. Contracts for services typically provide specific details regarding hourly rates or fees for the services of partners, associates, and paralegal staff.

NISD should revise the legal services contract to include specific hourly rates for services that are outside the scope of those included in the annual retainer fee. Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished at no additional cost to the district.

LEGAL FEES (REC. 18)

NISD lacks an evaluation process to ensure legal costs to the district are at an efficient level.

NISD's per student expenditures for legal services exceed the state, Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6), and peer district averages. **Exhibit 2-11** shows the comparison of legal fees with NISD ranking second highest in cost per student among the peer districts. NISD spends \$23.46 per student

**EXHIBIT 2-11
LEGAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES
SCHOOL YEAR 2007–08**

COMPARISON DISTRICTS	LEGAL SERVICES	TOTAL STUDENTS	LEGAL SERVICES PER STUDENT	RANK
El Campo	\$112,938	3,407	\$33.15	1
Navasota	\$68,480	2,919	\$23.46	2
Aransas Pass	\$32,213	2,046	\$15.74	3
Liberty	\$17,883	2,272	\$7.87	4
Region 6	\$2,064,247	160,361	\$12.87	N/A
State	\$60,611,611	4,651,516	\$13.03	N/A

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS School Year 2007–08.

Exhibit 2-12 shows legal services expenditures for calendar years 2007, 2008, and January through February 2009. As shown, the total expenditures have increased annually. Extrapolating the 2009 to-date expenditures for 12 months indicates that legal costs for 2009 could be as much as \$70,000 to \$90,000.

**EXHIBIT 2-12
LEGAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES
CALENDAR YEARS 2007 THROUGH 2008
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2009**

CALENDAR YEAR	EXPENDITURE
2007	\$50,150
2008	\$60,772
January through February, 2009	\$35,394

SOURCE: Navasota ISD legal service invoices, March 2009.

The cost of legal services is charged to the general fund and, therefore, has a negative impact on the availability of funds for instruction. An examination of legal activity and interviews with staff reveal that a significant portion of the expenditures are for personnel-related matters. Currently, in excess of 30 percent of the legal services expenditures are for various human resources-related matters that could be managed more effectively in-house thus reducing expenditures for legal services.

Ponca City Oklahoma Public School District has conducted a formal evaluation of legal services; their legal services costs were ranked high among other districts. This district obtained data for various districts, both peer and larger districts, and compared the cost for their legal services to these districts. Although this evaluation revealed that there is considerable variation among the districts and actual dollar comparisons are difficult to make, this process resulted in a significant decrease in cost to the district for legal services.

NISD should review and evaluate the district’s legal services. A review and evaluation of legal services should include a detailed examination of the type of legal work conducted, an assessment of the need for services, and an analysis of potential options for reducing or controlling expenditures. Typically, a careful examination of the causes for special education hearings/litigation, personnel actions, and expenditures in the area of risk management can be beneficial. NISD should take actions to reduce the costs of legal services including an annual evaluation of the types and categories of issues that have caused legal action.

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished at no additional cost to the district. However, following the implementation of this recommendation, the district could conservatively realize a reduction in legal services costs in school year 2009–10 of at least 10 percent of the 2008 expenditures, or \$6,000 (\$60,000 x 10 percent), and increasing to 20 percent, to \$12,000 (\$60,000 x 20 percent) in subsequent years.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
9. Develop a new district organizational structure for central administration and implement the structure with board approval.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10. Develop a comprehensive strategic planning document that includes established goals and provides measurable criteria for prioritizing and evaluating accomplishments.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
11. Develop clearly defined goals for the administrative council and reorganize the total membership.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12. Develop a process to regularly review and update board policies.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13. Reduce the number of board meetings to a maximum of 12 regular meetings and 12 work sessions, for a total of 24 meetings each year.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14. Conduct an organizational climate survey and prepare related recommendations to be incorporated in the proposed strategic planning document.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15. Provide alternate e-mail addresses for the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager to delegate routine e-mail to respective administrative assistants or secretarial staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
16. Formalize the existing school walkthrough process and related procedures as a means to provide data to support the accomplishment of goals and identify actions for improvement.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
17. Revise the legal services contract to include specific hourly rates for services that are outside the scope of those included in the annual retainer fee.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
18. Review and evaluate the district's legal services.	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$54,000	\$0
Totals	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$54,000	\$0

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Navasota Independent School District (NISD) enjoys strong support from the local community and receives aid for academics and athletics with in-kind donations of goods and services. The community also assists the school district through active involvement and attendance at a number of annual events, such as school dinners and carnivals. News of school district events is shared mainly through word-of-mouth. NISD has a website that provides parents with password-protected access to student grades and links to other instructional and informational sites.

NISD has strengthened ties with the City of Navasota through a series of property sales allowing the city to build facilities that enhance the quality of life in Navasota. One such example is a skate board park that will be constructed on property sold to the city by the school district. Also, the city and school district recently began a series of joint meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest and benefit.

Navasota's educational foundation has a 33 member board of directors with a broad representation of civic and community leaders, including the city mayor. The district's director of public relations and grant services is the executive director of the board. The foundation solicits financial and in-kind contributions from community donors and provides funds to support academics in the schools. All but two NISD schools have active parent-teacher organizations (PTO) and the PTO volunteers provide staffing and support for a series of carnivals and other fund-raising activities throughout the school year.

The school district uses a variety of media outlets to keep parents and the general public informed of academic and athletic events at local schools. Several examples include the following:

- The superintendent has a monthly blog (“Scoop from the Supe”).
- The local newspaper “Navasota Examiner” has a regular education column and advertising.
- The local radio stations, KWBC 1550 AM, and KHTZ 92.5 FM, provide coverage of NISD news events and other school activities of interest.

NISD also regularly solicits input from parents and the community through the use of online surveys that can be

accessed from the district's website. In the “Community Survey” section under “Community Involvement,” the results of their most recent parent survey regarding use of the media to advertise school events are posted. At the time of the review, there also was a “live” survey on the district's website seeking parent/community input on the quality of the school library services in the district.

In addition, the district's website provides information on contacting NISD staff and administrators by including a directory of all central office administrators at the main webpage. For persons wishing to address the school board, the website also contains detailed instructions on this procedure.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- NISD hosts a community involvement section on its website that provides a comprehensive array of information on school academics and athletics.
- NISD has an education foundation that provides financial and material support to educational programs in the school district and honors its donors in a unique way.

FINDING

- NISD does not have a process that effectively addresses community concerns over controversial issues.

RECOMMENDATION

- **Recommendation 19: Conduct a series of study circles in the community around the issues facing NISD.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WEBSITE

NISD hosts a community involvement section on its website that provides a comprehensive array of information on school academics and athletics.

The community involvement web pages provide comprehensive information on the district schools and their operations. **Exhibit 3-1** provides an example of the types of information available on the website, which is a one-stop

**EXHIBIT 3-1
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WEB PAGES
MARCH 2009**

Alumni website	Adult GED	Community Links
Rattler Wallpaper	Online Library	Educational Foundation
2008 Homecoming	Gradebook Online	Safety Information
UIL Parent Manual	Parent Support Resources	Surveys
Facilities Use & Volunteering	Forms	Scoreboard Ad Information

SOURCE: Community Involvement Webpage, Navasota ISD website, 2009.

source of information for parents and other community members. A wide variety of information is provided, including information about how to sponsor an advertisement in support of Navasota athletics, how to access student grades, and an alumni page for Navasota graduates. At the time of the review, all links at the website were operable.

The site features a drop-down menu listing the topics contained in the exhibit, which allows visitors to go directly to their pages of interest without having to navigate several other pages.

In addition to the community involvement section of the district’s website, there is a news and publications section that features a drop-down menu of web pages. One of the drop-down pages is a *Year-At-A-Glance* page that lists a calendar of events for the school year to help parents and other community members with advanced planning.

The sites are exemplary primarily because of the breadth of information available, the ease with which the pages can be navigated, and the currency of the information. All of the sites are designed so that the content can be easily read and understood without a great deal of previous knowledge about the schools or the school district. Dates for events, forms, and surveys are all tools used at the site that invite visitor interaction and encourages visitors to return to the site in the future.

The website has an added feature allowing Spanish-speaking parents and other visitors to access the information by selecting the Spanish translation link on the home page. This utility also allows the website to be translated into 33 other languages, including French, German, Italian, Russian, and Tagalong.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

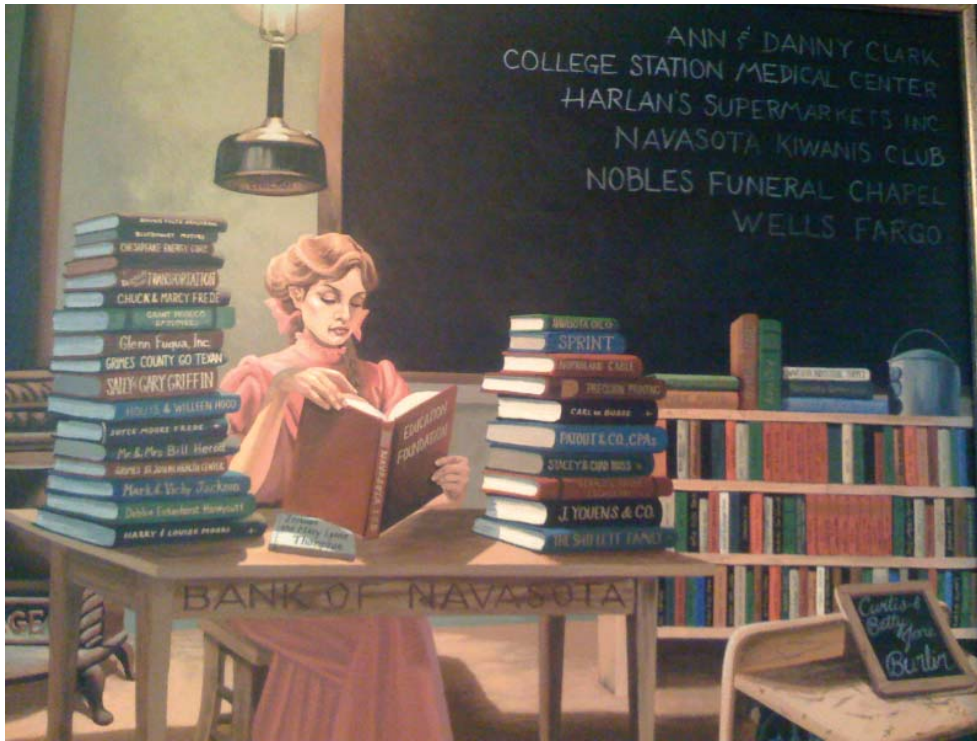
NISD has an education foundation that provides financial and material support to educational programs in the school district and honors its donors in a unique way.

The education foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporations that was founded in 2002 as a vehicle through which tax-deductible donations can be made to the schools for programs to support education. The foundation’s support for the school district is primarily in the form of grants to teachers, which range in amount from several hundred to several thousand dollars. Teachers apply for funds to assist implementation of existing classroom projects or proposed projects that provide extensions to the regular instructional program. Grants for fall 2008 and spring 2009 totaled \$22,924 and were awarded to seven projects at five Navasota schools. Since fall 2003, the foundation has funded grants in excess of \$226,865.

The foundation has a unique way of recognizing its contributors; in the main hallway of the central office administrative building, a local artist created a mural in which all the contributors are displayed. **Exhibit 3-2** portrays a photograph of the mural, which depicts an old-fashioned school room with the names of donors listed on the chalkboard, book spines, teacher’s desks, and other items throughout the painting. Larger donors are listed most prominently, but all donors are listed in a creative manner throughout the “classroom.” When new donors make contributions, their names are painted into the mural.

The foundation’s way of honoring donors is commendable in that smaller rural communities often have difficulty maintaining organizations that provide continuous, on-going financial support for schools. The work of the foundation most recently resulted in a donation of \$90,000 from AMARR Garage Door Company, a local business partner. The donation was a direct result of the work of the foundation and its efforts to inform the community about the activities and accomplishments of the school district, and to provide a clear means of contributing to the foundation and allowing donors to see how their donations are being used to directly benefit children.

**EXHIBIT 3-2
EDUCATION FOUNDATION DONOR MURAL
MARCH 2009**



SOURCE: Navasota ISD Foundation Donor Mural, Central Office, 2009.

DETAILED FINDING

COMMUNITY RELATIONS (REC. 19)

NISD does not have a process that effectively addresses community concerns over controversial issues.

School districts and their communities often face challenges when attempting to deal with controversial issues that incite strong opinions. Issues such as drugs and/or violence on school campuses, teacher quality, school funding, school and district leadership, and fairness and equity in dealing with diverse populations in schools, are just a few of the issues often dividing communities along social, ethnic, or geographic lines.

The demographics of the City of Navasota reflect an ethnic mix that is shifting towards a minority majority. As shown in **Exhibit 3-3**, Whites are the majority ethnic population with 52.4 percent. Blacks and Hispanics make up the largest percentage of minorities at 34.5 percent and 33.1 percent respectively. Other minorities make up a combined 13 percent of the population.

In the years between the 2000 and 2012, census projections show a decline of nearly three percent in the White population and a combined 10 percent increase in the Black and Hispanic population. The city’s housing patterns show that most ethnic populations are clustered in racially homogeneous neighborhoods.

Samples of district communication were reviewed during the onsite visit and revealed that NISD reaches out to all members of the community, inviting all interested parties to participate in school events; however, in interviews, a common theme emerged regarding the exclusion of Hispanic parents due to language barriers.

A key component of community involvement is providing opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to express views and opinions about the operational effectiveness and overall quality of a district. As part of this review, individual and group interviews were conducted, accompanied by an online survey that was available to all interested persons. The major themes emerging from concerns and opinions include:

- **Lack of Transparency.** Many citizens expressed concerns over the recent bond issue and perceived that

**EXHIBIT 3-3
CITY OF NAVASOTA POPULATION PERCENTAGES BY RACE/ETHNICITY
MARCH 2009**

RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP	2000 CENSUS	2007 ESTIMATE	2012 PROJECTION	2000 TO 2012 CHANGE
White	54.3%	52.4%	51.5%	(2.8%)
Black	33.3%	34.5%	34.3%	1.0%
Hispanic	27.7%	33.1%	36.7%	9.0%
Multiracial	11.6%	12.2%	13.3%	1.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.50%	0.60%	0.70%	0.20%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	No Change

SOURCE: U.S. Census, Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2009.

excessive cost overages and improper prioritization of construction and improvement projects were included in the bond. In the online survey, when asked if citizens had an opportunity to have input on facilities planning, 60 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

- **Teacher Turnover.** Among concerns listed for teacher turnover is that most teachers do not become residents of the city and use work experience in NISD to launch careers to a higher pay grade in other school districts, resulting in a constant turnover of new teachers.
- **Declining Student Enrollment.** In both surveys and interviews, citizens express concerns over the departure of top-performing students and stand-out athletes to neighboring school districts. Interviewees and survey respondents perceive this departure drains the district of academic resources in terms of both students and personnel, as well as the loss of state funding due to declining enrollment.
- **Emphasis on Athletics over Academics.** This area focuses on the construction of the new football stadium, with the concern that monies devoted to building the facility were spent at the cost of sacrificing some academic programs like vocational and alternative education. Another primary concern is that a comparison of per-pupil spending on athletics exceeded per-pupil spending on academics.
- **Inequities in Hiring, Promotions, Non-Reappoints, and Pay.** In interviews and surveys, respondents expressed concerns over perceived inequities in terms of how employees are hired, paid, promoted, or dismissed. There is a consistent

impression that decisions are not data-driven and do not promote the best interests of the district.

- **Lack of Discipline in Schools.** This area is consistently cited as a potential contributing factor to both teacher turnover and declining student enrollment. The high turnover in the number of principals at the high school is also cited as a factor.
- **Gangs and Drugs are a problem in the Schools.** In some interviews and surveys, respondents expressed concerns over the perception of gangs and drugs in the schools. The survey results show that nearly half of the junior and senior student respondents report significant issues with gangs and drugs in the school, 58 percent and 73 percent respectively. More than 60 percent of the parent respondents expressed concerns in these areas. Although the survey respondents for teacher and central office administrators and support staff did not strongly agree that gangs and drugs were a problem, more than 50 percent of the respondents in each category agreed that there is a problem in this area.

These issues and concerns were examined in interviews with NISD personnel, and Navasota business and community leaders, review of documents provided by the district, and analysis of data from peer districts and the state.

The online survey administered to NISD parents as a part of this review also asked about the school district's effectiveness in terms of communication and being open and accessible to the community. As shown in **Exhibit 3-4**, survey responses revealed that 58 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the district regularly communicates with parents. Forty-eight percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that the school facilities are open for community use, and 71

**EXHIBIT 3-4
NAVASOTA ISD PARENT SURVEY RESULTS
MARCH 2009**

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The district regularly communicates with parents.	6.25%	29.17%	6.25%	39.58%	18.75%
District facilities are open for community use.	6.25%	16.67%	29.17%	31.25%	16.67%
Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	4.17%	6.25%	18.75%	31.25%	39.58%

SOURCE: Performance Review team survey results of respondents answering the survey, 2008–09.

percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that schools have plenty of volunteers.

As previously mentioned in the chapter introduction, the district provides an online survey each month to citizens and publishes the results at the district website. NISD also provides direction and opportunities for the public to address the Board of Trustees during their monthly meetings. Recently, the district began producing a newsletter. The March 2009 issue features a *District in Review* article outlining the district’s efforts to increase students’ success in school. The article contained an invitation to the public and community groups to contact the district and have the superintendent come and speak to their group about the district and its success stories.

The website for the superintendent’s blog contains links for site visitors to email the superintendent and leave a message at the site; however, a communication gap still exists in terms of parents and the community being able to get information on topics of their interest and choosing, particularly if those topics are controversial.

In interviews and in the open comments section of the online survey, parents and other citizens expressed concerns about academics, school safety, leadership in the district, and a variety of other topics related to the operations of the school district and/or individual schools. In interviews, it was apparent that rumors often abound, and on occasion when facts are presented, they are disputed or disbelieved.

Schools and communities that do not find a way to successfully create a two-way system of communication allowing honest dialogue around controversial topics, open discussion of school operations, and solutions-focused responses to inquiries from the public, can find themselves mired in combative situations that only further divide the community.

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) provides a number of best practices related to rumor control, dealing with controversial topics, and other topics related to effective home-school communications. Among their recommendations are the following:

- *Providing a dedicated section on the district webpage to allow the public to post questions/concerns and receive responses on the same page.* For example, Murrieta Valley Unified School District (CA) provides a “Setting the Record Straight” section on their website to address inaccuracies in media reports about the school district. They also have a “Budget Watch” page that provides updates on the school district’s finances.
- *Organize focus groups to take the pulse of community opinion.* With this process, key communicators both internal to the district and external, and others who are viewed as “influencers” in the district are asked to provide environmental scans, i.e., provide their take on a controversial issue or situation based on their position in the community, and discuss what’s important to others and why. In this process, it is crucial to include persons who are critical of the district in order to determine the legitimacy of their concerns.
- *Create a study circle around a highly charged community issue.* This process involves pulling diverse groups of people together who would not ordinarily know or have contact with each other and discuss controversial issues. Graduate students majoring in communications, sociology, or other related fields, and local universities can be a source for volunteers and for expertise in matching the right group facilitation tool to the task. East Hartford, Connecticut organized a two-day event designed to address racial tensions in the schools and community that was designed to

help participants gain a better understanding of racial inequity and its impact on their community.

- *Appoint an ombudsman to address issues and concerns by members of the school community.* The traditional role of an ombudsman is that of a neutral, confidential, and independent third party to handle employee complaints before they become lawsuits.

The district should conduct a series of study circles in the community around the issues facing NISD. This study should provide a means for both internal and external stakeholders to openly discuss matters of concern and attempt to reach resolutions that are satisfactory to all parties. The ombudsman position identified in the Human Resources Chapter of this report should organize and facilitate these study circles. The district may consider using graduate students from nearby universities to assist the ombudsman.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
19. Conduct a series of study circles in the community around the issues facing NISD.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

CHAPTER 4

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 4. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

An effective asset and risk management program aims to control costs by ensuring that an organization is adequately protected against all significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums; this includes identifying and measuring risk and techniques to minimize the impact of risk. The entity would seek investments with maximum interest earning potential while safeguarding funds and ensuring liquidity to meet fluctuating cash flow demands. Effective tax management involves quick and efficient tax collections to allow the governmental entity to meet its cash flow needs and earn the highest possible interest. Capital asset management should account for governmental entity property efficiently and accurately, and safeguard it against theft, and obsolescence. The governmental entity's insurance programs for employees' health insurance, workers compensation insurance, and insurance property/casualty insurance should be sound and cost-effective to protect the governmental entity from financial losses.

Navasota Independent School District (NISD) carries various types of insurance, including property, casualty, vehicular, and liability plans. In addition, NISD has an underground diesel fuel tank for the operation of school buses and therefore maintains a separate insurance policy covering the risk of underground pollution.

NISD contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for unemployment and workers' compensation insurance coverage. Group health insurance coverage is provided to employees through the Teacher Retirement

System's (TRS) Active Care program. The district pays TRS \$3,192 per employee annually for medical coverage.

In school year 2008–09, NISD redesigned the premium structure for workers' compensation coverage. In 2007–08, the district paid approximately \$130,000 for workers' compensation. By paying a fixed component of \$47,500 and a portion of claims incurred, the district believes it can save up to \$56,700 in 2008–09. The district has had historically low incidents of employee accidents, so these savings should be achievable.

The district conducts regular safety and accident prevention training, including what steps to take in the event of an employee accident. While the district's business manager has the overall responsibility for risk management in the district, each campus has a designated safety liaison that is responsible for disseminating information, coordinating drills and training, and reporting accidents to the business office. In addition, the Child Nutrition and Maintenance departments conduct regular safety training to ensure employees use proper procedures to prevent accidents.

Exhibit 4-1 shows a summary of the district's fixed assets, including land, buildings, and property. As of August 31, 2008, the district maintained a total of \$45.7 million in assets.

NISD maintains a contract with a depository institution for banking services. As of August 31, 2008, the carrying amount of cash on hand was \$762,000 and investments amounted to \$2.4 million. As highlighted in **Exhibit 4-2**, it appears that

EXHIBIT 4-1
NAVASOTA ISD FIXED ASSET SUMMARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2006–07 THROUGH 2007–08

DESCRIPTION	2006–2007	2007–2008	PERCENT CHANGE
Land	\$1,021,218	\$1,021,218	0.00%
Construction in Progress	10,602,360	0	(100.00%)
Buildings and Improvements	50,219,427	62,620,057	24.69%
Vehicles	598,337	199,273	(66.70%)
Equipment	1,021,586	1,340,529	31.22%
Total – Original Cost	63,462,928	65,181,077	2.71%
Accumulated Depreciation	18,685,809	19,460,378	4.15%
Total – Net of Depreciation	\$44,777,119	\$45,720,699	2.11%

SOURCE: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2007–08.

EXHIBIT 4-2
NAVASOTA ISD INVESTMENTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08

INVESTMENT	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Lone Star Investment Pool	\$2,730,336	\$3,728,733	\$2,786,260	\$2,366,565
Texas Term Investment Pool	20,160,427	8,498,004	2,714,748	1,001
Certificates of Deposit	160,784	0	170,877	0
Total Investments	\$23,051,547	\$12,226,737	\$5,671,885	\$2,367,566

SOURCE: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2004–05 through 2007–08.

investment balances decreased dramatically between 2004–05 and 2007–08. However, some of the funds held in investments in 2005 included proceeds from bond issuances for construction. The decrease in investment balances between 2006–07 and 2007–08 are a result of the district funding of a portion of construction projects with operating funds.

In 2004–05, voters in the district approved the issuance of general obligation bonds for the construction of a new elementary school, the re-design of an existing elementary school, improvements to the high school facility, and the construction of a new football stadium. The district issued \$25 million in bonds for the construction of these projects. Total construction costs, however, exceeded bond proceeds by \$6.7 million, \$2.9 million of which was funded through the district's fund balance reserves and \$3.8 million of which was funded through the issuance of maintenance notes.

In addition, in 2004–05, the district refunded \$11.9 million of bonds issued in 1994, which saved the district approximately \$600,000 in interest charges.

Exhibit 4-3 provides an overview of NISD bond indebtedness, which is the ratio of general obligation bonds outstanding to assessed property values, for school years 2003–04 through 2007–08. Bond indebtedness is an indicator of a district's

ability to generate revenue from local property taxes to repay long-term debt. The exhibit also compares the amount of general obligation debt per student and total tax rates.

The exhibit shows that NISD's indebtedness increased significantly after the 2003–04 school year. As mentioned above, voters in the district approved the issuance of general obligation bonds in 2004–05. The issuance of the bonds in school year 2004–05 increased NISD's total debt outstanding by approximately 173 percent or \$20.5 million from school year 2003–04 to 2004–05. The exhibit also shows that while NISD's total debt outstanding has increased by approximately 20 percent from school years 2004–05 through 2007–08, the district's percent indebtedness has decreased slightly from 4.75 percent in 2004–05 to 4.15 percent in 2007–08.

Exhibit 4-4 provides a comparison of NISD and peer districts regarding bond indebtedness. The exhibit also compares the amount of general obligation debt per student and total tax rates.

NISD's bond indebtedness rate is considerably higher than its peer districts. For instance, the outstanding debt balances carried by Aransas Pass ISD is the lowest of the peer group, followed by El Campo ISD which is 45 percent lower than that of NISD. However, the assessed property values in the El Campo ISD are higher than those in Navasota ISD. While

EXHIBIT 4-3
NAVASOTA ISD INDEBTEDNESS AND TAX RATES
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

DESCRIPTION	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Total Debt Outstanding	\$11,865,000	\$32,391,707	\$36,221,707	\$39,977,078	\$38,943,517
Total Assessed Property Value	\$644,179,250	\$681,834,375	\$725,613,272	\$825,116,147	\$939,270,366
Total Enrollment	2,993	2,912	2,917	2,969	2,919
Indebtedness	1.84%	4.75%	4.99%	4.85%	4.15%
Debt per student	\$3,964	\$11,089	\$12,454	\$13,465	\$13,341
Total Tax Rate	\$1.60	\$1.60	\$1.70	\$1.60	\$1.2659

SOURCES: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2003–04 through 2007–08; Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 4-4
PEER DISTRICT COMPARISON OF INDEBTEDNESS AND TAX RATES
SCHOOL YEARS 2006–07 THROUGH 2007–08**

DESCRIPTION	NAVASOTA ISD	EL CAMPO ISD	LIBERTY ISD	ARANSAS PASS ISD
Total Debt Outstanding	\$38,943,517	\$26,960,000	\$15,804,920	\$2,944,323
Total Assessed Property Value	\$939,270,366	\$1,068,309,550	\$782,591,734	\$489,180,970
Total Enrollment	2,919	3,407	2,272	2,046
Indebtedness	4.15%	2.52%	2.02%	0.60%
Debt per student	\$13,341	\$7,913	\$6,956	\$1,439
Total Tax Rate	\$1.2659	\$1.158	\$1.1953	\$1.0614

SOURCES: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2007–08; El Campo ISD audited financial statements, 2007–08; Liberty ISD audited financial statements, 2007–08; Aransas Pass ISD audited financial statements, 2006–07; Texas Education Agency, Facts Sheets, February 3, 2009.

a comparison of indebtedness across districts shows the differences or similarities in districts’ abilities to generate revenue from local property taxes for the purpose of paying off debt, the peer districts used for comparison with NISD may not have been involved in capital construction projects recently. NISD’s percent indebtedness and debt per student numbers are higher than peer districts because of the 2004–05 bond construction projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- NISD uses an outside firm to inventory and record fixed assets, thus providing accurate accounting records while freeing district business office personnel to attend to other responsibilities.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

INVENTORY

NISD uses an outside firm to inventory and record fixed assets, thus providing accurate accounting records while freeing district business office personnel to attend to other responsibilities.

The firm tagged all district assets with bar code tags, and periodically conducts an inventory count. A unique bar code number is assigned to each classroom or office, and all assets belonging to a specified location are tracked accordingly.

The outside firm conducts a complete inventory count annually, adding or deleting new or disposed of assets. Information on new items acquired during the year is obtained from procurement documentation (purchase orders) so that the items may be located, tagged, and entered into the fixed asset inventory system.

Each principal receives an updated inventory listing, along with a list of “missing” assets. Principals are responsible for locating any missing assets.

Due to its value and portability, all technology equipment is tracked separately by a campus technology coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that laptop computers issued to teachers are returned upon the termination of employment of the teacher. In addition, the coordinator is responsible for adjusting inventory records for equipment that is transferred between classrooms or schools, ensuring an accurate accounting of equipment location.

Tagging and tracking fixed assets can be a cumbersome job for small districts, requiring staff at both the central office and campus levels to spend time away from regular duties to conduct inventory counts. By outsourcing the asset inventory, the district provides a level of protection for its assets with minimal impact to district staff.

CHAPTER 5

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

School districts must practice sound financial management to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources, and to plan for future needs. Effective financial management requires thoughtful planning and decision-making to obtain the best possible financial performance. It ensures that internal controls are in place and operating as intended, that technology is maximized to increase productivity, and that timely reports help management reach its goals. Financial managers must guarantee that a school district receives all available revenue from local, state, and federal government resources and that these resources are spent in accordance with law, statute, regulation, and policy to accomplish the district's established priorities and goals.

The district is required to manage its financial operation in conformity with the regulations and requirements of the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG)*, and to report their data to the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Using the data submitted by a district, the TEA publishes the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) rating. The School FIRST rating is used to improve the management of a school district's financial resources. For fiscal years 2005–06 through 2007–08, the Navasota Independent School District (NISD) received a School FIRST rating of *Superior Achievement*.

NISD has budgeted \$21.3 million for general fund expenditures for school year 2008–09. The district receives revenues from local property taxes and state and federally-funded programs.

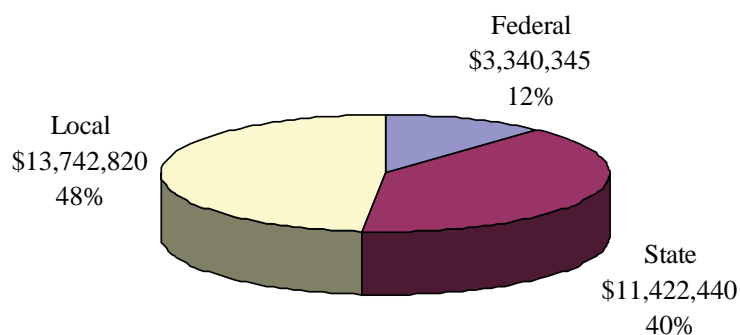
Exhibit 5-1 depicts NISD's revenue sources for school year 2007–08. Local property taxes accounted for the majority of the district's funding (48 percent), followed by state funding (40 percent) and federal funding (12 percent). In school year 2007–08, sources of revenue for NISD totaled \$28.5 million.

Exhibit 5-2 shows how the district spent funds in school year 2007–08: the largest portion was spent on instruction (44 percent), followed by other functions (20 percent), and plant maintenance and operations (11 percent).

NISD spent approximately 80 percent of its expenditures on activity functions. These include instruction, school leadership, student transportation, instructional leadership, and security and monitoring services. As referenced in **Exhibit 5-2**, other functions include expenditures such as interest on long-term debt (6 percent), capital outlay (9 percent), and principal on long-term debt (3 percent).

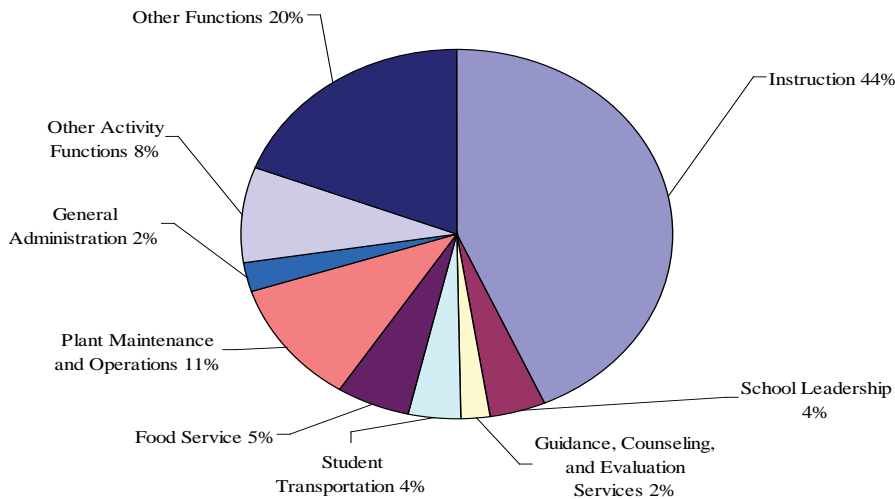
Primary finance and accounting functions are performed by the business office, which has a staff of four full-time equivalent (FTE) employees; the office handles budgeting,

EXHIBIT 5-1
SOURCES OF REVENUE
FISCAL YEAR 2007–08



SOURCE: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 5-2
USE OF FUNDS
FISCAL YEAR 2007–08**



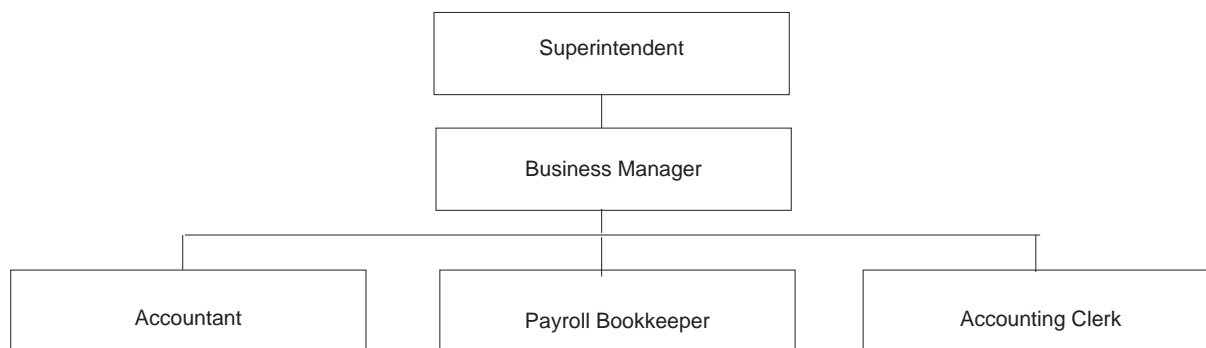
SOURCE: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2007–08.

purchasing, general ledger accounting, grant accounting, accounts payable, and payroll functions. The organizational structure of the business office is provided in **Exhibit 5-3**.

In addition, each school has a bookkeeper who performs the finance and accounting functions for the campus. The specific duties of the bookkeepers vary depending on the school, but duties typically include submitting payroll worksheets and leave requests, assisting principals with monitoring campus budgets, processing purchase requisitions, and receiving goods.

NISD’s budget process begins in December each school year, when principals and department heads receive a budget memo and budget calendar from the business manager. The budget memo explains the budget process to be used, including which items are to be budgeted at the campus or department level and which items are budgeted on a districtwide basis. For example, the budget memo distributed in December 2008 for the upcoming 2009–10 budget preparation process explains that budgets for transportation, maintenance, utilities, custodial services, technology, and food services are developed by central office staff and the program manager responsible for the functional oversight. Principals and their site-based decision-making (SBDM)

**EXHIBIT 5-3
NAVASOTA ISD BUSINESS OFFICE ORGANIZATION
MARCH 2009**



SOURCE: Navasota ISD Business Manager, March 2009.

teams, on the other hand, are responsible for budgeting for areas such as Gifted and Talented, State Compensatory, Dyslexia, Vocational, Bilingual, and English as a Second Language funding. In addition, campuses are also responsible for developing budgets for general and classroom supplies, copier supplies and service agreements, testing, and Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6) cooperative services. Budgets for some funds are developed both by site-based teams and by program directors including band, choir, and athletics budgets.

Exhibit 5-4 shows the budget calendar established for the preparation of the school year 2009–10 budget process. As this exhibit shows, campuses receive an estimated allocation in early March. This allocation is based on average daily attendance (ADA) for the preceding fall.

In addition to campuses’ regular budgets, which are based on ADA, each principal is required to submit budgets for new programs or for significant changes or increases to existing programs in what is called a “budget decision package.” Principals and SBDM teams are required to prioritize items submitted in their budget decision packages for the superintendent and board to review.

Interviews with principals indicate that the district provides a fair amount of autonomy in the budgeting process. That is, if a principal and SBDM team deems a program important to implement, the superintendent will provide support for the program so long as it is within the objectives of the campus improvement plan. Principals report that not all funding requests are granted, but that they feel there is strong support from the central office in the budget development process.

Once campuses and departments have submitted their regular budgets and their budget decision packages, they are reviewed by the business manager, the assistant superintendent, and the superintendent. There are then several meetings that take place prior to submitting a proposed budget to the Board of Trustees. The purpose of these meetings is so that principals and department heads can discuss their budget requests with the assistant superintendent and the superintendent.

The business manager’s role in the budget is not to approve the budgets but to provide the framework and process to be used, to inform the superintendent of what implications the individual campus and departmental budgets will have on the overall district budget position, and to provide revenue estimates.

In mid- to late-July each year, the Board of Trustees holds a budget workshop where administrative staff presents the proposed budget and principals and department heads are on-hand to answer questions. The board then votes to approve the budget and tax rate toward the end of August of each year.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- NISD has streamlined the payroll process by using “pay by exception” for all employees.

FINDINGS

- NISD does not have a fund balance policy and is spending down its general fund reserves.
- NISD does not have adequate internal controls for some of its business office processes.

**EXHIBIT 5-4
NAVASOTA ISD 2009–10 BUDGET CALENDAR**

DATE	BUDGET TASK
March 2, 2009	Campus Allocations presented to principals; Review of budget process
March – April 2009	Meetings with Site-Based Decision-Making Teams and Principals
May 1, 2009	Deadline for completed budgets from principals and department heads
May 15, 2009	Superintendent review of budget
May 15, 2009	Estimated state funding due from TEA
June 15, 2009	Preliminary budget presented to Board of Trustees
July 20, 2009	Board of Trustee budget workshop
August 5, 2009	Public notice of budget adoption and proposed tax rate
August 31, 2009	Board of Trustees vote to adopt budget and tax rate

SOURCE: Navasota ISD 2009–10 Budget Calendar, December 3, 2008.

- NISD is overpaying employees for travel reimbursements related to use of personal automobiles.
- A lack of transparency in financial management has created several discrepancies or unexplained financial or fiscal issues in the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 20: Develop and follow a fund balance policy.**
- **Recommendation 21: Reassign business office duties to improve internal controls.**
- **Recommendation 22: Develop employee travel policies and procedures that specifically disallow the practice of giving employees both travel stipends and reimbursements for use of personal vehicles.**
- **Recommendation 23: Cooperate with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding the recommendation of the Legislative Budget Board that TEA conduct an investigation of Navasota ISD under the provisions of the Texas Education Code §39.074, On-Site Investigations, and §39.075, Special Accreditation Investigations.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

PAY BY EXCEPTION

NISD has streamlined the payroll process by using “pay by exception” for all employees.

Pay by exception is a concept whereby an employee’s regular paycheck is programmed to calculate as if the employee worked a regular schedule. If the employee actually works a regular schedule, minor input is required to issue the employee’s paycheck. If the employee does not work a regular schedule due to vacation, illness, or professional development, the relevant activities are entered into the payroll system.

Employee time reporting is performed in a variety of ways in NISD, depending upon the type of employee. Teachers and administrative staff report only time away from their regular work day; this includes sick time, vacation, and professional development. Leave for teachers and administrative staff is reported through an “absence of duty” form, which is to be filled out by the employee, noting days absent and the reason

for the absence. The employee’s supervisor is then required to sign the form.

In the event of a teacher absence, the absence from duty form also serves as the authorization to pay a substitute teacher, and information such as the substitute teacher’s name and days worked is provided on the form.

Campus bookkeepers and departmental secretaries are responsible for collecting all absence of duty forms, ensuring they are filled out and approved correctly, and providing a timesheet summary for all employees on their campus. This information is then submitted to the payroll bookkeeper in the business office.

Hourly employees such as food service and custodial workers, use time clocks to track their time and to create a timecard. Campus bookkeepers are also responsible for collecting all timecards, reviewing to ensure they have been completed properly, and submitting them to the payroll bookkeeper for processing.

Many districts use pay by exception for salaried employees, but NISD uses the system for all employees. In doing so, the district saves valuable time in the payroll process.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FUND BALANCE POLICY (REC. 20)

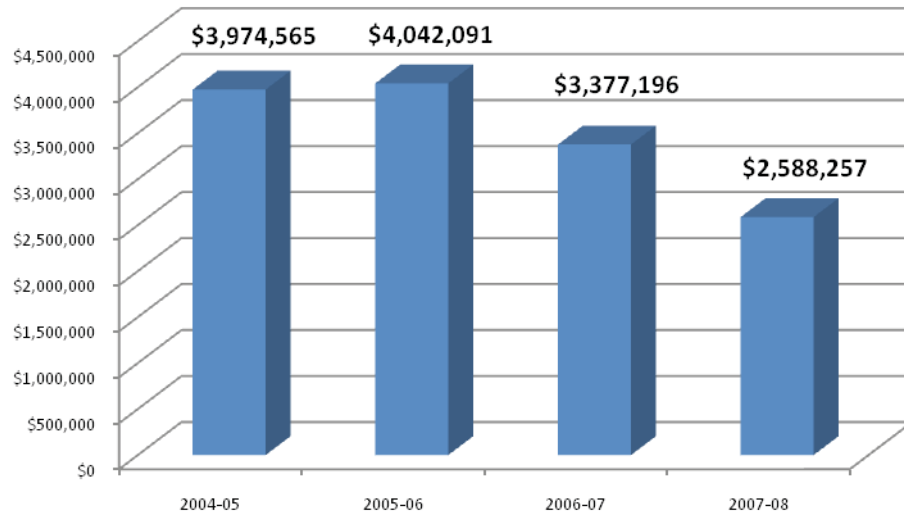
NISD does not have a fund balance policy and is spending down its general fund reserves.

Fund balance represents the district’s reserves—similar to a savings account. It can be a source of funds in case of emergencies, reserves to pay for expenditures before state or federal revenues are received, or can be used to accrue savings for large purchases not affordable in a single year.

The district’s fund balance declined by more than 16 percent between school years 2005–06 and 2006–07 and by more than 23 percent between school years 2006–07 and 2007–08 as portrayed in **Exhibit 5-5**.

The primary reason the district’s fund balance declined was the funding of construction projects. Bond issuances from school year 2004–05 fell short of providing adequate funding to finish planned construction projects in the district. Total costs to complete planned construction amounted to \$31,674,466, which represents an overage of 26.7 percent. According to district officials, the reasons for the overage include the increased costs of construction labor and materials due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the Gulf Coast.

**EXHIBIT 5-5
ENDING FUND BALANCE FOR GENERAL FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08**



SOURCE: Navasota ISD audited financial statements, 2004–05 through 2007–08.

Exhibit 5-6 provides a summary of the bond issues as compared to construction costs and how the overages were funded.

In total, the board approved \$2.9 million in funding to complete construction from its general fund reserves, and financed \$3.8 million through maintenance notes. District administration presented options to the board which included scaling back on construction plans. However, the board opted to use its reserves and issue the maintenance notes.

In addition, the NISD board adopted budgeted expenditures in excess of budgeted revenues for the 2008–09 budget, which is resulting in an additional shortfall of approximately \$215,000. The primary reason for approving this deficit budget was to fund employee pay increases. This has placed the district in a precarious financial position since funding pay increases (a recurring expenditure) through its fund reserves will create future deficits that will eventually erode remaining reserves.

The TEA sets target fund balances for general funds. The formula calls for the general fund balance to equal the

**EXHIBIT 5-6
NAVASOTA ISD CONSTRUCTION BOND SUMMARY**

BOND ISSUE	PROJECT	TOTAL EXPENSE	FUNDING SOURCES
Proposition 1 \$18,000,000	High Point Elementary Webb Elementary	\$19,399,399	\$18,000,000 bond \$1,399,399 operating funds
Proposition 2 \$5,000,000	High School gym, band room, choir room, park	\$8,034,142	\$5,000,000 bond \$238,413 operating funds \$2,795,729 maintenance notes
Proposition 3 \$2,000,000	Football Stadium	\$4,240,925	\$2,000,000 bond proceeds \$1,236,654 operating funds \$1,004,271 maintenance notes
Proposition Totals \$25,000,000	All Projects	\$31,674,466	\$23,000,000 bond \$2,000,000 bond proceeds \$2,874,466 operating funds \$3,800,000 maintenance notes

*This was one of three sources provided to the review team related to construction costs for the bond project. However, each source indicated different expenses and funding sources.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD bond summary document, February 16, 2009.

estimated amount needed to cover cash flow deficits for the fall period of the following fiscal year plus estimated average monthly cash disbursements for the nine months of the following fiscal year. **Exhibit 5-7** shows NISD’s optimal fund balance calculation to be \$3.6 million. Actual reserves, however, amounted to only \$2.6 million in August 2008, resulting in a shortfall of over \$1 million.

**EXHIBIT 5-7
OPTIMAL FUND BALANCE CALCULATION FOR GENERAL FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2007–08**

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Estimated amount needed to cover fall cash flow deficits in general fund	\$525,000
Estimate of one month’s average cash disbursements during the regular school session	\$1,776,683
Estimate of delayed payments from state sources	\$1,334,188
General fund optimal fund balance	\$3,635,871
General fund Balance as of August 31, 2008	\$2,588,257
Deficit	(\$1,047,614)

*NOTE: Exhibit 5-7 reflects an excerpt from the fund balance and cash flow calculation sheet.
SOURCE: Navasota ISD 2007–08 audited financial statement, fund balance and cash flow calculation sheet.

Prudent financial management requires accumulating balances in general funds that are large enough to cover cash outflows that leave negative balances. Failure to maintain adequate fund balances could be costly to the district. For instance, in the event that reserves are not adequate to fund current expenditures, the district would be required to borrow funds. In addition, depletion of fund balances can lead bond rating agencies to lower a district’s bond rating which results in higher interest rates on bond issuances.

The review team identified several best practices used in Texas school districts to maintain or increase fund balances. For example, Irving ISD uses several mechanisms to effectively manage funds, including conservative budget practices, careful management of expenditures, prudent investment practices, regular fund balance projections, and policy, which has allowed the district to establish and maintain a healthy fund balance.

In addition, Laredo ISD (LISD) established a general fund balance goal that exceeds the guidelines established by TEA and advanced toward that goal following the instructions

established by the board. LISD board policy CA (LOCAL) set a goal of attaining an unreserved, undesignated fund balance of at least two months of operating costs within five years. The policy instructs the superintendent and business manager to implement the following steps in order to meet the goal:

- Develop and submit for board approval a balanced budget with input from site-based decision making (SBDM) committees and instructional programs.
- Develop staffing patterns and funding formulas based on a per pupil basis.
- Direct any surplus funds towards unreserved, undesignated fund balance.

A third example is Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD), which increased its fund balance to more acceptable levels by controlling general fund expenditures. To accomplish this goal, the district’s budget procedures for the two previous years included a form requesting each department to identify a five percent budget reduction.

NISD should develop and follow a fund balance policy.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

INTERNAL CONTROLS (REC. 21)

NISD does not have adequate internal controls for some of its business office processes.

Internal controls are defined as processes and organizational structures designed to help an organization accomplish specific goals or objectives. Internal controls play an important role in preventing and detecting fraud and protecting an organization’s resources, both physical (machinery and property) and intangible (reputation or intellectual property, such as trademarks). At the organizational level, internal control objectives relate to the reliability of financial reporting, timely feedback on the achievement of operational or strategic goals, and compliance with laws and regulations. At the specific transaction level, internal control refers to the actions taken to achieve a specific objective (e.g., how to ensure the organization’s payments to third parties are for valid services rendered). Internal control procedures reduce process variation and thereby lead to more predictable outcomes.

Separation of duties is one of the key concepts of internal control and is the most difficult—and sometimes the most

costly—to achieve. Separation of duty, as a security principle, has as its primary objective the prevention of fraud and errors. Tasks are categorized into four types of functions: authorization, custody, record keeping, and reconciliation. In a perfect system, no person handles more than one type of function.

For the most part, NISD's business office has adequate separation of duties in that the accountant reconciles bank accounts and general ledger accounts (reconciliation duties), yet the accountant does not enter transactions to the general ledger (record keeping) or conduct bank transactions (custody).

However, the review team observed two areas in which separation of duties is not adequately achieved. The first breach of adequate separation of duties relates to the accounting clerk's responsibilities: this position has custody of the district's supply of vendor checks, access to the check signature machine, and the ability to generate checks from the automated financial system. In addition, the accounting clerk has the ability to set up vendors in the payment system.

The second situation involves the responsibilities assigned to the payroll bookkeeper. In addition to having access to the district's check stock, this position has the ability to establish new employees in the payroll system and adjust pay rates. As discussed in the Human Resource chapter, the payroll bookkeeper's responsibilities were recently expanded so that currently the position carries out most of the key HR functions in the district, as well as the assigned business-related duties. In addition, the payroll bookkeeper is responsible for transferring bank funds to the district's payroll account and for establishing electronic transfers of funds to individual employee bank accounts for payroll direct deposit transactions as part of the position's business-related duties.

Any discussion of internal controls and separation of duties warrants mention that the potential for employee wrongdoing is theoretical in nature. Establishing controls does not imply that employees are untrustworthy or have the potential for wrongdoing.

Establishing adequate controls can be difficult in small organizations such as NISD due to the limited number of staff members available to share duties. However, changes in some procedures will help improve the district's controls.

Failure to reassign some duties will leave the district at risk of accounting irregularities. In addition, lack of sound controls

could place employees in the position of unfairly being questioned in the event that an irregularity occurs.

The review team identified a best practice used in Franklin Township Public Schools (FTPS), New Jersey, where the business office responsibilities are specifically designed to promote a strong system of internal controls. For instance, the accounting clerks responsible for making payments to vendors are not given access to blank check stock and are not given the ability to establish new vendors in the payment system. In addition, the payroll bookkeeper does not have access to the payroll check stock or the ability to transfer district funds.

NISD should reassign business office duties to improve internal controls.

Internal controls in NISD may be improved by the creation of an HR coordinator position which is discussed further in the Human Resources chapter.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS (REC. 22)

NISD is overpaying employees for travel reimbursements related to use of personal automobiles.

A review of accounts payable documentation and salary/stipend schedules revealed that some district employees provided with travel stipends also receive mileage reimbursements for using their personal vehicles for district business.

The district pays a total of \$21,320 annually in travel stipends to six employees including the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of Special Education, director of Student Services, director of Athletics, and a high school assistant principal.

The review team examined general ledger reports for fiscal 2007–08 and year-to-date fiscal 2008–09 and found several travel reimbursements made to employees who also receive a travel stipend. However, the general ledger reports lacked adequate detail to determine whether reimbursed amounts were for mileage or for other travel expenses such as hotel and meals.

The review team also reviewed all accounts payable detail for travel reimbursements for year-to-date fiscal 2008–09. While the extent to which employees received both travel stipends and per mileage reimbursements was not quantified, a review

of the accounts payable detail revealed that employees received \$560 in direct mileage reimbursement in addition to receiving a travel stipend.

Continuing this practice will result in unnecessary expenditures for the district.

NISD should develop employee travel policies and procedures that specifically disallow the practice of giving employees both travel stipends and reimbursements for use of personal vehicles.

This recommendation can be implementing using existing resources.

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY (REC. 23)

A lack of transparency in financial management has created several discrepancies or unexplained financial or fiscal issues in the district. Both district administration and the NISD board appear to have been involved in poor decision making.

According to the business manager, NISD staff makes every attempt to keep the public informed of the district's financial status. For example, the district posts public notices in the local newspaper for meetings related to the state financial accountability rating, responds to all open record requests, and ensures that all financial audits are complete, as required by state law.

While the district provides some data on budgets and finances on the NISD website, the information is not the most current data available, such as a 2006–07 budget summary and a 2007–08 budget comparison published on the business office section of the website. In addition, a 2008–09 proposed budget summary document is accessible on the school board and policies section of the website; yet no current adopted budget or expenditure data is published. When review team members asked about financial discrepancies, clear explanations or documentation specifics could not be provided.

Several issues came to the attention of the review team, including:

- Unexplained and non-documented fluctuations in the Child Nutrition fund balance (Child Nutrition chapter);
- Workers' compensation expense discrepancy in the Child Nutrition fund (Child Nutrition chapter);

- Lack of accountability regarding the 2004-05 bond issue and construction projects, including discrepancies in the total amount of construction costs (Financial Management and Facilities chapters);
- Lack of documentation related to architectural budgets for construction projects, including change orders and budget changes on projects (Facilities chapter); and
- Board approval of expenditures that have resulted in budget deficits, in opposition to recommendations made by administrative staff, including approval of pay increases regardless of budget outcomes impacting the district's optimal fund balance required by TEA (Financial Management chapter).

Despite the fact that district staff provided the review team with financial reports regarding the fluctuations in Child Nutrition funds, the business manager was unable to adequately explain the discrepancies.

The review team was also provided several concerns from citizens regarding the lack of transparency in district finances, particularly in connection with the 2004 bond proposal and construction projects. Although the district has attempted to explain construction costs to the public in three town hall meetings held in March and April 2008, a lack of detailed accounting and cost records hamper efforts to provide a clear explanation to the community. The review team was provided three different sets of final cost numbers for the same completed construction projects. Moreover, inconsistent information was also provided regarding the use of change orders and a contingency budget in relation to the construction projects.

In addition, the board has approved deficit budgets and the use of fund reserves against recommendations from central district staff impacting NISD's optimal fund balance required by TEA. For instance, one district official told the review team that when it became apparent that facilities improvements and construction could not be completed within the original budgeted amounts, district staff presented options to the board for paring down plans to better meet budget constraints. The board, however, opted to use fund balance reserves and take on additional debt in order to complete the renovations and construction projects as originally planned. This decision resulted in a deficit of over \$1 million in NISD's fund balance for school year 2007–08. According to NISD's audited financial statements, the district's optimal fund balance calculation was just over \$3.6

million, but the district's actual reserves amounted to only \$2.6 million.

Further, when the district was in the process of adopting its 2008–09 budget, the board decided to approve a staff salary increase. Business office staff prepared projections showing the effects of approving the salary increase with limited funding, yet the board voted to approve a deficit budget regardless.

NISD should cooperate with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding the recommendation of the Legislative Budget Board that TEA conduct an investigation of NISD under the provisions of the Texas Education Code §39.074, On-Site Investigations, and §39.075, Special Accreditation Investigations. The TEA investigation should review the actions and environment leading to the discrepancies or unexplained financial or fiscal issues in the district. NISD should share information with the TEA as they conduct an investigation.

NISD should also make efforts at providing the public with more detailed and current financial data, including budgets, expenditure reports, and check registers on the website. For example:

- The district should publish information in relation to TEA's expenditure targets requirements. In accordance with Texas Education Code, Section 44.011, TEA establishes and publishes expenditure targets for school districts annually. These funding targets are set for instruction, leadership, student-based and non-student-based support services, and administration. School districts that adopt a budget that does not meet an established target are required to adopt and publish a board resolution with a justification of why the target has not been met. This requirement allows for greater transparency for district financial issues.
- The district should also publish its School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) rating, issued by TEA, on the NISD website. By publishing the financial rating, NISD will increase the transparency already built-in to the School FIRST requirements. Currently, TEA requires school districts to announce their financial rating in a public meeting within two months of receiving the final financial accountability rating. School districts are required to distribute their financial management report to attendees at a public School

FIRST hearing held at a district facility. According to TEA, notice of the hearing, including date, time, and location, must be provided to a local newspaper of general circulation once a week for two weeks prior to holding the public meeting.

- The district should publish its check register on the NISD website.

Finally, the community has requested reports from the district on how funds are spent and explanations on changes that impact the district's budget. Providing a detailed accounting of past bond and general fund expenditures will help ease community concerns or perceptions regarding inappropriate expenditures.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
20. Develop and follow a fund balance policy.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
21. Reassign business office duties to improve internal controls.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
22. Develop employee travel policies and procedures that specifically disallow the practice of giving employees both travel stipends and reimbursements for use of personal vehicles.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
23. Cooperate with the Texas Education Agency regarding the recommendation of the Legislative Budget Board that TEA conduct an investigation of Navasota ISD under the provisions of the Texas Education Code §39.074, On-Site Investigations, and §39.075, Special Accreditation Investigations.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

CHAPTER 6

PURCHASING

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 6. PURCHASING

Chapter 44 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) governs the purchasing and contracting processes used by Texas school districts. The code provides rules for making purchases of items valued at \$25,000 or above through one of the following methods:

- Competitive bidding;
- Competitive sealed proposals;
- Request for proposals (RFP) for services other than construction; or
- Reverse auctions.

For purchases valued between \$10,000 and \$25,000, districts may use the methods listed above or they can establish vendor lists. Districts may establish vendor lists by including vendors who request to be on such lists; however, before purchasing from an approved vendor, the district must obtain written or telephone price quotations from three vendors on the list.

The code allows purchases to be made from pre-established state contracts, from purchasing cooperatives, and through interlocal agreements. Any purchases made with these methods do not have to be bid by the district.

Purchasing requirements of the TEC do not apply to contracts for professional services rendered, including the services of architects, attorneys, or fiscal agents.

The TEC also contains provisions for making emergency purchases in the event that equipment, facilities, or personal property are destroyed or damaged and result in potential danger to students or staff members, or would substantially impair the conduct of classes. Under the emergency provisions of the code, districts are allowed to use procurement methods other than the standard required methods in order to make emergency repairs.

Navasota Independent School District's (NISD's) purchasing functions are a combination of both decentralized and centralized processes. Departmental personnel and school-based personnel (usually a bookkeeper at each school) are trained in purchasing processes and procedures. Department heads and campus principals have the power to approve purchases for their departments or schools, and are responsible for ensuring that their budgets are not overextended.

In the district's business office, the business manager, an accountant, and an accounting clerk participate in the procurement process. The business manager is responsible for the overall oversight of the purchasing functions, including primary responsibility for contract management, and has first-hand responsibility for obtaining bids and quotations for purchases, and entering into contracts. The accountant reviews and approves all purchasing requests, and the accounting clerk ensures proper purchasing documentation is maintained and then makes payment for purchases.

The process of obtaining prior approval, completing requisitions, and entering approved requisitions into the district's automated purchasing system is decentralized and is handled by departments and schools.

The process of reviewing purchase requisitions to ensure proper account coding and fund availability is performed centrally by the accountant in the business office. After reviewing and approving a purchase requisition, the accountant "converts" a purchase request into a purchase order, which is printed and returned to the requesting department or school.

Each requester is then responsible for ordering and receiving items. Departments and schools notify the accounting clerk in the business office that an invoice is ready for payment by submitting a copy of the purchase order and any shipping/receiving documents that contain signatures noting that all items have been received.

The district does not maintain a central supply warehouse. However, a portable storage building located on an elementary school campus is used to store bulk purchases of paper and janitorial supplies. All other supplies, including food and cafeteria supplies, are stored on each campus. Other than paper and janitorial supplies, all other items are primarily ordered when needed, reducing the need to store and maintain large quantities of supplies.

FINDINGS

- NISD's Business Office does not maintain adequate contract monitoring procedures.

- NISD does not follow Texas Education Code requirements regarding criminal history checks for businesses or individuals doing business with the district.
- NISD does not maintain adequate controls over purchasing, storage, or monitoring of bulk paper, custodial supplies, or fuel.
- NISD's bid files are not well organized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 24: Develop contract monitoring procedures that clearly assign responsibility and specify steps necessary to ensure that the district is receiving the goods and services it contracts for at the appropriate prices.**
- **Recommendation 25: Write and implement procedures to ensure that Texas Education Code requirements for criminal history checks are performed for applicable employees of district vendors.**
- **Recommendation 26: Develop processes for preventing losses or errors in bulk paper, custodial**

supplies, and fuel by streamlining purchasing procedures, conducting monthly inventory checks, and requiring written acknowledgement of inventory deliveries and usage.

- **Recommendation 27: Create a system to organize and file the district's procurement documentation and prepare a summary of vendor responses with products being bid and their prices.**

DETAILED FINDINGS

CONTRACT MONITORING (REC. 24)

NISD's Business Office does not maintain adequate contract monitoring procedures.

Contract monitoring encompasses the activities performed after a contract has been awarded to determine how well the contractor has met the requirements of the contract. Factors influencing the degree of contract monitoring needed include the nature of the work, the type of contract, contract scope, and contract complexity.

Exhibit 6-1 shows the type and amount of contracted services in NISD from school years 2003–04 through 2007–08.

**EXHIBIT 6-1
NISD CONTRACTED EXPENDITURES
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

CONTRACTED EXPENDITURE	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Legal Services	\$17,250	\$16,330	\$50,072	\$48,008	\$68,480
Audit Services	\$21,000	\$27,645	\$15,801	\$15,500	\$16,450
Tax Appraisal and Collection	\$319,916	\$337,341	\$346,548	\$396,744	*\$384,710
Professional Services	\$337,394	\$431,249	\$366,450	\$308,677	\$375,539
Student Tuition- Public Schools	\$25,012	\$26,535	\$20,953	\$11,235	\$24,905
Education Service Center Services	\$106,160	\$119,742	\$137,357	\$125,875	\$161,697
Contracted Maintenance and Repair	\$171,069	\$208,602	\$500,895	\$184,053	\$280,969
Utilities	\$815,509	\$837,448	\$1,006,828	\$1,382,470	\$1,554,723
Rentals- Operating Leases	\$1,206,019	\$1,276,609	\$1,221,113	\$1,262,709	\$1,333,485
Miscellaneous Contracted Services	\$269,854	\$293,737	\$142,394	\$236,445	\$542,877
Total Professional and Contracted Services	\$3,289,183	\$3,575,238	\$3,808,411	\$3,971,716	\$4,743,835
Total District Expenditures	\$22,424,260	\$24,318,319	\$40,951,524	\$38,913,556	\$31,454,745
Percent Contracted Services	14.67%	14.70%	9.30%	10.21%	15.08%

*Amount includes Other Intergovernmental Charges, Function 99.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2003–04 through 2007–08.

From school years 2003–04 through 2007–08, NISD spent over 60 percent of its contracted expenditures on utilities and rentals-operating leases. According to the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), utilities are comprised of water, electricity, gas for heat, cooking and cooling, ongoing telephone and facsimile charges. Rentals-operating leases are defined in FASRG as expenditures/expenses for rentals, including furniture, computers, telecommunication equipment, buildings, and vehicles. Over the same five-year period, the district spent \$1,819,309 or approximately 10 percent of its contracted expenditures on professional services classified as expenditures for services rendered by personnel who are not on the payroll of the district.

NISD maintains several contracts for goods or services. The district’s primary contracts are displayed in **Exhibit 6-2**.

The business manager and central administration personnel, depending upon the type of contract being negotiated, is responsible for obtaining bids or quotations for contracted services, evaluating vendor responses, negotiating terms of

the contracts, and providing adequate information to board members should contracts need board approval.

When deemed necessary by the business manager, the district’s attorney also reviews contract terms. According to the business department interviews, this practice is used for complex contracts needing legal review.

Contract monitoring is performed by a variety of staff members depending upon the services or goods provided under the contract. For instance, the director of Technology is responsible for monitoring the technology services provided through the Region 6 contract, while the director of Special Education is responsible for monitoring the provisions of the Special Education Cooperative Agreement. The contract with Region 6 provides the majority of the district’s educational services, which are monitored by the assistant superintendent. However, interviews with staff indicated that the district lacks a formal process to ensure coordination and oversight of contract activities at the district level.

In some instances, the review team found that contract monitoring is not performed adequately. During the review

**EXHIBIT 6-2
NISD CONTRACTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

CONTRACTED SERVICES	CONTRACT BEGINNING DATE	CONTRACT EXPIRATION DATE	AMOUNT
Special Education Cooperative – NISD and four neighboring districts pool state and federal funds to provide needed services to member districts	2001	Contract renews automatically unless provisions change	Varies
Contract with City of Navasota and Grimes County for school resource officers (SRO)	August 1, 2006	July 31, 2009, with the option to extend	\$8,427 monthly
Contract for legal services	March 3, 2008	Contract does not contain an expiration date	\$1,000 annual retainer, plus costs for legal consultation (not detailed in the actual contract)
Contract for lease/purchase of copy machines and maintenance on copiers	September 24, 2003	September 23, 2009	\$90 lease payment per month with purchase option at end of term
Various contracted services provided by Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6); including Advanced Academics, Bilingual/ESL, data management for assessment and curriculum, distance learning and video conferencing technologies, and administrative data processing	September 1, 2008	August 31, 2009	Varies depending on service and pricing; examples of pricing: Bilingual/ESL services are \$300 per year plus \$65 per Limited English Proficient (LEP)-identified student; pricing for administrative data processing is approximately \$51,277 annually (based on enrollment and number of student records)
Transportation for regular, Special Education, and field trip bus services	July 1, 2006	June 30, 2011	Invoiced monthly; cost varies based on number of routes, and number of hours and miles traveled on field trips; 2008–09 budgeted to be \$1.3 million

SOURCE: Navasota ISD contracts reviewed, March 2009.

team's onsite visit, two examples were identified that demonstrated performance issues: the contracts for copiers and transportation services.

While detailed issues associated with the copier contract were not specifically identified, the business manager and campus staff members shared their frustrations with the review team that the copier machines are often malfunctioning and are down for repairs much of the time.

Also, covered in the transportation chapter, the review team identified several performance issues related to the transportation contract that had gone unnoticed by district officials. For example, performance issues related to the transportation company was the combination of school bus routes, allowing for the use of one bus instead of two. This change decreased the need for bus personnel, but necessitated longer bus rides for some children. However, the invoices submitted by the transportation provider continued to charge the district as if it were running full bus routes, effectively doubling its charges for some routes.

In addition, charges for field trips are not monitored or verified by campus personnel on a timely basis. Principals told the review team that they do not receive detailed invoices for field trips, yet field trip expenditures are charged to their budgets. For example, the district received an invoice from the transportation provider for field trip costs in January 2009 totaling \$7,451.74. The invoice did not contain a break-down of the total costs involved. No documentation was provided regarding the number of school bus routes, personnel, or number of hours involved in the field trips. Without detailed documentation from the transportation provider, the district cannot verify the accuracy of these charges.

Without implementation of proper contract monitoring practices, the district is at risk of overpaying for contracted services or not receiving the full benefit of such services.

Industry best practices highlight the value of documented contract monitoring processes, which provide guidelines for ensuring that an entity receives the services for which it is paying and that it is not overcharged by contractors. Monitoring processes do not need to be elaborate or complicated; they should clearly state who is responsible for monitoring a contract or vendor, and list required actions. Proper processes also ensure adequate review of contractor charges by employees who have the information and authority to verify the accuracy of charges.

The review team identified best practices from three sources: the Office of Federal Procurement, the National State Auditors Association, and the Colorado Department of Human Services. Implementing some of these best practices could benefit NISD in its contracting processes.

The Office of Federal Procurement lists the following best practices for use in the contract monitoring process:

- Conduct a post-award orientation or communication session with the vendor.
- Establish measures of performance for which the vendor will be expected to achieve.
- Assign specific staff member(s) to be responsible for oversight of contract performance and invoicing.
- Obtain input from the users or customers of the contracted services.

In addition, the Performance Audit Committee of the National State Auditors Association has issued a guide called *Best Practices in Contracting for Services*, which states that monitoring should be performed to ensure that contractors comply with contract terms, that performance expectations are achieved, and any problems are identified and resolved. Contract monitoring tasks include:

- Assigning a contract manager having the authority, resources, and time to monitor the contract or project.
- Ensuring that the contract manager possesses adequate skills or receives appropriate training to properly manage the contract.
- Ensuring that the contract manager has the ability to track budgets, review invoices, and compare to contract terms and conditions.
- Ensuring that deliverables are received on time.
- Withholding payments to vendors until deliverables are received or performance is adequate.
- Retaining documentation to support charges against the contract.
- Evaluating contractor performance.

The Colorado Department of Human Services utilizes a contract monitoring checklist that may be useful to NISD (**Exhibit 6-3**).

**EXHIBIT 6-3
CONTRACT MONITORING CHECKLIST
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

CONTRACT MONITORING & ADMINISTRATION TOOLS

BEST PRACTICE	STATE CONTRACT MANUAL, CHAPTER 10 PAGE REFERENCE:	WILL THIS "PRACTICE" BE USED TO MANAGE THIS CONTRACT?	
		YES	NO
1. Have a designated Project/Contract Manager.	10-2		
2. Have and follow a List of Contract Manager Duties.	10-4		
3. Require and utilize Progress Reports from the Contractor.	10-6, 10-7		
4. Maintain a formal Contract Administration File. [<i>Use of this practice is required.</i>]	10-12, 10-13	X	
5. Conduct a Post Award Conference with the Contractor.	10-16, 10-17, 10-18		
6. Have and utilize a detailed, written, and chronological Work Plan with Performance Time Frames. [<i>May be part of the Statement of Work</i>]	10-19, 10-20		
7. Conduct careful Monitoring of Contractor Performance and maintain written records thereof.	10-20, 10-21, 10-22, 10-23		
8. Have an internal plan for Resolution of Vendor Performance Issues.	10-39		
9. Do a Project Risk Assessment and have a Risk Management Contingency Plan in place to address identified risks.	10-14, 10-67		
10. Conduct a Post Contract Evaluation.	10-74		
11. Other [<i>Please describe</i>]:	N/A		

SOURCE: Colorado Department of Human Services, Contract Management Unit, April 10, 2007.

NISD should develop contract monitoring procedures that clearly assign responsibility and specify steps necessary to ensure that the district is receiving the goods and services contracted at the appropriate prices.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

VENDOR BACKGROUND CHECKS (REC. 25)

NISD does not follow Texas Education Code (TEC) requirements regarding criminal history checks for businesses or individuals doing business with the district.

TEC Section 44.034, Subsections (a) and (b) state the following:

(a) A person or business entity that enters into a contract with a school district must give advance notice to the district if the person or an owner or operator of the business entity has been convicted of a felony. The notice must include a general description of the conduct resulting in the conviction of a felony.

(b) A school district may terminate a contract with a person or business entity if the district determines that the person or business entity failed to give notice as required by Subsection (a) or misrepresented the conduct resulting in the conviction. The district must compensate the person or business entity for services performed before the termination of the contract.

Further, TEC Section 22.0834 requires vendors doing business with the district to certify that they have received criminal history records for their employees who have continuing duties related to the contracted service or have direct contact with students.

Staff in the business office told the review team that some requests for proposals (RFPs) and bid notices issued by the district contain language informing prospective vendors of the criminal history certification requirements, but some RFPs or notices do not contain the notice. Further, the district is not obtaining certification documentation from its vendors who fall under the requirements of TEC Sections 44.034 and 22.0834.

The district conducts criminal background checks for all applicants for employment in accordance with TEC requirements. This requirement and the related requirement for vendors are intended to protect the children in the district; failure to comply places students at risk. Additionally, failure to follow these requirements makes the district vulnerable to lawsuits should an unfortunate incident involving a vendor's employees occur.

Fort Worth ISD (FWISD) provides prospective vendors information about the requirements of the criminal history certification on its purchasing website; included is a link to the Reference Guide to Senate Bill 9, which passed in 2008 and requires the criminal history certification per amendment to Texas Education Code 22.083.

The district should write and implement procedures to ensure that Texas Education Code requirements for criminal history checks are performed for applicable employees of district vendors.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources. Any fees necessary to conduct vendor background checks should be passed on to the vendor.

ADEQUATE PURCHASING CONTROLS (REC. 26)

NISD does not maintain adequate controls over purchasing, storage, or monitoring of bulk paper, custodial supplies, or fuel.

NISD maintains a centralized stock of bulk paper and custodial supplies in a portable classroom building located on the campus of Webb Elementary School. The director of Maintenance and the business manager are responsible for replenishing these supplies as necessary.

As campuses and departments need paper and custodial supplies, they request the needed items from the director of Maintenance. The director, in turn, instructs a custodial supervisor to deliver the necessary goods to the requesting school or department.

At the campus level, paper is usually ordered and received by personnel in the main office, but there is no process to verify that an order and delivery match. The custodial supervisor tracks the amount of paper delivered to departments and campuses and submits documentation to the business manager. The business manager charges the appropriate budgets for the paper delivered approximately four times per year.

NISD lacks an effective process for purchasing cleaning supplies. The ordering process for custodial supplies is similar to the process for ordering paper—the head custodian at each campus requests supplies and materials as needed from the director of Maintenance. These supplies are not charged to department or school budgets; however, instead, the expenditures associated with custodial supplies are absorbed in the maintenance department's budget. As is the case with paper, there is no process to verify that orders and deliveries of custodial supplies match.

The business manager reported that the district spends approximately \$0.27 per square foot for cleaning supplies. According to the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO), school districts in the state typically spend about \$0.08 per square foot on cleaning supplies. High costs for cleaning supplies can be indications of numerous management problems including waste, misuse, or theft of the supplies. During interviews, the business manager and the director of Maintenance indicated that since the beginning of the 2008–09 school year they started monitoring the use of cleaning supplies with the goal of reducing costs to the state average of \$0.08 per square foot.

In addition, there are no regular inventory counts of paper stock and custodial supplies maintained in the storage building.

The district maintains a diesel fuel pump at High Point Elementary School. District personnel take buses to the school for fuel as needed. Although the fuel pump is located within a fenced area that is kept locked at night, there are no controls to monitor fuel usage and there are also no inventory checks of fuel usage.

Failure to conduct inventory counts and verify usage levels leaves the district at risk of loss, theft, or abuse of these items.

Best practices for inventory use and management require that physical inventories be taken on a regular basis—preferably monthly—and that all delivery and receipt of goods be acknowledged in writing.

Regarding fuel inventory protection, each vehicle should have detailed records that include the number of miles driven, a list of drivers, and how much fuel the vehicle uses. Regular comparisons of vehicle reports with fuel on hand can indicate irregularities, either in the dispensing of fuel or in mechanical problems with the vehicles.

The review team identified a best practice for inventory management in Rockwall ISD (RISD). When the district began conducting physical inventory counts on a monthly basis, inventory discrepancies were dramatically reduced. Prior to implementing the inventory counts, inventory discrepancies ranged from \$6,594 to \$189,835. Now after all inventory stock has been counted, reports are sent to the business office where any variances are reviewed, investigated, and adjusted if necessary.

NISD should develop processes for preventing loss and error in bulk paper, custodial supplies, and fuel by streamlining purchasing procedures, conducting monthly inventory checks, and requiring written acknowledgement of inventory deliveries and usage.

Although automated fuel inventory tracking systems are available for purchase by the district, the review team determined that properly documenting fuel usage, which would require a few minutes with every vehicle fueling, should be adequate to detect any irregularities in fuel inventories. Similarly, inventories of paper and custodial supplies can be performed manually in less than two hours monthly. Therefore, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

BID ORGANIZATION (REC. 27)

NISD's bid files are not well organized.

A review of the documentation systems used in the business office reveal that while general accounting, payroll, and accounts payable records are well-documented, organized, and easy to locate, some purchasing files are not as well organized, including bidding files.

While onsite, the review team asked to see a sample of several procurement-related items including contracts, RFPs, bid tabulations, and public notices of solicitation of bids. While all items requested were eventually provided to the review team, they were not easily accessible to district staff.

Procurement-related items were filed in a variety of locations, including boxes on the floor of the business manager's office, in stacks on filing cabinets, or in drawers or cabinets. There appear to be no structured processes for filing and maintaining procurement documents. For instance, bids received, bid tabulations, and bid advertisements associated with a single bid are not necessarily filed together. Failure to properly organize and file procurement records leaves the district at risk of misplacing vital documentation. In addition, such

failures do not lend to efficient or effective management of such documentation.

Bidding and procurement documentation is part of the district's official records, and as such, is subject to Texas' Open Records Act. It is therefore imperative that records be maintained in a way that will ensure their protection.

The district uses good practices in its retention and maintenance of payroll and accounts payable documentation, and should mirror these practices for its procurement documentation.

A detailed review of accounts payable information, for example, revealed that two years' worth of payable information (current year plus prior year) is maintained in the business office, with a third year kept in a storage location. All payable files were organized alphabetically by vendor, with all necessary documentation supporting each payment contained in the vendor files.

Another best practice identified by the review team was found in Charlottesville City Schools (CCS), Virginia. This school division's finance department maintains a well-run formal bidding process with well organized documentation.

In CCS, all correspondence associated with each bid file, along with documentation of bid advertisement, bid opening, and bid evaluation and award are contained in each file by bid. To aid in the review and evaluation of bids, an administrative technician in the division's purchasing department prepares a summary of vendor responses along with a summary sheet showing products being bid and their prices. In addition to maintaining paper files, CCS also scans bid documents into the department's document database where they can be archived for quick and easy electronic retrieval.

NISD's business manager should create a system to organize and file the district's procurement documentation and prepare a summary of vendor responses with products being bid and their prices.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS)/ SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS)/ SAVINGS
24. Develop contract monitoring procedures that clearly assign responsibility and specify steps necessary to ensure that the district is receiving the goods and services it contracts for at the appropriate prices.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
25. Write and implement procedures to ensure that Texas Education Code requirements for criminal history checks are performed for applicable employees of district vendors.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26. Develop processes for preventing losses or errors in bulk paper, custodial supplies, and fuel by streamlining purchasing procedures, conducting monthly inventory checks, and requiring written acknowledgement of inventory deliveries and usage.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
27. Create a system to organize and file the district's procurement documentation and prepare a summary of vendor responses with products being bid and their prices.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

CHAPTER 7

HUMAN RESOURCES

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 7. HUMAN RESOURCES

In school year 2008–09, Navasota ISD (NISD) served a student population of 2,945 with 402.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions. For school districts, personnel costs are the primary driver of district budgets. Payroll and benefits usually comprise the largest portion of a school district's budget. In 2008–09, the average payroll costs were 70.5 percent of all funds for Texas school district budgets and 64.6 percent of all funds for NISD budget.

The **Exhibit 7-1** shows the classification of NISD staff according to group categories from school year 2003–04 through 2007–08. Generally, teachers comprise over 50 percent of the full-time staff in the district over the five-year period. Educational aides and auxiliary staff comprise approximately 40 percent of the full-time staff over the same period.

Staffing levels in NISD are comparable with its peer school districts. **Exhibit 7-2** displays the student-teacher and

student-staff ratios among peer districts, and the state average. As shown in the exhibit, NISD staffing ratios for both student-teacher and student-staff are the highest among the peer districts. When compared with the state, NISD's student-teacher ratio is slightly lower, and its student-staff ratio is slightly higher.

Typically districts spend a majority of their personnel costs on teachers. **Exhibit 7-3** shows the percentage of personnel costs in Navasota by classification of staff from school year 2003–04 through 2007–08. Over the five-year period, Navasota ISD spent over 60 percent of its personnel costs on teachers.

How a district manages its human resources directly affects its financial and operational performance. Human Resources (HR) management is a diverse discipline guided by numerous state and federal legal requirements for wage and benefit programs, anti-discrimination activities, certification

EXHIBIT 7-1
NAVASOTA ISD STAFF CLASSIFICATION BY ROLES
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

STAFF BY ROLES	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Teachers	204.7	192.6	205.8	214.7	218.8
Professional Support	18.3	18.2	21.1	19.5	18.4
Campus Administration (School Leadership)	12.0	12.0	14.2	16.3	16.9
Central Administration	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
Educational Aides	68.0	61.8	63.9	63.5	64.8
Auxiliary Staff	78.7	75.7	81.0	90.2	99.9
Total	385.2	363.3	389.0	407.2	422.8

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2003–04 through 2007–08.

EXHIBIT 7-2
STUDENT-TEACHER AND STUDENT-STAFF RATIOS COMPARISONS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09

SCHOOL DISTRICT	STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	STUDENT-STAFF RATIO
Aransas ISD	13.4	5.8
El Campo ISD	14.0	6.5
Liberty County ISD	12.5	5.9
Navasota ISD	14.1	7.5
State	14.4	7.3

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS 2008–09; Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) District Report 2007–08; Texas Education Agency, Accountability Ratings 2007 October Appeals.

**EXHIBIT 7-3
PERCENTAGE OF NAVASOTA ISD PERSONNEL COSTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

STAFF BY ROLES	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Teachers	65.2%	64.7%	64.0%	63.5%	62.9%
Professional Support	7.1%	7.5%	8.1%	7.3%	6.5%
Campus Administration (School Leadership)	5.7%	6.1%	6.6%	7.1%	7.1%
Central Administration	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	2.4%
Educational Aides	7.9%	7.7%	7.4%	6.7%	6.8%
Auxiliary Staff	12.1%	12.0%	11.9%	13.4%	14.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS, 2003–04 through 2007–08.

provisions, and contract standards. An effective human resource department must have the skills to develop compensation and benefit programs that balance the personal needs of the employee and the financial needs of the district. Recruitment activities must attract skilled employees capable of meeting district performance expectations. Ongoing operations must reduce the risk of competent, trained employees leaving for better working conditions with other employers.

The district’s HR functions are managed by a staff of four, consisting of the assistant superintendent and three staff members. While the assistant superintendent serves as the director of HR, the payroll bookkeeper is responsible for maintaining employee leave benefits and teacher certifications, in addition to basic tasks such as new employee processing, personnel file maintenance, and data entry of personnel information into the human resource module of the financial system. The business manager and the accountant assist mainly with position control for hiring purposes.

NISD’s HR division is responsible for the following personnel functions:

- posting/updating position vacancy listings;
- conducting initial screening/background checks of job applicants;
- processing new employees;
- monitoring the licensure status for all certified personnel;
- maintaining personnel files;
- facilitating the orientation, training and evaluation of NISD employees;

- assisting in the administration of personnel compensation and benefits;
- preparing materials for personnel recommendations to the school board; and
- performing other personnel duties in accordance with board policies and procedures established for personnel services management.

Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6) assists the district with staff development it provides to professional staff. To assist NISD in determining professional development options, the service center website provides an interactive calendar of training offerings and allows interested persons to register for the classes online. Most of the classes are free of charge, but others are fee-based.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The district has developed an employee handbook that serves as an effective guide for district actions related to human resources.
- The employee records storage system used by the school district complies with state requirements, improves access to retained records, and removes outdated records.

FINDINGS

- NISD lacks the staff and organizational structure necessary to support the HR functions of the district.
- The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager do not conduct periodic

performance reviews of direct reports per board policy DN (LOCAL).

- NISD lacks a process for updating job descriptions and scheduling a review of job responsibilities.
- NISD does not implement local board policy or the employee pay plan administrative procedures related to conducting salary offers to prospective employees for placement on the salary schedule.
- NISD lacks a formal evaluation process and procedures to determine appropriate staffing decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, salary schedules, and appropriate staffing levels.
- NISD has no comprehensive teacher recruitment plan.
- While NISD's grievance process allows for informal staff discussions of concerns or complaints with appropriate administrators, the process does not provide an alternative to the formal grievance procedure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 28: Expand the existing organizational structure of the Human Resources Department by creating a coordinator position.**
- **Recommendation 29: Adhere to board policy DN (LOCAL) and conduct periodic performance evaluations of direct reports.**
- **Recommendation 30: Establish a schedule for regularly reviewing and, as needed, updating all district job descriptions.**
- **Recommendation 31: Implement local board policy, follow existing administrative procedures, and consistently use the official placement form to standardize the process for placement of employees on the salary schedule.**
- **Recommendation 32: Develop a Human Resources strategic plan, evaluation process, and formal procedures to manage decisions associated with personnel-related issues.**
- **Recommendation 33: Develop a recruitment plan and create and/or enhance the procedures related to the early identification of position vacancies.**

- **Recommendation 34: Create an ombudsman position and develop a strategic communications plan that is designed to provide a means for both internal and external stakeholders to openly discuss matters of concern.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The district has developed an employee handbook that serves as an effective guide for district actions related to human resources.

The district has an 87-page employee handbook that is updated annually by HR staff. The handbook is printed for distribution to new employees. The handbook is also available on the district's intranet for all employees to access and provides detailed and precise directions related to all aspects of human resources, including each of the following:

- **District Overview:** Includes an introduction to the division, with information about its history, growth, goals, mission and leadership philosophy.
- **Legal Issues:** Including, but not limited to, Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement, Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, Americans with Disabilities Act Policy Statement, Conflict of Interest and Outside Employment Statement and any work confidentiality issues. There is also a detailed section on Grievance Procedures, including citations of board policy and the operational processes associated with the policy.
- **Employment Contracts:** References to key contractual language relating to day-to-day activities of the affected employee groups.
- **Compensation and Evaluation:** Discusses performance management and compensation programs, performance evaluation schedule, payment of salary, overtime pay and employee referral programs.
- **Time-Off Policies:** Includes procedures for taking vacations, sick time, personal time, bereavement, jury duty, leave under The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), parental leave and leave of absence without pay.
- **Benefit Information:** Includes information on health insurance, dental insurance, flexible

spending accounts, group life insurance, long-term disability, retirement plan, 401(k) plan, and workers' compensation benefits.

- **Job-Related Issues:** Includes information regarding attendance and punctuality, drug and alcohol abuse, appearance and dress code, intolerance of violence in the workplace, responses to accidents and emergencies, internal complaint channels, e-mail and Internet policies, use of company equipment and computer systems, reference checks, smoking policy, and tuition reimbursement programs (if applicable).
- **Terminating Employment:** Communicates the expectations and procedures for resignations, dismissals, including immediate dismissals and those other than immediate termination, post-resignation/termination procedures.

A well-written, comprehensive employee handbook provides the HR department with a tool to disseminate information to school district employees, and helps to reduce the number of phone calls to the central office from persons seeking basic HR information. With the small size of the HR staff, providing the handbook improves their efficiency by allowing personnel at district schools and other departments in the central office to have ready access to vital HR information.

EMPLOYEE RECORDS STORAGE

The employee records storage system used by the school district complies with state requirements, improves access to retained records, and removes outdated records.

NISD uses a former school facility as the warehousing site for both employee and student records. The district contracts with a private firm to provide the following services: (1) packing records in storage boxes; (2) labeling each box to indicate the content of the box, appropriate date of record destruction, or indication that records are not to be destroyed; (3) shredding records after the appropriate destruction date.

The room used for records storage is climate controlled to prevent mold and mildew, and is secured at all times, with only two central office administrators possessing the key to the room. All boxes were stored in a sturdy shelving system, the bottom shelf of which was elevated off the floor to prevent records from incurring water damage in case of flooding.

When reviewing the storage facility during the onsite review, the review team noted that the destroy date labels and "do not destroy" labels were appropriate for the type of records

stored in each box, in keeping with requirements outlined in the Texas Local Government Records Act.

Strict adherence to guidelines regarding records storage is sometimes problematic within school organizations. Often there are not sufficient financial resources dedicated to either securing an appropriate storage facility or providing the time and resources for timely record destruction. NISD has committed the necessary resources to providing both a well-secured and appropriate records storage facility and to contracting for records labeling and destruction services to ensure compliance with all state requirements. In addition, the labeling system provided by the private contractor, and the well-lit, well-organized shelving system allow for the records to be easily accessed by appropriate school personnel if and when the need arises to retrieve archived records.

DETAILED FINDINGS

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION (REC. 28)

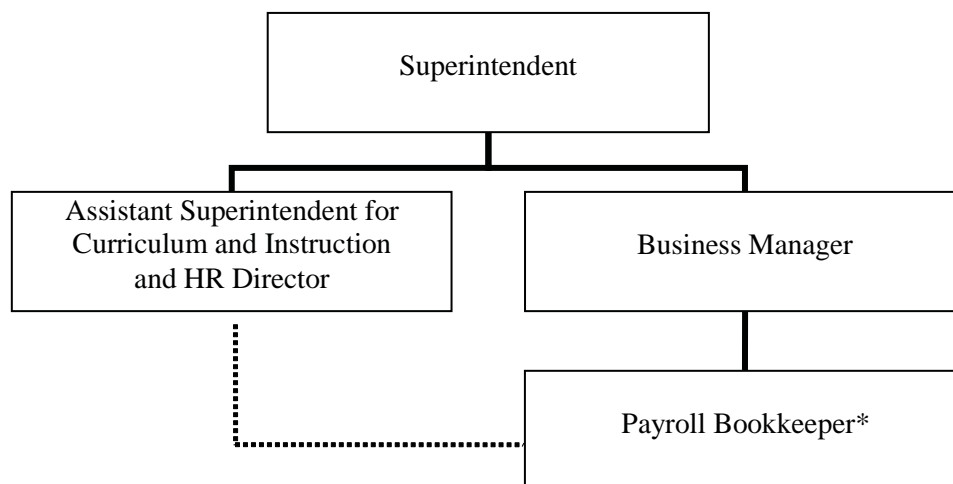
NISD lacks the staff and organizational structure necessary to support the HR functions of the district.

Interviews with central administration staff revealed that the district lacks an HR department. According to interviews and a review of job descriptions, the department is led by the assistant superintendent, who currently has the dual responsibilities of heading the curriculum and instruction department and serving as director of Human Resources. The position is supported by three staff members consisting of a payroll bookkeeper—whose job description and salary have been expanded to reflect the additional HR responsibilities—an accountant, and the district's business manager.

The lines of reporting for the current structure are displayed in **Exhibit 7-4**. As shown in the exhibit, both the assistant superintendent and business manager are direct reports to the superintendent, and the payroll bookkeeper position formally reports to the business manager, but also receives direction from the assistant superintendent.

Given that the district does not have a formal HR department, some functions related to employee hiring are delegated to school-based administrators and the heads of other departments. For example, when job applicants go to the district website, they are directed to contact these individuals directly. **Exhibit 7-5** shows the contact persons for various positions, as indicated at the district HR website. As shown in the exhibit, principals are responsible for conducting

**EXHIBIT 7-4
HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
MARCH 2009**



*Payroll Bookkeeper’s official title does not reflect the position’s actual duties. This position also has job responsibilities that mirror an HR specialist position.
SOURCE: Navasota ISD Human Resources Department, March 2009.

**EXHIBIT 7-5
CONTACT PERSONS FOR POSITION VACANCIES
MARCH 2009**

VACANCY TYPE	CONTACT PERSON
Elementary Instructional	School Principals
Junior High Instructional	School Principal
High School Instructional	Assistant Superintendent
Special Education	Special Education Director
Technology	Technology Director
Paraprofessionals	School Principals
Substitutes	Assistant Superintendent
Maintenance	Assistant Superintendent
Food Service (Child Nutrition)	Assistant Superintendent

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Human Resources Department, March 2009.

screening interviews with candidates for school teaching positions, and the assistant superintendent or various department heads are responsible for candidate screening and interviews for other instructional and non-instructional positions.

Exhibit 7-6 displays the human resources functions in the department and who has primary responsibility for carrying out each function. As shown in the exhibit, the payroll bookkeeper carries out most of the key HR functions. The assistant superintendent has overall supervisory responsibility for the department, and is consulted for final

recommendations when the need arises for interpreting board policy or deciding on the appropriate procedure for dealing with a problem related to HR.

The absence of an administrative position exclusively dedicated to the human resources function in the school district places a great deal of responsibility for this function on the payroll bookkeeper, administrators in other departments, and school-based administrators. This practice also creates a demand for providing initial and ongoing training on the legal aspects of hiring so that individuals involved in this function can conduct activities related to HR in a manner that is consistent with legal requirements such as equity, due process, and confidentiality.

Failure to have a structure that allows for all critical HR functions to either be handled within the department, or to provide adequate training for persons charged to implement these functions leaves the district vulnerable to legal actions by current and/or prospective employees who feel that they have not been dealt with fairly.

**EXHIBIT 7-6
HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS
MARCH 2009**

HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION	ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	BUSINESS MANAGER	PAYROLL BOOKKEEPER	ACCOUNTANT
Position control	X	X		X
Recruitment	X			
Job posting			X	
Review job applications*			X	
Payroll set-up			X	
Employee benefits			X	
Teacher licensure			X	
New teacher orientation			X	
Retirement			X	
HR training and development	X			
Employee relations	X	X		
Employee records			X	
Substitutes	X		X	

*Qualifications screening.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Human Resources Department, March 2009.

DeSimone and Harris (1998), human resource development specialists, state that the organizational structure of human resources should be of appropriate size to address six major functions:

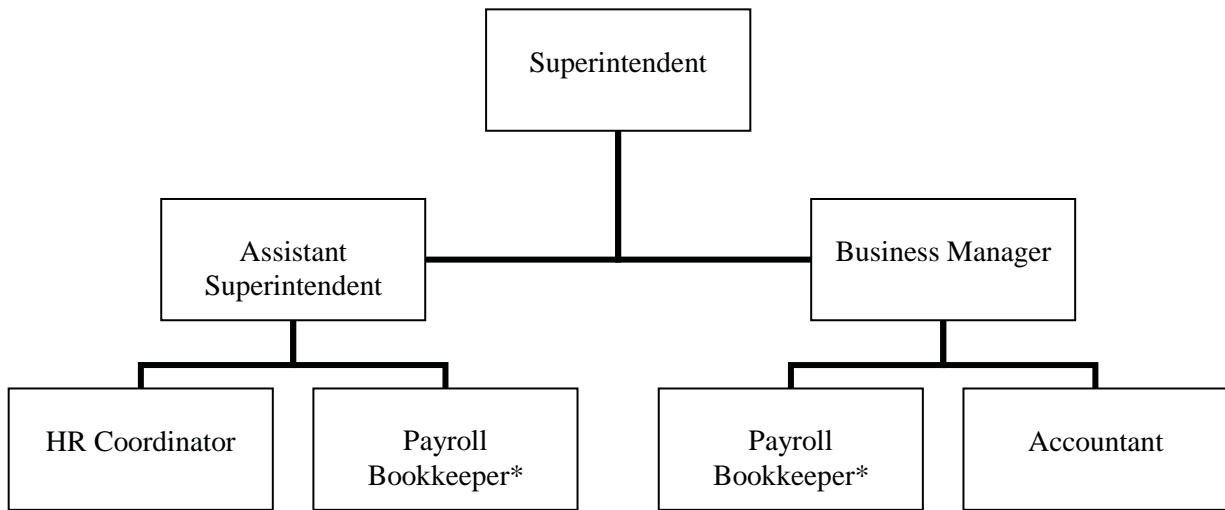
- **Recruitment and Selection:** This function involves the timely identification of potential applications for current and future job openings and for assessing and evaluating applicants in order to make effective hiring decisions.
- **Compensation and Benefits:** This is the establishment and maintenance of an equitable and competitive wage and benefits package.
- **Employee Relations:** The development of a communications system through which employees can address their problems and grievances. In a labor contract environment, it also includes the responsibilities for collective bargaining.
- **Human Resources Planning:** Predicting how changes in enrollment will affect future human resources needs is a critical function. HR planning must chart the course for future plans, programs and actions based on the size and availability of an effective work force within the school district.

- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** This function addresses the legal and ethical responsibilities of the school district by monitoring and modifying (as needed) school board policies, procedures, and practices, particularly when making employment decisions.
- **Human Resource Development:** Having a function that ensures the ongoing training and development of the school district workforce is essential to effective organizational operations.

There also needs to be a sufficient number of individuals in the HR department who have the requisite background knowledge and experience to ensure that each function is carried out effectively. **Exhibit 7-7** illustrates a more effective organizational structure that would support all the essential functions of human resources. As shown, a newly created human resource coordinator position would report to the assistant superintendent, and the current payroll bookkeeper position is shared between the assistant superintendent and business manager.

Exhibit 7-8 shows the proposed functions of each position in HR, including those that would be assigned to a proposed coordinator position. As indicated, the coordinator position assumes the duties of teacher licensure and new teacher orientation formerly assigned to the payroll bookkeeper. The

**EXHIBIT 7-7
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



*Single position shared 50 percent between human resources and business services.
SOURCE: Performance Review Team, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 7-8
PROPOSED FUNCTIONS CHART**

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	HUMAN RESOURCES COORDINATOR	PAYROLL BOOKKEEPER	BUSINESS MANAGER
Forward personnel recommendations to the school board	Provide training on equity issues to NISD administrative staff	Prepare personnel recommendations for the school board	Review and monitor HR budget Position control
Position control	Employee relations	Prepare and post job vacancy notices	
HR planning	Teacher recruitment	Employee benefits	
Teacher recruitment	Teacher licensure	Retirement	
	New teacher orientation	Employee records	
	Employee set-up	Screen job applications	
	Oversee job description development	Substitutes	
	HR Development		

SOURCE: Performance Review Team, 2009.

payroll bookkeeper keeps the duties associated with payroll set-up; however, all other employee set-up responsibilities would be assigned to the coordinator position. In addition, the payroll bookkeeper keeps all duties associated with substitutes, which was formerly a shared function between the assistant superintendent and the payroll bookkeeper. The accountant no longer has responsibilities related to position control. Instead position control is a shared function between the assistant superintendent and the business manager, and teacher recruitment is shared between the assistant superintendent and the HR coordinator.

The HR coordinator will help oversee employee relations. This individual will provide training for all administrators on topics such as legal aspects of employee hiring, appraisal, and dismissal, and employee grievance procedures.

The addition of the HR coordinator would also allow for enhancement of the recruiting practices in the district. This responsibility is currently carried out by the assistant superintendent, but due to the time intensive nature of this activity, recruitment is limited to job fairs and institutions in the region. With the addition of an HR coordinator, the

assistant superintendent would have more time to devote to recruitment trips, and to developing a more comprehensive plan for recruitment based on analysis of personnel data related to vacancies due to retirements, resignations, terminations, and growth in enrollment.

NISD should expand the existing organizational structure of the HR department by establishing a coordinator position.

The fiscal impact of creating the coordinator position is based on Administrative Pay Grade 1, at the minimum rate of \$192 per day, for a 226-day period, which is \$43,392 (\$192 x 226). Benefits for this position include: variable benefits of 3.144 percent of the average salary or \$1,364 (\$43,392 x 0.03144), and fixed benefits of \$3,205. Total benefits would be \$4,569 (\$1,364 + \$3,205), which brings the total cost for this position to \$47,961 (\$43,392 + \$4,569).

To give the district time needed to implement this recommendation, the 2009–10 fiscal impact is prorated to begin in January 2010 for a total expenditure of \$23,981 (\$47,961/2). The total annual fiscal impact to the district for the remaining years is \$47,961.

ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATIONS (REC. 29)

The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager do not conduct periodic performance evaluations of direct reports per board policy DN (LOCAL).

An examination of personnel records and interviews with personnel revealed that regular or periodic performance reviews of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager's direct report positions are not conducted. While staff and administrators report that informal feedback is provided, written documentation of performance has not been recorded and acknowledged by employees. A review of personnel records and interviews with other employee groups such as principals, teachers, and auxiliary staff revealed that performance evaluations were being conducted in accordance with board policy.

The lack of conducting systematic evaluations of direct hires for central office staff constitutes a failure to adhere to board policy DN (LOCAL) requiring a periodic performance evaluation of each employee. Additionally, failure to provide employees with formal performance reviews can lead to misunderstandings regarding the supervisor's perceptions of the employee's effectiveness and value to the organization. In turn this can result in affecting employee morale and future performance.

Best practice and board policy require the periodic evaluation of each employee unless otherwise stated in policy. For example, policy DNB (LEGAL) requires annual appraisal of identified professional employees. Irving ISD has created policies and procedures specifying the frequency and methods for evaluating instructional, administrative and classified personnel. The district has developed the requisite evaluation forms and processes for follow-up conferencing for employees with less than satisfactory evaluations.

The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager should adhere to board policy DN (LOCAL) and periodically conduct performance evaluations of direct reports.

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the school district; however, it requires that each administrator schedule time to conduct annual evaluations.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 30)

The district lacks a process for updating job descriptions and scheduling a review of current job responsibilities.

Upon review of job descriptions for NISD staff, the review team found that many job descriptions were adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1986 and had not been updated since 2000. The job description review also indicated that the most recently updated job description, which was for an accountant position, occurred in 2005—the same year the job was adopted by the board. In addition, several job descriptions did not specify when they were adopted or updated by the board.

Consequently, a review of the job descriptions for the assistant superintendent and payroll bookkeeper positions in human resources revealed that these job descriptions no longer reflect the actual work assignments for these positions. The job description for the assistant superintendent focuses on the aspects of the job related to curriculum and instruction, but do not reflect the human resources functions that are assigned to this position. In addition, the payroll bookkeeper's job has expanded into a position that more closely resembles a human resources specialist, but these additional HR duties are not reflected in the current job description.

This lack of job description accuracy could result in complications when seeking replacement personnel for these important positions. Further, if an individual was not fulfilling his/her duties, legal complications could exist if the employee were terminated and he/she challenged the action.

based on an inadequately updated job description or lack of appropriately specified job responsibilities.

According to the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (2008), HR best practices require standardization of job descriptions and the inclusion of the following basic elements:

- job title;
- qualifications;
- job goal;
- essential knowledge and skills;
- supervisor;
- positions supervised (if any);
- performance responsibilities (show essential tasks with an asterisk);
- physical requirements;
- terms of employment;
- compensation classification or salary level; and
- dates of development, approvals and revisions.

The district should establish a schedule for regularly reviewing and, as needed, updating all district job descriptions. The newly created HR coordinator, in cooperation with the other district department heads, should convene a committee with representatives from all district employee groups to meet and review district job descriptions, and make recommendations for modifications as necessary.

Full implementation of this recommendation should provide the school district with accurate job descriptions to provide newly employed and veteran employees a guide to understanding the various requirements of their positions. New employees, upon completing an application for employment, should sign a statement that certifies that they have read the essential duties required and can perform those duties upon employment.

This recommendation can be implemented without additional cost to the district.

EMPLOYEE SALARY STRUCTURE (REC. 31)

NISD does not implement local board policy or the employee pay plan administrative procedures related to providing salary offers to prospective employees for placement on the salary schedule.

Although NISD has a board policy and administrative procedures related to salary, wage, and salary offers; the policy and procedures are not consistently used by district staff. For example, school principals are charged with the responsibility of working with prospective employees in the hiring process; being the first line of contact and by conducting screening interviews. On occasion, some school principals have gone beyond the district's administrative procedures by tendering salary offers to potential new hires. This process is often in the form of a verbal offer, without a standardized form to ensure that the offer is in keeping with the district's salary schedule or that the individual is being placed on the appropriate salary level within the schedule.

Additionally, there is no formal methodology used to ensure that central administrative staff assigns the appropriate pay grade to potential new hires on the district's official placement form. The TASB developed comprehensive worksheet located in NISD's administrative procedures includes the range and pay grade for the potential new hire. For example, the business manager said that he does not consistently use the TASB developed worksheet for placement of new hires and has the tendency to record salary offers on the nearest blank sheet of paper. In addition, although administrative regulations exist, the review team found that in many cases central administrative staff does not use their guidelines when offering prospective employees a salary quote that is out of the normal salary range. For example, if an individual with a highly specialized skill set and/or previous experience in the job were to receive a job offer, staff does not often document where this individual should be placed on the salary schedule.

Central administrative staff provided the review team with a copy of NISD's *Employee Pay Plan: Board Policy and Administrative Procedures Guide* developed by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) in 2005 and subsequently adopted by NISD. The Employee Pay Plan includes board policy DEA (LOCAL) which outlines the district's policy for salaries, wages, and stipends. The policy states that "the Superintendent shall recommend to the board for approval pay structures and compensation plans for all district employees...the Superintendent shall administer and maintain pay systems in accordance with administrative procedures for the district compensation plan." Additionally, the 2005 Employee Pay Plan includes administrative procedures for the following areas: minimum pay requirements, procedures for job classification and job classification review, base pay for exempt and nonexempt

employees, eligibility for general pay increases, individual equity adjustments, placement of new employees, promotion and demotion, and adjusting pay-range structures.

Upon further review, the review team found that board policy DEA (LOCAL) was updated in 2008. Although the updated policy can be found on the NISD website, central administrative staff provided the review team with a 2005–06 pay plan policy that is not current and might not reflect all required procedures. In addition, the review team was unable to determine whether the administrative procedures associated with the 2005 Employee Pay Plan have been updated by the district to reflect the changes made to board policy. Specific changes to DEA (LOCAL) include the addition of policies related to annual pay increases, mid-year pay increases, contract and noncontract employees, and early separation from employment. Additionally, the updated policy deleted the reference to “administering and maintaining pay systems in accordance with administrative procedures...” It is uncertain whether the district’s 2005 administrative procedures reflect the changes in the updated policy.

Failure to have an equitable, standardized process for making salary offers and/or adjusting employee salaries creates liability issues for the district in terms of pay equity. Continuing to use a process that has the appearance of being arbitrary erodes employee confidence in the system and places the district in a position to offer an individual the salary that was verbally quoted. Interviews conducted by the review team noted that at times new hires were offered salaries that were not in line with the range the district would pay. However, once the new hire was given a verbal quote on a salary, the district felt obligated to honor the quote.

Industry standards as described by the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) dictate that the placement of new employees on the district’s salary schedule or adjusting the salaries of current employees based on promotions or system-wide pay raises should be a uniform procedure carried out by the department. Salary offers or quotes should not be made by school principals or department heads that may lack the requisite familiarity with the salary schedule or may not have all of the background information in terms of an employee’s previous work experience and education necessary for accurately placing the individual on the salary schedule. Also, depending on the laws and policies in the district, these individuals may also lack the authority to make binding offers of employment and/or salary.

NISD should implement local board policy, follow existing administrative procedures, and consistently use the official placement form to standardize the process for placement of employees on the salary schedule. In following this recommendation, the district should ensure that only appropriate staff, to include the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager, tender salary offers. In addition, the district should consider updating their administrative procedures to align with current board policy DEA (LOCAL).

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished without additional cost to the district.

MANAGEMENT FINDING (REC. 32)

NISD’s Human Resources (HR) function lacks a strategic plan, evaluation process, and formal procedures to determine appropriate personnel-related decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, salary schedules, and appropriate staffing levels.

Information gathered during interviews with staff indicates that NISD lacks many of the formal processes and procedures needed to make well-informed personnel decisions in several areas. Given the current structure or lack thereof, of the human resources function in NISD, the district has not developed formal procedures for the following areas:

- Conducting formal exit interviews
- Examining teacher turnover trends in the district
- Tracking teacher recruitment efforts
- Assessing staffing levels in the district
- Analyzing salary schedules for each staff category in the district
- Communicating salary information to district employees

EXIT INTERVIEWS

During the review team’s fieldwork, several NISD staff and stakeholders indicated that they believed the district had a large turnover problem. When central administration staff was asked about the reasons for the turnover, they indicated that the district does not have a formal process for conducting formal exit interviews to determine the reason for teacher turnover. The district instead uses information gathered from informal discussions with exiting staff and has attributed much of its turnover to hiring a significant number of

teachers who are either recent graduates of Texas A&M University, relatives of faculty members, or graduate students. With its proximity to the university, the district believes that as recent graduates get a few years of teaching experience, they look for other higher paying teaching positions in Houston or other larger markets. Additionally, spouses or other relatives of university personnel depart with family members when transferring or graduating from the university. Informal discussions with exiting staff also indicated that staff was dissatisfied with teacher salaries. In a survey conducted as part of the Performance Review of the district, 69 percent of teachers stated that they did not feel that salaries in NISD were competitive with similar positions in the job market. However, the lack of a formal exit interview process impedes the district from determining the actual reason for teacher turnover to qualify or quantify their perceptions regarding turnover.

TEACHER TURNOVER

While the district attributes teacher turnover primarily to two areas—proximity to Texas A&M University and noncompetitive teacher salaries; NISD does not have a formal process to examine teacher turnover trends in the district. **Exhibit 7-9** displays the teacher turnover rates for NISD, peer school districts, and the state turnover average for school years 2003–04 through 2007–08.

The exhibit shows that since school year 2004–05, the teacher turnover rate in the district has improved—the district experienced a turnover rate of 25.3 percent in school year 2004–05 compared to a 15.9 percent turnover rate in school year 2007–08. Additionally, the teacher turnover rate in 2007–08 was comparable to the overall state turnover rate, 15.2 percent. While **Exhibit 7-9** shows an overall positive trend for teacher turnover in NISD, the district lacks information related to specific turnover trends. For example, the district does not track which teacher groups are most

affected by turnover or the actual reasons that personnel leave the district.

TRACKING RECRUITMENT

Tracking teacher turnover trends is an important factor to determining recruitment needs for a district. NISD has not developed a formal recruitment plan to identify potential job vacancies, projections of vacancies over a three to five-year period, a strategic plan for selecting recruitment venues, or staffing formulas designed to address fluctuations in student enrollment, as addressed further in this chapter (**REC. 33**). In addition, interviews indicate that the district does not track recruitment efforts in order to determine the success of these efforts. Best practices in recruitment highlight that a formal recruitment plan helps to minimize start-of-the-year position vacancies and assists in hiring qualified teachers.

STAFFING LEVELS

For many school districts, the recruitment and hiring process is often influenced by the use of staffing allocation formulas or industry standard guidelines to determine staffing requirements. School districts may use a system of tracking staffing information based on positions rather than actual employees—referred to as “position control.” This process allows school districts to account for all necessary staff, regardless of having a position filled. The review team’s fieldwork indicated that NISD does not use a formal staffing formula for recruitment or hiring purposes, but instead strives to follow the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) class size guidelines. However, these guidelines only cover grades K–4. When compared against peer districts and the state, NISD’s student-teacher and student-staff ratios (shown in **Exhibit 7-2**) indicate that the district’s ratio is comparable with the state and slightly higher than its peers.

Although data indicates that NISD’s staffing levels are comparable to the state and other districts, NISD would

**EXHIBIT 7-9
TEACHER TURNOVER RATE COMPARISON
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Aransas Pass ISD	18.4%	26.5%	16.7%	22.0%	21.7%
El Campo ISD	6.9%	11.6%	5.5%	7.8%	6.2%
Liberty ISD	11.8%	17.2%	13.6%	18.6%	11.7%
Navasota ISD	12.1%	25.3%	21.8%	17.3%	15.9%
Region 6	15.7%	17.9%	16.4%	17.0%	16.9%
State	14.3%	16.1%	14.6%	15.6%	15.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2003–04 through 2007–08.

benefit from using locally developed staffing allocation formulas or industry standard guidelines to determine the appropriate number of positions necessary. In this manner, the district would have a formal, standardized process for creating new positions or eliminating excess positions. The district may want to use an established staffing guideline, such as those developed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), to assist with this process.

SALARY SCHEDULE

The review team’s examination of NISD’s HR functions indicated that the district does not have a formal plan for analyzing and updating the district’s salary schedule. In April 2008, the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) compiled a *Compensation Plan Update* for Navasota ISD. The study was a follow-up to an NISD compensation study from 1995 commissioned by the district. The TASB study compared salaries in NISD against ten districts that were selected on the basis of enrollment and location to assess the competitive job market. The study provided NISD an updated analysis of the district’s salary structure as compared to peer districts.

Exhibit 7-10 displays a teacher salary schedule comparison for NISD which shows NISD salaries compared to the local market median.

TASB’s study indicated that overall, NISD has lower salaries compared to other districts in the area. Navasota ISD’s teacher salary schedule is \$1,313 below the market at year zero and \$2,515 below at year five. In addition, the exhibit shows that NISD’s teacher salary schedule is \$2,756 below at year 10, \$1,260 below at year 15, and \$902 below at year 20.

During the 2008–09 school year, the board approved a 3 percent pay raise for NISD staff. Although the across-the-

board pay raise was not a component of TASB’s *Compensation Plan Update*, the district made steps towards improving the competitiveness of the district’s salaries. However, during the review team’s fieldwork, interviews with district staff indicated that the district still lacks a strategic plan for examining salary schedules.

COMMUNICATING SALARY INFORMATION

TASB’s *Compensation Plan Update*, 2008 found that there is confusion among staff and managers regarding NISD’s salary schedule. During interviews, staff expressed confusion related to how pay grades are determined and how employees receive pay increases. Given that the district does not provide employees information related to the pay grades and classification, there is some distrust in how the compensation plan is designed and administered. For example, the study indicated that several employees thought that their pay grade should be higher due to their years of experience in the district while others thought they should be in a higher pay grade due to a change in their credentials. However, NISD classifies jobs in pay grades based on the level of skill, effort, and responsibility of the job duties, not on credentials or an employee’s years of experience.

NISD should develop a Human Resources (HR) strategic plan, evaluation process, and formal procedures to manage decisions associated with personnel-related issues.

**EXHIBIT 7-10
TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE COMPARISON
APRIL 2008**

	BEGINNING SALARY	5-YEAR SALARY	10-YEAR SALARY	15-YEAR SALARY	20-YEAR SALARY	MAXIMUM SALARY
Navasota ISD Salary	\$34,025	\$36,243	\$38,266	\$43,220	\$47,711	\$52,155
Local Market Median	\$35,338	\$38,755	\$41,022	\$44,480	\$48,613	\$52,133
Percent of Market	96%	94%	93%	97%	98%	100%
Dollar Difference	(\$1,313)	(\$2,512)	(\$2,756)	(\$1,260)	(\$902)	\$22

SOURCE: Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), *Compensation Plan Update*, 2008.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) emphasizes that strategic planning for human resources is important for analyzing the need for and availability of human resources in meeting an organization's, or school district's, goals and objectives. A strategic plan will assist the HR division in developing a direction. According to SHRM, strategic planning:

- Creates a vision;
- Identifies present and future critical needs of the organization;
- Assesses organizational capabilities and performance gaps;
- Defines workable methods, systems, and processes;
- Maximizes the human, financial, and capital resources of the organization; and
- Focuses on continuous improvement.

NISD's HR strategic plan should also include a communications strategy for disseminating HR-related information to personnel. In order to develop a communications strategy, the district should analyze the *TASB Compensation Plan Update* which included recommendations related to establishing a communication plan in the district. As mentioned in the TASB study, the communication plan should include information related to how jobs are assigned to pay grades and how employees receive their pay increases. The district can use a variety of methods to disseminate this information, including small group presentations, management training, and informational updates.

As part of the HR plan, NISD should develop formal procedures related to personnel-related issues, including conducting exit interviews, examining teacher turnover trends in the district, tracking teacher recruitment efforts, assessing staffing levels in the district, analyzing salary schedules for each staff category in the district, and communicating salary information to district employees. The newly created HR Coordinator position, in conjunction with the assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction/HR director, and payroll bookkeeper, should be tasked with developing the documentation to formal procedures in these areas.

Additionally, NISD must develop a method to evaluate personnel-related issues and procedures to assist with management decisions. The district should use the various

functions of HR (exit interviews, turnover trends, and salary schedules) to assist in evaluating district processes and make management decisions related to personnel issues. For example, NISD teacher turnover trends could help inform the types of recruitment efforts in certain grade levels.

The recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT (REC. 33)

NISD has no comprehensive teacher recruitment plan.

The assistant superintendent serves as the recruitment coordinator for the school district. Recruitment efforts are centered on job fairs in and around regional higher education institutions. A review of documentation provided by HR personnel revealed the following recruitment trips for the 2007–08 school year:

- 2008 Educator's Career Invitational (Lamar University, Beaumont, TX);
- Texas A&M University;
- TLAC – Aggie Teacher Career Fair;
- 2008 Spring Teacher Job Fair (Texas State University, San Marcos, TX);
- 2008 Spring Teacher Job Fair (The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College);
- Tri-University Teacher Job Fair (The University of Texas at San Antonio);
- 2008 Spring Teacher Job Fair (Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX); and
- 28th Annual Teacher Education Job Fair (Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX).

Total cost for the recruitment activities was \$1,590. These efforts resulted in 61 teachers hired for the start of school year 2008–09. However, it is uncertain which venue produced the best recruitment efforts.

The district does not have a written recruitment plan which includes timelines for identification of potential job vacancies, projections of vacancies over a three to five-year period, strategic plan for selecting recruitment venues, or staffing formulas designed to address fluctuations in student enrollment.

The absence of a formal recruitment plan also hampers the district's ability to improve its efforts in recruiting African-American and Hispanic teachers. Currently the percentage of African-American teachers compared to students is seven percent teachers to 27 percent students. Hispanic percentages are nine percent teachers and 39 percent students. While NISD's peer districts reflect the same type of teacher-student ethnic imbalances, increasing the number of highly qualified minority teachers should be reflected in a recruitment plan for the district.

In addition to providing information on the previously listed areas, a comprehensive recruitment plan identifies and describes every aspect of the district's mission, goals and objects and activities related to employee recruitment. A good recruitment plan, at a minimum, contains the elements listed as follows:

- **Specifying the roles and responsibilities of district leadership:** Leadership must set the priority and clarify the expectations within the organization so that the plan is developed and resources are allocated for implementation.
- **Increasing the quality and quantity of candidates:** A set of strategies to aggressively seek out potential candidates within schools, districts, universities and the population in general need to be developed. Selling the profession is essential if the best and the brightest are going to consider education as an attractive career choice.
- **Contacting the candidates:** In addition to traditional recruiting methods, the plan should identify how technology will be maximized to contact candidates anywhere in the world in an efficient and cost effective way. This can greatly increase the size of the pool that has traditionally been accessed. This section should also include the district's recruitment calendar.
- **Selling your district:** Districts should have a wealth of information available for any candidate from any location. The Internet makes this possible at virtually no cost to the district or the candidate. Well-informed candidates will make for fewer turnovers. Candidates who may have never considered certain locations due to a lack of information can become top candidates if a district does a good job of presenting the advantages of working there.
- **Facilitating the application process:** It should be easy for a candidate to apply for a position. Online

applications and acceptance of hard copy or electronic standard applications make applying easier.

- **Screening the candidates:** Again the plan should identify cost effective ways that technology can facilitate the screening process so that it is efficient and timely. Video interviewing makes it easy to hire candidates from any location who would never be available otherwise.
- **Simplifying the employment process:** Describes a streamlined employment process that is efficient and candidate-friendly.
- **Induction into the district and profession:** A high level of support for new teachers has proven to reduce turnover in districts and provides for higher retention in the profession. Support programs need to be flexible to meet the needs of individuals and should not become a burden for the new teacher.

NISD should develop a recruitment plan and create and/or enhance the procedures related to the early identification of position vacancies.

Failure to have a written plan decreases the HR department's ability to assess the quality of the recruitment activities, impedes the development of tools such as a retraining template for other NISD central office or school-based personnel who may be invited to be a part of the district's recruitment activities. The plan should be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

In following best practice, NISD can model their recruitment plan on one developed by Nacogdoches ISD. Nacogdoches ISD developed a well-orchestrated recruitment program that minimizes start-of-year position vacancies. In the fall, the district targets recruitment fairs and gathers contact information from attendees who express an interest in working in the district. This information is used to compile an invitation list for the district's spring recruitment fair. At the district's recruitment fair, principals and school hiring committees attend and set up their own tables to "sell" their school to the applicants. After making contacts during the morning, applicants are interviewed in the afternoon by the school hiring committee. The committee may make employment offers the same day.

There is no fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation; however, once the plan is developed, additional costs or savings may be accrued based on decisions made regarding the number and location of recruitment venues.

OMBUDSMAN POSITION (REC. 34)

While NISD's grievance process allows for informal staff discussions of concerns or complaints with appropriate administrators; the process does not provide an alternative to the formal grievance procedure.

NISD lacks a position dedicated to resolving grievances and complaints from school district personnel. Interviews conducted by the review team with staff members indicate that staff experiencing concerns or issues are afraid to discuss matters with immediate supervisors or administrators for fear that they may lose their jobs. In school year 2007–08, the district had several complaints filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) regarding unfair practices or treatment due to race. For example, a complaint filed with the OCR on July 31, 2008 alleged that NISD terminated a person's employment in retaliation for asserting the rights of African-American and Hispanic students housed in the district's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). In March 2009, OCR concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support the complaint. In addition, during interviews, staff and community members indicated that the district had not responded to Level Three complaints.

The NISD employee handbook outlines the grievance process adopted by the Board of Trustees. Policy DGBA (LOCAL) "encourages employees to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their supervisory, principal, or other appropriate administrator." The policy states that if the informal process does not reach the outcome requested by the employee, that he/she may initiate a formal process by filing a written complaint form. The policy further describes the process for filing a Level One, Two or Three complaint.

- A Level One complaint must be filed within fifteen days of the date the employee first knew of the decision/action giving rise to the complaint, and with the lowest level administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem. In most circumstances, the lowest level administrator would be the campus principal or immediate supervisor.
- A Level Two complaint may be filed if either: 1.) the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problems is the Superintendent or designee; 2.) the employee, filing the grievance, did not receive the relief requested at Level One; or 3.) the time for a response has expired. As indicated in policy, the

superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after a level two grievance is filed, and shall have ten days following the conference to provide the employee a written response.

- A Level Three complaint may be filed if the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired. Level Three complaints are appealed to the Board. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda. The district shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable laws.

Although the board has adopted a specific policy related to filing grievances and complaints, interviews with staff and community members suggest that the continuance of grievance and complaint charges in the district has resulted in staff and community mistrust. Schools and communities that do not find a way to successfully create a two-way system of communication allowing honest dialogue around controversial topics, open discussion of school operations, and solutions-focused responses to inquiries from the public, can find themselves in situations that only further divide the community. An independent mediator eases fears of complainants who lack trust in internal staff whom they perceive to potentially side with their employer.

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) defines the role of an ombudsman as a "neutral, confidential, and independent third party to handle employee complaints before they become lawsuits." In the CPA Journal Online, Donna N. Saleh further describes the duties of the ombudsman as being multifaceted, but minimally should be comprised of the following:

- **Listener:** Oftentimes it is helpful for an employee to merely use the ombudsman as a listener to help clarify the issues, disentangle complicated situations, and prioritize concerns.
- **Information resource:** The ombudsman is available as an information resource, providing access to applicable guidelines and policies, or facilitating communication with other services or appropriate administrative units.
- **Provider of options:** The ombudsman may suggest a range of feasible options and help employees evaluate the pros and cons.

- **Role-player:** The ombudsman is available to discuss potential situations and role-play an upcoming meeting, as well as suggest constructive approaches to handle difficult situations.
- **Informal intervener:** With permission of the complainant, the ombudsman can act as an intermediary to clarify issues and initiate problem-solving, including facilitating a mediation session.
- **Trend recorder:** The ombudsman will periodically report to management on problem areas and trends within the organization so that such issues can be addressed through policies and procedures.

School districts may have an ombudsman to serve as an independent resource for resolving conflicts within the district. Austin ISD (AISD) has a district ombudsman position to “ensure that all members of the AISD community receive fair and equitable treatment in matters of concern or complaint.” According to the district website, the AISD ombudsman position provides an alternative to the formal complaint process in the district, assists employees in clarifying their issues and generating options for resolution,

and equips district staff with tools for effective problem resolution.

NISD should create an ombudsman position and develop a strategic communication plan that is designed to provide a means for both internal and external stakeholders to openly discuss matters of concern. Much like the district ombudsman in AISD, this position would assist NISD in resolving problems, complaints, conflicts, and other school-related issues. In addition, the ombudsman would assist the district in creating study circles to gather community opinion and discuss highly charged issues within the community. These activities are discussed further in the Community Involvement chapter.

Given the mistrust expressed by staff and members of the community, NISD’s ombudsman position should be independent from central administration. **Exhibit 7-11** provides some basic principles, guidelines, and best practices for Ombudsman offices. The information is adapted from the *Governmental Ombudsman Standards* developed by the United States Ombudsman Association. By using these

**EXHIBIT 7-11
GOVERNMENTAL OMBUDSMAN STANDARDS**

STANDARDS	INDICATORS
Independence	Position should be free from outside control or influence in structure, function and appearance. Authority should be established by law. Discretion to prescribe how complaints are to be made, received , and acted upon, including the scope and manner of investigations. Finding and recommendations are not appealable to any other authority.
Impartiality	Position should receive and review each complaint in an objective and fair manner, free from bias, and treat all parties without favor or prejudice. Position absents himself or herself from involvement in complaints where a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest may exist. Does not allow personal views regarding the subject matter or the parties involved to affect decisions as to what complaints to accept or how they are investigated.
Confidentiality	Position should have the privilege and discretion to keep confidential or release any information related to a complaint or investigation. Position should not reveal information when confidentiality has been promised. Position should not be compelled to testify or to release records.
Credible Review Process	Position should perform his or her responsibilities in a manner that engenders respect and confidence and be accessible to all potential complainants. Qualified to analyze issues and matters of law, administration, and policy. Discretion to act informally to resolve a complaint. Process for how complaints are to be made, received, and acted upon, including the scope and manner of investigations, should be defined and transparent.

SOURCE: United States Ombudsman Association, *Governmental Ombudsman Standards*, October 2003.

standards, the district can create a position that is independent and impartial.

As part of the responsibilities of the position, the NISD ombudsman should coordinate with the newly created HR coordinator position to oversee employee relations. In the wake of recent employee complaints to the OCR and the EEOC, the addition of this position will fill a crucial need to improve communication and understanding in the area of employee relations.

In coordination with the creation of the ombudsman position, NISD staff should also develop a strategic communications plan. The district should convene a strategic communications committee, including central administration staff, the HR coordinator, the ombudsman, Board of Trustee members, and teacher representatives, to design a plan with input from all stakeholders. The plan should provide a means for both internal and external stakeholders to openly discuss

matters of concern and attempt to reach resolutions that are satisfactory to all parties averting the need to use a more formal grievance process or seeking legal actions.

The fiscal impact of creating the ombudsman position is based on a national average salary for an ombudsman working for a state or local government agency, which is \$49,017 (according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Benefits for this position include: variable benefits of 3.144 percent of the average salary or \$1,541 ($\$49,017 \times 0.03144$), and fixed benefits of \$3,205. Total benefits would be \$4,746 ($\$1,541 + \$3,205$), which brings the total cost for this position to \$53,763 ($\$49,017 + \$4,746$).

To give the district time needed to implement this recommendation, the 2009–10 fiscal impact is prorated to begin in January 2010 for a total expenditure of \$26,882 ($\$53,763/2$). The total annual fiscal impact to the district for the remaining years is \$53,763.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
28. Expand the existing organizational structure of the Human Resources department by creating a coordinator position.	(\$23,981)	(\$47,961)	(\$47,961)	(\$47,961)	(\$47,961)	(\$215,825)	\$0
29. Adhere to board policy DN (LOCAL) and conduct periodic performance evaluations of direct reports.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
30. Establish a schedule for regularly reviewing and, as needed, updating all district job descriptions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
31. Implement local board policy, follow existing administrative procedures, and consistently use the official placement form to standardize the process for placement of employees on the salary schedule.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
32. Develop a Human Resources strategic plan, evaluation process, and formal procedures to manage decisions associated with personnel-related issues.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
33. Develop a recruitment plan and create and/or enhance the procedures related to the early identification of position vacancies.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
34. Create an ombudsman position and develop a strategic communications plan that is designed to provide a means for both internal and external stakeholders to openly discuss matters of concern.	(\$26,882)	(\$53,763)	(\$53,763)	(\$53,763)	(\$53,763)	(\$241,934)	\$0
Totals	(\$50,863)	(\$101,724)	(\$101,724)	(\$101,724)	(\$101,724)	(\$457,759)	\$0

CHAPTER 8

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 8. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Navasota Independent School District's (NISD) facilities are located on 360 square miles and include five campuses and several support facilities. The campuses include two elementary schools, one intermediate school, one junior high school, and the high school for a total of 493,450 square feet. The support facilities include the administration building, auditorium, warehouse, bus barn, a vocational building, and the gymnasium at the intermediate school for an additional 92,786 square feet. The total number of square feet for all instructional and support facilities is 586,236.

The superintendent oversees the planning, design, and construction of facilities and has been responsible for the recent construction program, which was the result of a successful school bond election in December 2004 for a total of \$21 million. The business manager oversees the maintenance and custodial services of the district; the director of Maintenance reports to the business manager.

FINDINGS

- NISD has not sufficiently documented nor produced a written report accounting for the 2004 bond program capital construction.
- NISD does not project short- and long-term enrollments on an annual basis.
- NISD does not calculate school capacities to effectively determine the appropriate utilization of schools.
- NISD lacks educational specifications for district facilities.
- NISD lacks an effective work order system for the maintenance department.
- NISD lacks an effective custodial staffing formula.
- NISD does not have an energy management program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 35: Document and report the district's performance in managing its capital construction programs using common industry-wide practices.** The preparation of the report should

be overseen by the superintendent and incorporate multiple performance measures.

- **Recommendation 36: Develop short- and long-term enrollment projections on an annual basis.** The superintendent should direct the business manager to be responsible for the enrollment projections.
- **Recommendation 37: Establish a methodology to determine the capacity of each of its schools on an annual basis.** The capacity should be used to calculate the current and future utilization rates based on current and projected enrollments.
- **Recommendation 38: Develop an educational specification for each school or other relative construction project type prior to commencing any new construction projects.**
- **Recommendation 39: Purchase a work order software program to develop and maintain a work order system.**
- **Recommendation 40: Develop a custodial staffing formula that will distribute custodians in an equitable manner using an industry standard that is applicable to the district's needs.**
- **Recommendation 41: Develop and implement an energy management program.**

DETAILED FINDINGS

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION (REC. 35)

NISD has not sufficiently documented nor produced a written report accounting for the 2004 bond program capital construction.

The superintendent and architect oversaw the design and construction of the capital projects with support from the business manager who provided budget data.

Funding for the projects came from three basic sources: the bond, maintenance notes, and operating funds, as detailed in the *Final Expenditure Report* (**Exhibit 8-1**). The bond is defined as the bond the district issued after the election by the community. The district sells bonds to acquire monies which are then paid back through taxes on the community.

**EXHIBIT 8-1
CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FUNDING – FINAL EXPENDITURE REPORT
SCHOOL YEARS 2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08**

EXPENDITURES		FUNDING SOURCES	
PROPOSITION 1			
High Point Elementary School	\$8,133,787	Bond Proceeds	\$18,000,000
Webb Elementary School	\$9,384,064	Interest	\$858,287
Architect Fees	\$1,166,530	Operating Funds	\$541,112
Purchase of Land	\$288,946		
Glenn Fuqua	\$348,675		
O'Mally Eng	\$23,950		
HTS Survey	\$53,447		
Total	\$19,399,399		\$19,399,399
PROPOSITION 2			
High School Café	\$778,356	Bond Proceeds	\$5,000,000
High School Gym	\$5,614,825	Interest	\$224,510
Parking Lot	\$1,336,221	Maintenance Notes	\$2,795,729
Architect Fee	\$277,631		
HTS Construction	\$8,630		
CLR Inc.	\$4,577		
Total	\$8,020,240		\$8,020,239
PROPOSITION 3			
Football Field/Stadium	\$4,077,969	Bond Proceeds	\$2,000,000
Architect Fee	\$161,705	Interest	\$223,849
		Maintenance Notes	\$1,004,271
		Operating Funds	\$1,011,553
Total	\$4,239,674		\$4,239,673

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Business Office, 2009.

Maintenance notes are loans the district can acquire for maintenance work. Finally, operating funds are the funds the district receives from various sources while operating the school district.

The bond proposal was divided into three separate “Propositions,” so that the voters could be selective. It should be noted that the district applied for state funding under the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) program in Round 8 (2006–07) and Round 9 (2008–09), but did not receive any funding.

The review team requested a list of all change orders from district staff on these projects, and were told that there were no change orders. Change orders are changes to the construction contract that change the amount of the contract, or the timeline of the contract. The superintendent, the

business manager, and the architect all stated that the architect had included contingencies in the budget, which according to some interviewed stakeholders totaled \$1.5 million for all projects. The contingencies were used for changes to the contract amounts as opposed to issuing change orders. Contingencies are budget amounts that are not specifically allocated, but are used for items that were not predicted. The district staff were not able to locate a copy of the architect’s budget for each project to identify the amounts of the contingencies.

A review of the final *Application and Certificate for Payment* documents from the NISD business office found that several projects had change orders and were identified as such. **Exhibit 8-2** lists these change order amounts. Board policy (Facilities Construction, CV (LOCAL)-A, (LDU-49-06)) states that “change orders shall be approved by the Board of

**EXHIBIT 8-2
CHANGE ORDER AMOUNTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08**

PROJECT	TOTAL AMOUNT OF CHANGE ORDERS
Webb Elementary School	(\$286,936)
High Point Elementary School	(\$246,113)
High School Cafeteria	(\$10,084)
High School Stadium	\$28,029

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Business Office, 2009.

Trustees or its designee prior to any changes being made in the approved plans or the actual construction of the facility.” All change orders are typically approved by the Board of Trustees or the superintendent depending on the amount of the change order. There is currently no board policy on contingencies.

In addition, two inconsistencies were observed in the accounting reports. The final contract sum for the high school stadium is listed as \$4,105,998 on the final *Application and Certificate for Payment*, but is recorded as \$4,077,969 on the final expenditure report, a difference of \$28,029. An *Application and Certificate for Payment* is a form the contractor submits that shows the amount of work completed along with a request for payment for work performed. The low bid for the high school parking lot is listed as \$1,390,000 on the bid tabulation, but the contract amount is recorded as \$1,336,221 on the final payment request or a difference of \$53,779.

The lack of recording, analyzing, and reporting financial transactions along with inconsistencies in the construction program documentation are problematic. While it is customary to include a contingency in a project budget to account for unknown conditions, acceptable use of a contingency is documented by change orders to eliminate the perception of or opportunity for the mishandling of funds. Also, regardless of whether or not the client/architect has included a contingency, the amount and type of a change order are means to track the performance of a construction project. A high rate of change orders can indicate poor contract documents, poor project management, or poor contractor performance.

Poor documentation can also lead the public and other stakeholders to lack confidence in a project, the district, and/or the school administration. The review team interviewed stakeholders who stated that \$1.5 million in contingencies

and allowances for all projects were mishandled since the allocations were not documented.

Common industry-wide practices include the documentation of basic accounting elements for each construction project. These figures are often compiled in one report so that stakeholders and the public can review the performance of the district in managing major capital construction programs. These elements frequently seen while reviewing the construction programs of school districts include:

- Original project budget;
- Estimates by the architect (schematic, design development, and construction document phases);
- Bid amounts;
- Original contract amount;
- Number, amount, originator, and reason for all change orders;
- Final contract amount;
- Final cost per square foot;
- Final cost per student; and
- Percent change order amount.

All of these elements can be used to evaluate the performance of capital construction program managers. Gwinnett County Public Schools in the state of Georgia is an example of a district that effectively uses performance measures required by state and national policy.

Since the onsite review, the district provided spreadsheets regarding their capital revenue and expenditure projections, revenue and expenditure audit trail documentation, and statements of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances. Although the documentation represents some funding breakdowns, it is inconclusive in that it does not provide clear-cut explanations for each capital project. Instead the documentation provided references internal accounting codes and funding streams that cannot be easily understood by all district stakeholders. Transparency regarding a district’s construction program is best achieved when following a template or format that is clearly readable and uses industry-wide practices as previously mentioned including multiple performance measures

NISD should document and report the district’s performance in managing its capital construction programs using the suggested common industry-wide practices. Stakeholders

should be provided with a report overseen by the superintendent to ensure transparency in construction programs. The report’s narrative should explain NISD’s performance as measured by indicators. The report should also include an accounting of all project budgets, including contingencies and change orders, and be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing district resources.

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS (REC. 36)

NISD does not project short- and long-term enrollments on an annual basis.

The business manager tracks average daily attendance (ADA) by grade and by school on a six weeks basis, but does not make projections to determine future enrollments on short- (1 to 2 years) or long-term (5 to 10 years) basis. In 2003–04, NISD agreed to a one-time contract with Information Management Systems (IMS) to develop long-term enrollment projections through 2013–14. **Exhibit 8-3** compares the IMS projections to actual enrollments and shows that the projections were accurate within approximately two percent.

As **Exhibit 8-3** shows, IMS used three methods to project enrollments using the Cohort Survival Ratio (CSR) Method. The CSR Method is an enrollment projection method which essentially compares the number of students in a particular grade to the number of students in the next lower grade during the previous year. Ratios are computed for each grade, averaged from a set number of historical years, and are then used to project future enrollments. The ratios indicate whether a change in the number of students is indicative of enrollment that is stable, increasing, or decreasing. Method One uses the survival ratios for the last five years in a particular

grade. Method Two uses the survival ratio for only the current year to project enrollment. Method Three uses the average of the survival ratios arrived at for the last five years in a particular grade from Method One, and combines that with the survival ratio of the one current year calculated in Method Two.

The review team interviewed stakeholders who shared their perceptions that enrollments are growing at certain grade levels, but that overall enrollment has been decreasing. These contradictory observations make it difficult to secure public support for planning. Annual grade-by-grade enrollment analyses provide a more accurate picture of the district’s enrollment pattern and makes planning more effective and collaborative.

Short-term (1 to 2 years) projections are critical in determining staffing and classroom needs. Long-term projections (5–10 years) are the basis for determining capital construction needs since it usually takes 3–5 years to plan and build new facilities to accommodate growth in student populations. Conversely, if the projections show a decline in enrollment, a district must begin developing strategies to minimize the overhead costs of maintaining underutilized facilities. Without proper planning, the district is unable to adequately determine the proper classroom needs of the district.

As a standard planning exercise, districts develop annual enrollment projections by grade and school, and update long-term enrollment projections by grade band at a minimum. Grade band is defined as all the students in a particular grade throughout the district. The cohort-survival ratio projection method or some variation of it is widely used and is an industry standard to calculate enrollment projections. Methods which may be employed include:

**EXHIBIT 8-3
ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS COMPARED TO ACTUAL ENROLLMENTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2004–05 THROUGH 2008–09**

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Method 1	2,955	2,954	2,943	2,957	2,947
Method 2	2,988	2,998	2,984	2,972	2,938
Method 3	2,972	2,977	2,964	2,966	2,943
Average	2,972	2,976	2,964	2,965	2,943
Actual Enrollments*	2,926	2,921	2,970	2,939	2,951
Percent Difference	1.55%	1.848%	(0.202%)	0.877%	(0.272%)

*Enrollment: Any student served by the school district is considered enrolled in the district.
SOURCE: “Navasota ISD Enrollment Projection 2003–04,” Information Management Systems, and MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

- the annual percentage change method which projects future enrollments based on the annual change in enrollments for previous years;
- the linear regression method which projects enrollments based on a linear regression formula of the previous years; and/or
- the student per household method which projects enrollments based on the number of new households planned for the community, and the average number of students per household in the community.

The best planning processes incorporate multiple methods and periodically employ a professional demographer. Irving ISD has implemented this best practice by preparing accurate short- and long-term enrollment projections that are used for staffing and facility needs projections. The Irving ISD division director of Planning/Evaluation/Research prepares annual enrollment projections used for projecting the number of teachers and classrooms needed at each school. In addition, Irving ISD employs an outside consultant to periodically prepare long-term enrollment projections used in the district wide facility planning process.

NISD should develop short- and long-term range enrollment projections on an annual basis. The superintendent should direct the business manager to be responsible for the enrollment projections. The business manager should investigate the use of several enrollment projection methods and implement at least two of the suggested methods. The district superintendent should annually review the accuracy of the enrollment projections and report the results to the Board of Trustees.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION CALCULATIONS (REC. 37)

NISD does not calculate school capacities to effectively determine the appropriate utilization of schools.

The superintendent determines whether schools are overcrowded or underutilized by surveying principals; principals report whether or not their schools are overcrowded. The district has not annually determined, using a standardized method, the capacity of each school. Consequently, the utilization rate of each school is a subjective determination.

Since the district does not project enrollments and does not know the capacity of its schools, it cannot project whether

the schools will be overcrowded or underutilized in future years.

A district must know the functional capacity of its schools to ensure that the facilities are appropriately sized for the specific student body and educational program. Knowledge of the functional capacities and resulting utilization rates will allow the administration to determine whether a school is overcrowded or underutilized.

The functional capacity is the number of students who can be housed in a given facility based on the specific educational program. For instance, identical 20 classroom schools could have different functional capacities based on different educational programs. If school A has 20 classrooms of 20 students, its functional capacity is 400 ($20 \times 20 = 400$). If school B has 10 classrooms of 20 students, and 10 special education classrooms of 10 students, its functional capacity is 300 ($20 \times 10 = 200$, $10 \times 10 = 100$, $200 + 100 = 300$). The functional capacity should also take into consideration scheduling and the number of periods in the school day.

There are many strategies to resolve overcrowding and/or underutilization. If a school is overcrowded, the administration may choose a short-term solution, such as using portable classrooms and revisiting its enrollment projections. If a school is underutilized, the administration may want to shift programs or attendance boundaries. However, a district must have objective measures to determine appropriate strategies.

In order to ensure effective program delivery and equity throughout a district, the administration must establish the functional capacity of each school. The functional capacity will be affected by the student-teacher ratios, which often change in different grades; the number of periods in the day, and whether a teacher uses his/her classroom for their planning period; and the type of program, and whether it has a high or low student-teacher ratio. The capacity can change from year to year based on the changing demographics of the student body and the necessary educational programs.

Irving ISD calculates capacity and utilization of their schools on a regular basis. They use effective planning processes, including attendance zone adjustments and portable classroom deployment, to balance the utilization of its facilities before resorting to capital construction projects.

NISD should establish a methodology to determine the capacity of each of its schools on an annual basis. The capacity should be used to calculate the current and future utilization rates based on current and projected enrollments. This

process will assist the district in determining whether and when it needs additional classrooms or whether it has excess space. The capacity calculation methodology should take into consideration the following factors at a minimum:

- Student-teacher ratios;
- Educational programs;
- Number of periods;
- Teacher planning periods;
- Size of classrooms; and
- Size of core facilities

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS (REC. 38)

NISD lacks educational specifications for district facilities.

The purpose of educational specifications is to define the programmatic, functional, spatial, and environmental requirements of the educational facility, whether new or remodeled, in written and graphic form for review, clarification, and agreement as to scope of work and design requirements by the architect, engineer, and other professionals working on the building design. Educational specifications must begin with a thorough, in-depth explanation of curriculum goals and instructional activities that occur within the learning environment. A detailed description of the educational program enables complete and accurate descriptions of functional and spatial needs allowing for a successful design.

Furthermore, the educational specification also acts as a design guide for the architect. By detailing the activities that need to occur in each space, the educational specification gives the architect a yardstick to measure the success of the design. Also, the project manager and stakeholders can use the educational specification to verify that the finished design meets the needs of the building users.

Under the 2004 \$21 million bond program, five significant projects that affect the educational process in the district were completed without educational specifications, including:

- Construction of a new elementary school;
- Renovation/addition of an existing elementary school;

- New cafeteria seating area in the high school;
- New band room, choir room, and gymnasium at the high school; and
- New stadium at the high school.

Per staff interviews, the design processes for these projects were prepared by the superintendent and the architect with final designs approved by the school board. No educational specifications were prepared to guide the design of the projects. Current board policy (Facility Standards, CS (LEGAL)-P; Update 82) for facility standards requires that all new facilities and major renovations require educational specifications with input from teachers, other school campus staff, and district program staff.

As indicated by the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI), a worldwide professional non-profit association dedicated to improving the places where children learn, an educational specification for a school design project is the result of the collaborative process that documents the goals and needs of the numerous stakeholders. The educational specification will detail the educational goals of the district for the school, the educational delivery system, the community uses of the facility, the sustainability and energy efficiency philosophy of the building, and details such as the number and types of rooms, the types of storage, and the information technology systems.

The district used a non-collaborative design process, which did not include input from teachers, campus staff, and district program staff, resulting in educational specifications detailing the functional needs of each project not being met. The lack of a collaborative process, in which all stakeholders have input, often results in a less-than-satisfactory design. The design may not address the needs of the school administrators, staff, maintenance department, parents, or the goals of the community for shared use. The needs and goals of all stakeholders can be documented in an educational specification, which would thereby ensure a successful project.

NISD should develop an educational specification for each school or other relative construction project type prior to commencing any new construction projects.

The collaborative effort should have the assistant superintendent overseeing the process with the responsibility of ensuring that the educational specifications meet, at a minimum, the guidelines suggested by CEFPI.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing district resources.

MAINTENANCE WORK ORDER SOFTWARE (REC. 39)

NISD lacks an effective work order system for the maintenance department.

Principals submit work requests to the maintenance department by e-mail or by manually completing the maintenance request form. The request is reviewed by the director of Maintenance and assigned to the appropriate staff as a work order. The maintenance staff member completing the work order documents the work provided and has a school staff person sign-off on the work order.

The district employs a private contractor to accomplish some heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) work. HVAC work that is above the skill level of the NISD maintenance staff, and some preventive maintenance work on the HVAC system is done by a private contractor.

While this manual work order system is not uncommon for small districts, it is not a step forward for the district. Previously, NISD used a computer software program that generated and managed maintenance work orders; work orders could be submitted and managed online. However, the district decided to end its software subscription several years ago. The staff reported that the board did not see the value in the software and could save money by canceling the subscription to the software.

Even for a small district like NISD, a work order software program is an effective tool for managing the maintenance operation and the public’s investment in facilities. A software program provides the maintenance supervisors tools and reports to manage the flow of work and monitor staff performance. These tools and reports can contribute to a more efficient and effective maintenance program.

Work order software programs can also be programmed to produce preventive maintenance work orders on a pre-set schedule. This feature helps to ensure that preventive maintenance work is completed on a timely basis, therefore minimizing deferred maintenance.

It is a common industry practice in the school district maintenance field to utilize automated work order software programs. These programs allow the building users a convenient way to submit work order requests and track the progress of the requests. Software programs provide management tools for supervisors and reporting features to

help in measuring performance and maintaining accountability.

NISD should purchase a work order software program to develop and maintain a work order system.

The fiscal impact for implementing this recommendation would be approximately \$6,000 per year depending on the number of users and the features acquired.

CUSTODIAL STAFFING FORMULA RECOMMENDATION (REC. 40)

NISD lacks an effective custodial staffing formula.

According to the review team’s assessment, NISD staffs custodial positions at an average of 22,430 square feet per full-time equivalent (FTE) custodial position for its core instructional facilities. **Exhibit 8-4** shows the staffing levels at each school, which range from 17,994 square feet per FTE custodian to 27,596 square feet per FTE custodian.

**EXHIBIT 8-4
NAVASOTA ISD CUSTODIAL STAFFING LEVELS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09**

FACILITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE	2008-09 CUSTODIAL POSITIONS FTE	SQUARE FEET PER CUSTODIAN
High Point Elementary	65,824	3	21,941
Webb Elementary	91,990	5	18,398
Intermediate	71,977	4	17,994
Junior High	110,385	4	27,596
High School	153,274	6	25,546
Total/Average	493,450	22	22,430

NOTE: FTE = Full-Time Equivalent.
SOURCE: Navasota ISD Business Office, 2009.

As a result of the staffing practice highlighted in this exhibit, some custodians are assigned 50 percent more space than other custodians. Staffing in this manner will produce inconsistent cleaning results and inequities in the workloads. These conditions could lead to a poor work climate and difficulty in retaining staff.

Exhibit 8-5 shows a comparison of custodial staffing with national norms as presented in a 2008 survey conducted by *American School and University Magazine*. It should be noted that this national norm has increased from 22,722 square feet per FTE custodian in 2006 to 23,408 square feet per

FTE custodian in 2007, and to 26,786 square feet per FTE custodian in 2008.

Using the standard in **Exhibit 8-5**, the district is over the standard by 3.5 custodians (493,450 square feet divided by 26,786 = 18.42 FTEs; 22 FTEs - 18.42 FTEs = 3.5 FTEs).

The Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) publication, *Custodial Staffing Guidelines Second Edition* (1998), established custodial staffing levels based on five defined levels of cleaning. Level 2, ordinary tidiness, establishes a staffing level of one FTE custodian for every 20,000 square feet of facility. In addition, the review team has adjusted this standard to reflect the reality that custodians often perform duties beyond cleaning, such as light maintenance. The adjustment adds 0.5 FTE for elementary schools, 0.75 FTE for middle schools, and 1.0 FTE for high schools.

Exhibit 8-6 presents a comparison of NISD’s staffing levels using APPA standards as best practice at K–12 schools. As highlighted in this exhibit, NISD staffs custodial crews at approximately 5.5 positions below best practice levels. According to the review team’s analysis, NISD is staffing at levels above the national norm; site visits by the review team revealed that the schools are kept clean.

NISD should develop a custodial staffing formula that will distribute custodians in an equitable manner using an industry standard that is applicable to the district’s needs.

Several industry standards have been developed to assist and offer guidelines to school districts with their maintenance and operations (M&O) costs. Two respected facilities management standards are published by American School and University (AS&U), and the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA). As per data provided by NISD, the district’s ratio of custodial staff per square foot is 1:22,430 while the standards published in the AS&U Magazine (April 2008) is 1:26,786. The standard offered by APPA is 1:20,000 square feet; not including adjustments made by the review team due to custodians performing other duties beyond cleaning.

However, the review team notes that benchmark numbers can vary significantly due to age and overall condition of buildings, the labor market of the area, climate, job titles and duties, organizational structure, etc. Moreover, benchmarks do not represent “Best Practices,” and should only be used as a point of reference for further investigation if the district’s FTEs seem to be out of line with industry averages.

Exhibit 8-5 outlines staffing guidelines provided by AS&U showing the district exceeding this standard by 3.5 FTEs in the custodial personnel area. In **Exhibit 8-6**, however, APPA

**EXHIBIT 8-5
NATIONAL NORM CUSTODIAL STAFFING COMPARISON
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

STAFFING AREA	NAVASOTA ISD NUMBER OF CUSTODIAL STAFF	NAVASOTA ISD NUMBER OF SQUARE FEET	NATIONAL NORM SQUARE FEET/CUSTODIAN	NAVASOTA ISD SQUARE FEET/CUSTODIAN
Custodial	22	493,450	26,786	22,430

SOURCE: American School and University Magazine, and MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

**EXHIBIT 8-6
CUSTODIAL STAFFING COMPARISON WITH ADJUSTED ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICAL PLANT ADMINISTRATORS BEST PRACTICE
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

FACILITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE	2008–09 CUSTODIAL POSITIONS/FTE	SQUARE FEET PER CUSTODIAN	BEST PRACTICE (FTE/20,000) WITH ADJUSTMENTS	OVER (UNDER) BEST PRACTICE
High Point Elementary	65,824	3	21,941	4.0	(1.0)
Webb Elementary	91,990	5	18,398	5.0	0.0
Intermediate	71,977	4	17,994	4.0	0.0
Junior High	110,385	4	27,596	6.0	(2.0)
High School	153,274	6	25,546	8.5	(2.5)
Total/Average	493,450	22	22,430	27.5	(5.5)

NOTE: FTE = Full-Time Equivalent.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Business Office and MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

staffing guidelines show the district to be at 5.5 custodial FTEs below best practice level.

NISD should perform a detailed zero-based budget staffing analysis to confirm appropriate staffing levels and efficiencies, including the differences at each facility. Once this evaluation and detailed analysis is complete, the district should consider various maintenance industry staffing standards available and outline the standard that can best serve the district, benchmarking themselves against that standard for future staffing needs.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT (REC. 41)

NISD does not have an energy management program.

Staff members are not focused on energy management, and there are no energy management incentives for NISD schools. During the onsite visit, review team members witnessed administrators opening windows on a warm day due to the very cold temperatures in the administration building. Moreover, during interviews, stakeholders commented that the HVAC systems were always broken at Webb Elementary School due to the HVAC system being too big for the school; High Point Elementary School also experiences frequent problems with their HVAC system. The district installed computerized controls on the new HVAC systems in the elementary schools, but they are not managed or monitored to emphasize energy efficiency.

Staff members reported to the site visit team that the district had an energy education program several years ago, but the district did not think that it was worth the investment. Also, the district had a contract with a private contractor to provide maintenance to the HVAC control systems, but did not think that this was worth the cost either.

NISD budgeted approximately \$1,270,000 for school year 2008–09 on utilities for a total of 586,236 square feet of facilities, or \$2.17 per square foot. According to budget and expenditure reports provided by the district at the time of the onsite visit, approximately 62 percent of the \$1,270,000 budgeted for utilities for school year 2008–09 had been spent by mid-February 2009. Furthermore, the Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), a division of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, has adopted a benchmark average cost of \$1.00 per square foot. NISD's average cost per square foot of \$2.17 exceeds the benchmark cost established by SECO.

One of the probable results in running an effective and efficient energy management program is the shifting of

valuable resources with savings being redirected towards curriculum instruction. Energy efficient buildings have not been the standard until the last 5-10 years, and school districts are often operating inefficient physical plants that must be updated to new standards, such as those offered by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and the Energy Star Program. LEED provides building owners and operators with the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance while the Energy Star Program is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) helping us all save money and protecting the environment through energy efficient products and practices. Even with recent advances in building technology that make new buildings energy efficient, building users must be educated in the effective operation of these new facilities.

It is common practice among school districts to have staff responsible for ensuring the energy efficient operation of facilities. Large districts of 30,000 students or more may devote two or more staff members to these programs and may contract with private consultants to accomplish program goals. Small districts of 5,000 students or less often assign these duties to the business manager or maintenance director.

An effective energy management program will incorporate the following efforts identified from similar reviews of energy management programs in school districts all over the country. They include:

- Monitor operation of all HVAC and lighting equipment to ensure they are being shut back when not in use.
- Monitor accuracy of all utility bills.
- Monitor utility bills to expose water leaks or wasteful practices.
- Development and implementation of an energy behavioral program to educate building users about ways to save energy.
- Introduction of incentive programs at each school to save energy.
- Installation of energy efficient lighting and ballasts.
- Installation of room occupancy sensors.

- Introduction of water conservation measures such as waterless urinals.
- Installation of energy efficient HVAC controls and equipment.
- Utilization of performance contracting.
- Work with local utility companies to receive rebates for energy efficient initiatives.
- Work with the U.S. Department of Energy and become active in the Energy Smart Program.

NISD should develop and implement an energy management program. In order to realize an energy management program, the district should increase the current maintenance director position from half-time to full-time with the assigned responsibility for developing and implementing an energy management program.

The fiscal impact of implementing this program will depend on the nature of the program selected. However, at a minimum based on previous reviews, the district should see a return on its investment after three years, and should expect a reduction in energy costs of at least 10 percent.

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)/Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) publish an Administrative/Professional Report providing information on salary ranges for maintenance directors for districts comparable to NISD. Using the salary information provided in this report, the midpoint salary for a director of Maintenance for a district the size of NISD is \$53,500 plus benefits. Benefits for this position include: \$1,682 in variable benefits ($\$53,500 \times .03144$), and fixed benefits of \$3,205. Total benefits for this position are \$4,887 ($\$1,682 + \$3,205 = \$4,887$), which brings the total cost for this position to \$58,387 ($\$53,500 + \$4,887 = \$58,387$).

Currently, the total cost for the part-time maintenance director is \$36,211 (\$32,000 base salary + \$4,211 benefits). Total cost to the district to hire a full-time director of Maintenance would be \$22,176 ($\$58,387 - \$36,211 = \$22,176$), or the difference between the salary of a full-time director and the salary of the current part-time director.

The district should be able to implement this recommendation in the first year since the position is already filled as a part-time position and should be extended to full-time. The total annual fiscal impact to the district for the remaining years is

\$22,176 with a total 5-year fiscal impact of \$110,880 ($(5 \text{ years} \times \$22,176) = \$110,880$).

The district will incur a cost for this recommendation during school years 2009–10 through 2011–12 because of expanding the part-time position to a full-time director of Maintenance. However, if the district saves 10 percent on their utility bill in the fourth and fifth years of this program, the fiscal impact assumes that the district will have a savings in school years 2012–13 and 2013–14. The savings for these school years will be \$104,824, or the difference between the 10 percent utility savings (10 percent of \$1,270,000) and the additional cost of hiring a full-time director of Maintenance position ($\$127,000 - \$22,176 = \$104,824$). The total fiscal impact for this recommendation will be a savings of \$143,120 over the five-year period.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
35. Document and report the district's performance in managing its capital construction programs using common industry-wide practices.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36. Develop short- and long-term enrollment projections on an annual basis.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
37. Establish a methodology to determine the capacity of each of its schools on an annual basis.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
38. Develop an educational specification for each school or other relative construction project type prior to commencing any new construction projects.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
39. Purchase a work order software program to develop and maintain a work order system.	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$30,000)	\$0
40. Develop a custodial staffing formula that will distribute custodians in an equitable manner using an industry standard that is applicable to the district's needs.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41. Develop and implement an energy management program.	(\$22,176)	(\$22,176)	(\$22,176)	\$104,824	\$104,824	\$143,120	\$0
Totals	(\$28,176)	(\$28,176)	(\$28,176)	\$98,824	\$98,824	\$113,120	\$0

CHAPTER 9

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 9. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

The Navasota Independent School District's (NISD) Technology Department is led by a director of Technology who reports to the superintendent. The director is supported by the instructional technology specialist and a technology specialist at each elementary and intermediate school and two at the high school. Each of these positions assists with technology-related needs and is provided a stipend. Job descriptions are consistent with duties performed to support 249 staff and 2,945 students. The district students share one computer for every 4.5 students and the district is in the process of updating hardware with grant and state funds.

The department is responsible for maintaining the network and Internet structure security and use, teaching resources, interactive whiteboard resources, electronic mail, technology applications created by central office staff, and professional development for the integration of technology in the classroom. Technology assistance for the Pentamation application, which is used for both the student information system and the financial systems, is provided by the Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6) located in Huntsville.

A full-time coordinator position handles the submissions to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) for all student-related data.

In addition, the department handles all software and hardware purchases throughout the district to ensure compatibility with the infrastructure and classroom needs. This responsibility allows for appropriate inventory control once an item is purchased. The department also reviews the technology related issues in all campus improvement plans as well as School Technology and Readiness (STaR) charts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Technology Department provides a variety of online professional development opportunities, reviews completed STaR charts prior to submission, incorporates online delivery of training for computers, and administers online testing following the training.

- The district's PEIMS coordinator produces and analyzes a multitude of reports on a routine basis to reduce the amount of errors for state submissions.

FINDINGS

- NISD lacks consistent written procedures for technology-related operations.
- NISD lacks formal technology purchasing standards to ensure that the district has a standardized system for purchasing technology-related equipment and does not take advantage of purchasing cooperatives to obtain the lowest cost for their technology purchases.
- NISD lacks a help desk system to more efficiently track and monitor technology-related requests.
- NISD lacks a disaster recovery plan to ensure that important student and district data are not permanently lost or destroyed in the event of a disaster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 42: Create a comprehensive procedure manual to document essential information for technology staff.** Additionally, NISD should publish the manual on a protective internal drive for the technology personnel to use at their own school or in the central office.
- **Recommendation 43: Create and maintain formal technology-related equipment standards and research the best possible solutions and costs.** In addition, these standards should be reviewed on an annual basis for potential updates.
- **Recommendation 44: Implement an automated help desk system that will enable the district to continually monitor staffing levels based on the numbers and types of requests submitted by user and location.** The district could purchase software with nine licenses for the support technicians at the schools, the technology director, and the instructional technology coordinator.

- **Recommendation 45: Create a disaster recovery chart to use in the case of an electrical outage or disaster impacting the district.** In addition, a contact list should be created and disseminated among staff to use in case of such an emergency. This contact list and plan should also be printed and posted in each locked server room throughout the district; the business manager should have a copy in case an emergency prevents network accessibility to the list and plan.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Technology Department provides a variety of online professional development opportunities, reviews completed School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Charts prior to submission, incorporates online delivery of training for computers, and administers online testing following the training.

The district has a long-range goal to train all staff on the use of computers as well as a three-year technology proficiency guide for assisting teachers as shown in **Exhibit 9-1**. The guide provides three levels of proficiency that start with understanding the Windows environment, electronic mail, use of the Internet, and word processing. The second level addresses the use of spreadsheets and graphs, along with multimedia presentations. The third level highlights database creation and use and integration of technology in the classroom.

During the onsite visit, the review team members performed unannounced classroom visits to 35 classrooms and found technology used in 13 classrooms on four different campuses, which is 37 percent of classes observed. NISD also includes technology as an item for review on teacher observation forms. Survey responses from the performance review team survey shows that over 86 percent of teachers and administrative staff *agree* or *strongly agree* that *students regularly use computers* and over 64 percent of students *agree* or *strongly agree* that *teachers know how to use computers in the classroom*.

Additionally, the district incorporates distance learning courses for students through Region 6. These classes include Mandarin Chinese, Advanced Placement Biology, and Economics offered by Texas A&M University, the Texas Virtual School, and Blinn College. These efforts support the use of technology in the district by both staff and students.

Some of the training that took place during school year 2007–08 is listed in **Exhibit 9-2** with the numbers of attendees.

Online lessons were provided for eChalk (district communication tool) training to assist teachers in accessing the modules from any location with Internet capability, and also emphasized the use of technology through this delivery method. The district also incorporated online testing following the electronic mail training. Both of these delivery methods are commendable practices.

**EXHIBIT 9-1
NAVASOTA ISD COMPUTER RELATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

Proficiency Level 1 – Required by June 30th of first year of employment. (Any certificates from former districts may be used after we’ve checked with the prior district)	Proficiency Level 2 – Required by June 30th of the second year of employment.	Proficiency Level 3 – Required by June 30th of the third year of employment.
<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows • E-mail (GroupWise) • Internet • Word processing (MSWord)- 3 sessions <p>Complete the Skill Level 1 tests at an 80% mastery for each test.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreadsheets/Graphs (Excel) – 3 sessions • Multimedia (PowerPoint)– 3 sessions <p>Complete the Skills Level 2 tests at 80% mastery for each test.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database (Access) – 3 sessions • Demonstrate Technology • Integration in the classroom <p>Complete the Skills Level 3 tests at an 80% mastery for each test</p>

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Technology Program Guide, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 9-2
NAVASOTA ISD TECHNOLOGY TRAINING
SCHOOL YEAR 2007–08**

DATE	NAME OF TRAINING	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
8/09/2007	Adobe Training @ Region 6	4 teachers
8/16/2007	Development and management of assessment and curriculum (DMAC) Training	1 teacher
8/20/2007	Intermediate staff training using eChalk	Teachers on the campus
8/21/2007	eChalk informal training @ Intermediate	Come and go
8/21/2007	eChalk training at High Point by grade	13 teachers
8/22/2007	eChalk training at High School in half day sessions	All teachers
8/23/2007	eChalk training at JCW in half day sessions	All teachers
8/24/2007	eChalk training at Jr. High in half day sessions	All teachers
9/05/2007	eChalk one-on-one training at High School for those	5 teachers showed
9/05/2007	Introduction to cScope in Admin Building	14 teachers
9/11/2007	DMAC Training @ Region 6	5 teachers
9/21/2007	DMAC Training @ Region 6	4 teachers
9/25/2007	PLATO Training	10 teachers
9/26/2007	DMAC training at HS	5 department heads
9/26/2007	DMAC training at Intermediate	6 lead teachers
10/02/2007	cScope Training during conference times at Intermediate	All core teachers
10/04/2007	eChalk training @ Jr. High	All teachers
10/04/2007	eChalk training @ High School	All teachers
10/08/2007	DMAC training with teacher representative at the admin building	20 teachers
10/17/2007	United Streaming training @ JCW	6 Pre-K teachers
10/25/2007	Polycom advance training in DL lab	1 teacher
11/05/2007	WebCCAT at HS library	25 teachers
11/13/2007	DMAC training @ High Point	16 teachers
11/19/2007	Adobe training at Region 6	6 teachers
1/07/2008	SMARTBoard training with PK @JCW	5 teachers
1/28/2008	TETN session on Texas Virtual School	1 teacher
1/28/2008	FitnessGram training with PE teachers	6 teachers
1/29/2008	FitnessGram training with PE teachers	4 teachers
2/05 to 2/08/2008	TCEA conference in Austin	8 teachers
2/20/2008	FitnessGram training for PE teachers	4 teachers
5/20/2008	cScope Training	1 teacher

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Technology Department, March 2009.

The central office and campus level technology staff review the STaR charts of each campus prior to submission in order to verify the validity of the charts. These charts are self assessment tools that outline professional development needs related to technology. Interviews with staff indicated that the teachers seem to be rather hard on their own ratings since technology training evolves so quickly.

Through the implementation of a variety of technology sessions for professional development, verification of STaR Charts prior to submission, and use of online courses for staff, NISD has created a best practice that other districts can replicate. These practices allow for greater integration of technology in the classroom, which is a necessity for students in the 21st century.

PUBLIC EDUCATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PRACTICES

The district's PEIMS coordinator produces and analyzes a multitude of reports on a routine basis to reduce the amount of errors for state submissions.

NISD uses the services of Region 6 for PEIMS submission to TEA. Additionally, the district PEIMS coordinator creates the following reports on a routine basis, some as often as weekly, to correct any erroneous or missing information:

- Transition report by campus – verifies that an enrollment form is on file for each new student; the child nutrition staff members are provided with lists of withdrawn students to purge from their databases at this time.
- Daily report – monitors the district's enrollment on a weekly basis.
- Meal status missing – sent to child nutrition staff members to validate the appropriate coding of free or reduced-priced meals.
- Eligibility status – verifies that every student has average daily attendance vectors.
- Title I status – verifies elementary students are appropriately identified.
- Discipline – several reports are created to validate offense codes and mandatory Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) information is provided.
- Build career technology hours – validates error free reporting.
- Build attendance totals – validates error free reporting.

The PEIMS coordinator indicated that by producing and analyzing reports on a routine basis, campus staff have the information necessary to make timely corrections.

As a result of annual PEIMS training and having procedures for all campus-level personnel entering data into the student information system, and monitoring reports on a weekly basis, the district has been successful in producing an error rate of 0 percent, according to the TEA's correspondence dated February 23, 2009.

DETAILED FINDINGS

WRITTEN PROCEDURES (REC. 42)

NISD lacks consistent written procedures for technology-related operations.

District personnel have not created written procedures for campus or central office technology processes. Interviews with all district technology staff confirmed that individuals may create their own procedures to address a technology related issue and store it on their computers or print to retain in file folders for individual use. School-based staff reported that they tend to search the Internet to find solutions to technology related issues that they cannot remember or research issues that are new to them in order to handle situations or challenges requested by teachers or staff. Additionally, the central office staff rely on their knowledge and abilities to handle technology related situations and have not created a procedures manual to assist in this area. These central office technology staff support the district's main servers as well as central office desktop computers and peripherals.

In addition to there not being procedures in place to direct the technology staff operations, there are also no specific procedures for the maintenance of the server rooms in order to provide the optimum conditions (cleanliness and temperature control) for operation. An example of this was observed at the Navasota Junior High as the server room was messy and dirty, there were boxes on top of a file cabinet and back-up tapes in a box on a table in the room. Only one school was borderline acceptable according to industry standards and best practices. Webb Elementary was clear of clutter, and had cool air circulating; however there were 12-packs of soda stacked on the floor.

Not having written procedures to address technology-related issues is inefficient and ineffective because staff must stop what they are doing to find information they have used before or search for new solutions rather than refer to pre-established procedures. Additionally, the lack of procedures can result in situations in which the district employees cannot access email, network files, student information, or connect to the Regional Education Service Centers for services should an absence occur among technology staff.

The *Innovative Solutions to Help Address the Issues and Challenges Facing Most Public School Districts*, as written by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts in April 2003, stresses the importance of well-written procedures. Winchester Public Schools in Virginia provides an example

of well-written procedures. **Exhibit 9-3** shows the table of contents for these procedures which are comprehensive and well-organized into a manual that includes the many operations associated with servers, computers, and peripherals. Having documented procedures assist in daily operations and troubleshooting, this can enhance efficiencies and overall effectiveness for those who assist teachers and staff on technology-related needs.

NISD should create a comprehensive procedure manual to document essential information for technology staff. This manual should include the basic information as shown in **Exhibit 9-3**. Additionally, NISD should publish the manual on a protective internal drive for technology personnel to use

at their own schools or in the central office. Capturing and posting information in this manner will ensure that updates are completed in one place and all users will have immediate access to updated procedures.

These manuals can be created by district and campus technology staff using the outlined suggestions provided. The director should disseminate sections of the procedures needed among staff to create drafts, and all drafts should be reviewed as a team. These procedures should be updated on an as-needed basis, such as when a new issue and solution arises.

**EXHIBIT 9-3
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
2005**

**WINCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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SOURCE: Winchester Public Schools, Virginia, Technology Department, 2005.

TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT STANDARDS (REC. 43)

NISD lacks formal technology purchasing standards to ensure that the district has a standardized system for purchasing technology-related equipment and does not take advantage of purchasing cooperatives to obtain the lowest cost for their technology purchases.

Based on the most current inventory, there are 4.5 students sharing one computer throughout the district. Formal standards are not used when purchasing new equipment to replace older equipment or when ordering for a new school. Documentation provided by staff related to technology purchases is shown in **Exhibit 9-4**. As indicated, the technology-related hardware items for a new school are generic in nature and do not show the specific standards for purchasing. In addition, documentation was not provided for equipment replacement; however, staff indicated during interviews that the latest technology is purchased to replace the old equipment after researching the products.

Technology-related hardware is purchased through the central office and the administrative and instructional staff work together to ensure compatibility of purchases from

both academic and hardware perspectives. Additionally, the district uses the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) for purchasing equipment; yet Region 6 also provides purchasing opportunities through a cooperative. The district is missing out on potential cost savings by not researching which cooperative provides the best product for the lowest cost.

By not having and maintaining specific standards for items such as types of computer models, hard drives, processing speed minimums, types of switches, projector information, printers, other peripherals, and cable locations, the district may order inefficient or ineffective equipment. While the current organization shows one person handling the order of materials, the district needs to have formal standards to allow for backup or continuation of this process in case this person is unavailable. Formalized standards will also help with determining the best costs for items since the information will be based on specific requirements needed for the purchase.

EXHIBIT 9-4**NAVASOTA ISD TECHNOLOGY NEEDS FOR NEW SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09****TECHNOLOGY NEEDS FOR NEW SCHOOLS**

- Telephone System – Telephones in every classroom and office
- Network Infrastructure – Network cabling throughout building with at least one network outlet on every wall in classroom
- Wireless capability through the campus
- Campus Server
- Gigabit switches in network closets
- Bell System/Intercom System
- Synchronized Clock System
- Security Surveillance System
- One computer lab per 150 students (28 computers)
- Media Retrieval System and Cable TV to classrooms
- Ceiling mounted projector in every classroom and teaching area
- Multimedia projector and screen in the gym/cafeteria and library
- Laptop for each teacher
- Four desktop computers for each classroom
- Computer lab in library

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Technology Department, March 2009.

Furthermore, the district could be paying higher costs for items by not analyzing both the DIR and the Region 6 prices for the intended purchases.

According to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Support Index, school districts need to optimize equipment purchases by having brand and model selection specifications for efficient technology practices. This practice can be found in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District in Alaska and Lufkin ISD.

NISD should create and maintain formal technology-related equipment standards and research the best possible solutions and costs by comparing prices between the DIR and the Region 6 cooperatives. In addition, these standards should be reviewed on an annual basis for potential updates. The technology director could begin this process by using the information in **Exhibit 9-4** and applying specific standards to each item and using this to purchase equipment for new schools. Furthermore, as the district prepares for technology equipment purchases consideration should be given to the state's *Long-Range Plan for Technology* goal that districts reach a 1:1 student to computer ratio by 2010. NISD can implement this recommendation without cost and may actually see a cost savings depending on the results of the cooperative analyses for purchasing technology-related equipment.

HELP DESK (REC. 44)

NISD lacks a help desk system to more efficiently track and monitor technology-related requests.

The district's process for staff to notify technology personnel of hardware or software issues is to call or send emails to either their specific campus technicians, located at each school, the technology director, or the instructional technology specialist. Per staff interviews, no process exists to track these calls or emails. When asking about support from technology staff, interviewees throughout the district responded that they were able to access staff and issues were resolved quickly. Staff did not mention any concerns or issues related to the quality or accessibility of technology staff. However, there was no system in place to track the number of calls to determine if there are any recurring technology issues that may need to be addressed throughout the district or if there are staff that constantly request assistance from the technician.

Help desk systems allow for a structured response to each request regardless of the user. Systems also allow for tracking

of calls by user, type of situation, number of calls handled by each technician, and the resolution taken to resolve an issue or concern. Without any of this information, NISD is unable to determine if several users routinely need assistance from the technicians or if there is a potential glitch in the software, and each technology staff member has to conduct research for each call instead of using a bank of known responses. Each of these scenarios contributes to efficiency loss by both the user and the technician. By having to call or email technicians, there may be a delay based on the availability of personnel, which can lead to additional down time for a teacher or administrator.

Both Sealy ISD and Lufkin ISD use commendable help desk systems that are automated, capture each request, and offer ways for the district to monitor staff performance and retain history on problematic equipment or software. In addition, Loudoun County Public Schools, Virginia uses a self-service web-based help desk solution that successfully meets the needs of district employees.

As indicated by the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE), by not having a help desk, the district is operating at a low efficiency. High-efficiency help desks are considered the optimum for school district efficiencies for help desks.

NISD should implement an automated help desk system that will enable the district to continually monitor staffing levels based on the numbers and types of requests submitted by user and location. The district should purchase software with a total of nine licenses for the technology specialist at the schools, the director of Technology, and the instructional technology specialist for a one-time cost of \$1,266. Most vendors have an annual maintenance fee of approximately 20 percent of the actual cost of the software. Therefore, the cost to purchase and maintain this type of remote help desk for a Windows environment would be a one-time cost of \$1,266 during the first year and \$253 each additional year for maintenance (\$1,266 x 20 percent). The total cost over five years is \$2,278 (\$1,266 [software & license]+ \$253 maintenance for each of the four years).

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN (REC. 45)

The district lacks a disaster recovery plan to ensure that important student and district data are not permanently lost or destroyed in the event of a disaster.

According to documentation provided by the district and verified with personnel during the onsite visit, data are

backed up on each school server and at the central office on a daily basis. The rotation is to keep a copy of the weekly backup off-site. The daily back-up tapes were observed during campus visits by the review team. The district is in the process of purchasing a server for the central office to use as a centralized backup server for each of the campuses. While this is a start to backing up school district data, it does not necessarily allow for continuation of operations should a disaster strike.

Region 6 provides the back-up and testing of student and financial data as part of its contractual services to the district. However, the district lacks a comprehensive emergency contact list with necessary information for district staff, vendors, and the regional support staff in case of an interruption in service.

Without implementing a disaster recovery plan complete with annual testing, the district is in jeopardy of not being

able to carry out routine operations such as the ability to connect to the network, retrieve email or other documents stored on NISD servers in the event of a disaster.

Glen Rose ISD has created a commendable disaster recovery plan to use when an interruption of service occurs or when a disaster strikes. **Exhibit 9-5** shows a sample of the restoration plan used by system, how the district can determine the amount of data lost, and how to recover appropriately. **Exhibit 9-6** shows the protocol to use by source.

In addition to Glen Rose ISD, the Licking Area Computer Association (LACA) in Ohio also states that the elements listed in the **Exhibits 9-5** and **9-6** are important to any disaster recovery in order to continue with business operations. This association is comprised of both public and nonpublic schools in Ohio.

**EXHIBIT 9-5
GLEN ROSE ISD DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN
2002**

SYSTEM	RESTORATION
Servers: Operating System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt restoration using Power Quest image. • Restore operating system using tape backup. • Re-install operating system from CD.
Servers: Data Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify loss of data. If RAID drive is lost, attempt recovery with a hot spare. • Restore data using tape backup of alternate server backup.
Servers: Hardware Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace failed part – if not in stock, determine availability. • Evaluate repair time of failed server. • Move application and data to secondary server.
Network: Primary LAN Router – Cisco 5500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco 5500 Route Switch Module may be replaced with Cisco 3810 to provide routing between Internet subnets.
Network: Primary WAN Router – Cisco 3810	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco 3810 Switch may be replaced with a Cisco 2500 router from the Cisco lab and used with a CSU (Channel Service Unit) from the Distance Learning Lab.
Network: Backbone Switches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the chassis is equipped with redundant power supplies, if one fails, the other may be plugged in. • To restore Fiber Module connectivity, a MM or SM to UTP converter may be used. (However, this is a temporary fix and will only operate at 10 Mbps.) • Replace individual switch modules with either a spare or a stand-alone switch. • Combine steps 2 and 3 in the event of total chassis failure. This will only achieve a minimum level of service.
Network: IDF Switch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Cisco 1924 or 2924 switches may be swapped with spare units.
Alternate Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff is prepared to move all necessary servers and equipment to the Administration building server room in cases where a primary site loses power, HVAC or sustains damage that prevents service restoration in that area. • Alternatively, fiber patch cables may be configured to route network traffic to the new location.

SOURCE: Glen Rose ISD Disaster Recovery Plan, 2002.

**EXHIBIT 9-6
GLEN ROSE ISD NETWORK/INTERNET ATTACK RECOVER PLAN
2002**

SOURCE	PROTOCOL
External	Unplug T1 cable from Cisco 3810 router. Save all 3810 configurations, ARP and IP route information (if possible). Telnet to router and type "show configuration, show IP route and show ARP." Select all and copy to Word or Word pad.
Internal	Telnet to the RSM. Disable VLAN0 and VLAN1. Disable the 213 route if attack continues.

SOURCE: Glen Rose ISD Disaster Recovery Plan, 2002.

NISD should create a disaster recovery chart to use in the case of an outage or disaster impacting the district.

In addition, a contact list should be created and disseminated among staff to use in case of such an emergency. This contact list and plan should also be printed and posted in each locked server room throughout the district; the business manager

should have a copy in case an emergency prevents network accessibility to the list and plan.

The disaster recovery plan and contact list can be created by the director and should be reviewed by each campus technology specialist. This plan should be reviewed on an annual basis and be updated as needed.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5- YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
42. Create a comprehensive procedure manual to document essential information for technology staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
43. Create and maintain formal technology-related equipment standards and research the best possible solutions and costs.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
44. Implement an automated help desk system that will enable the district to continually monitor staffing levels based on the numbers and types of requests submitted by user and location.	\$0	(\$253)	(\$253)	(\$253)	(\$253)	(\$1,012)	(\$1,266)
45. Create a disaster recovery chart to use in the case of an electrical outage or disaster impacting the district.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$0	(\$253)	(\$253)	(\$253)	(\$253)	(\$1,012)	(\$1,266)

CHAPTER 10

TRANSPORTATION

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 10. TRANSPORTATION

Navasota Independent School District (NISD) provides student transportation services for all regular, special education, and extracurricular routes through an independent contract with Durham School Services (DSS). The district has been contracting with DSS for all transportation services since 1995. The contract between NISD and DSS does not have a set contract amount for each school year. Each year, NISD transportation costs are determined by contract provisions that allow DSS to charge a minimum daily rate for each bus used for up to four hours on a route. For every hour beyond four hours, NISD is charged an additional hourly rate for each bus that exceeds the four hours. Although no formal authority or responsibility for transportation oversight in NISD was identified, the district oversight for the contract with DSS is provided informally by the assistant superintendent and the business manager.

DSS, by virtue of its contract with NISD, provides transportation services over an area that encompasses 360 square miles. The district boundary is contained primarily in Grimes County, but it also extends into Brazos County. The district has a mix of rural and urban/city routes. During the 2007–08 school year, buses traveled 389,648 miles transporting students to and from school, excluding activity and field trips.

All vehicles utilized to transport students are owned, operated, and maintained by DSS. DSS has a fleet of 43 buses with 28 used for regular and special education routes; two are identified as “transit” style buses to be used for extracurricular trips making a total of 30 active buses. Four have been identified as spare buses. The remainder of the fleet is for sale or used whenever DSS exceeds its need for spare buses. Buses are brought in from other sites on a periodic basis so the actual onsite inventory may change with buses coming and going mainly due to breakdowns. The fleet generally appears to be at the end of its useful life cycle.

DSS currently operates 25 regular routes. Of the approximately 1,300 daily riders, 385 reside within a two-mile radius of the school they attend. DSS also operates three special education routes that transport approximately 30 students daily. In 2007–08, the number of students riding the bus daily represented 45 percent of the 2,919 students attending NISD.

FINDINGS

- NISD does not adequately manage its contract for outsourced transportation and operates the program under vague contractual terms.
- NISD lacks identifiable assessment measurements to evaluate the quality or efficiency of transportation services provided by DSS.
- NISD lacks policies, procedures, and guidelines that require DSS to meet minimal acceptable specifications for the fleet of buses utilized in the district.
- NISD does not have established procedures to evaluate the accuracy of monthly invoices presented by DSS or to evaluate the cost effectiveness of outsourced transportation services.
- NISD lacks safety and emergency management practices and procedures that are mutually developed, evaluated, and enforced in partnership with DSS transportation staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 46: Renegotiate the contract with Durham School Services to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the level of service expected.** Additionally, the Board of Trustees should add provisions to local school board policy that identifies their expectations for district staff to adequately oversee transportation services provided by DSS.
- **Recommendation 47: Develop data-driven level of performance benchmarks to assess the quality and/or efficiency of the transportation services provided by Durham School Services.** The district should organize a team of staff members to develop performance standards to include specific criteria that measure productivity, costs, safety, personnel, customer satisfaction, and vehicle maintenance.
- **Recommendation 48: Develop cost-effective standards for the quality of the bus fleet to be provided by Durham School Services and hold Durham School Services accountable for the appropriate level of bus care.** The district should create minimum

standards of quality to include age, mileage, repair/breakdown record, and visual appearance.

- **Recommendation 49: Develop cost accounting practices that validate the accuracy of all costs associated with providing transportation services and implement cost-effective practices that control transportation expenditures.** Furthermore, the business manager should develop a system of regular checks and balances to examine the accuracy of all requests for payment.
- **Recommendation 50: Develop a safety mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plan for the school transportation program.** In addition, NISD should require Durham School Services to incur the costs of installing video and radio communication systems as both are elements of the day-to-day costs of providing appropriate levels of transportation service.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT (REC. 46)

NISD does not adequately manage its contract for outsourced transportation and operates the program under vague contractual terms.

NISD and DSS have a longstanding contractual relationship which originated in 1995. At that time, management and operation of all daily, including to and from school and extracurricular activities transportation services, were outsourced to DSS. As recently as 2006, NISD advertised for competitive proposals to provide transportation services. DSS again secured the contract for a period of five years with the term of the agreement having commenced on July 1, 2006, and expiring June 30, 2011.

The contract between DSS and NISD requires the contractor to designate one person to act as supervisor of operations and stipulates this person shall be available all working hours of school days for the purpose of handling routing, assignments, and discipline problems. DSS has assigned an area manager to directly oversee the student transportation operations for the NISD. The DSS manager also provides oversight for DSS services in the neighboring districts of Madisonville CISD (MCISD) and Brenham ISD (BISD). The manager estimates her time and responsibility allocation as follows: NISD 70 percent, BISD 25 percent, and MCISD 5 percent. It is rather difficult for the area manager to be available to NISD all

working hours of every school day as stipulated in the contract.

The Board of Trustees has established CNA (LEGAL) school board policy that authorizes the district to contract for student transportation services. The policy does not address guidance or expectations regarding the oversight of the company providing student transportation services for the district.

The current contract with DSS was negotiated and approved by the NISD business manager. The business manager was the only individual in the district that dealt with the execution and administration of the contract. The business manager was responsible for overseeing the entire process of developing a request for proposals (RFPs) from vendors, receiving proposals, analyzing proposals, selecting a vendor, and negotiating a contract with the vendor. Key provisions of the existing agreement and related current practices are summarized in **Exhibit 10-1**.

Interviews with district staff indicate that there is a lack of understanding about current contract provisions. One upper management staff member stated that he had not read the contract. An additional upper management staff member indicated that the prime motivation to contract transportation services was to control costs and transfer the problems associated with student transportation away from normal district operations. Efficient and effective service to students and the community was not mentioned as a motivating factor for outsourcing the service.

Results of parent and student surveys indicate a lack of interest towards the student transportation program. More than 50 percent of students and parents had “no opinion” when asked questions about transportation services. Only 23 percent of parents responding said their children regularly ride the bus and 26 percent of students said they regularly ride the bus. Of the parents that did have an opinion, cleanliness of buses and discipline on the bus were their top two concerns. Thirty-three percent stated they either disagree or strongly disagree that buses are clean. Twenty-five percent of the parents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the bus driver maintains discipline on the bus. Student responses were slightly different than parents. Cleanliness of buses was their biggest concern, however, buses arriving and departing on time was more important to them than discipline on the bus. Forty-three percent of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that buses are clean. Whereas, 28 percent of students disagree or disagreed strongly that buses arrive and

**EXHIBIT 10-1
PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES OF DURHAM SCHOOL SERVICES CONTRACT**

CONTRACT PROVISION	CURRENT PRACTICE
DSS shall provide regular and continuous formal safety instruction for operating personnel assigned.	DSS does not have an established safety curriculum that was readily available to the review team. The driver trainer holds monthly meetings with the drivers. Meeting topics are identified by observations made by the driver trainer. Record of attendance is maintained, but an agenda and minutes of the safety meetings are not kept.
Prior to the start of any services, NISD and DSS shall cooperatively establish routes and schedules conforming to the needs of NISD.	NISD approves routes prior to the start of a new school year. There is limited review of the specifics of each route. DSS is responsible for all data collection and reporting for state revenue calculation. DSS does not report monthly data to the district.
All routes, schedules, and bus stops shall be established by DSS on such basis as may be determined by it to be most efficient, but shall be approved by NISD, and shall not be revised without its authorization.	Predetermined route criteria by NISD do not exist. NISD does not require that DSS use routing software so all routes are created manually. The district does not have an established method to determine whether routes are efficient and/or effective.
All personnel assigned to perform under this agreement shall be subject to continuous approval by NISD and by DSS.	NISD does not review the hiring process of DSS and is not required to issue any reports to NISD regarding the hiring of DSS personnel. Sources from DSS identified a driver turnover rate during 2007–08 between 50 and 65 percent. DSS does have a well developed driver training program that meets and exceeds Texas Education Agency (TEA) requirements.
All buses supplied under this agreement shall be approved school buses, as defined by applicable statutory or administrative codes, and must, in addition, meet with the approval of the district.	The fleet of buses provided by DSS is predominately old and of high mileage. The contract states that school buses must only be approved buses. Therefore, DSS has great latitude as to the quality of bus they provide. Since the fleet is old and of high mileage, DSS has stated they must keep more spares available than they normally would due to breakdowns. General appearance of the buses is poor. Staff utilizing DSS bus services expressed being “embarrassed” when DSS transported their students to other school districts.
Buses shall be cleaned inside and out as necessary, and repairs to visible body damage, inside or out, shall be made immediately after such damage occurs.	Buses were dirty. Windows were not routinely cleaned, floors were not swept, and garbage cans were not emptied. Seats of buses were in various stages of disrepair. Inspections revealed numerous seats torn beyond repair. Graffiti was a common occurrence. Interviews with NISD staff indicated that this has been a long-term problem. NISD has communicated bus care to DSS in the past; however, bus care has not improved. NISD does not have staff assigned to do regular inspections of the buses.
NISD grants to DSS the nonexclusive rights to use the bus barn facility in the conduct of its operations hereunder at no cost.	No specific guidelines exist for the operation, maintenance, and repair of the district-owned facility that DSS utilizes. When questioned, neither staff from DSS or NISD knew who was responsible for maintaining the district-owned facility. As a result, the building is getting limited maintenance. There is an absence of long-range plans for the care of the building.
NISD shall purchase all fuel for the purpose of transporting students and personnel of the district under the term of this agreement.	Fuel usage is not monitored. Whenever the main fuel tank at the DSS bus facility gets low, DSS contacts NISD and requests that more fuel be delivered. The district has not developed standards that would indicate appropriate level of consumption of fuel by DSS.

**EXHIBIT 10-1 (CONTINUED)
PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES OF DURHAM SCHOOL SERVICES CONTRACT**

CONTRACT PROVISION	CURRENT PRACTICE
At NISD's request, DSS will provide transit style buses for activity and athletic field trips. These buses will be equipped with Air Conditioning (A/C), under storage compartments, and customized seating. The daily rate charge for each bus will be \$47 per day for 180 days, plus \$18 per hour and \$.43 per mile for their use.	NISD requested that DSS provide two transit style buses for activity and extracurricular trips. Guidelines are not in place that govern the use of these buses. While the district is paying a daily fee to have these buses available, DSS regularly uses them on routes so they can collapse two routes into one. This occurs when DSS has a shortage of route drivers. DSS still charges NISD for two routes and collects the \$47 daily use fee. These buses are not regularly cleaned. Mold has developed on the ceiling of the buses. Neither DSS nor NISD wants to take responsibility for cleaning them. The contract calls for "customized" seating. The transit style buses that DSS currently have provided NISD are equipped with seats that would normally be installed in a regular transit style school bus instead of customized seating as called for in the contract.
The contractor will report serious or persistent misconduct on the part of the students to the designated person employed by the district and the contractor may refuse to transport any student who, based upon past conduct, presents a potential danger to other persons.	All day-to-day discipline is processed by DSS. The DSS dispatcher has the authority to determine if a student will be denied transportation. The principals of the schools only get involved if the behavior escalates to serious level. Discipline records are kept in an unlocked file cabinet at the DSS transportation facility office. DSS does not track the number of discipline referrals concerning student misconduct on school buses.

SOURCE: Transportation Services Contract with Navasota ISD, 2006 and MGT of America, Inc., Analysis, 2009.

depart on time. **Exhibits 10-2** and **10-3** show the complete results of the survey.

The provisions of the contract with DSS are vague and lack performance expectations. Due to lack of specificity in the contract, lack of performance expectations, and general lack

of formal oversight of the student transportation program, NISD is not receiving the appropriate level of service. The contract states that DSS *buses shall be cleaned inside and out as necessary*. NISD has not identified standards and, as a result, does not hold DSS accountable to keep the buses clean. Furthermore, there are no provisions for penalty for

**EXHIBIT 10-2
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09**

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
My child regularly rides the bus.	12.50%	10.42%	27.08%	8.33%	41.67%
The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	2.08%	12.50%	60.42%	18.75%	6.25%
The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	4.17%	12.50%	58.33%	12.50%	12.50%
The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	10.42%	22.92%	62.50%	2.08%	2.08%
The bus stop near my house is safe.	10.42%	18.75%	64.58%	2.08%	4.17%
The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	8.33%	18.75%	62.50%	6.25%	4.17%
Buses arrive and depart on time.	4.17%	18.75%	56.25%	12.50%	8.33%
Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	2.08%	18.75%	60.42%	6.25%	12.50%
Buses seldom break down.	4.17%	20.83%	56.25%	10.42%	8.33%
Buses are clean.	4.17%	10.42%	52.08%	18.75%	14.58%
Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	6.25%	14.58%	68.75%	2.08%	8.33%
The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	2.08%	20.83%	64.58%	6.25%	6.25%

SOURCE: Performance Review Team Survey Results of Respondents Answering the Survey, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 10-3
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I regularly ride the bus.	10.64%	15.96%	22.34%	15.96%	35.11%
The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	5.32%	14.89%	58.51%	6.38%	14.89%
The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	4.26%	17.02%	61.70%	6.38%	10.64%
The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	9.57%	26.60%	55.32%	6.38%	2.13%
The bus stop near my house is safe.	12.77%	24.47%	56.38%	3.19%	3.19%
The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	12.77%	21.28%	60.64%	2.13%	3.19%
Buses arrive and depart on time.	3.19%	10.64%	58.51%	12.77%	14.89%
Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	5.32%	17.02%	61.70%	5.32%	10.64%
Buses seldom break down.	12.77%	13.83%	57.45%	8.51%	7.45%
Buses are clean.	2.13%	5.32%	50.00%	19.15%	23.40%
Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	13.83%	18.09%	54.26%	6.38%	7.45%

SOURCE: Performance Review Team Survey Results of Respondents Answering the Survey, 2009.

non-performance other than dissolution of the contract or binding arbitration. A binding arbitration is when the parties cannot reach a settlement on their own, but they both prefer not going to trial, the two sides will sometimes agree to have a third party, known as an arbitrator, hear both sides and render a decision and settlement that is binding on both parties. The only recourse is to litigate to prove that DSS refuses or fails to perform services as required to provide to the district with efficient, safe, and economical services...or the contractor persistently disregards laws, ordinances, or instructions of the district. The contract with DSS gives the district limited options to increase the level of service beyond the interpretations DSS has made on the current contract language.

The lack of contract management of expected levels of service does not allow the district to ensure that DSS is meeting the transportation needs. Although DSS operates the district's transportation program, NISD is still accountable to the state for funds that are received and expended on behalf of the district. The lack of accountability for the provision of services in the agreement leaves the district in a potential legal quandary. The district cannot effectively oversee this critical functional area without specific board policies, procedures, and expectations to govern the transportation program.

In an article presented in *The School Administrator* (2002), the American Association of School Administrators provided the following guidance for obtaining the highest quality of service for the lowest price:

The terms and conditions of a contract determine the level, style, and quality of service. Transportation contracts should be based on thorough specifications, detailing expectations, and needs. When a school district becomes frustrated by the level of service, often the contractor is simply providing the services spelled out contractually. If necessary, contract terms can be modified through negotiation or rebidding. Any changes must be documented as an addendum to the agreement and consistently enforced.

The state of Texas has identified best practice for districts to consider when contracting services. The Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) team Audit Protocols state:

An effective contracting process continually monitors and evaluates services received from external entities. The contracting process analyzes the operations of various areas of the district and performs cost/benefit analyses to evaluate whether there are goods and services that can be obtained from the private sector at a lower cost, higher quality or both. The contract negotiation process ensures that bidders receive contract awards based on the best available goods and services at the best prices with terms favorable to the district. The

negotiation process also includes a detailed review of terms and conditions by district staff and attorneys so that board members receive adequate information before voting to accept a contract. Properly assigning contract management responsibilities to district staff provides for oversight of contract provisions so that the district receives quantity and quality of services included in the contract and ensures compliance with the terms of the contract.

Contract management has been identified as a key component of the purchasing activity performed by a school district. Staff with the TSPR team have developed a set of questions that should be asked when auditing a district's performance regarding the critical function of contract management. Examples include:

- Did the district dedicate correct and sufficient contract management resources to the contract?
- Who is responsible for managing the contract in the district?
- Who has the authority to change the contract and authorize additional work?
- Does this person have the authority to enforce the contract?
- What reports does the vendor have to provide the district, and when do they have to be provided?

Ultimately, the goals of outsourcing transportation services should be to achieve cost savings, improve quality and service, and improve customer satisfaction. In order for NISD to receive the highest quality transportation service at the lowest cost, it will require increased clarity of expectations in the existing contract and increased oversight of the contract on behalf of the district.

NISD should renegotiate the contract with DSS to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the level of service expected for all provisions of the existing contract and provide for increased oversight of the level of service provided by the contractor.

Prior to renegotiating the contract with DSS, the district should appoint a key staff member to have responsibility and authority to manage the contract with DSS. It is recommended that this responsibility be assigned to the NISD business manager. Under this person's lead, a team of district staff should meet to determine the priority and quality of service expected as related to the existing contract with DSS. The

district and DSS should have a clear understanding regarding the level of service expected.

Through the negotiation process, an addendum to the existing contract should be created and agreed to by the district and DSS that provides increased clarity to the provisions contained within the original contract. District legal counsel should also review all proposed content of the addendum when completed. Items that cannot be agreed to in an addendum should be addressed through dispute provisions of the contract. If utilization of the dispute process is not practical, improvements to the contract should be addressed as specific provisions in the Request for Proposal (RFP) when the contract is rebid in 2011.

Furthermore, the Board of Trustees should amend provisions to CNA (LEGAL) school board policy that identifies their expectations for assigned district staff to adequately oversee transportation services provided by DSS.

There should be minimal fiscal impact to renegotiate the terms of the contract with DSS. Existing staff will assume the responsibility and authority to represent the district in its communication with DSS. No additional staff time should be needed. There will be a one-time cost for legal services to review any potential addendums to the existing contract with DSS. It is estimated that five hours of legal service will be required at \$235 per hour using a partner's fee for a one-time total of \$1,175 (5 hours x \$235 per hour).

PERFORMANCE MEASURES (REC. 47)

NISD lacks identifiable assessment measurements to evaluate the quality or efficiency of transportation services provided by DSS.

Issues that become problematic due to lack of clarity of the contract and lack of contract oversight are made more complicated due to a lack of identifiable performance measures regarding the student transportation program.

A review of the five year contract with DSS beginning on July 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2011, but signed on February 20, 2006, provides evidence that the contractor is not required to provide annual performance data to NISD with the exception of the following requirement:

Record Keeping and Accident Reports. Contractor will be required to provide any and all operational records deemed necessary by the district.

All reportable accidents (as defined by law) involving the contractor's equipment or personnel while operating for the district shall be reported to the district. Pupil injuries not involving acceleration, deceleration, or movement of the bus may be reported on forms provided by the district, at its option.

There is no evidence that any accident data are provided to the district other than what is required by TEA. Beyond this clause in the contract, there is no expectation for DSS to provide additional performance data to NISD.

Annual review of the contract is limited to the adjustment of rates. The terms for amending or terminating the contract do not address the contractor's level of performance. On an annual basis, NISD solely renews the contract based upon the most recent 12-month regional consumer price index. Under current circumstances, the district has no formal procedures in place to determine if DSS is meeting standards of performance because the district has not identified standards against which DSS is to be measured.

Since the contract between DSS and NISD is primarily silent regarding performance expectations, a review of the proposal submitted to the district during the most recent RFP process was completed. The proposal submitted by DSS to the district did not identify any promised levels of service. Most services described were general in nature and difficult to quantify. Of note is the "Implementation Plan." The plan, as presented in the proposal stated:

Durham School Services will continue to provide Navasota Independent School District with the same quality service, delivered by the same quality staff we have in place at this time. Our current transportation program has been designed specifically for the educational priorities of your district. Your pupil transportation program will continue to be managed with the following priorities governing our activities:

- *Safety;*
- *On-time performance;*
- *Cost effectiveness;*
- *Maintenance of high employee morale; and*
- *Positive community and district relations.*

An examination of the specific chapters of the proposal did not identify any further evidence of quantifiable levels of service DSS promised to provide NISD. Therefore, an assessment was made regarding performance data NISD

expected DSS to submit to the district. No performance measures were identified that are currently being requested by the district to determine if standards of the contract or proposal promises made by DSS are being met. Without any written standards, NISD has limited capability to determine whether they are operating an efficient and cost-effective transportation program. The district's performance evaluation of DSS relies informally on the number of phone call complaints and the degree of district acceptance of current expenditures for transportation. Due to a lack of objective performance measures, there is no data to back up this general and subjective evaluation.

The Texas Legislative Budget Board has identified suggested performance measures for outsourced student transportations shown in **Exhibit 10-4**. These performance measures are examples of data to collect that can be used to establish benchmarks of quality for the transportation program.

Utilizing average bus occupancy percentage is an example of a performance benchmark to increase cost savings for the district. The current contract with DSS states that NISD will be charged a daily rate for the first four hours of every route they operate. If a route exceeds the four hour minimum time, the district will be charged an additional hourly rate. A typical route will cost the district at least \$30,000 per year. If the capacity of a bus is underutilized, unnecessary routes are created that add to the district's transportation costs. Circumstances such as this reinforce the need to track average bus occupancy. If data show that buses are underutilized, the district must hold DSS responsible to maximize the use of the bus or eliminate the bus route.

NISD should develop data-driven level of performance benchmarks to assess the quality and/or efficiency of the transportation services provided by DSS.

Since the performance responsibilities of DSS are not clearly defined, it is necessary for the district to identify an acceptable level of performance and collect the appropriate data to determine if the level of performance desired has been met. The district should organize a team of staff members to develop performance benchmarks for DSS to meet. At a minimum, these benchmarks should include specific criteria that measure productivity, costs, safety, personnel, customer satisfaction, and vehicle maintenance. The data generated by tracking the benchmarks will serve as the district's transportation department "report card." Establishing, tracking, and monitoring the performance of the district transportation program will allow NISD to make informed

**EXHIBIT 10-4
SUGGESTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR OUTSOURCED TRANSPORTATION**

CATEGORY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Productivity	Student riders per mile Student riders per bus Linear density
Cost	Cost per route Cost per mile Cost per student rider Percent state reimbursement
Safety	Bus accidents every 100,000 miles of service Student incidents every 1,000 miles transported Training curriculum for new drivers Hours of in-service training for each driver
Personnel	Number of driver positions vacant Absentee rate for drivers Number of available relief drivers Starting wage rate Percent overtime
Customer Satisfaction	Annual user survey of parents and school administrators Referrals per route Response time per referral
Vehicle Maintenance	Percent of preventative maintenance inspections completed on time Miles between in-service breakdowns Cost per bus for maintenance labor, parts, and fuel Number of certified mechanics

SOURCE: Texas School District Transportation Services, Legislative Budget Board Website, 2009.

decisions as to whether they are meeting the district’s responsibility to provide safe, efficient, and cost-effective services.

The major focus of this recommendation is to develop a system of measures and data collection to be used to track levels of performance. The assistant superintendent and business manager may have to reallocate time in order to fully implement this recommendation.

FLEET SPECIFICATIONS (REC. 48)

NISD lacks policies, procedures, and guidelines that require DSS to meet minimal acceptable specifications for the fleet of buses utilized in the district.

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2 to 3 percent of Texas districts outsource their transportation services. Of the districts which outsource their transportation, some provide their own school buses, while some provide a portion of the school buses, or require the contractor to provide school buses. NISD currently does not provide any buses for their transportation program.

The contract between DSS and NISD identifies limited specific standards that must be met regarding the provision of school buses to operate the student transportation

program. The contract also sets the daily rates to be charged for transportation services by bus capacity and allows the district to request that DSS provide two transit style buses at an additional fee. The daily fee schedule for regular home-to-school and special education is shown in **Exhibit 10-5**. The fee schedule identifies four categories of bus capacity, but utilizes just two daily rates. A 73+ capacity bus is charged the same rate as the smaller 48-72 capacity bus. Under the current contract, it would not cost NISD additional funds if larger capacity buses were provided. However, DSS chooses to provide the smaller capacity buses for all its regular home-to-school routes. The utilization of some larger capacity buses could possibly reduce the number of buses needed to provide transportation service.

**EXHIBIT 10-5
DAILY TRANSPORTATION RATES BY BUS CAPACITY
SCHOOL YEAR 2006-07**

BUS CAPACITY	DAILY RATE PER BUS TO 4 HOURS	HOURLY RATE OVER 4 HOURS
01-20	\$164.84	\$17.02
21-47	\$164.84	\$17.02
48-72	\$156.79	\$17.02
73 +	\$156.79	\$17.02

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Transportation Services Contract, 2006.

Due to an absence of requirements for age and mileage of buses, DSS has great latitude regarding the quality of the buses they provide. Interviews with DSS staff identified the following informal criteria used to determine when buses should be replaced for NISD:

- Maintenance costs (indication the bus is no longer cost effective for DSS to operate);
- Terrain and geography of the routes each bus travels;
- Manager input;
- DSS has buses to disperse when contracts with other districts are terminated; and
- NISD requests replacement buses.

The district has not identified any standards regarding the replacement of the fleet. An evaluation of the fleet currently in use by DSS for regular home-to-school routes identified an average age of 13 years. In March 2009, *School Bus Fleet* published its most recent survey results regarding the average age of school bus fleets in the United States. The average fleet

age is 8.5 years and 79 percent of all fleets averaged less than 11 years. Furthermore, the average retirement age of large buses (capacity of more than 30) was 14.9 years. Eight of the 25 or 32 percent of the buses that DSS uses on regular home-to school routes are 15 years old. The fleet of buses currently in use by DSS to provide daily transportation is much older than national averages and is at the end of its life cycle.

Due to the number of buses that had odometers replaced, determining a reliable average number of miles traveled by each bus was not possible. However, the majority of the buses used on a daily basis had very high mileage.

As shown in **Exhibit 10-6**, the status of the fleet currently utilized by DSS for NISD indicates that the fleet has high mileage. Additionally, visual inspections of the fleet show faded or peeling paint and interiors are generally worn.

DSS does have an established maintenance program for their fleet of buses. Contained in their 2006 proposal to NISD, DSS stated that *Safety and well-maintained buses are top priorities at Durham School Services.*

**EXHIBIT 10-6
FLEET INVENTORY
MARCH 2009**

YEAR	MAKE	CATEGORY	MILES	STATUS
1999	International	C	75,874	Route 1
1996	International	C	120,253	Route 2
1997	Freightliner	C	54,194	Route 3
1995	International	C	203,046	Route 4
1997	Freightliner	C	184,137	Route 5
1995	International	C	212,764	Route 6
1995	International	C	152,014	Route 7
1999	International	C	109,978	Route 8
1998	Freightliner	C	125,442	Route 9
1995	International	C	235,526	Route 10
1995	Ford	C	173,618	Route 11
1999	Freightliner	C	*33,758	Route 13
1996	International	C	173,435	Route 15
1998	Freightliner	C	*48,031	Route 16
1998	Freightliner	C	179,460	Route 17
1996	International	C	208,163	Route 18
2007	Freightliner	C	33,095	Route 19
1999	International	C	71,864	Route 20
2009	Freightliner	Wheelchair	19,898	Route 21
1996	International	C	78,844	Route 22
1997	Freightliner	C	195,543	Route 23

**EXHIBIT 10-6 (CONTINUED)
FLEET INVENTORY
MARCH 2009**

YEAR	MAKE	CATEGORY	MILES	STATUS
1996	International	C	*28	Route 24
1995	International	C	218,741	Route 25
1995	International	C	193,806	Route 27
2009	Freightliner	Wheelchair	21,000	Route 28
1995	International	C	239,823	Route 29
1998	Freightliner	Wheelchair	*20,747	Route 30
1997	Ford	C	170,448	Route 31
2007	Thomas	D	29,785	Trips
2007	Thomas	D	31,178	Trips
1999	Freightliner	C	198,932	Spare
1999	Freightliner	C	*18	Spare
1999	International	C	135,257	Spare
2009	Freightliner	Wheelchair	24,282	Spare
1994	International	C	116,634	Spare
1996	International	C	220,139	Spare
1999	International	C	146,688	Spare
1999	International	C	119,090	Spare
1995	International	C	190,667	Spare
1995	Ford	C	194,318	Parked for Sale
1996	International	C	180,877	Parked for Sale
1995	International	C	211,658	Parked for Sale
1996	International	C	152,203	Parked for Sale
1996	International	C	166,034	Parked for Sale
1998	Freightliner	C	182,197	Parked for Sale

*Odometer replaced
SOURCE: Durham School Services, March 2009.

An onsite review demonstrated that bus drivers were utilizing a Vehicle Condition Report (VCR) on a daily basis. Copies of the report were maintained on file or directed to a technician if a driver, detected a defect of the bus during the daily visual inspection. The drivers do not conduct checks of engine and transmission fluids. A designated “fueler” checks the fluids whenever the bus is refueled.

Visual inspection of the interior of buses indicates that drivers are not being held accountable for the cleanliness of buses. Buses are generally dirty throughout. Windows and floors were not clean and garbage cans were not emptied on a regular basis. Seats were in very poor condition. Many were ripped beyond repair and graffiti was a common occurrence. Although many of the buses travel on dusty, gravel roads, exteriors were not washed or polished on a regular basis.

Each bus is scheduled for regular preventative maintenance inspections according to either number of days operated or miles traveled. Preventative maintenance is scheduled and tracked with Robert Turley Associates (RTA) fleet management software. A preventative maintenance “A” 60-point inspection is scheduled every 90 days or 3,000 miles, and is recorded on a checklist that includes all vehicle components and systems. A more comprehensive “C” inspection is conducted that includes 232 items. This inspection is completed at least once a year.

School Bus Fleet's annual survey indicated that the average bus-to-technician ratio in the United States is 21:1. The bus-to-technician ratio for DSS is 19.5:1. Ample staff may be assigned for the maintenance and repair of DSS buses, but it is not clear if this is the case. Due to the fact that costs

incurred maintaining and repairing DSS buses is considered proprietary information, repair costs are unknown. Since the age of the fleet is older and the number of miles per bus is higher, the number of repairs to be made on each bus may be higher than average. If that is the case, DSS may be understaffed. Drivers did report that the technicians were very busy and had a difficult time keeping up with the workload. They also reported that buses were out-of-service for repair quite often.

A DSS representative indicated that they normally keep an additional 10 percent inventory of buses to ensure they have enough buses available for use as spares. Due to the age of their fleet, they have found it necessary to keep twice as many spares in their inventory to meet route needs when buses break down.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) released a report in January 2002 which indicated the anticipated lifetime, under normal operating conditions, of a Type “C” and Type “D” bus is 12 to 15 years. The report further stated that after 12 years of use, the annual operating costs of Type “C” and “D” school buses began to increase significantly and continued an annual increase each year thereafter.

NISD predominantly utilizes buses manufactured from 1995 to 1998. Industry practice, using a 15-year replacement schedule, would have two buses from each year over the 15-year period. **Exhibit 10-7** shows NISD’s current age distribution of their regular home-to-school route buses compared to the number of buses as seen in industry practice.

NISD does operate buses in some rural areas that have many miles of rough, dusty and/or muddy gravel roads. Buses are not housed under cover and are constantly exposed to very hot weather for many months each year. These conditions could shorten the useful life of the buses DSS currently operates for NISD.

The district should develop cost-effective standards for the quality of the bus fleet to be provided by DSS and hold DSS accountable for the appropriate level of bus care.

NISD should create minimum standards for the quality of the bus that they will allow DSS to operate on a daily basis. These standards should include:

- Age;
- Mileage;
- Repair/breakdown record; and
- Visual appearance.

These standards should be clearly communicated and reviewed by DSS. It is recognized that DSS will have a cost obligation if it is required to improve the quality of the fleet. The district should negotiate the level of commitment DSS is obligated to provide in order to improve the quality of the fleet. DSS should be able to demonstrate an annual financial commitment that is mutually cost-effective to maintain a fleet of buses that meets NISD standards and the intent of the contract with the district. At a minimum, NISD should set a goal of moving the average age of their fleet closer to the national average. **Exhibit 10-8** identifies a five-year goal for reducing the age of the fleet.

For comparison purposes, **Exhibit 10-9** shows the current estimated costs for purchasing a 1997, 2004, or 2010 Type “C” bus. The Type “C” school bus, also known as a “conventional,” is a body installed upon a flat-back cowl chassis with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, designed for carrying more than 10 persons. All of the engine is in front of the windshield and the entrance door is behind the front wheels. NISD must determine the level of financial commitment they expect DSS to meet as part of the contractual agreement. The level of commitment expected is influenced by the quality of bus NISD expects DSS to provide. It may not be cost-effective to require DSS to purchase all new buses. However, it is reasonable to expect DSS to provide a quality of fleet that is closer to national

**EXHIBIT 10-7
REGULAR BUS ROUTE FLEET DISTRIBUTION BY YEAR MANUFACTURED
SCHOOL YEARS 1995–96 THROUGH 2008–09**

YEAR	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Navasota ISD	8	5	4	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Industry Practice	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

SOURCE: Durham School Services Fleet Inventory Report, March 2009, and MGT of America, Inc., Analysis.

**EXHIBIT 10-8
PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE FLEET AGE REDUCTION GOALS
SCHOOL YEARS 2009–10 THROUGH 2014–15**

YEAR	2008–09 NATIONAL AVERAGE	2009–10 NAVASOTA ISD AVERAGE	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2014–15
Average Age of Fleet	8.5 Years	13 years	12 years	11 Years	10 Years	9 Years

SOURCE: Performance Review Team Analysis, Based on Documentation Provided by Navasota ISD and Durham School Services, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 10-9
COMPARATIVE COSTS
72 PASSENGER TYPE “C” BUS**

	1997 INTERNATIONAL TYPE “C” 125,000 MILES	2004 INTERNATIONAL TYPE “C” 60,000 MILES	2010 INTERNATIONAL TYPE “C” NEW
Cost	\$6,500	\$35,000	\$81,000

SOURCE: Performance Review Team Analysis, 2009 United States Retail Prices for Used and New Buses.

standards than is currently provided. This may be accomplished by providing used buses that are newer and with lower mileage than the current fleet.

NISD should develop cost effective standards for the quality of the bus fleet to be provided by DSS and hold DSS accountable for the appropriate level of care of the buses. The criteria must include, at a minimum, the cleanliness of the interior and exterior of each bus. In addition, the district must evaluate whether timely repairs are made to buses that have damage to both the interior and exterior. Responsibility for the care of the transit style buses must be established.

There may be a financial impact to the district when renegotiating the contract to improve the quality and age of the buses. If NISD is not successful in requiring DSS to provide better buses, the district may be obligated to allocate additional funds to secure these improvements in their contract. Therefore, the following fiscal impact is being provided as a guide to district officials when renegotiating the contract and/or to utilize as a basis for comparison when the contract is bid again in 2011. The potential for DSS to purchase five buses per year at a cost of \$35,000 per bus would add up to a total cost of approximately \$175,000 per year or (5 buses x \$35,000 per bus).

To give the district time needed to implement this recommendation, the fiscal impact of renegotiating the contract will begin in school year 2010–11.

INVOICE EVALUATION (REC. 49)

NISD does not have established procedures to evaluate the accuracy of monthly invoices presented by DSS or to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of outsourced transportation services.

Comparisons with two other districts in close proximity to NISD are shown in **Exhibit 10-10**. Both Madisonville CISD and Brenham ISD contract for transportation services with DSS. DSS provided the buses for Madisonville CISD, while Brenham ISD provided their own buses. Additionally, there are comparisons made between NISD and three other Texas school districts whose demographics were similar to NISD. These districts included Liberty ISD, El Campo ISD, and Aransas Pass ISD. These three school districts do not outsource their transportation services.

The percentage of the general fund expended for student transportation is shown in **Exhibit 10-11**. The range in year 2005–06 through 2006–07 is 5.40 percent to 5.53 percent for NISD. Nationwide data are not available, but a survey from the state of Iowa analyzed statewide transportation costs as a percentage of the regular program costs statewide. For school districts the size of NISD with enrollment of 2,500 to 7,499 students, the Iowa statewide average percentage of general funds spent on student transportation was 3.12 percent. Comparison data indicate NISD expends considerably more of the percentage of general fund spent on student transportation than average for student transportation services than comparable Texas schools and schools surveyed in Iowa.

A closer review compared the percentage of expenditures between districts that contract for services and those that did not. NISD was compared to (a) the average of the three districts that did not outsource their transportation services, (b) the district that outsourced its transportation and did not own their buses, and (c) the district that outsourced its transportation but owned its buses. As indicated in **Exhibit 10-12**, NISD expended a greater percentage of their general

**EXHIBIT 10-10
STATUS OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
MARCH 2009**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	CONTRACTS WITH DURHAM SCHOOL SERVICES FOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	DISTRICT PROVIDES TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	OWNS BUSES	CONTRACTOR OWNS BUSES
Aransas Pass ISD		YES	YES	
Brenham ISD	YES		YES	
El Campo ISD		YES	YES	
Liberty ISD		YES	YES	
Madisonville CISD	YES			YES
Navasota ISD	YES			YES

SOURCE: Performance Review Team Telephone Survey of Selected Districts, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 10-11
EXPENDITURES FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE GENERAL FUND
SCHOOL YEARS 2005–06 THROUGH 2006–07**

YEAR	ARANSAS PASS ISD	BRENHAM ISD	EL CAMPO ISD	LIBERTY ISD	MADISONVILLE CISD	AVERAGE	NAVASOTA ISD
2005–06	2.51%	4.31%	4.21%	3.43%	4.61%	3.81%	5.40%
2006–07	2.57%	3.87%	4.16%	3.72%	4.22%	3.71%	5.53%

SOURCE: "Actual Financial Data" 2009 by District, Texas Education Agency Website.

**EXHIBIT 10-12
COMPARISON OF DISTRICTS: OUTSOURCED VERSUS NON-OUTSOURCED
2005–07 PERCENTAGE OF GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

	NON-OUTSOURCED DISTRICTS (OWNS BUSES)	OUTSOURCED DISTRICTS (OWNS BUSES)	OUTSOURCED DISTRICTS (DOES NOT OWN BUSES)	AVERAGE ALL DISTRICTS
Percent Expended	3.43%	4.09%	4.42%	3.76%
Percent Expended Navasota ISD	5.47%	5.47%	5.47%	5.47%
Difference	2.04%	1.38%	1.05%	1.71%

SOURCE: "Actual Financial Data" Texas Education Agency Website, 2009, and Performance Review Team Analysis.

fund on student transportation than any other category. Overall, NISD’s two-year average percentage of general fund expended for student transportation is 1.71 percentage points above the average of the comparable school districts.

The district does not expend general funds to purchase school buses. Therefore, the value of any buses purchased or provided by DSS is contained in the overall operation expenses that DSS incurs. NISD does not have data that identifies an annual financial contribution DSS contributes to purchase school buses. **Exhibit 10-13** shows that NISD expends proportionately \$378,461 more annually on transportation services than the five comparative school districts, based upon the percentage of general fund expenditures. A portion of this \$378,461 can be attributed to NISD compensating

DSS for the provision of school buses. Since the information is proprietary, it is not possible to determine an actual amount DSS expends for vehicle acquisition. Due to the age of the fleet DSS operates, it is likely that DSS is allocating only a small percentage of NISD payments toward fleet acquisition. For example, if DSS provided five 1997 International Type “C” buses per year (**Exhibit 10-9**), they would be allocating only \$32,500 per year toward fleet improvements (5 buses x \$6,500 per bus = \$32,500). This allocation amounts to a small percentage of the identified \$378,461 potential cost differential. Reduction in operation costs will allow NISD to reclaim a portion of the \$378,461 to reduce costs and, and the same time, improve fleet quality.

**EXHIBIT 10-13
COMPARISON OF NAVASOTA ISD STUDENT TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES
ACTUAL TO AVERAGE OF COMPARISON DISTRICTS, 2006–07**

NAVASOTA ISD 2006–07 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	5.47 PERCENT OF EXPENDITURES (NAVASOTA ISD ACTUAL PERCENTAGE)	3.76 PERCENT OF EXPENDITURES (5-DISTRICT AVERAGE PERCENTAGE)	DIFFERENCE (ACTUAL MINUS AVERAGE)
\$22,132,167	\$1,210,630	\$832,169	\$378,461

SOURCE: "Actual Financial Data" Texas Education Agency Website 2009, and MGT of America, Inc., Analysis.

NISD has experienced an increase in their transportation costs over the past five years. Overall, the district's costs have risen by 21.71 percent as shown in **Exhibit 10-14**. Costs for co-curricular and field trips have risen at an even greater amount at 30.75 percent. It should also be noted that the first year of the new contract with DSS in 2006–07 showed a dramatic increase in costs. Daily rates were increased and the district began purchasing all of the fuel used by DSS. In addition, the district exercised their option for DSS to provide two transit style buses at an additional fee. Overall transportation expenditures increased by 15.75 percent in year one of the new contract. Further, co-curricular and field trip transportation costs increased by 24.3 percent the first year. The following year, when fuel prices escalated throughout the United States, NISD overall transportation costs increased an additional 11.80 percent. In the past two years, overall

transportation costs have increased by a combined 29.41 percent.

Exhibit 10-15 cites data from the *TEA Student Transportation Operations Report* indicating that the district increased state reportable transportation costs during the past five years by 33.8 percent. During the same time period, as indicated in **Exhibit 10-16**, the total miles driven decreased by 1.9 percent. Cost per mile for regular transportation increased by 32.4 percent and special education costs per mile increased by 23.7 percent. The current cost escalation experienced by NISD has not been evaluated for cause. Annual budgets are established by prior year spending patterns. If expenditures are up, the subsequent year's budget is adjusted upward to reflect the increase in costs. The district does not have policies and procedures in place to control the level of annual increase in expenditures for student transportation.

**EXHIBIT 10-14
FIVE –YEAR SUMMARY OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	PERCENT INCREASE
Operations	\$1,137,443	\$1,120,706	\$1,053,175	\$1,087,318	\$1,143,069	0.49%
Fuel	N/A	N/A	\$16,554	\$150,940	\$241,297	N/A
Total	\$1,137,443	\$1,120,706	\$1,069,729	\$1,238,258	\$1,384,366	21.71%

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Business Office, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 10-15
FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY OF STATE REPORTED TRANSPORTATION COSTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

YEAR	REGULAR ROUTE	SPECIAL EDUCATION ROUTE	TOTAL
2003–04	\$810,674	\$225,442	\$1,036,116
2004–05	\$871,654	\$254,759	\$1,126,413
2005–06	\$877,758	\$211,330	\$1,089,088
2006–07	\$1,011,486	\$238,560	\$1,250,046
2007–08	\$1,213,108	\$173,049	\$1,386,157
Percent Change	49.6%	(23.2%)	33.8%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Student Transportation Operations Report, Navasota ISD Business Office, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 10-16
FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY OF STATE REPORTED MILES DRIVEN INCLUDING ACTIVITY AND FIELD TRIPS
SCHOOL YEARS 2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08**

YEAR	REGULAR ROUTE	SPECIAL EDUCATION ROUTE	TOTAL
2003–04	381,021	104,727	485,748
2004–05	399,688	93,073	492,761
2005–06	378,015	76,224	454,239
2006–07	408,522	73,389	481,911
2007–08	429,794	64,943	494,737
Percent Change	12.8%	(38.0%)	(1.9%)

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency Student Transportation Operations Report, Navasota ISD Business Office, 2009.

NISD does not track the number of runs each bus makes daily; however, the district should work in partnership with DSS to make more efficient use of the buses which the district is paying for. By utilizing automated routing software, the district will be able to create scenarios to test bus efficiency when start and dismissal times are changed without actually having to make the changes in school schedules. Ultimately, increasing the number of multiple runs each bus makes daily will decrease the transportation costs for NISD.

Analysis of districtwide financial practices indicates that NISD lacks procedures to monitor transportation program expenditures. Further review of the district transportation expenditures shows:

- The district business office does not review the monthly route invoices presented by DSS and is unaware of a practice to compress routes. Compressing routes occurs when two routes are combined into one route. Due to either a lack of drivers or equipment breakdowns, DSS will combine two routes into one and only have to use one bus. DSS does not grant NISD credit for not running the extra bus. Furthermore, DSS often uses the larger transit bus, which the district is already paying extra for, to combine routes because it is a bigger route.
- Each month DSS invoices the district for additional costs to provide co-curricular and field trip transportation. The district does not have procedures to review the accuracy of the invoice.
- In 2006–07, the district changed its practice regarding who purchases fuel for the district. Beginning with the 2006–07 school year, NISD began purchasing all fuel used in DSS school buses. Although NISD is paying 100 percent of the fuel costs, they do not monitor

fuel consumption beyond the invoice provided by the distributor. There are no regular auditing procedures to determine if fuel logs are accurate. Furthermore, the district does not have any expectations regarding fuel efficiency. There are no built-in incentives for DSS to conserve fuel. Fleet fuel efficiency is of little or no priority to DSS as it does not involve a direct cost to them.

- The district has not established standards for the minimum or maximum number of students that should be riding each bus or the minimum or maximum length of a route. Since there are no established standards, DSS lacks incentives to reduce the number of routes or the length of routes. NISD does not require DSS to submit routine reports regarding the number of students riding each route by bus and run.
- DSS is not required to use electronic routing software to maximize the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of established routes.
- The district has not determined who is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the bus barn facility they provide DSS. The district also does not know the fair market value received by DSS for the use of the bus barn facility. There are no data available to determine if DSS is paying fair market value for the use and maintenance of the bus barn facility when calculating the costs they incur.

The quality and availability of student transportation services to students of NISD is impacted by the true cost to the district for operating the transportation program. Identified costs that NISD may influence are shown in **Exhibit 10-17**.

**EXHIBIT 10-17
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES IDENTIFIED TRANSPORTATION COSTS
IMPACTING NAVASOTA ISD
2009**

CATEGORY	COST	NAVASOTA ISD
Vehicles	Purchase/Lease price Maintenance/ Repair Fuel/Oil/Fluids Parts Depreciation	Can control costs by limiting routes, time, and miles and improving the quality of the fleet.
Personnel Costs	Recruitment Background checks Drug and alcohol testing License and renewal fees Training Salaries Fringe benefits Management	Can control costs by expecting DSS to reduce the employee turnover rate.
Supplies	Communication system Body fluid cleanup kit Emergency safety equipment First aid kit Cleaning supplies Child Restraints	Most costs are included in the daily rate charge. Communication equipment is not provided by DSS.
Property Costs	Building (rent or mortgage) Security Maintenance Taxes	Can determine the credit value to the district for providing a bus facility for DSS.
General Costs	Insurance Substitute staff Spare vehicles State inspection fees Information technology costs	Can reduce daily costs by expecting DSS to utilize routing software.

SOURCE: United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2009, and MGT of America, Inc., Analysis.

NISD is not able to determine whether expenditures for transportation are legitimate unless it develops an appropriate cost accounting system to monitor efficiency and cost effectiveness. If the current practice is continued, costs for student transportation will very likely continue to escalate.

The Idaho State Department of Education Division of School Transportation states that *routing is probably the single most important factor in establishing an efficient, cost-effective, and safe transportation system. Efficient bus routes incorporate features such as reasonably high average bus occupancy and reasonably low cost-per-rider and cost-per-mile.* Since the efficiency of routes determines how many bus routes, buses, and drivers are necessary, route efficiency is critical to improved cost-effectiveness.

Results from other school districts in Texas and Virginia have demonstrated that transportation departments can reduce the number of routes by 5 to 10 percent by utilizing automated routing software. A 5 percent reduction for NISD would reduce the need for 1.5 routes. At approximately

\$30,000 annual cost per route, the district could reduce their transportation costs by \$45,000 annually.

Students residing within the two-mile radius of the school they attend receive limited funding to pay for their transportation. Funding for students living within two miles of their school is limited to a cap of an additional 10 percent of the allocation received for eligible students residing outside of the two-mile radius. This 10 percent additional allocation is intended to help mitigate issues surrounding students living in areas that are too hazardous to walk to school. Since NISD has determined that they will transport all students living within 2 miles of the school, NISD is doing so with a limited 10 percent additional allocation.

Records indicate approximately 400 students who live within the two-mile radius are transported. It is estimated the equivalent of eight routes are used to transport these students. An alternative to busing students who live close to their neighborhood school for NISD to consider is the *Walking School Bus* program. A walking school bus program consists

of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or as structured as a route with meeting points, a timetable, and a regularly rotated schedule of trained volunteers. Assistance in developing such a program is available at www.walktoschool.org. Both Webb Elementary and Navasota Intermediate Schools are located within a neighborhood that is conducive to this program. Eliminating just one route could save the district \$30,000 in transportation costs and, at the same time, provide a healthy activity for families and children.

The district should develop cost accounting practices that validate the accuracy of all costs associated with providing transportation services and implement cost-effective practices that control transportation expenditures.

The business manager should develop a system of regular checks and balances to examine the accuracy of all requests for payment. This should include the following:

- Audit each monthly invoice to determine if the routes charged actually occurred and if the time charged is accurate.
- Fuel usage by DSS should be audited. The district should audit fuel use by bus to determine whether the buses are consuming acceptable levels of fuel. Access to fueling stations should be controlled and monitored and the possibility for fuel loss should be evaluated on at least a monthly basis, but preferably on a weekly basis.
- Computerized routing software should be utilized to maximize the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of all routes.
- The district should require DSS to collect data that include the number of riders per route, the time-length per route, and the mileage of each route. Daily ridership, route time, and linear density should be monitored monthly to ensure that established routes are necessary and cost effective. Linear density is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily on standard routes to the number of route miles traveled daily for those standard routes.
- The district should develop standards that would encourage more students to walk to school; if it can be done safely. The district should consider implementing a walk-to-school program such as

the *Walking School Bus*. The district should consider implementing standards that would require students living within district determined distances to walk to school.

- Costs associated with providing a bus facility for DSS should be calculated. Expenditures for care and upkeep should be documented and controlled. The comparative value of leasing a similar bus barn facility should be calculated and should be attributed to the overall cost of operating the transportation program. Credit for the value of the use of the bus barn facility should be given to the district.

Two practices that will have the greatest fiscal impact are the utilization of computerized routing software and the reduction in the number of students who are transported that reside within two-miles of their home school.

It is estimated the district in conjunction with DSS could reduce at least 1.5 routes through more efficient route planning. This would generate an annual savings of \$45,000 per year for the district (1.5 routes x \$30,000 per route). Furthermore, there may be a financial impact to the district when renegotiating the contract to include the purchase of computerized routing software. If NISD is not successful in requiring DSS to purchase the computerized software, the district may be obligated to allocate additional funds to secure the software. Therefore, the following fiscal impact is being provided as a guide to district officials when renegotiating the contract and/or to utilize as a basis for comparison when the contract is bid again in 2011. An estimated one-time cost of approximately \$10,000 and an annual support cost of \$1,000 per year would be incurred if the software is purchased by DSS. The contractor, however, is highly likely to own the computerized software, therefore, the district would need to negotiate that DSS begin using a computerized software to create more efficient routes.

Reducing the number of students that receive transportation within the two-mile radius could also reduce transportation costs by eliminating up to two routes. This could save the district an estimated \$60,000 per year (2 routes x \$30,000 per route). The district would encounter approximately \$5,000 start-up fees for safety equipment and apparel to implement the *Walking School Bus* program. It is estimated that \$1,000 for supplies and materials would be needed annually by the district to maintain the volunteer program.

Reducing the number of routes by five percent should reduce the number of miles traveled by school buses and produce a

subsequent reduction in the amount of fuel consumed. NISD's average fuel costs for the past two years were approximately \$200,000 (**Exhibit 10-14**). It is estimated that NISD could reduce fuel consumption by \$10,000 per year (5 percent x \$200,000) given March 2009 fuel prices.

To give the district time needed to implement more efficient routes through the use of a computerized software system, a *Walking School Bus* program and reduction of fuel costs, the fiscal impact of the recommendation may be realized beginning in school year 2010–11. The total annual fiscal impact is \$113,000 (\$45,000 in savings for reduction of 1.5 bus routes + \$60,000 in savings for elimination of 2 bus routes + \$10,000 in savings for fuel consumption—\$1,000 in costs for routing software support—\$1,000 in costs for *Walking School Bus* program supplies and materials). In addition, the total fiscal impact for one-time costs is \$15,000 (\$10,000 cost for purchasing routing software + \$5,000 cost for the *Walking School Bus* program start-up fees).

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS (REC. 50)

NISD lacks safety and emergency management practices and procedures that are mutually developed, evaluated, and enforced in partnership with DSS transportation staff.

The Texas School Safety Center provides guidance to Texas schools regarding safe school practices. Safety planning strategies have been developed to reduce the risk of exposure to potential hazards and to increase the emergency response readiness of schools. In addition, the Texas School Safety Center has developed a Texas Unified School Safety Standards checklist for *School Safety Standards* that summarizes minimum standards that must be met by Texas schools regarding school safety. Onsite review of practices throughout NISD regarding school transportation identified the following:

- The district administrative staff was able to identify a framework for a districtwide emergency plan that included elements for student transportation. However, the specific details of the plan had not yet been developed and/or communicated to DSS. DSS was not able to produce a copy of any written safety or emergency response plans that had been developed by NISD and found in the district's multi-hazard emergency operations plan.
- School buses regularly had loose items surrounding the driver's compartment. In case of an accident, these items could potentially injure riders. Additionally, each bus was equipped with a pipe to be used to

check tire pressure before each trip. This pipe was left loose on the dashboard area of the bus.

- Student drop-off and pick-up locations at Webb Elementary and Navasota High School and Junior High School were very congested. Passenger cars, pedestrians, and school buses were often competing for the same place.
- A "no idling" policy is not enforced when school buses are waiting to pick-up students at school.
- Bus route numbers are not routinely displayed on each bus.
- Misconduct on the school bus is handled by DSS staff. Only when misbehavior has escalated to the level of fighting and/or drugs do school officials become involved. Drivers report misconduct to the dispatcher and the dispatcher determines if a student will be denied transportation. The dispatcher has no formal training to deal with student misconduct beyond that which regular drivers receive. The dispatcher has not been sent to a special class on how to handle student discipline. Denial letters are sent by DSS to parents and to the school the student attends. The denial letter informs parents that a student may no longer use student transportation for a set period of time; students are denied transportation due to misbehavior on the bus. Misbehavior incident rates on buses are not tracked or reported to NISD. Student misconduct reports are maintained in an unlocked file cabinet at the DSS bus facility. There is no indication that students receive due process allowing them an opportunity to submit to school officials their version of what happened on the bus. The contract with DSS transfers final authority to determine if a student will be denied transportation to DSS. Principals interviewed mentioned that they prefer not to deal with student issues that occur on the school bus.
- Video surveillance is not available on all buses.
- DSS buses are not equipped with any form of two-way communication.
- Student rosters and emergency contact information are not kept on the bus.
- Accident or student injury protocol is not kept in each bus. Student accident and /or injury reports were not

used and student injury data is not kept by DSS or required by NISD.

- DSS requires all drivers to attend a monthly safety meeting. There is not an identified safety curriculum that must be taught throughout the year. DSS records who attends the required meeting. Neither a meeting agenda nor minutes of the safety meeting are kept.
- NISD staff does not conduct on site periodic safety assessments. DSS is responsible to implement all safety standards required by the district.

A key element of a safe student transportation program is driver training. DSS has developed a very specific training program for its drivers. Review of the program indicates that it exceeds the minimum standards required in Texas per Texas Education Code Chapter 34 Section 34.002. Drivers felt well prepared to handle all the technical skills required of them to physically drive their bus. They also felt they received appropriate training on the safety requirements they must evaluate daily when inspecting their bus prior to putting it in service.

Drivers indicate that one of the most difficult tasks for them is student management. Training is limited to the pre-service curriculum developed by DSS and the safety standards developed by the Texas Department of Public Safety with the advice of TEA. With a high turnover rate (50 to 60 percent) DSS has a limited number of experienced drivers. Most of the drivers are new and have not yet developed all the skills necessary to handle student misconduct issues. When students' misbehavior escalates, drivers indicate difficulty balancing their focus between driving and watching students. They are concerned that student misconduct is impacting their ability to safely drive the bus.

Implementing sound safety and emergency management practices provide evidence that the district has a commitment to the safety and security of students, staff, and community. By developing plans for mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery, NISD can develop a roadmap to reduce the risks associated with school transportation. The level of risk the district is willing to assume is dependent upon the level of commitment made to safety and emergency response planning. As the level of commitment to mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery planning increases, the level of risk the district assumes decreases. If NISD desires to reduce exposure to risk of injury to students, staff and the community, a commitment to safety planning and review is necessary.

Failure to do so will increase the potential for preventable accidents in the future.

In the past ten years, government agencies and non-profits have developed practices that provide assistance to schools in the area of safety and emergency planning. *National School Safety and Security Services* identified recommendations for school officials to consider when planning safety and emergency planning procedures.

A comprehensive "best practice" resource for use by school transportation officials was recently developed by the *Pupil Transportation Safety Institute*. The 74-page document titled, *School Transportation Safety Assessment Checklist* includes a broad spectrum of criteria for running a model student transportation program. It is designed to help a school district make an informed assessment regarding the implementation of safe practices for their transportation program. The following are selected criteria from the document that are particularly relevant to NISD. These only represent a small sampling of the comprehensive list that was developed for the document.

Radio Communication System: A two-way radio system provides communication between the transportation office and buses.

Contractor Safety Performance: Contractor safety performance is closely monitored by school district officials.

School Sites: Temporary barriers are erected or staff assigned to prevent motorists from entering the bus loading area when buses are loading or unloading.

Student Custody: An up-to-date student roster for each run is carried on the bus.

Driver Turnover: Bus driver turnover for the past 12 months is less than 12 percent.

Student Management: Buses are equipped with video cameras. School administrators consistently enforce the district's bus discipline policy.

Emergency Planning: The district multi-hazard emergency operations plan (EOP) clearly defines the role of transportation personnel in various school emergencies.

Bus Accident Management: Bus drivers are provided with a written list of their responsibilities if they are involved in an accident.

Emergency Equipment on Buses: All vehicles used for pupil transportation, regardless of size, are provided with fire extinguishers, fully-stocked first aid kits, and fluid spill clean-up kits.

Security: Two-way radios systems include a silent alarm function allowing bus drivers to notify base of a possible security problem.

Information about Students with Special Needs: Safety-significant information is provided to the bus driver and attendants responsible for the student, including substitute drivers and attendants, on a need-to-know basis.

Activity and Sports Trips: Drivers for activity trips are properly licensed, certified, and trained for the special challenges of the task before driving. Buses left unattended at activity trips are locked and adequately secured.

NISD should develop a safety mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plan for the school transportation program.

At a minimum, NISD should immediately implement mitigation and prevention strategies for the following:

- Secure all loose items and remove any item in the school bus that could be of danger to the driver or riders.
- Develop procedures to improve drop-off and pick-up practices at Webb Elementary School and Navasota High School and Junior High School.
- Implement a “no idling” policy for buses waiting at schools.
- Provide signage for route numbers on all buses that is visible and portable from bus-to-bus.
- Review the current practice of delegating discipline of students to DSS. An evaluation of frequency, severity, and location of discipline issues should be completed. A district official should be designated to provide oversight of student discipline issues.
- Video surveillance technology should be installed in all school buses.
- Two-way communications technology that is operable in all emergency situations should be installed in all school buses.

- Student rosters, with up-to-date emergency contact information, should be maintained in all school buses.
- All school buses should contain up-to-date guidelines for drivers to follow if they are involved in an accident, a student is injured, or is in need of assistance.
- NISD should require that DSS develop a planned and comprehensive safety curriculum for bus drivers that is presented at required monthly safety meetings. Record should be kept of the topics covered at each of the meetings.
- A district official should be designated to do periodic reviews of the safety practices at DSS. Specific safety assessment guidelines should be utilized in each review.

A long-term commitment is necessary to complete a comprehensive emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plan. NISD must designate one school official to collaborate with DSS to develop and coordinate the elements of an emergency plan that involve student transportation. Therefore, the district should develop a safety mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plan for the school transportation program.

DSS has equipped approximately 50 percent of its buses with video surveillance cameras and recorders. The recommended action would be to have all buses equipped with video surveillance cameras and recorders; however, there may be a financial impact to the district when renegotiating the contract to include the installation of video surveillance in the remainder of the fleet. If NISD is not successful in requiring DSS to provide video surveillance for the remainder of the fleet, the district may be obligated to allocate additional funds to ensure DSS secures these safety improvements. Therefore, the following fiscal impact is being provided as a guide to district officials when renegotiating the contract and/or to utilize as a basis for comparison when the contract is bid again in 2011. It is estimated that there would be a one-time cost to DSS of approximately \$16,500 (15 buses x \$1,100 per video camera) to install video surveillance in the remainder of the fleet.

DSS does not have two-way radios installed in any of their school buses. Once again, the recommended action would be to have all buses equipped with two-way radios; however, there may be a financial impact to the district when renegotiating the contract to include this communication

system. If NISD is not successful in requiring DSS to provide two-way radios for all buses, the district may be obligated to allocate additional funds to ensure DSS secures this communication system. It is estimated that there would be a one-time cost to DSS of \$22,500 to install two-way radios in 30 school buses (30 radios x \$750 per radio). This includes two-way radios for the 25 regular routes, the three special education buses, and the two transit buses for a total of 30 buses. Additionally, it is estimated that it would cost DSS \$6,000 annually to maintain the communication system (12 months x \$500 per month = \$6,000).

To give the district time needed to implement this recommendation, the fiscal impact will begin in school year

2010–11. Total one-time costs for installing video surveillance in the remainder of the fleet and installing two-way radios in 30 school buses is \$39,000 (\$16,500 for video surveillance + \$22,500 for two-way radios). In addition, the total annual fiscal impact to maintain the communication system for the remaining years is \$6,000 in costs. NISD should require DSS to incur the cost of purchasing and installing the video and radio communication systems to DSS owned buses as both are elements of the day-to-day costs of providing appropriate levels of transportation service.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
46. Renegotiate the contract with Durham School Services to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the level of service expected.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,175)
47. Develop data-driven level of performance benchmarks to assess the quality and/or efficiency of the transportation services provided by Durham School Services.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
48. Develop cost-effective standards for the quality of the bus fleet to be provided by Durham School Services and hold Durham School Services accountable for the appropriate level of bus care.	\$0	(\$175,000)	(\$175,000)	(\$175,000)	(\$175,000)	(\$700,000)	\$0
49. Develop cost accounting practices that validate the accuracy of all costs associated with providing transportation services and implement cost-effective practices that control transportation expenditures.	\$0	\$113,000	\$113,000	\$113,000	\$113,000	\$452,000	(\$15,000)

FISCAL IMPACT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
50. Develop a safety mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plan for the school transportation program.	\$0	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$24,000)	(\$39,000)
Totals	\$0	(\$68,000)	(\$68,000)	(\$68,000)	(\$68,000)	(\$272,000)	(\$55,175)

CHAPTER 11

CHILD NUTRITION

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 11. CHILD NUTRITION

The Navasota Independent School District (NISD) Child Nutrition Department is managed by a child nutrition director who reports directly to the assistant superintendent; the business manager also provides support as needed. The child nutrition director shares the duties of the central child nutrition office with her secretary who is knowledgeable on policies and procedures that exist within the department.

The child nutrition operating budget is \$1,734,077 for the 2008–09 school year. During October 2008, the average daily participation (ADP) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was 2,355; and the ADP in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) was 1,073.

Students attending the Success Academy are located, and participate in the child nutrition programs at the high school. The department also offers reimbursable a la carte items for sale in all school cafeterias and bottled water is sold in all schools.

FINDINGS

- NISD does not offer universal breakfast and “offer versus serve” is not practiced at all campuses.
- NISD has raised student and adult meal pricing for the 2008–09 school year; however, reimbursement for a full-price student meal still does not cover the cost of producing and serving the meal; the adult lunch price is less than the federal reimbursement plus U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity assistance for a free meal.
- Portion sizes exceed minimum requirements and contribute to excessive tray waste when not consumed.
- The district pays \$0.043 more per unit for milk packaged in plastic bottles than milk packaged in paper cartons.
- The Child Nutrition Department does not have nor is provided with financial records managers can use to make management decisions and resolve financial discrepancies. The district has unexplained fluctuations in child nutrition profits, losses, and fund balances between 2004–05 and 2007–08.

- There are no district-established standards in the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) for reasonable participation, cost, and revenue for the Child Nutrition Department to target; the child nutrition director and kitchen managers are not provided monthly profit and loss statements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 51: Implement a universal breakfast program and the “offer versus serve” option at all campuses.** The child nutrition director should calculate the projected food, labor, and other costs as percentage of the reduced per meal revenue (\$1.24 per breakfast) giving specific consideration to labor costs associated with higher participation rates for the program.
- **Recommendation 52: Raise student prices for breakfast and lunch; and adult prices for lunches.** Raising prices ensures that the revenue generated by meals in these two categories is sufficient to cover the cost of preparing and serving the meals.
- **Recommendation 53: Evaluate and determine reductions in portion size and food cost without affecting the acceptability of the meals served.**
- **Recommendation 54: Purchase milk packaged in paper cartons.**
- **Recommendation 55: Develop a financial reporting format that is useful to the director of Child Nutrition in making management decisions and resolve the discrepancies in the child nutrition funds.**
- **Recommendation 56: Set standards for reasonable participation, cost, and revenue for child nutrition to target, both by individual production unit and as a district summary.** Additionally, the business manager should provide the child nutrition director and kitchen managers current and accurate monthly profit and loss statements.

DETAILED FINDINGS

UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST (REC. 51)

NISD does not offer universal breakfast and “offer versus serve” is not practiced at all campuses.

According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), breakfasts served as part of the school breakfast program (SBP) provide one-fourth or more of the daily recommended levels for key nutrients that children need. Studies conclude that students who eat school breakfast increase their math and reading scores as well as improve their speed and memory in cognitive tests. Research also shows that children who eat breakfast at school, closer to class and test-taking time, perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.

The district’s 2008–09 ADP in SBP ranges from 23 percent at Navasota High School to 51.6 percent at Webb Elementary School. Approximately 72 percent of enrolled students are approved for free or reduced-price meal benefits. Administrators, teachers, and child nutrition staff members expressed an interest in providing breakfast to all students at no charge, but there is concern regarding affordability.

Exhibit 11-1 shows the 2008–09 pricing and reimbursement structure of the NISD school breakfast program.

Furthermore, an example of the prices the district is currently paying for breakfast items is shown in **Exhibit 11-2**.

While the district has expressed an interest in offering universal breakfast, there has been a concern regarding affordability. The district, however, has not taken into account

EXHIBIT 11-1 NAVASOTA ISD SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM STRUCTURE BY ONE FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEAL VERSUS ONE FULL- PRICE MEAL, 2008–09

REVENUE	BREAKFAST PRICES		
	FREE	REDUCED- PRICE	FULL-PRICE
Meal Price	\$0.00	\$0.30	\$1.10
Reimbursement	\$1.40	\$1.10	\$0.25
Severe Need*	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.00
Total Revenue Available per Meal	\$1.68	\$1.68	\$1.35

*Schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced price qualify for extra “severe need” school breakfast reimbursements.
SOURCE: Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture Reimbursement Schedule and Navasota ISD Meal Prices, March 2009.

the opportunity to increase their revenues from additional Average Daily Participation (ADP) and a decrease in food waste.

According to interviews with staff, the district may be spending more on breakfast foods since it allows students to select as many of the different offered foods as they chose to at no additional cost. The child nutrition director emphasizes this practice is to give children a variety of foods to eat at breakfast; the one meal that has been universally accepted as contributing positively to the ability of children to learn. Although this decision was intended to be in favor of the health of the child, it is not necessarily a financially sound decision for the CNP. School administrators encourage children to select one of each item as they move through the cafeteria line.

A conservative estimate from observations at Webb Elementary School of the unopened food waste on the day of the review team conducted fieldwork is approximately 30 percent of food selected. Students were routinely throwing away unopened cereal, cheese, juice, milk and whole pieces of fruit. In addition to the unopened foods, there were partially eaten portions of other foods discarded at a rate that would be classified as heavy waste in most schools. Custodians, food service staff members, and teachers interviewed indicated that the degree of waste observed is representative of daily meal discards.

As indicated from interviews during the review, NISD does not practice the “offer versus serve” option as part of its SBP. As per the USDA, “offer versus serve” is an option within the National School Lunch (NSLP) and Breakfast Programs (SBP). “Offer versus Serve” lets students turn down foods they do not plan to eat. This helps reduce waste by not making students take food that they don’t like or won’t eat. “Offer versus Serve” gives students flexibility. Meals still meet federal nutrition standards. Depending on how menus are planned in the school, a set number of food groups are offered. Students must select a certain number of food groups for a school meal. The number of food groups that are offered and the number that students can decline vary.

The “offer versus serve” option is displayed in **Exhibit 11-3** which shows the potential savings that NISD could achieve if students were asked to select a maximum of one entrée, one vegetables/fruit serving, and milk from the choices provided within the unit-priced breakfast. As shown, students are currently selecting extra foods at a median cost of \$0.48 per meal. It is difficult to predict if NISD students

**EXHIBIT 11-2
BREAKFAST ITEM PRICES**

ENTREE	COST	FRUIT, FRESH	COST
Biscuit	\$0.18/each	Apple	\$0.18/each
Breakfast Burrito	\$0.39/each	Banana Petite	\$0.13/each
Breakfast Pizza	\$0.29/each	Orange	\$0.13/each
Breakfast Pocket	\$0.29/each	Pear	\$0.20/each
Breakfast Sausage Bagel	\$0.42/each	Kiwi	\$0.33/each
Cereal, Ready-to-Eat	\$0.18/each		
Chicken on Biscuit	\$0.36/each	Fruit/Juice	
Cinnamon Roll	\$0.32/each	Fruit Juice	\$0.18/each
Honey Bun	\$0.27/each		
Muffins	\$0.29/each	Fruit, Canned	
Pancakes	\$0.15/serving	Apricots	\$0.44/serving
Pancake/ Sausage Stick	\$0.30/serving	Peaches	\$0.26/serving
Pop Tart	\$0.31/serving	Pears	\$0.42/ serving
Sausage Roll	\$0.31/each	Pineapple Chunks	\$0.37/ serving
Sausage Patty	\$0.20/each		
String Cheese	\$0.19/each	Fruit, Frozen	
Super Bun	\$0.33/each	Strawberries	\$0.18/serving
		Milk	
		Paper Carton	\$0.25/each
		Plastic Bottle	\$0.29/each

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Child Nutrition Department, 2009.

will typically select all four components or will refuse one component. Each time a student refuses one component of the breakfast, the savings in food cost will increase. The bolded figures represent the minimum selections the students could have taken for a reimbursable meal.

As shown in **Exhibit 11-1**, the 2008–09 free or reduced-price breakfast generates \$1.68 respectively; and a full-paid breakfast generates \$1.35 in federal and local funds in NISD. The average breakfast served generates \$1.57. Using the average revenue generated by one breakfast, a food cost of \$1.51 (see **Exhibit 11-3**) represents 96 percent of revenue. Industry standard for the amount generated by one breakfast with food costs is 40–45 percent, or \$0.63–\$0.71.

The best practice and the industry standard for implementation of “offer versus serve” in the NSLP and SBP follows the guidelines offered in Resource Guide: Offer Versus Serve. Districts should offer the four required components of the school breakfast as outlined in the traditional school breakfast meal pattern, and allowed to refuse one component. The four

required components of a school breakfast include: 2 Breads, or 2 Meats, or 1 Bread and 1 Meat; 1/2 cup of fruit; and milk. When choices are offered within one of the component categories, the student may select one of the choices. Any additional foods selected by the student should be considered a la carte sales and the child should be charged accordingly.

NISD will continue to lose significant amounts of money on the food cost of tray waste if the interpretation of how “offer versus serve” should be implemented at breakfast is not changed; therefore, the district should implement the “offer versus serve” option at all campuses.

Using information from **Exhibit 11-3**, there is potential for a savings in food cost of \$0.48 or more, per breakfast served by limiting the number of foods students may select as part of the reimbursable unit-priced breakfast. The reimbursement claim for October 2008 totaled 23,601 student breakfasts claimed, or an ADP rate of 1,074 reimbursable breakfasts per day. By changing the way “offer versus serve” is implemented, the district could potentially realize a minimum savings of

**EXHIBIT 11-3
FOOD COST OF STUDENT BREAKFAST SELECTIONS OBSERVED VERSUS MINIMUM SELECTIONS QUALIFYING FOR REIMBURSEMENT
WEBB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

FOOD COST OF STUDENT SELECTIONS – “OFFER VERSUS SERVE”						
TOTAL FOOD COST FOR MENU AS OFFERED	FOOD ITEMS	REIMBURSABLE STUDENT SELECTIONS				
\$0.30	Pig n Stick	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
	or					
\$0.18	Assorted Cereal and	\$0.18	\$0.18	\$0.18	\$0.18	\$0.18
\$0.19	Cheddar Cheese Portion	\$0.19		\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19
	and					
\$0.18	Fruit Juice or	\$0.18	\$0.18	\$0.18		\$0.18
\$0.37	Canned Fruit or	\$0.37		\$0.37		\$0.37
\$0.20	Fresh Fruit		\$0.20		\$0.20	
\$0.29	Milk	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.29
\$1.71	Total Food Cost of Five Actual Student Selections Observed are shown in bold	\$1.51	\$1.15	\$1.51	\$1.16	\$1.51
	Total Food Cost of a Four Component Breakfast (Bold)	\$0.84	\$0.79	\$1.03	\$0.79	\$0.96
	Savings	\$0.67	\$0.36	\$0.48	\$0.37	\$0.55
	Median Food Cost of Five Actual Student Selections					\$1.51
	Median Food Cost of a Four Component Breakfast					\$0.84
	Median Savings per Meal					\$0.48

SOURCE: Navasota ISD March Breakfast Menu, Department of Child Nutrition, 2009.

\$515.52 daily (1,074 ADP x \$0.48 food cost = \$515.52), or \$92,794 annually (\$515.52 daily savings x 180 days = \$92,794). These figures represent the children selection all of the four components of the offered breakfast. When children refuse one of the components under “offer versus serve,” the savings will increase up to 25 percent more per breakfast.

Additionally, NISD should implement a universal school breakfast program. According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a universal school breakfast refers to a school program that offers breakfast at no charge to all students, regardless of income.

There is no rule as to the percentage of students approved for free and reduced-priced meals necessary to have a financially self-sustaining universal breakfast program; many factors contribute to its success or failure. The major factor is the percentage of students approved for free and reduced-price meal benefits. The higher the number of breakfasts served as free and reduced-price reimbursable meals, the better the chance a universal breakfast program has for financial success.

NISD currently has 72 percent of enrolled students approved for free and reduced-price meal benefits.

Two significant changes generally occur when implementing the universal breakfast program:

1. The number of participating students receiving reduced-price and full-price meal benefits will increase.
2. The revenue collected from the students receiving reduced-price and full-price meal benefits will no longer include local funds; revenue per meals served will be reduced to federal reimbursement.

Exhibit 11-4 shows that with the universal breakfast program, the revenue per meals available to pay for food, labor, and other costs decreases.

Lueders-Avoca Consolidated ISD implemented the universal breakfast program using the most effective and economical method, and changed the serving time until after the beginning of the school day from its original 7:30 A.M. time

**EXHIBIT 11-4
COMPARISON OF REVENUE GENERATED BY ONE FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEAL VERSUS ONE FULL-PRICE MEAL**

REVENUE	BREAKFAST, 2008–09			UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST		
	FREE	REDUCED-PRICE	FULL-PRICE	FREE	REDUCED-PRICE	FULL-PRICE
Meal Price	\$0.00	\$0.30	\$1.10	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Reimbursement	\$1.40	\$1.10	\$0.25	\$1.40	\$1.10	\$0.25
Severe Need*	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.00	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.00
Total Revenue Available per Meal	\$1.68	\$1.68	\$1.35	\$1.68	\$1.38	\$0.25

*Schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced price qualify for extra "severe need" school breakfast reimbursements.

SOURCE: Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture Reimbursement Schedule and Navasota ISD Meal Prices, March 2009.

slot to 9 A.M. The schedule change allowed for students to attend first period before heading to breakfast and resuming the rest of their day. School administrators and cafeteria personnel point to the fact that students are more awake at this later hour, which means they are more open to the idea of sitting down for a meal.

Exhibit 11-5 provides 2008–09 and projected ADP and daily revenue for NISD. The funds available per meal to provide for food, labor and other expenditures decreases from current levels, consequently, with an increase in participation administrators must be able to produce a meal for the available funds per meal, as shown in the 90 percent ADP column of **Exhibit 11-5**.

Exhibit 11-6 shows the funds available for food, labor, and other expenditures plus a small profit, using commonly accepted industry standards. Nationally, free breakfasts are reimbursed at \$1.40 plus \$0.28 Severe Need, totaling \$1.68

revenue per free meal. The price of the NISD full-priced breakfast plus reimbursement is less than the reimbursement provided for a free breakfast; the average NISD revenue available per breakfast is currently \$1.57. If ADP of NISD breakfast increased to 90 percent through the implementation of the universal breakfast, the revenue available per breakfast would drop to \$1.24 as a result of the no-charge policy.

NISD should implement a universal breakfast program and the "offer versus serve" option at all campuses. The child nutrition director should calculate the projected food, labor, and other costs as percentage of the reduced per meal revenue (\$1.24 per breakfast) giving specific consideration to labor costs associated with higher participation rates for the program. The analysis should determine the breakeven point for offering free breakfast to all students.

At breakfast, students are offered: two entrees, juice, canned fruit, fresh fruit, and milk. Choices are encouraged because

**EXHIBIT 11-5
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09 AND PROJECTED AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION AND DAILY REVENUE BY SCHOOL**

SCHOOL	2008–09		PROJECTED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST AT 90 PERCENT ADP				AVAILABLE FUNDS PER MEAL		
	TOTAL DAILY REVENUE	ADP PERCENT OF ADA	ADP	APPROVED BY CATEGORY	90 PERCENT ADP	TOTAL DAILY REVENUE	CHANGE IN DAILY REVENUE	2008–09	90 PERCENT ADP
High School	\$303.87	23.0%	185	804	724	\$791.13	\$487.26	\$1.64	\$1.09
Junior High School	\$234.30	23.6%	143	606	545	\$657.10	\$422.80	\$1.64	\$1.21
Intermediate	\$208.74	37.8%	127	336	302	\$391.70	\$182.96	\$1.64	\$1.30
High Point Elementary	\$252.48	51.0%	155	304	274	\$330.92	\$78.44	\$1.63	\$1.21
Webb Elementary	\$767.64	51.6%	464	899	809	\$1,116.01	\$348.37	\$1.65	\$1.38

NOTE: ADP = Average Daily Participation and ADA = Average Daily Attendance

SOURCE: Record of Meals Claimed; U.S. Department of Agriculture Reimbursement Schedule, October 2008.

EXHIBIT 11-6
BUDGETING OF AVAILABLE FUNDS PER BREAKFAST

	FUNDS AVAILABLE PER BREAKFAST	FOOD 45 PERCENT	LABOR 40 PERCENT	OTHER 10 PERCENT	PROFIT 5 PERCENT
Free Reimbursement	\$1.68	\$0.76	\$0.67	\$0.17	\$0.08
2008–09 Average	\$1.57	\$0.71	\$0.63	\$0.16	\$0.08
Average Projected Under Universal Breakfast at 90 Percent Average Daily Participation	\$1.24	\$0.56	\$0.50	\$0.12	\$0.06

SOURCE: Adapted from Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Leadership by Excellence, 2008.

they contribute to participation in the programs. The district needs to continue offering choices within the traditional breakfast pattern if a universal breakfast option is implemented; however, it would be necessary for the district to properly implement “offer versus serve.” If the district does not implement “offer versus serve” leading to a continuing loss of money for food costs related to tray waste, then the district will continue to lose money as the ADP for breakfast increases with the implementation of a universal breakfast program.

As per the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI), in school food service programs, the production of meals is the unit of measurement used to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of a school food service program. To determine meal cost or meals per labor hour, customer transactions for a la carte/extra food sales and other revenue-producing services must be converted to a meal equivalent. The meal equivalent is a statistical tool that is used to allocate costs based on a unit of production. It is not a unit of production but a calculation that allows the operator to equate all meals to a standard. Counting meals other than lunches is not as clear-cut as counting lunches served to students. Thus, a method for converting operational data for other food services must be used to determine an equivalent measure.

Furthermore, NFSMI sets out to explain that Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH) is used by many school food service administrators to monitor the effectiveness of the operation using the productivity index of meals per labor hour to determine appropriate staffing. This is an important piece of information that indicates to administrators whether they are using their resources efficiently and productively. It can help in determining how many employees are needed in a single production unit or throughout the district. Paid labor hours are calculated on time actually paid for by the school food service program. The formula for determining meals per

labor hour is to divide the number of meals or meal equivalents by the number of paid labor hours.

NISD individual school performance with regard to effective use of labor hours is demonstrated in **Exhibit 11-7**. The exhibit shows performance measured in Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH); for both 2008–09 and projected with the implementation of a universal breakfast program using 90 percent participation. Individual school information has been integrated into the industry standard guidelines. As shown, based on meal equivalents (ME) and 2008–09 staffing levels, all NISD schools are currently producing fewer than the recommended MPLH. The projected 90 percent ADP for a universal breakfast program increases MPLH produced to levels almost equal to recommended levels.

In summary, it appears that the district has sufficient labor to accommodate the projected number of meals; however, that is on the assumption that:

1. the managers are all working managers;
2. menus are written with limited labor hours in mind;
3. kitchen-prepared foods such as cutting carrot sticks, assembling entrée salads, assembling cold sandwiches, etc. are kept to a minimum; and
4. breakfasts are planned so that they may be served by one person and a cashier per serving line, as the other employees work to back up the line and begin lunch preparation.

The child nutrition director will need to study each school’s staffing level as the participation increases. Menu specific written work schedules would help in making this determination. Unused labor dollars can be used to support the food costs.

**EXHIBIT 11-7
STAFFING GUIDELINES FOR ONSITE FOOD PRODUCTION AND SERVICE**

MEAL EQUIVALENTS (ME)	RECOMMENDED MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH)		NAVASOTA ISD ACTUAL		RECOMMENDED MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH)	
	CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM*		NAVASOTA ISD MENUS		CONVENIENCE SYSTEM**	
	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS
301–400	15	20–26			18	17–21
High Point Elementary School, 2008-09, 382 ME with 90 Percent Breakfast ADP 480 ME			13.6 17.3	28 28		
401–500	16	25–31			19	21–25
Navasota Intermediate School, 2008-09, 413 ME with 90 Percent Breakfast ADP 492 ME			12.9 15.4	32 32		
701–800	19	38–43			23	32–35
Navasota Junior High School, 2008-09, 719 ME with 90 Percent Breakfast ADP 982 ME			12.8 17.5	56 56		
801–900	20	40–45			24	34–38
Navasota High School, 2008-09, 896 ME with 90 Percent Breakfast ADP 1246 ME			12.4 17.3	72 72		
Webb Elementary School, 2008-09, 1115 ME with 90 Percent Breakfast ADP 1343 ME			15.5 18.7	72 72		

*Food service system involving ingredients being assembled and food being produced onsite, held either heated or chilled, and served.

**Food service system involving limited food preparation; food products purchased already prepared and only requires heating before service.

NOTE: ADP = Average Daily Participation

SOURCE: Adapted from Financial Management Instructor Guide, National Food Service Management Institute, the University of Mississippi, 2005.

The fiscal impact associated with the universal breakfast is dependent on the findings of the recommended evaluation by the child nutrition director and the ability of the district to stay within set limits for food, labor, and other expenditures. The average revenue available per meal at 90 percent ADP is \$1.24 as previously identified in **Exhibit 11-6**. The median food cost of the sample menus (**Exhibit 11-3**) is \$0.84; the projected cost for disposables and other expenditures is \$0.12 per meal; leaving \$0.28 per breakfast unspent. If it is determined that additional labor is needed, it should not

exceed \$0.22 per meal to ensure \$0.06 per meal planned profit.

Exhibit 11-8 provides examples of fiscal impact when the food cost is limited to \$0.84 per meal; the other costs are limited to \$0.12 per meal; and a planned profit of \$0.06 per meal is achieved. The first example uses the \$0.22 per meal labor to add additional staffing. The second example uses 2008–09 staffing levels and the \$0.22 becomes profit in addition to the \$0.06 planned profit.

**EXHIBIT 11-8
POTENTIAL POSITIVE FISCAL IMPACT AT 90 PERCENT AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST WITH AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL LABOR**

AVAILABLE REVENUE PER BREAKFAST	MEDIAN FOOD COST PER BREAKFAST	AVERAGE OTHER COST PER BREAKFAST	REMAINING FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR ADDITIONAL LABOR COST PER BREAKFAST	DAILY PLANNED PROFIT PER BREAKFAST SERVED	TOTAL DAILY PROFIT AT 90 PERCENT ADP	TOTAL ANNUAL PROFIT AT 90 PERCENT ADP
\$1.24	\$0.84	\$0.12	\$0.22	\$0.06	\$159.24	\$28,663
\$1.24	\$0.84	\$0.12	\$0.00	\$0.28*	\$743.12	\$133,762

*The sum of \$0.28 is derived by adding \$0.06 profit + \$0.22 labor per meal for a total of \$0.28.

NOTE: ADP = Average Daily Participation

SOURCE: Analysis based on Navasota ISD Child Nutrition Department Data, 2009.

The assumed participation is 90 percent ADP or 2,654 breakfasts per day.

Using the 90 percent ADP goal, 2,654 breakfasts per day at a profit of \$0.06 each equals earnings of \$159.24 daily (\$0.06 profit per meal X 2,654 at 90 percent participation = \$159.24), or \$28,663 annually (\$159.24 daily X 180 days = \$28,663).

Based on the *Staffing Guidelines for Onsite Food Production*, NISD can accommodate the increase in meal equivalents with no additional labor hours. The resulting fiscal impact is \$743.12 daily (\$0.28 profit per meal x 2,654 at 90 percent participation = \$743.12), or \$133,762 annually (\$743.12 x 180 days = \$133,762).

To give the district time needed to implement this recommendation, there will be no fiscal impact for 2009–10. The total annual fiscal impact to the district for the remaining years is \$133,762 with a total 5-year fiscal impact of \$535,048 [(4 years x \$133,762) + \$0 = \$535,048].

STUDENT AND ADULT MEAL PRICING (REC. 52)

NISD has raised student and adult meal pricing for the 2008–09 school year; however, reimbursement for a full price student meal still does not cover the cost of producing and serving the meal; the adult lunch price is less than the federal reimbursement plus USDA commodity assistance for a free meal.

Exhibit 11-9 identifies 2008–09 student and adult meal breakfast and lunch pricing for school districts in the surrounding area. Of the school districts selected, NISD has

the second highest prices; yet the NISD is currently operating at a deficit of \$122,323. As of March 23, 2009, year-to-date revenue was \$796,597.20 and expenditures were \$918,919.87.

Exhibit 11-10 shows adult breakfast prices exceed the revenue generated by student meals. The adult lunch price is \$0.0475 less than the revenue generated by a free or reduced-price lunch. According to the business manager, NISD supplements CNP revenue by providing utilities and various other services at no charge. The value of these district-donated services subsidizes the CNP sufficiently to cover the difference.

Exhibit 11-11 shows a comparison of the NISD revenue generated by one free or reduced-price student meal to the revenue generated by one full-price student meal over a span of three school years. The USDA recommends, but does not require, that when the price charged to students receiving full-price meal benefits is combined with reimbursement for a full-price meal and the per meal value of USDA-donated foods, the total price of the revenue should be sufficient to cover the cost of preparing and serving that meal.

Districts must ensure, to the extent practicable, that the federal reimbursements, children's payments and other non-designated nonprofit child nutrition revenues do not subsidize program meals served to adults. Breakfasts and lunches served to teachers, administrators, custodians and other adults must be priced so that the adult payment in combination with any other revenues (i.e., school subsidizing as a fringe benefit) is sufficient to cover the overall cost of the meal, including the value of any USDA entitlement and

EXHIBIT 11-9 SCHOOL MEAL PRICES OF DISTRICTS IN THE SURROUNDING AREA, 2008–09

MEAL PRICING SCHOOL DISTRICT	BREAKFAST			LUNCH		
	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ADULT	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ADULT
Aransas Pass ISD	\$0.75	\$0.75	-	\$1.75	\$1.75	-
Bryan ISD	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$3.00
College Station ISD	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.75
El Campo ISD (ARAMARK)	\$0.75	\$0.75	-	\$1.75	\$1.75	-
Iola ISD	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$3.00
Liberty ISD	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$2.50
Montgomery ISD	\$1.10	\$1.10	\$1.25	\$2.10	\$2.10	\$3.00
Navasota ISD	\$1.10	\$1.10	\$1.75	\$1.90	\$2.20	\$2.75
District Average	\$1.03	\$1.03	\$1.54	\$1.91	\$2.04	\$2.83

SOURCE: Individual School District Web Sites, 2009.

**EXHIBIT 11-10
ADULT MEAL PRICES COMPARED TO TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED BY A STUDENT MEAL**

BREAKFAST					
CATEGORY OF MEAL BENEFITS	PRICE PAID	REIMBURSEMENT	SEVERE NEED*	USDA-DONATED FOODS VALUE	TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED BY MEAL
Free	\$0.00	\$1.40	\$0.28	N/A	\$1.68
Reduced-Price	\$0.30	\$1.10	\$0.28	N/A	\$1.68
Full Price	\$1.10	\$0.25	N/A	N/A	\$1.35
Adult	\$1.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1.75

LUNCH					
CATEGORY OF MEAL BENEFITS	PRICE PAID	REIMBURSEMENT	60 PERCENT**	USDA-DONATED FOODS VALUE PER LUNCH	TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED BY MEAL
Free	\$0.00	\$2.57	\$0.02	\$0.2075	\$2.7975
Reduced-Price	\$0.40	\$2.17	\$0.02	\$0.2075	\$2.7975
Full Price	\$1.85/\$2.20	\$0.24/\$0.24	\$0.02/\$0.02	\$0.2075	\$2.3175/\$2.6675
Adult	\$2.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$2.7500

*Schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced price qualify for extra "severe need" school breakfast reimbursements.

**Applies to schools where 60 percent of more lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced price. Navasota ISD collects an additional 2¢.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Child Nutrition Department, March, 2009 and U.S. Department of Agriculture Reimbursement Schedule, 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 11-11
COMPARISON OF REVENUE GENERATED BY ONE FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEAL TO ONE FULL-PRICE MEAL,
AUGUST 2006–MARCH 2009**

PER MEAL REVENUE OVER A THREE YEAR PERIOD								
SCHOOL YEAR	BREAKFAST				LUNCH			
	ALL SCHOOLS FREE / REDUCED-PRICE	ALL SCHOOLS FULL-PRICE	ALL SCHOOLS DIFFERENCE	ALL SCHOOLS FREE / REDUCED PRICE	ELEMENTARY FULL-PRICE	MIDDLE AND HIGH FULL-PRICE	ELEMENTARY DIFFERENCE	MIDDLE / HIGH DIFFERENCE
2006–07	\$1.31+\$0.25	\$1.00+\$0.24	\$0.32	\$2.40 + \$0.02	\$1.75 + \$0.23	\$1.85+ \$0.23	\$0.44	\$0.34
2007–08	\$1.35+\$0.26	\$1.00+\$0.24	\$0.37	\$2.47 + \$0.02	\$1.75 + \$0.25	\$1.85 + \$0.25	\$0.49	\$0.39
2008–09	\$1.40+\$0.28	\$1.10+\$0.25	\$0.33	\$2.57 + \$0.02	\$1.85 + \$0.26	\$2.20 + \$0.26	\$0.48	\$0.13

SOURCE: Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture Reimbursement Schedules and Navasota ISD Meal Prices.

bonus commodities used to prepare the meal. An audit trail must document these revenues since meals served to adults are neither eligible under the law and regulations for federal cash reimbursement, nor do they earn donated commodities for the district.

If the district does not raise prices as necessary to maintain the price of a full-price student meal and an adult meal at a

level that covers all of the costs of producing and serving that meal, the CNP will continue to lose funds on each meal served.

NISD should raise student prices for breakfast and lunch; and adult prices for lunches to ensure that the revenue generated by meals in these two categories is sufficient to cover the cost of preparing and serving the meals. Raising

prices will ensure that the revenue generated by meals in these two categories is sufficient to cover the cost of preparing and serving the meals. This will help ensure that funds available to pay the cost of student meals are not being used to supplement the cost of adult meals as per the Texas Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Division Administrator's Reference Manual.

In order for NISD's full-priced student meal prices to equal the reimbursement for a free meal the breakfast price would need to be raised to \$1.43; the lunch price would need to be raised to \$2.33; and adult lunches would need to be raised to \$2.80. Previous school reviews conducted in other school districts have shown that an increase in lunch prices might be more palatable to the community if a universal breakfast program is implemented for students. Students receiving full-price meal benefits would receive daily breakfast and lunch for \$2.33; instead of \$1.10 for breakfast and \$1.85 or \$2.20 for lunch, for a total cost of \$2.95 or \$3.30 respectively, depending on grade level of the child.

Exhibit 11-12 demonstrates the total daily and annual (180 days) potential increase in revenue if prices are increased to the level of a reimbursable free breakfast and lunch.

Using 2008–09 ADP, the daily revenue for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs increases by

\$183.79 daily or \$33,082 annually ($\$183.79 \times 180 \text{ days} = \$33,082$), when the price of a student full-priced meal plus USDA reimbursement equals the reimbursement for a free meal (\$0.33 increase for breakfast, \$0.13 increase for secondary lunch, and \$0.48 increase for elementary lunch); and the full-price of an adult lunch equals the reimbursement for a free student meal plus the per meal value of USDA commodity assistance (\$0.05 increase for adult lunch).

To give the district time needed to implement this recommendation, there will be no fiscal impact for 2009–10. The total annual fiscal impact to the district for the remaining years is \$33,082 with a total 5-year fiscal impact of \$132,328 [$(4 \text{ years} \times \$33,082) + \$0 = \$132,328$].

Since the onsite review, NISD has provided documentation from the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) – Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) (15.3 Meal Pricing) indicating that the district falls within the guidelines when charging for an adult lunch. While the current pricing falls within the guidelines, it is still not enough to cover the cost to produce and serve the meal as outlined in the recommendation. The intent of the recommendation is to support increased revenue to cover the cost of the meals served so that the program is self-sustaining.

**EXHIBIT 11-12
POTENTIAL INCREASE IN REVENUE BY RAISING PRICES OF FULL-PRICED MEALS TO EQUAL REVENUE RECEIVED FOR
FREE MEALS**

	BREAKFAST			LUNCH		
	DAILY FULL-PRICED ADP	DIFFERENCE IN REVENUE PER MEAL	POTENTIAL DAILY INCREASE IN REVENUE	DAILY FULL-PRICED ADP	DIFFERENCE IN REVENUE PER MEAL	POTENTIAL DAILY INCREASE IN REVENUE
Navasota High School	21	\$0.33	\$6.93	155	\$0.13	\$20.15
Navasota Junior High School	18	\$0.33	\$5.94	137	\$0.13	\$17.81
Navasota Intermediate School	14	\$0.33	\$4.62	56	\$0.48	\$26.88
High Point Elementary School	24	\$0.33	\$7.92	62	\$0.48	\$29.76
J.C. Webb Elementary	36	\$0.33	\$11.88	100	\$0.48	\$48.00
Adults in All Schools	N/A	N/A	N/A	78	\$0.05	\$3.90
Totals Daily			\$37.29			\$146.50
Totals Annual			\$6,712			\$26,370
Grand Total Annual						\$33,082

NOTE: ADP = Average Daily Participation.

SOURCE: Navasota ISD October 2008 Record of Meals Claimed and Meal Prices, 2008–09.

PORTION SIZES (REC. 53)

Portion sizes exceed minimum requirements and contribute to excessive tray waste when not consumed.

According to NISD cafeteria managers, the portion size of all fruits and vegetables offered is 1/2-cup. The USDA Traditional Meal Pattern for lunch requires the vegetables/fruits component of the meal be offered as follows:

- Grades K–3 – Total 1/2-cup from two or more sources
- Grades 4–12 – Total 3/4-cup from two or more sources

In order to meet and not exceed these requirements a variety of options exist in planning serving sizes. Many school districts consistently use two 1/4-cup (#16 scoop) servings to meet the K–3 requirements. On days when three vegetables/fruits servings are offered the K–3 child gets a third 1/4-cup serving for a total of 3/4-cup. To meet, not exceed the 3/4-cup requirement for students in grades 4–12, vegetables/fruits servings might be portioned in two 3/8-cup (#10 scoop) servings; 1/2-cup (#8 scoop) plus 1/4-cup servings; or in the case of offering three sources within the menu, three 1/4-cup servings meet the 3/4-cup requirement. The minimum contribution that may be counted is 1/8-cup or two tablespoons; this is a reasonable serving size for items like cranberry sauce and pickle chips; however, 1/8-cup could be used on the grades K–3 menu to introduce new or very expensive vegetables/fruits servings as long as the total amount offered equaled 1/2-cup.

Using the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*, three raw carrots sticks 1/2 inch by 4 inches equals 1/4-cup vegetables/fruits. Therefore, it would take six of these sticks to equal 1/2-cup vegetables/fruits. Although raw carrot sticks are typically popular, six sticks may be too large a serving for older children and adults.

The costs for producing excessive portion sizes of the fruit salad and chef's salad in NISD exceed industry standards. Based on the March 2009 NISD menu, the district is offering approximately 11 1/4 (1/2-cup) servings or 5 5/8-cups of vegetables/fruits weekly (1 1/8-cup daily or 5/8-cup more than the daily requirements for grades K–3; and 3/8-cup more than the daily requirement for grades 4–12). This practice is problematic when the food is not consumed and results in excessive tray waste, as was observed during the course of the review, and validated by custodians, teachers, and food service staff members.

Exhibit 11-13 shows the costs associated with the excess portion sizes for the salads. As shown, if the entrée salad portion sizes were reduced to meet but not exceed the requirements of the traditional lunch pattern; and the container used were replaced with a less costly container; the total savings for a fruit salad would be \$0.70 per serving; and chef's salad would be \$0.67 per serving.

Corpus Christi ISD serves minimum portion sizes designed to meet, but not exceed minimum USDA requirements. Although additional foods may be added as necessary to meet the nutrient standards, portion sizes are carefully calculated in the planning stages of menu and recipe development; and the precise execution of those plans is closely monitored in the individual school kitchens.

The district should evaluate and determine reductions in portion size and food cost without affecting the acceptability of the meals served.

An example of how vegetables/fruits portion sizes could be reduced on the March 9, 2008, weekly menu follows:

Grades K–3

- All portions of vegetables/fruits could be reduced to 1/4-cup (#16 scoop) with the possible exception of French fries which could be reduced to 3/8-cup (#10 scoop); (2 1/4-cup reduction in volume of vegetables/fruits servings).
- Spanish rice when made with the USDA recipe contributes 1/4-cup vegetable in a 1/2-cup serving. If this product is made using the USDA recipe, the portion size could be reduced to 1/4-cup contributing 1/8-cup vegetables/fruits provided that the Spanish rice is not the only Grain/Bread offering in the meal (1/8-cup reduction in volume of vegetables/fruits servings).

Using the above examples, the vegetables/fruits offering total volume reduction to students in grades K–3 would equal 2 3/8-cup per week.

Grades 4–12

- All fruit portions could be reduced to 3/8-cup (5/8-cup reduction in volume of vegetables/fruits servings).
- English peas could be reduced to 3/8-cup or 1/4-cup (1/8-cup reduction in volume of vegetables/fruits servings).

**EXHIBIT 11-13
EXCESSIVE (COSTS) OR SAVINGS FOR ENTRÉE SALAD RECIPES**

FRUIT SALAD					
REQUIRED COMPONENTS	REQUIRED PORTION K-3	REQUIRED PORTION 4-12	RECIPE YIELD	EXCESS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS OF EXCESS
Meats/Meat Alternate	1-1/2 oz equivalent lean meat	2 oz equivalent lean meat	3 oz	1 oz – 1-1/2 oz	(\$0.19)
Vegetables/Fruits	1/2-cup from two or more sources	3/4-cup from two or more sources	2 1/4-cup	1 1/2 – 1 3/4-cup	(\$0.36)
Grains/Breads	1 serving per day; eight per week	1 serving per day; eight per week	1 serving	N/A	N/A
Milk	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	N/A	N/A
Styrofoam Container			\$0.25	\$0.10	(\$0.15)
Total (Costs) or Savings of Excess Ingredients per Portion					(\$0.70)
CHEF'S SALAD					
REQUIRED COMPONENTS	REQUIRED PORTION K-3	REQUIRED PORTION 4-12	RECIPE YIELD	EXCESS	(COSTS) OR SAVINGS OF EXCESS
Meats/Meat Alternate	1-1/2 oz equivalent lean meat	2 oz equivalent lean meat	3 1/2 oz	1 1/2–2 oz	(\$0.14)
Vegetables/Fruits	1/2-cup from two or more sources	3/4-cup from two or more sources	2 1/4-cup	1 1/2 – 1 3/4-cup	(\$0.25)
Grains/Breads	1 serving per day; eight per week	1 serving per day; eight per week	1 serving	N/A	N/A
Milk	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	N/A	N/A
Salad Dressing	N/A	N/A	3 oz	1 1/2 oz	(\$0.13)
Styrofoam Container			\$0.25	\$0.10	(\$0.15)
Total (Costs) or Savings of Excess Ingredients per Portion					(\$0.67)

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Recipe File and High Point Elementary School Invoices, 2009.

- “Charra” beans and celery sticks could each be reduced to 3/8-cup (1/4-cup reduction in volume of vegetables/fruits servings).

Using the above examples, the vegetables/fruits offering total volume reduction to students in grades 4–12 would equal one full cup per week.

Exhibit 11-14 identifies the potential daily and annual savings when entrée salads are reduced in size.

Exhibit 11-15 shows the difference in the food cost of commonly used serving sizes of vegetables/fruits portions in the National School Lunch Program. Cost per 1/2-cup servings were provided by the NISD child nutrition director.

The average cost of one 1/2-cup serving of a vegetables/fruits component is \$0.22 as shown in the previous exhibit. Using

the Grades 4–12 reductions (the lesser or the more conservative of the two examples of reductions in portion sizes) 1-cup total per week, this represents a savings of \$0.44 per five meals (one week) or \$0.088 per meal. This simple change, which from observations of tray waste over the course of the review would potentially yield \$119.59 daily savings (\$0.088 x 1,359 ADP); \$21,526 annual savings (\$119.59 x 180 days = \$21,526). When added to the projected annual savings in **Exhibit 11-13** of \$39,564 for entrée fruit salads and \$12,784 for entrée chef’s salads, the grand total of savings for reduction in vegetables/fruits portions is \$73,874 (\$21,526 + \$39,564 + \$12,784 = \$73,874).

The year-to-date expenditure on fresh fruits and vegetables as of February 2009 was \$60,000; \$38,000 more than was spent the prior year, as of February, 2008. This signals that the district is following the recommendation of USDA to

**EXHIBIT 11-14
POTENTIAL SAVINGS FOR REDUCING THE PORTION SIZES OF ENTRÉE SALADS**

COSTS	INDUSTRY STANDARD COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE	AVERAGE NAVASOTA ISD REVENUE PER LUNCH	TARGET PER MEAL USING 45 PERCENT OF REVENUE	FOOD COST				SAVINGS	
				ACTUAL FRUIT SALAD	ACTUAL CHEF'S SALAD	REDUCED SIZE FRUIT SALAD	REDUCED SIZE CHEF'S SALAD	SAVINGS ON NUMBER OF FRUIT SALADS SERVED	SAVINGS ON NUMBER OF CHEF'S SALADS SERVED
Food	40–45%	\$2.52	\$1.13	\$1.75	\$1.55	\$1.20	\$1.03	\$172.70	\$55.12
Labor	40–45%	\$2.52	\$1.01						
Other*	5–15%	\$2.52	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.10	\$0.10	\$47.10	\$15.90
Profit	0–5%	\$2.52	\$0.13						
Total Daily Savings								\$219.80	\$71.02
Total Annual Savings								\$39,564	\$12,784

*Represents costs and savings on Styrofoam containers.

NOTE: Calculations Estimated based on Total District Fruit Salads served of 314, and Total Chef Salads served of 106.

SOURCE: Exhibit 11-13, and District Totals of Fruit Salads and Chef's Salads for March 4, 2009; and Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Leadership by Excellence, 2008.

**EXHIBIT 11-15
NAVASOTA ISD VEGETABLE/FRUIT PORTION COSTS, 2008–09**

VEGETABLES/FRUITS	COST/ 1/2-CUP	COST/ 3/8-CUP	COST/ 1/4-CUP	FRUIT, FRESH	COST/ 1/2-CUP	COST/ 3/8-CUP	COST/ 1/4-CUP
Beans, Baked	\$0.18	\$0.135	\$0.09	Apple	\$0.18	\$0.135	\$0.09
Beans, Pinto	\$0.16	\$0.12	\$0.08	Banana Petite	\$0.13	\$0.0975	\$0.065
Beans, Pork N	\$0.21	\$0.1575	\$0.105	Orange	\$0.13	\$0.0975	\$0.065
Beans, Ranch Style	\$0.19	\$0.1425	\$0.095	Pears	\$0.20	\$0.15	\$0.10
Beans, Refried	\$0.20	\$0.15	\$0.10	Kiwi	\$0.33	\$0.2475	\$0.165
Broccoli, Frozen	\$0.18	\$0.135	\$0.09				
Carrots, Frozen	\$0.12	\$0.09	\$0.06	Fruit, Canned			
Corn	\$0.19	\$0.1425	\$0.095	Apricots	\$0.44	\$0.33	\$0.22
Corn on Cob	\$0.21	\$0.1575	\$0.105	Peaches	\$0.26	\$0.195	\$0.13
Garden Salad/Ranch	\$0.12	\$0.09	\$0.06	Pears	\$0.42	\$0.315	\$0.21
Green Beans	\$0.21	\$0.1575	\$0.105	Pineapple Chunks	\$0.37	\$0.2775	\$0.185
Mixed Vegetables	\$0.17	\$0.1275	\$0.085				
Peas, Black-eyed	\$0.20	\$0.15	\$0.10	Fruit, Frozen			
Potatoes, French Fried	\$0.12	\$0.09	\$0.06	Strawberries	\$0.36	\$0.27	\$0.18
Potatoes, New	\$0.25	\$0.1875	\$0.125				
Potatoes, Mashed	\$0.29	\$0.2175	\$0.145				
Potatoes, Tator Tots	\$0.08	\$0.06	\$0.04				

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Menu Items Cost Per Serving on Plate, 2009.

increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in schools. However, children are wasting a significant amount of that produce due to portion sizes that exceed the minimum. By reducing the portion sizes, the district will simply reduce the

food cost, not the consumption of this healthful component of the CNP.

Since the onsite review, NISD has provided documentation from the ARMS – TDA (9.4 Lunch) indicating that the district is in compliance with federal requirements. However, observations made by the review team indicate that the district could be more efficient and cost effective by serving the minimum portion size required by the traditional meal pattern across all grade levels. This would be a good start toward reducing food costs and ensuring the Child Nutrition Department operates on a budget where expenditures do not exceed revenues.

MILK PACKAGING (REC. 54)

The district pays \$0.043 more per unit for milk packaged in plastic bottles than milk packaged in paper cartons.

NISD implemented this purchasing practice during the 2008–09 school year. This form of packaging is being tested in school districts across the nation, and many report increases in milk consumption due to the packaging. The child nutrition director also reported an increase in milk consumption at the beginning of the school year; however, current consumption has returned to normal now that students have become familiar with the product.

Kitchen managers indicate that they prefer to purchase the paper cartons. Managers state:

- They do not think consumption of milk has increased due to the new packaging.
- The plastic bottles spill on student trays.
- The plastic bottles are difficult for children to open; sometimes the plastic ring breaks off and there is no way to open the container, so it must be replaced.
- They would prefer to use the less expensive paper cartons and spend additional funds on higher quality foods.

The funds available to provide food, labor, and other expenditures in child nutrition programs are limited. NISD has \$1.64 revenue available per breakfast, and \$2.52 revenue available per lunch. The difference in cost of the milk packaged in plastic bottles over paper cartons is 2.62 percent of available funds per breakfast and 1.71 percent of available funds per lunch. If there is no clear benefit with plastic, the cost will be lower by reverting to paper carton packaging.

The offering of milk packaged in plastic bottles to the school food service industry is relatively new, having been introduced in the Texas markets only a few years ago. In order to package

milk in this manner, the dairies must retool and invest in new equipment. This adds to the initial cost of the product.

The industry best practice as it relates to purchasing menu items new to the market is addressed in U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, with the National Food Service Management Institute (2002). *First Choice: A Purchasing Systems Manual for School Food Service*. 2nd Ed. University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute, Ch. 7, p. 77.

According to the document, food products are constantly introduced, and all pass through four stages:

1. Launch - cost is high because of development and marketing cost.
2. Market growth - costs are lower, sales growth is rapid.
3. Maturity - prices decrease as competition increases.
4. Final - demand for the product drops, and supply remains stable.

New products are developed by manufacturers to replace this product, and the cycle starts over.

The document further states that schools seek new products to avoid the boredom associated with serving a captive customer. A conservative policy on the introduction of new products can reduce errors and save time devoted to developing descriptions for multiple ingredient foods. Products normally move through the phases rapidly, often less than a year between the launch and maturity phase. Waiting until the maturity phase can save time and money and still keep new products coming to students. Review descriptions each time a request for pricing is issued because manufacturing processes change constantly.

NISD should purchase milk packaged in paper cartons.

NISD currently uses a mixture of plastic bottles and paper cartons of milk. By changing to all plastic bottles to paper cartons the district will save \$0.043 per unit; 10,200 units of plastic bottles per week x \$0.043 per unit = \$438.60 savings weekly; divided by 5 equals \$87.72 daily x 180 days = \$15,790 annual savings.

Since the onsite visit, the NISD Child Nutrition Department reports that the purchase and use of milk in plastic bottles continues at the high school level only. The district further reports that the use of milk in plastic bottles is a marketing ploy which has shown an increase in milk sales. However, the district's claim could not be verified due to the lack of

supporting documentation. Despite the lack of supporting documentation and with the use of documentation provided during the onsite visit, it is estimated that NISD would save \$2,477 annually by changing from all plastic bottles to paper cartons at the high school level alone at \$0.043 per unit (1,600 units of plastic bottles per week at the high school x \$0.043 per unit = \$68.80 savings weekly; divided by 5 equals \$13.76 daily x 180 days = \$2,477 annual savings).

FUND BALANCE 2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08 (REC. 55)

The Child Nutrition Department does not have nor is provided with financial records managers can use to make management decisions and resolve financial discrepancies. The district has unexplained fluctuations in child nutrition profits, losses, and fund balances between 2004–05 and 2007–08.

Exhibit 11-16 shows financial information for the National School Lunch Program fund for 2004–05 through 2007–08. There are correlative fluctuations in ending fund balance over the time period examined, with a \$196,241 ending fund balance for 2004–05, decreasing to \$180,872 the following year, then increasing to \$242,376 in 2006–07, and ending with a balance of \$87,320 for 2007–08.

In addition, the district transferred \$86,896 from the general fund in 2004–05 and \$30,009 in 2005–06 when the need to do so was not apparent. That is, the NSLP fund balance would have remained positive even without these transfers from the general fund. However, in 2007–08, when the fund had a loss of \$155,056, no transfers were made.

Further, the review team requested detailed financial data for the NSLP fund to gain an understanding for the variations in operating results. Variations in labor expenditures (as much

as a 16.5 percent variance between 2006–07 and 2007–08), as well as variations in commodities expenditures were not adequately explained by district management. For instance, the business manager offered an explanation of increased cost of personnel, and provided records.

The business manager indicated that the NSLP fund may have been overcharged for worker’s compensation, but when the district receives a refund the overage will be credited back to the fund. It was unclear as to the amount or timeframe.

In addition, the review team was given differing reasons for the fluctuation in commodities expenditures. Some district staff stated that commodities were not ordered during 2007–08, while other staff indicated that they were ordered.

The expenditures Year-to-Date (YTD) for the school year 2008–09 exceed revenues by \$180,125.71. Labor costs are \$387,241.33, or 48.61 percent of revenue; food costs are \$520,341.42, or 65.32 percent of revenue; and other costs are \$69,140.16, or 8.68 percent of revenue. The values of commodities used for the 2008–09 school year have not been posted.

The financial records that were provided to the review team were inconclusive. The financial reports available do not show results of operations, either by school or in total, requiring the user to manually calculate operating profit or loss. In addition, the reports do not contain a summary of fund balances.

In order to make informed decisions regarding operations, adequate financial information is necessary. The child nutrition director must be able to identify accurate information regarding revenue and expenditures in order to make fact-based decisions to protect the fund balance.

**EXHIBIT 11-16
RESULTS OF OPERATIONS AND ENDING FUND BALANCES
2004–05 THROUGH 2007–08**

	2004–05	2005–06	PERCENT CHANGE	2006–07	PERCENT CHANGE	2007–08	PERCENT CHANGE
Revenues	\$1,449,287	\$1,461,846	0.87	\$1,595,187	9.12	\$1,557,734	(2.35)
Expenditures	\$1,434,955	\$1,507,224	5.04	\$1,533,683	1.7555	\$1,712,790	11.68
Profit/(Loss)	\$14,332	(\$45,378)	(416.62)	\$61,504	(235.54)	(\$155,056)	(352.11)
Transfers In/(Out)	\$86,896	\$30,009	(65.47)	–	(100.00)	–	N/A
Beginning Fund Balance	\$95,013	\$196,241	106.54	\$180,872	(7.83)	\$242,376	34.00
Ending Fund Balance	\$196,241	\$180,872	(7.83)	\$242,376	34.00	\$87,320	(63.97)

SOURCE: Navasota ISD Audited Financial Statements 2004–05 through 2007–08.

Port Arthur ISD has an excellent system for maintaining child nutrition records in a manner that encourages food service administrators and individual school kitchen managers to routinely analyze current program operations and take appropriate action when any sign of revenue or expenditure activity varies from the norm. Time is of the essence when identifying and correcting problems at the individual production unit level that may contribute to a deficit in the fund balance.

NISD should develop a financial reporting format that is useful to the director of Child Nutrition in making management decisions and resolve the discrepancies in the child nutrition funds.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (REC. 56)

There are no district-established standards in the CNP for reasonable participation, cost, and revenue for the child nutrition department to target; the child nutrition director and kitchen managers are not provided monthly profit and loss statements.

The business office does not provide the child nutrition director and school kitchen managers with individual monthly current and accurate profit and loss statements showing food, labor, and other expenditures as a percentage of revenue; and a district summary.

The child nutrition director was first able to fully access the district financial software during the course of the review. The child nutrition director indicated that prior to March 10, 2008, she had a password to the system, but did not have the icon on her desktop. She could access the information, but she had to go to the business office to ask for the reports she wanted, since she could not generate them from her own desk.

The cafeteria managers interviewed were not knowledgeable about their campus financial status. Each expressed frustration in not knowing this important information; and being challenged to effectively manage the program rather than just operate the cafeterias.

Financial data are essential for the child nutrition department management to use in making fact-based decisions to protect the fund balance. All CNPs operate on a very small profit margin, and prices on goods and services continually rise. If the child nutrition director does not routinely monitor

revenue and expenditures by production unit, using current and accurate information, the programs can quickly slip into operating at a deficit.

Financial management is controlling food, labor, and other costs as they relate to reimbursement and local revenue generated by the programs. A system for routinely evaluating each kitchen's financial status is imperative to ensure success. Goals for each kitchen must be developed and monitored cooperatively by the child nutrition director and kitchen managers. Managers must routinely receive current and accurate financial information; training on how to read and interpret reports effectively; and instructions on strategies to employ when necessary to reverse any negative indicators.

Exhibit 11-17 demonstrates commonly accepted industry standards for food, labor, and other expenditures as a percent of revenue. There is a range, from 40–45 percent for food and labor. Schools that use convenience products will have a higher percentage of food costs and lower percentage of labor costs. The reverse is true for kitchens that cook most meals from scratch.

NISD should set standards for reasonable participation, cost, and revenue for child nutrition to target, both by individual production unit and as a district summary. Additionally, the business manager should provide the child nutrition director and kitchen managers current and accurate monthly profit and loss statements.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

EXHIBIT 11-17 INDUSTRY STANDARDS, EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH	COMMONLY ACCEPTED INDUSTRY STANDARD RANGES
REVENUE	
LOCAL-STATE-FEDERAL	
Labor Expenditure	40–45%
Food Expenditure	40–45%
Other Expenditure	5–15%
Profit	0–5%

SOURCE: Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Leadership by Excellence, 2008.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
51. Implement a universal breakfast program and the "offer versus serve" option at all campuses.	\$0	\$133,762	\$133,762	\$133,762	\$133,762	\$535,048	\$0
52. Raise student prices for breakfast and lunch; and adult prices for lunches.	\$0	\$33,082	\$33,082	\$33,082	\$33,082	\$132,328	\$0
53. Evaluate and determine reductions in portion size and food cost without affecting the acceptability of the meals served.	\$73,874	\$73,874	\$73,874	\$73,874	\$73,874	\$369,370	\$0
54. Purchase milk packaged in paper cartons.	\$15,790	\$15,790	\$15,790	\$15,790	\$15,790	\$78,950	\$0
55. Develop a financial reporting format that is useful to the director of Child Nutrition in making management decisions and resolve the discrepancies in the child nutrition funds.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
56. Set standards for reasonable participation, cost, and revenue for child nutrition to target, both by individual production unit and as a district summary.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$89,664	\$256,508	\$256,508	\$256,508	\$256,508	\$1,115,696	\$0

CHAPTER 12

SAFETY AND SECURITY

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHAPTER 12. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security-related activities provide a significant foundation for the success or failure of educating today's student.

Tragic events in schools across the country, which have led to injury and/or loss of life, have raised the consciousness of school officials and the public at large of the importance of safe and secure schools. It is no different at the Navasota Independent School District (NISD) where the topic of safety and security encompasses numerous activities that involve the entire school district community. Some of these activities include: the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program at the elementary school level, demonstrations of various types of safety equipment utilized by law enforcement, providing "walk through" visibility at schools, assisting with security as the need may arise, and availability for dealing with extreme behavioral issues that may constitute statutory violations.

Safety and security of schools is one of the responsibilities assigned to the business manager. On the fourth Friday of each month safety meetings are held to advise staff of safety and security issues, and to provide some of the recommended training suggested by the Texas School Safety Center.

The district's school resource officer (SRO) program and use of local law enforcement personnel is contracted to the City of Navasota for a period of three years beginning August 1, 2006 and ending July 31, 2009 at an annual cost of \$101,120 to provide officers, vehicles, fuel, and related training. The contract is classified as a shared service given that NISD is not billed the full cost for such services. The contract calls for providing one full-time SRO at both the high school and junior high; and two officers on-call for both the intermediate and Webb elementary schools. Furthermore, an agreement with a neighboring district, Anderson Independent School District (AISD), provides an SRO two days per week at High Point Elementary. This agreement is at no cost to NISD as it is paid for by means of a multiyear federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The agreement with AISD and the contract with the City of Navasota are the only safety and security services not directly provided by NISD.

Expenses for safety and security for the 2007–08 school year were increased due to the cost of a safety and security audit conducted by an outside firm as required pursuant to Texas

Education Code (TEC) 37.108(b). The district has budgeted \$130,500 in safety and security for school year 2007–08 and \$133,800 for school year 2008–09.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- NISD provides each school with an updated, annually revised, and well-organized crisis management notebook.

FINDINGS

- NISD lacks control of the public's access to staff in the administration building.
- NISD does not secure its administrative facility.
- NISD does not have a plan regarding the implementation of safety and security recommendations identified in the May 2008 safety and security audit.
- NISD does not firmly enforce local policy regarding student welfare and safety, and safety program/risk management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 57: Assign a clerical position to the central office reception desk.** Develop a reception procedures document including providing a form of visitor identification to all who enter the administration building, and schedule coverage for lunch and breaks by rotating among building secretarial and clerical personnel
- **Recommendation 58: Develop and implement a controlled access system to secure the district's administration building during working hours.** The district should consider locking all building entrance doors, keying all doors with one key allowing selected personnel with entry keys access through various doors, and providing access and visitor sign-in through the building's front entrance
- **Recommendation 59: Develop a plan with estimated costs to prioritize and implement recommendations from the comprehensive security campus audit report completed in 2008.**

- **Recommendation 60: Remove concrete ramps located at the rear of Webb Elementary School in order to reduce potential hazards.** The superintendent should firmly enforce Policies CK (LOCAL) and FFF (LOCAL) so as to provide a safe school and working environment for all members of the community.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

CRISIS MANAGEMENT NOTEBOOK

NISD provides each school with an updated, annually revised, and well-organized crisis management notebook.

The current crisis management notebook, otherwise known as the district's multi-hazard emergency operations plan, was developed from a model provided by Conroe ISD, and revised to meet the comprehensive needs of NISD. The notebook was last revised in September 2008. Its contents were determined by a committee represented by staff from all schools, the district site-based decision-making committee, and district administrators.

The notebook contains detailed sections including:

- Instructions on use and contents.
- Communications including contacts for each campus and employee emergency information.
- Thirty-three actions highlighting injuries, illness and/or life-threatening crises to individuals and/or groups are described for building level crisis situations.
- Ten detailed actions involving infrastructure failure, natural disasters, and bus/auto incidents are described for districtwide situations.
- A listing of area agencies and media contacts.
- A listing of each campus crisis management team, assigned responsibilities, and contact information.

The crisis management notebook helps to provide a safe school environment for students and staff. The Conroe ISD model provided guidance and direction, and helped NISD reduce the time and effort required to develop a comprehensive notebook. The organization of the notebook provides easy access to topics.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

CENTRAL OFFICE RECEPTIONIST (REC. 57)

NISD lacks control of the public's access to staff in the administration building.

Prior to 2005, an employee was assigned to the reception desk at the main entrance to the district's administration building; however, reductions in personnel and needs for clerical assistance in other offices resulted in the elimination of this position. The absence of a receptionist or some type of access security results in no monitoring of persons entering the building, including those conducting business in the administration building.

By not having a receptionist, persons enter the building without being properly identified or signed-in and can wander throughout the central offices. This practice was observed by review team members during the onsite visit. Staff expressed concerns that unauthorized persons enter the facility and could cause harm to employees or remove equipment or materials without authorization.

Best practices in safety and security of facilities as published by Edwards Risk Management, Inc., a firm that conducts safety and security reviews for Texas school districts, state that public school facilities and related support offices should have provisions for identifying visitors and their purpose, and providing appropriate identification badges or labels. The identification badges or labels would help provide a record of who entered the administration building on a particular day.

NISD administration should assign a clerical position to the central office reception desk. The district should develop a reception procedures document including providing a form of visitor identification to all who enter the administration building, and schedule coverage for lunch and breaks by rotating among building secretarial and clerical personnel.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing clerical staff by assigning a clerical employee from the assistant superintendent and business manager's areas to the receptionist desk set-up with the necessary computer system. The computer system will allow the secretarial and clerical employees being rotated at the central office reception desk to continue with their primary duties and responsibilities while away from their permanent duty station.

CENTRAL OFFICE ACCESS (REC. 58)

NISD does not secure its administrative facility.

The business manager has no written, established procedures to follow for ensuring building security during the work day. The lack of procedures does not allow for the business manager to follow established rules and methods for securing the administration building.

Entry doors to the central office facility are unlocked for ease of staff entry each working day. Informally developed unwritten procedures allow for the business manager to assign keys to central office personnel needing weekend access to the administration building. Concerns related to unlimited and unchecked access by any person could create safety and security problems. One staff person mentioned that on more than one occasion, unknown persons had entered the building without any apparent purpose.

The current practice creates a situation where a person could easily enter the building and remove supplies or equipment unnoticed.

Given today's climate regarding violent acts, it has become common practice among school districts to secure school campuses to prevent or minimize unauthorized entry and potential vandalism, theft, or even harm to students and employees. This is an emerging practice for many other public buildings, particularly after unauthorized entry has occurred. Lee County Public Schools in the state of Florida secure their doors in the central administration building following an attack on the superintendent in the office complex.

NISD should develop and implement a controlled access system to secure the district's administration building during working hours by locking all building entrance doors, keying all doors with one key allowing selected personnel with entry keys access through various doors, and providing access and visitor sign-in through the building's front entrance.

Cost for implementing this recommendation should be restricted to the purchasing and assigning of additional keys to employees assigned to the central office facility and currently without a means to gain side or rear access to the building during working hours. It is estimated that this is no more than ten employees and the purchase of 20 keys should meet this need plus provide a reserve for needed occasions.

Twenty keys can be purchased for a total of approximately \$60 at \$3 each at a hardware or building supply outlet. Keys

should be maintained by the Business Office and assigned to one of the clerical staff. A checkout sheet requiring a signature and printed name should be created and guidelines for assignment developed and reviewed with all central office personnel and the board.

The guidelines should include:

- Central office positions to be assigned a key.
- A listing of circumstances permitting a key to be checked out by other central office personnel or other personnel not assigned to the central office.
- An administrator and a back-up administrator, including regular and emergency telephone numbers, with authority to make building key assignments not covered by the guidelines.
- A requirement that lost keys be immediately reported to the administrator-in-charge.
- Each key to be stamped with a **Do Not Duplicate** notation.
- Other information deemed important to the process, such as when and where keys should be returned.

FORMER AUDIT RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION (REC. 59)

NISD does not have a plan regarding the implementation of safety and security recommendations identified in the May 2008 safety and security audit.

The Seventy-ninth Legislature, 2005, amended the Texas Education Code, Section 37.108, to require that each school district adopt a multi-hazard emergency operations plan (EOP) no later than March 1, 2006. Furthermore, all school districts are required to undergo a first round of Security Audits by September 1, 2008, with security audits being conducted at least once every three years using security audit procedures developed by the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) or a comparable public/private entity. The results of the security audits must be reported to the school district's Board of Trustees and the Texas School Safety Center.

The TxSSC, housed at Texas State University – San Marcos, serves as a central location for school safety information, and provides schools and school districts with research, training, and technical assistance to reduce youth violence and promote safety in the state. The TxSSC is charged with conducting safety training that includes: development of a positive school environment and proactive safety measure to

address local concerns, school safety courses for law enforcement officials, assistance for districts in developing a multi-hazard emergency operations plan, security criteria for instructional facilities, and a model safety and security audit procedure for the state.

At NISD, the business manager is responsible for overall safety and security for the district and holds safety meetings the fourth Friday of each month. The business manager provides administration and staff current information on safety and security, and provides related training as recommended by the TxSSC.

In April 2008, the safety and security audit was conducted by an outside firm, and copies of the respective school results were provided to each principal. Principals were instructed to proceed with reviewing the findings and implementing those recommendations that did not have a major fiscal impact. Recommendations with a fiscal impact were to be discussed with the business manager for possible inclusion in the district's budget.

During the review team's onsite visit in March 2009, the district was not able to produce an organized listing of school principal recommendations from the audit report deemed unnecessary or a list of prioritized recommendations requiring immediate implementation. This observation is in line with the district having budgeted \$130,500 for school year 2007–08 and \$133,800 for school year 2008–09.

However, upon the review team's analysis of the audit report, it was determined that several of the audit report's findings warranted immediate prioritization and implementation. Key findings uncovered by the audit are shown in **Exhibit 12-1** and include:

- Inoperable classroom phones at the high school.
- Centrally monitored intrusion security system is lacking in all schools.
- Centrally-monitored fire alarm system is lacking at High Point Elementary School and the intermediate school.
- All staff are not trained in the implementation of the emergency operations plan at the junior high and intermediate schools.
- Emergency operation plans are not fully implemented at all schools. The results of the safety and security audit indicate NISD schools being at the beginning, intermediate and/or final stages of fulfilling a required

and/or strongly recommended course of action in multiple areas of the EOP.

During the onsite review, the review team provided all principals with a listing of key safety and security audit findings as presented by the external firm conducting the safety and security audit. The principals were asked by the review team to provide a status report on each key finding to assess the extent of safety issues that each school had implemented. As of April 3, 2009, only High Point and Webb Elementary Schools had addressed a few recommendations uncovered by the audit. The updated key findings thus far implemented are indicated with a check mark in **Exhibit 12-1**.

Best practices involve the systematic assessment of the safety and security status in all schools and facilities. While the assessment by an outside firm is complete, the district must still identify those recommendations it will choose to implement.

The district should therefore develop a plan with estimated costs to prioritize and implement recommendations from the comprehensive security campus audit report completed in 2008. The plan should ensure that a careful analysis of findings be conducted using established criteria to identify shortcomings needing immediate attention, and those that do not constitute an immediate concern.

Criteria to guide this assessment are referenced in the safety and security audit provided in May 2008 and raise the following questions:

- Does the condition present or create a danger to the safety and security of students?
- Does the condition present or create a danger to parents, visitors, or personnel?
- Can the condition be remedied with existing resources?
- If resources not readily available, what is needed and what are the options for securing resources?
- If the option is to NOT implement a response to the finding, have all potential consequences been identified and evaluated?

As has been shown by the review team, several key findings could be immediately reviewed and a decision to implement made, including:

**EXHIBIT 12-1
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS BY SCHOOL
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	SCHOOL				
	HIGH POINT	WEBB	INTER-MEDIATE	JR. HIGH	HIGH
Lack of security fencing at key locations	x	x	x	x	x
Classroom phones inoperable					x
A 2-way Public Address (PA) system not present between classrooms and office					x
Perimeter doors unsecured				x	x
Staff without photo identification badges		✓	x	x	x
Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) not fully implemented	x	x	x	x	x
Students not represented on the school safety planning team	x		x	x	x
All staff not trained in implementation of EOP			x	x	
Exterior doors not numbered on outside	x	x	x		x
Interior classroom doors not locked when classes in session; cannot be locked from the inside	x	x	x	x	x
Practice and documentation of drills not accomplished	x	x	x		x
Floor plan drawings are not updated & do not contain essential information	x	x	x	x	x
Visitor practices can be improved	✓	✓	x	x	x
Staff sign-in/out procedures lacking or needing revision		x	x		
School Resource Officer (SRO) or School-Based law enforcement not located on site		x	x		
Additional signage and/or lighting needed in parking areas	✓	x	x		
Drug free, weapon free, smoke free and/or tobacco free signage missing from some required locations	x	x	x	x	
Lacks an anti-intrusion security system	x	x	x	x	x
Lacks a centrally-monitored fire alarm system	x		x		
Does not have a plan for sustaining occupants for 72 hours in the event of an extended emergency	x	x			

SOURCE: Created by Performance Review Team from April 2008 Safety and Security Audit Findings, March 2009.

- Securing perimeter doors at the junior high school and high school.
- Providing all staff with photo identification badges.
- Appointing student representation to the school safety planning team.
- Practice and documentation of emergency drills.
- Improving visitor practices.
- Correcting staff sign-in/out procedures where lacking or needing revision.

- Developing a plan for sustaining occupants for 72 hours in the event of an extended emergency.

Completion of this process provides the district with an understanding of safety and security issues and the students, parents, and community information concerning school needs.

The process of identifying and prioritizing the actions to be implemented can be accomplished at no additional cost to the district. The actual implementation cost to the district budget cannot be estimated until the district determines the recommendations to be implemented.

PORTABLE CLASSROOM HAZARD (REC. 60)

NISD does not firmly enforce local policy regarding student welfare and safety, and safety program/risk management.

NISD's board Policy FFF (LOCAL) regarding student welfare and safety states that the district shall attempt to ensure student safety through supervision of students in all school buildings, at all school-sponsored events or activities, and on all school grounds by maintaining a reasonably safe school environment. Furthermore, NISD's board Policy CK (LOCAL) on safety program/risk management states that the district shall take every reasonable precaution regarding the safety of its students, employees, visitors, and all others with whom it conducts business. The superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing, implementing, and promoting a comprehensive safety program. Program activities intended to reduce the frequency of accident and injury include inspecting work areas and equipment.

The district has not enforced Policy FFF (LOCAL) ensuring the safety of students at Webb Elementary School. When portable classrooms were removed from Webb Elementary School, the entrance ramps were not removed. The majority of these concrete structures contain embedded short steel projections that can easily injure personnel, students or others when walking, running, and/or playing in the area.

This hazard was reported by the school principal, according to interviews; yet the structures are still present. An April 1, 2009 conference call with the business manager confirms this situation and indicated that the plans for removal are underway.

NISD should immediately remove the concrete ramps located at the rear of Webb Elementary School in order to reduce potential hazards that may cause injury to students or staff. The superintendent should firmly enforce Policies CK (LOCAL) and FFF (LOCAL) so as to provide a safe school and working environment for all members of the community.

Removing these concrete structures will cost approximately \$2,000.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
57. Assign a clerical position to the central office reception desk.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
58. Develop and implement a controlled access system to secure the district's administration building during working hours.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$60)
59. Develop a plan with estimated costs to prioritize and implement recommendations from the comprehensive security campus audit report completed in 2008.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
60. Remove concrete ramps located at the rear of Webb Elementary School in order to reduce potential hazards.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,000)
Totals	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,060)

APPENDICES

NAVASOTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

(Total number = 91)

PART A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	MALE	FEMALE
	13.48%	86.52%

2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
	0.00%	14.61%	65.17%	10.11%	0.00%	10.11%

3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY NAVASOTA ISD?	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–15 YEARS	16–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
	31.87%	14.29%	14.29%	18.68%	20.88%

4. ARE YOU A(N):	ADMINISTRATOR	CLERICAL STAFF	SUPPORT STAFF
	27.47%	31.87%	40.66%

5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN THIS CAPACITY BY NAVASOTA ISD?	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–15 YEARS	16–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
	42.86%	23.08%	10.99%	12.09%	10.99%

PART B. 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.	29.67%	29.67%	26.37%	9.89%	4.40%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	25.27%	35.16%	23.08%	13.19%	3.30%
3. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	16.48%	21.98%	29.67%	16.48%	15.38%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	16.48%	19.78%	34.07%	16.48%	13.19%
5. Central administration is efficient.	18.68%	50.55%	16.48%	9.89%	4.40%
6. Central administration supports the educational process.	28.57%	52.75%	10.99%	5.49%	2.20%
7. The morale of central administration staff is good.	17.58%	35.16%	27.47%	15.38%	4.40%

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.	35.16%	39.56%	5.49%	17.58%	2.20%
9. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	26.37%	41.76%	23.08%	5.49%	3.30%
10. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	17.58%	36.26%	27.47%	14.29%	4.40%
11. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	13.19%	26.37%	26.37%	27.47%	6.59%
12. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a) Reading	26.37%	49.45%	15.38%	7.69%	1.10%
b) Writing	24.18%	50.55%	15.38%	7.69%	2.20%
c) Mathematics	17.58%	47.25%	16.48%	15.38%	3.30%
d) Science	21.98%	50.55%	19.78%	5.49%	2.20%
e) English or Language Arts	26.37%	50.55%	17.58%	4.40%	1.10%
f) Computer Instruction	27.47%	48.35%	17.58%	4.40%	2.20%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	24.18%	51.65%	18.68%	4.40%	1.10%
h) Fine Arts	16.48%	38.46%	29.67%	13.19%	2.20%
i) Physical Education	25.27%	48.35%	17.58%	7.69%	1.10%
j) Business Education	14.29%	30.77%	42.86%	9.89%	2.20%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	16.48%	30.77%	30.77%	19.78%	2.20%
l) Foreign Language	10.99%	35.16%	35.16%	14.29%	4.40%
13. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a) Library Service	31.87%	46.15%	18.68%	2.20%	1.10%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	16.48%	54.95%	21.98%	3.30%	3.30%
c) Special Education	31.87%	50.55%	10.99%	5.49%	1.10%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	15.38%	49.45%	24.18%	7.69%	3.30%
e) Dyslexia program	13.19%	29.67%	31.87%	20.88%	4.40%
f) Student mentoring program	9.89%	23.08%	40.66%	18.68%	7.69%
g) Advanced placement program	16.48%	42.86%	29.67%	7.69%	3.30%
h) Literacy program	28.57%	41.76%	19.78%	7.69%	2.20%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	12.09%	29.67%	36.26%	16.48%	5.49%
j) Summer school programs	15.38%	46.15%	21.98%	12.09%	4.40%
k) Alternative education programs	13.19%	37.36%	30.77%	9.89%	8.79%
l) "English as a second language" program	17.58%	40.66%	28.57%	8.79%	4.40%
m) Career counseling program	6.59%	21.98%	41.76%	21.98%	7.69%
n) College counseling program	6.59%	28.57%	34.07%	20.88%	9.89%
o) Counseling the parents of students	5.49%	20.88%	42.86%	19.78%	10.99%
p) Drop-out prevention program	4.40%	30.77%	41.76%	15.38%	7.69%
14. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	10.99%	38.46%	31.87%	13.19%	5.49%
15. Teacher turnover is low.	2.20%	15.38%	28.57%	37.36%	16.48%
16. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	10.99%	30.77%	29.67%	21.98%	6.59%
17. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	8.79%	46.15%	24.18%	16.48%	4.40%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
18. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	5.49%	18.68%	38.46%	28.57%	8.79%
19. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	9.89%	28.57%	46.15%	9.89%	5.49%
20. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	18.68%	46.15%	21.98%	7.69%	5.49%
21. The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	23.08%	41.76%	18.68%	12.09%	4.40%
22. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	42.86%	47.25%	7.69%	0.00%	2.20%
23. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	21.98%	46.15%	23.08%	3.30%	5.49%

C. PERSONNEL

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
24. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	5.49%	23.08%	21.98%	28.57%	20.88%
25. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	12.09%	57.14%	19.78%	6.59%	4.40%
26. Temporary workers are rarely used.	5.49%	28.57%	32.97%	21.98%	10.99%
27. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	6.59%	25.27%	41.76%	18.68%	7.69%
28. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	6.59%	30.77%	38.46%	17.58%	6.59%
29. The district operates an effective staff development program.	10.99%	43.96%	27.47%	13.19%	4.40%
30. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	17.58%	56.04%	16.48%	4.40%	5.49%
31. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	5.49%	15.38%	34.07%	31.87%	13.19%
32. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	4.40%	25.27%	45.05%	16.48%	8.79%
33. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	18.68%	38.46%	29.67%	7.69%	5.49%
34. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	14.29%	42.86%	28.57%	6.59%	7.69%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
35. The district regularly communicates with parents.	17.58%	46.15%	20.88%	13.19%	2.20%
36. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	17.58%	39.56%	23.08%	17.58%	2.20%
37. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	1.10%	18.68%	27.47%	38.46%	14.29%
38. District facilities are open for community use.	13.19%	40.66%	27.47%	12.09%	6.59%

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.	8.79%	38.46%	29.67%	17.58%	5.49%
40. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	6.59%	20.88%	60.44%	8.79%	3.30%
41. Schools are clean.	16.48%	56.04%	12.09%	12.09%	3.30%
42. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	12.09%	45.05%	17.58%	18.68%	6.59%
43. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	10.99%	45.05%	15.38%	23.08%	5.49%
44. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	18.68%	49.45%	19.78%	7.69%	4.40%

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.	4.40%	35.16%	51.65%	6.59%	2.20%
46. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	9.89%	42.86%	36.26%	7.69%	3.30%
47. The district's financial reports are easy to read and understand.	10.99%	23.08%	51.65%	7.69%	6.59%
48. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	14.29%	26.37%	49.45%	4.40%	5.49%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
49. Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	20.88%	51.65%	16.48%	7.69%	3.30%
50. Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	9.89%	47.25%	32.97%	5.49%	4.40%
51. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	15.38%	47.25%	30.77%	4.40%	2.20%
52. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	6.59%	36.26%	40.66%	10.99%	5.49%
53. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	19.78%	30.77%	32.97%	13.19%	3.30%
54. Textbooks are in good shape.	14.29%	40.66%	35.16%	7.69%	2.20%
55. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources for students.	39.56%	43.96%	12.09%	3.30%	1.10%

H. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
56. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	3.30%	13.19%	18.68%	47.25%	17.58%
57. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.00%	8.79%	17.58%	47.25%	26.37%
58. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	2.20%	19.78%	19.78%	39.56%	18.68%
59. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	26.37%	42.86%	23.08%	6.59%	1.10%
60. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	13.19%	47.25%	30.77%	6.59%	2.20%
61. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	27.47%	47.25%	18.68%	4.40%	2.20%
62. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	18.68%	35.16%	13.19%	25.27%	7.69%

I. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
63. Students regularly use computers.	38.46%	48.35%	8.79%	3.30%	1.10%
64. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	32.97%	49.45%	12.09%	3.30%	2.20%
65. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	32.97%	54.95%	9.89%	1.10%	1.10%
66. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	25.27%	54.95%	9.89%	6.59%	3.30%
67. The district meets students needs in computer fundamentals.	28.57%	52.75%	10.99%	4.40%	3.30%
68. The district meets students needs in advanced computer skills.	20.88%	42.86%	25.27%	7.69%	3.30%
69. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	35.16%	51.65%	8.79%	2.20%	2.20%

J. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
70. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	28.57%	48.35%	16.48%	5.49%	1.10%
71. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	20.88%	46.15%	30.77%	1.10%	1.10%
72. Buses arrive and leave on time.	15.38%	40.66%	24.18%	13.19%	6.59%
73. Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	13.19%	20.88%	48.35%	13.19%	4.40%

K. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
74. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	12.09%	37.36%	28.57%	13.19%	8.79%
75. Food is served warm.	17.58%	51.65%	23.08%	6.59%	1.10%
76. Students have enough time to eat.	14.29%	53.85%	19.78%	8.79%	3.30%
77. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	13.19%	58.24%	16.48%	9.89%	2.20%
78. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	12.09%	39.56%	38.46%	7.69%	2.20%
79. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	12.09%	52.75%	23.08%	8.79%	3.30%
80. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	19.78%	39.56%	25.27%	8.79%	6.59%
81. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	28.57%	53.85%	15.38%	1.10%	1.10%

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY

(Total number = 54)

PART A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	MALE	FEMALE
	50.00%	50.00%

2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY NAVASOTA ISD?	NO RESPONSE	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–15 YEARS	16–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%

4. WHAT GRADES ARE TAUGHT IN YOUR SCHOOL?		
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE
50.00%	50.00%	50.00%
SECOND GRADE	THIRD GRADE	FOURTH GRADE
50.00%	50.00%	25.00%
FIFTH GRADE	SIXTH GRADE	SEVENTH GRADE
25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EIGHTH GRADE	NINTH GRADE	TENTH GRADE
0.00%	25.00%	25.00%
ELEVENTH GRADE	TWELFTH GRADE	
25.00%	25.00%	

PART B. 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.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3. School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
6. Central administration is efficient.	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
7. Central administration supports the educational process.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
8. The morale of central administration staff is good.	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%

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.	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
10. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
11. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
12. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%
13. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
14. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
15. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
16. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a) Reading	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
b) Writing	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
c) Mathematics	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%
d) Science	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
e) English or Language Arts	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
f) Computer Instruction	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
h) Fine Arts	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%
i) Physical Education	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
j) Business Education	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%
l) Foreign Language	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
17. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a) Library Service	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
c) Special Education	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%
e) Dyslexia program	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%
f) Student mentoring program	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%
g) Advanced placement program	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
h) Literacy program	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
j) Summer school programs	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
k) Alternative education programs	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%
l) "English as a second language" program	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
m) Career counseling program	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%
n) College counseling program	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%
o) Counseling the parents of students	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%
p) Drop-out prevention program	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%
18. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
19. Teacher turnover is low.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%
20. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
21. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	50.00%
22. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
23. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%
24. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
25. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%

C. PERSONNEL

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
26. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%
27. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
28. Temporary workers are rarely used.	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%
29. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
30. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
31. The district operates an effective staff development program.	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%
32. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
33. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%
34. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%
35. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
36. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
37. The district regularly communicates with parents.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
38. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%
39. District facilities are open for community use.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

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.	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
41. Schools are clean.	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%
42. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
43. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
44. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%

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.	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
46. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
47. Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

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.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
49. Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
50. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
51. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%
52. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
53. Textbooks are in good shape.	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
54. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

H. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
55. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%
56. Food is served warm.	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%
57. Students have enough time to eat.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
58. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
59. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
60. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
61. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
62. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
63. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
64. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
65. Buses arrive and leave on time.	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%
66. Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
67. Students feel safe and secure at school.	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
68. School disturbances are infrequent.	0.00%	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
69. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
70. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
71. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%
72. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
73. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
74. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
75. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
76. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
77. Students regularly use computers.	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
78. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
79. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
80. The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%
81. The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
82. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
83. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

TEACHER SURVEY

(Total number = 115)

PART A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
	0.00%	11.48%	88.52%

2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
	0.00%	4.13%	76.86%	0.83%	12.40%	5.79%

3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY NAVASOTA ISD?	NO RESPONSE	1-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	16-20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
	0.00%	50.40%	14.40%	10.40%	7.20%	17.60%

4. WHAT GRADE(S) DO YOU TEACH THIS YEAR (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)?		
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE
7.1%	15.1%	15.1%
SECOND GRADE	THIRD GRADE	FOURTH GRADE
17.5%	16.7%	9.5%
FIFTH GRADE	SIXTH GRADE	SEVENTH GRADE
11.9%	11.1%	13.5%
EIGHTH GRADE	NINTH GRADE	TENTH GRADE
14.3%	12.7%	17.5%
ELEVENTH GRADE	TWELFTH GRADE	
15.1%	17.5%	

PART B. 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.	8.06%	41.13%	45.16%	4.03%	1.61%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	8.87%	43.55%	33.87%	9.68%	4.03%
3. School board members work well with the superintendent.	8.06%	37.10%	45.16%	9.68%	0.00%
4. The school board has a good image in the community.	6.45%	33.06%	25.00%	31.45%	4.03%
5. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	11.29%	31.45%	22.58%	22.58%	12.10%

A. DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
6. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	10.48%	25.81%	32.26%	19.35%	12.10%
7. Central administration is efficient.	11.29%	42.74%	25.81%	17.74%	2.42%
8. Central administration supports the educational process.	12.90%	52.42%	20.97%	12.90%	0.81%
9. The morale of central administration staff is good.	13.71%	36.29%	41.13%	8.06%	0.81%

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.	30.89%	46.34%	4.88%	16.26%	1.63%
11. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	16.26%	47.97%	10.57%	23.58%	1.63%
12. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	8.94%	42.28%	26.02%	18.70%	4.07%
13. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	5.69%	44.72%	24.39%	16.26%	8.94%
14. The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	21.14%	56.91%	5.69%	10.57%	5.69%
15. The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	13.82%	53.66%	9.76%	17.89%	4.88%
16. The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	15.45%	56.91%	8.94%	13.82%	4.88%
17. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a) Reading	15.45%	63.41%	13.82%	4.88%	2.44%
b) Writing	12.20%	52.85%	19.51%	15.45%	0.00%
c) Mathematics	12.20%	51.22%	17.07%	14.63%	4.88%
d) Science	12.20%	53.66%	19.51%	13.82%	0.81%
e) English or Language Arts	13.01%	63.41%	13.01%	10.57%	0.00%
f) Computer Instruction	10.57%	57.72%	21.14%	8.94%	1.63%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	5.69%	56.10%	22.76%	15.45%	0.00%
h) Fine Arts	3.25%	46.34%	30.08%	16.26%	4.07%
i) Physical Education	9.76%	55.28%	26.83%	6.50%	1.63%
j) Business Education	2.44%	27.64%	62.60%	7.32%	0.00%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	1.63%	29.27%	54.47%	8.94%	5.69%
l) Foreign Language	4.88%	31.71%	49.59%	11.38%	2.44%
18. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a) Library Service	22.76%	54.47%	17.89%	3.25%	1.63%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	15.45%	51.22%	17.89%	10.57%	4.88%
c) Special Education	19.51%	58.54%	13.82%	7.32%	0.81%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	11.38%	43.90%	35.77%	4.07%	4.88%
e) Dyslexia program	6.50%	33.33%	35.77%	17.07%	7.32%
f) Student mentoring program	8.13%	28.46%	33.33%	24.39%	5.69%
g) Advanced placement program	8.94%	42.28%	43.09%	4.88%	0.81%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
h) Literacy program	19.51%	52.85%	20.33%	4.07%	3.25%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	6.50%	30.08%	43.90%	15.45%	4.07%
j) Summer school programs	11.38%	51.22%	26.02%	9.76%	1.63%
k) Alternative education programs	6.50%	35.77%	35.77%	18.70%	3.25%
l) "English as a second language" program	13.01%	53.66%	21.14%	10.57%	1.63%
m) Career counseling program	1.63%	17.89%	56.10%	22.76%	1.63%
n) College counseling program	2.44%	19.51%	56.91%	17.89%	3.25%
o) Counseling the parents of students	2.44%	20.33%	42.28%	26.02%	8.94%
p) Drop-out prevention program	0.81%	19.51%	60.16%	13.82%	5.69%
19. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	8.94%	34.96%	32.52%	17.89%	5.69%
20. Teacher turnover is low.	1.63%	16.26%	17.89%	39.02%	25.20%
21. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	6.50%	44.72%	23.58%	17.89%	7.32%
22. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	6.50%	50.41%	27.64%	10.57%	4.88%
23. Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	2.44%	21.14%	15.45%	45.53%	15.45%
24. Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	6.50%	47.97%	22.76%	20.33%	2.44%
25. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	14.63%	68.29%	9.76%	7.32%	0.00%
26. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	14.63%	68.29%	9.76%	7.32%	0.00%
27. The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	11.38%	65.04%	4.88%	15.45%	3.25%
28. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	33.33%	56.10%	4.88%	2.44%	3.25%

C. PERSONNEL

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
29. District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.83%	20.00%	10.00%	53.33%	15.83%
30. The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	6.67%	59.17%	15.83%	15.00%	3.33%
31. Temporary workers are rarely used.	5.00%	40.83%	24.17%	27.50%	2.50%
32. The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	0.83%	40.83%	33.33%	24.17%	0.83%
33. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	3.33%	25.00%	41.67%	26.67%	3.33%
34. The district operates an effective staff development program.	2.50%	55.00%	8.33%	27.50%	6.67%
35. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	18.33%	66.67%	10.83%	4.17%	0.00%
36. The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	2.50%	25.00%	33.33%	27.50%	11.67%

C. PERSONNEL (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
37. Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	5.00%	30.00%	40.83%	22.50%	1.67%
38. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	6.67%	42.50%	45.83%	4.17%	0.83%
39. The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	5.83%	55.83%	15.83%	15.83%	6.67%

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
40. The district regularly communicates with parents.	15.00%	56.67%	13.33%	12.50%	2.50%
41. The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	6.67%	44.17%	26.67%	21.67%	0.83%
42. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	3.33%	14.17%	18.33%	47.50%	16.67%
43. District facilities are open for community use.	5.83%	41.67%	34.17%	16.67%	1.67%

E. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY FOR QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
44. The district plans facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.	4.20%	39.50%	24.37%	27.73%	4.20%
45. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	3.36%	31.93%	34.45%	25.21%	5.04%
46. The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	2.52%	15.97%	66.39%	10.92%	4.20%
47. The quality of new construction is excellent.	6.72%	33.61%	30.25%	25.21%	4.20%
48. Schools are clean.	15.13%	62.18%	3.36%	16.81%	2.52%
49. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	9.24%	50.42%	10.08%	25.21%	5.04%
50. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	9.24%	48.74%	10.08%	27.73%	4.20%
51. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	13.45%	54.62%	18.49%	10.08%	3.36%

F. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
52. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	5.88%	36.13%	41.18%	10.08%	6.72%
53. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	4.20%	45.38%	46.22%	3.36%	0.84%
54. Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	6.72%	40.34%	26.05%	21.01%	5.88%

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.	5.04%	45.38%	25.21%	20.17%	4.20%
56. Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	3.36%	42.02%	43.70%	6.72%	4.20%
57. Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	3.36%	46.22%	32.77%	14.29%	3.36%
58. Vendors are selected competitively.	3.36%	33.61%	59.66%	3.36%	0.00%
59. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	2.52%	36.13%	23.53%	35.29%	2.52%
60. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	9.24%	63.03%	18.49%	7.56%	1.68%
61. Textbooks are in good shape.	5.88%	63.03%	21.01%	5.88%	4.20%
62. The school library meets the student needs for books and other resources.	25.21%	61.34%	7.56%	5.88%	0.00%

H. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
63. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	3.39%	35.59%	18.64%	28.81%	13.56%
64. Food is served warm.	6.78%	61.86%	17.80%	9.32%	4.24%
65. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	13.56%	66.10%	5.08%	13.56%	1.69%
66. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	22.03%	46.61%	16.10%	12.71%	2.54%
67. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	11.02%	56.78%	9.32%	17.80%	5.08%
68. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	20.34%	49.15%	10.17%	14.41%	5.93%
69. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	20.34%	63.56%	8.47%	5.93%	1.69%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
70. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	21.19%	66.95%	5.93%	5.93%	0.00%
71. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	15.25%	57.63%	19.49%	5.93%	1.69%
72. Buses arrive and leave on time.	14.41%	55.08%	18.64%	11.02%	0.85%
73. Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	5.08%	23.73%	66.10%	4.24%	0.85%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
74. School disturbances are infrequent.	8.47%	57.63%	7.63%	16.95%	9.32%
75. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	5.93%	15.25%	25.42%	45.76%	7.63%
76. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	2.54%	7.63%	27.12%	46.61%	16.10%
77. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	2.54%	13.56%	22.88%	50.85%	10.17%
78. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	12.71%	52.54%	27.97%	5.08%	1.69%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
79. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	11.02%	44.07%	42.37%	2.54%	0.00%
80. A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	14.41%	58.47%	26.27%	0.85%	0.00%
81. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	8.47%	39.83%	11.02%	26.27%	14.41%
82. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	4.24%	42.37%	22.88%	27.12%	3.39%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
83. Students regularly use computers.	29.66%	56.78%	4.24%	6.78%	2.54%
84. Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	21.19%	44.07%	3.39%	24.58%	6.78%
85. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	25.42%	65.25%	4.24%	5.08%	0.00%
86. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	21.19%	55.93%	5.93%	11.02%	5.93%
87. The district meets student needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	18.64%	55.08%	11.86%	12.71%	1.69%
88. The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	10.17%	36.44%	35.59%	12.71%	5.08%
89. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	25.42%	62.71%	5.08%	4.24%	2.54%

PARENT SURVEY

(Total number = 48)

PART A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	MALE	FEMALE				
	27.08%	72.92%				

2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
	0.00%	10.42%	68.75%	0.00%	10.42%	10.42%

3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN NAVASOTA ISD?	NO RESPONSE	0–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11 YEARS OR MORE
	0.00%	25.00%	12.50%	62.50%

4. WHAT GRADES ARE TAUGHT IN YOUR SCHOOL?		
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	KINDERGARTEN	FIRST GRADE
2.1%	20.8%	8.3%
SECOND GRADE	THIRD GRADE	FOURTH GRADE
12.5%	14.6%	14.6%
FIFTH GRADE	SIXTH GRADE	SEVENTH GRADE
16.7%	12.5%	18.8%
EIGHTH GRADE	NINTH GRADE	TENTH GRADE
12.5%	14.6%	6.3%
ELEVENTH GRADE	TWELFTH GRADE	
20.8%	18.8%	

PART B. 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.	10.42%	25.00%	37.50%	18.75%	8.33%
2. School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	6.25%	27.08%	22.92%	33.33%	10.42%
3. The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	6.25%	16.67%	25.00%	22.92%	29.17%
4. The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	6.25%	18.75%	29.17%	22.92%	22.92%

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.	2.08%	39.58%	12.50%	18.75%	27.08%
6. Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	8.33%	27.08%	35.42%	16.67%	12.50%
7. The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	8.33%	29.17%	20.83%	20.83%	20.83%
8. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	2.08%	20.83%	31.25%	33.33%	12.50%
9. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a) Reading	12.50%	39.58%	12.50%	22.92%	12.50%
b) Writing	8.33%	39.58%	12.50%	29.17%	10.42%
c) Mathematics	8.33%	35.42%	14.58%	22.92%	18.75%
d) Science	6.25%	47.92%	20.83%	20.83%	4.17%
e) English or Language Arts	8.33%	45.83%	16.67%	25.00%	4.17%
f) Computer Instruction	14.58%	41.67%	20.83%	20.83%	2.08%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	8.33%	50.00%	16.67%	20.83%	4.17%
h) Fine Arts	10.42%	41.67%	25.00%	12.50%	10.42%
i) Physical Education	14.58%	50.00%	18.75%	14.58%	2.08%
j) Business Education	4.17%	33.33%	37.50%	14.58%	10.42%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	6.25%	31.25%	31.25%	20.83%	10.42%
l) Foreign Language	2.08%	41.67%	25.00%	12.50%	18.75%
10. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a) Library Service	29.17%	45.83%	20.83%	2.08%	2.08%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	6.25%	35.42%	27.08%	20.83%	10.42%
c) Special Education	10.42%	33.33%	41.67%	12.50%	2.08%
d) Head Start and Even Start programs	8.33%	43.75%	35.42%	6.25%	6.25%
e) Dyslexia program	2.08%	18.75%	47.92%	20.83%	10.42%
f) Student mentoring program	4.17%	16.67%	43.75%	14.58%	20.83%
g) Advanced placement program	10.42%	29.17%	33.33%	8.33%	18.75%
h) Literacy program	2.08%	37.50%	41.67%	12.50%	6.25%
i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	2.08%	22.92%	39.58%	14.58%	20.83%
j) Summer school programs	6.25%	35.42%	39.58%	12.50%	6.25%
k) Alternative education programs	6.25%	25.00%	45.83%	14.58%	8.33%
l) "English as a second language" program	6.25%	31.25%	58.33%	4.17%	0.00%
m) Career counseling program	2.08%	12.50%	50.00%	18.75%	16.67%
n) College counseling program	2.08%	16.67%	43.75%	22.92%	14.58%
o) Counseling the parents of students	2.08%	10.42%	39.58%	20.83%	27.08%
p) Drop-out prevention program	4.17%	12.50%	43.75%	18.75%	20.83%
11. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	16.67%	22.92%	22.92%	20.83%	16.67%
12. Teacher turnover is low.	4.17%	10.42%	31.25%	20.83%	33.33%
13. Highly qualified teachers fill job openings	4.17%	20.83%	27.08%	20.83%	27.08%
14. A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	6.25%	18.75%	25.00%	29.17%	20.83%

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
15. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	8.33%	37.50%	22.92%	20.83%	10.42%
16. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs, and art classes.	10.42%	39.58%	25.00%	16.67%	8.33%
17. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	31.25%	43.75%	14.58%	6.25%	4.17%
18. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	10.42%	33.33%	29.17%	16.67%	10.42%
19. The district provides a high-quality education.	8.33%	22.92%	20.83%	16.67%	31.25%
20. The district has a high quality of teachers.	6.25%	31.25%	18.75%	18.75%	25.00%

C. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
21. The district regularly communicates with parents.	6.25%	29.17%	6.25%	39.58%	18.75%
22. District facilities are open for community use.	6.25%	16.67%	29.17%	31.25%	16.67%
23. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	4.17%	6.25%	18.75%	31.25%	39.58%

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.	2.08%	12.50%	25.00%	31.25%	29.17%
25. Schools are clean.	6.25%	37.50%	8.33%	22.92%	25.00%
26. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	6.25%	31.25%	18.75%	20.83%	22.92%
27. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	6.25%	22.92%	22.92%	22.92%	25.00%
28. The district uses very few portable buildings.	6.25%	52.08%	22.92%	12.50%	6.25%
29. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	8.33%	22.92%	39.58%	18.75%	10.42%

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.	8.33%	14.58%	29.17%	27.08%	20.83%
31. Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	6.25%	12.50%	27.08%	31.25%	22.92%

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.	2.08%	20.83%	29.17%	27.08%	20.83%
33. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	6.25%	20.83%	33.33%	20.83%	18.75%
34. The district's financial reports are easy to read and understand.	4.17%	16.67%	33.33%	29.17%	16.67%
35. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	6.25%	18.75%	50.00%	14.58%	10.42%

G. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
36. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	8.33%	43.75%	18.75%	16.67%	12.50%
37. Textbooks are in good shape.	8.33%	39.58%	20.83%	12.50%	18.75%
38. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	22.92%	58.33%	12.50%	2.08%	4.17%

H. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
39. My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	27.08%	35.42%	8.33%	10.42%	18.75%
40. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	22.92%	45.83%	22.92%	6.25%	2.08%
41. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	8.33%	18.75%	10.42%	22.92%	39.58%
42. Food is served warm.	8.33%	33.33%	16.67%	20.83%	20.83%
43. Students have enough time to eat.	8.33%	39.58%	14.58%	8.33%	29.17%
44. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	6.25%	41.67%	16.67%	18.75%	16.67%
45. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	6.25%	31.25%	18.75%	25.00%	18.75%
46. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	4.17%	39.58%	22.92%	25.00%	8.33%
47. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	6.25%	31.25%	22.92%	25.00%	14.58%
48. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	8.33%	50.00%	16.67%	10.42%	14.58%

I. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
49. My child regularly rides the bus.	12.50%	10.42%	27.08%	8.33%	41.67%
50. The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	2.08%	12.50%	60.42%	18.75%	6.25%
51. The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	4.17%	12.50%	58.33%	12.50%	12.50%
52. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	10.42%	22.92%	62.50%	2.08%	2.08%
53. The bus stop near my house is safe.	10.42%	18.75%	64.58%	2.08%	4.17%
54. The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	8.33%	18.75%	62.50%	6.25%	4.17%

I. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
55. Buses arrive and depart on time.	4.17%	18.75%	56.25%	12.50%	8.33%
56. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	2.08%	18.75%	60.42%	6.25%	12.50%
57. Buses seldom break down.	4.17%	20.83%	56.25%	10.42%	8.33%
58. Buses are clean.	4.17%	10.42%	52.08%	18.75%	14.58%
59. Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	6.25%	14.58%	68.75%	2.08%	8.33%
60. The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	2.08%	20.83%	64.58%	6.25%	6.25%

J. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
61. Students feel safe and secure at school.	4.17%	41.67%	8.33%	29.17%	16.67%
62. School disturbances are infrequent.	2.08%	27.08%	20.83%	27.08%	22.92%
63. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	6.25%	10.42%	20.83%	27.08%	35.42%
64. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	6.25%	6.25%	20.83%	25.00%	41.67%
65. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	6.25%	14.58%	20.83%	25.00%	33.33%
66. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	12.50%	37.50%	37.50%	10.42%	2.08%
67. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	8.33%	37.50%	31.25%	12.50%	10.42%
68. A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	14.58%	37.50%	27.08%	14.58%	6.25%
69. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	6.25%	25.00%	25.00%	20.83%	22.92%
70. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	6.25%	22.92%	25.00%	25.00%	20.83%

K. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
71. Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	4.17%	47.92%	33.33%	10.42%	4.17%
72. Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	8.33%	58.33%	25.00%	6.25%	2.08%
73. The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	8.33%	50.00%	22.92%	12.50%	6.25%
74. The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	6.25%	37.50%	29.17%	14.58%	12.50%
75. Students have easy access to the internet.	14.58%	52.08%	22.92%	6.25%	4.17%

STUDENT SURVEY

(Total number = 94)

PART A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

1. GENDER (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	MALE	FEMALE
	1.1%	43.6%	55.3%

2. ETHNICITY (OPTIONAL)	NO RESPONSE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ANGLO	HISPANIC	ASIAN	OTHER
	0.0%	24.5%	36.2%	24.5%	1.1%	13.8%

3. WHAT IS YOUR CLASSIFICATION?	JUNIOR	SENIOR
	42.6%	57.4%

PART B. 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.	4.26%	37.23%	14.89%	39.36%	4.26%
2. The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	5.32%	42.55%	21.28%	25.53%	5.32%
3. The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
a) Reading	15.96%	59.57%	14.89%	5.32%	4.26%
b) Writing	15.96%	58.51%	12.77%	10.64%	2.13%
c) Mathematics	11.70%	54.26%	14.89%	12.77%	6.38%
d) Science	9.57%	44.68%	20.21%	18.09%	7.45%
e) English or Language Arts	25.53%	58.51%	10.64%	3.19%	2.13%
f) Computer Instruction	12.77%	48.94%	24.47%	11.70%	2.13%
g) Social Studies (history or geography)	31.91%	42.55%	11.70%	10.64%	3.19%
h) Fine Arts	13.83%	39.36%	27.66%	15.96%	3.19%
i) Physical Education	18.09%	35.11%	23.40%	11.70%	11.70%
j) Business Education	5.32%	32.98%	36.17%	17.02%	8.51%
k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	4.26%	32.98%	36.17%	15.96%	10.64%
l) Foreign Language	8.51%	36.17%	22.34%	21.28%	11.70%
4. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a) Library Service	37.23%	44.68%	11.70%	5.32%	1.06%
b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	12.77%	39.36%	29.79%	18.09%	0.00%
c) Special Education	18.09%	30.85%	46.81%	4.26%	0.00%
d) Student mentoring program	5.32%	17.02%	37.23%	24.47%	15.96%
e) Advanced placement program	13.83%	38.30%	37.23%	5.32%	5.32%

A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
f) Career counseling program	4.26%	19.15%	30.85%	25.53%	20.21%
g) College counseling program	6.38%	17.02%	22.34%	29.79%	24.47%
5. Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	15.96%	50.00%	7.45%	15.96%	10.64%
6. Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	7.45%	40.43%	19.15%	23.40%	9.57%
7. The district provides a high-quality education.	4.26%	19.15%	20.21%	35.11%	21.28%
8. The district has high-quality teachers.	8.51%	21.28%	26.60%	27.66%	15.96%

B. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
9. Schools are clean.	3.19%	19.15%	14.89%	38.30%	24.47%
10. Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	3.19%	20.21%	24.47%	37.23%	14.89%
11. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	3.19%	17.02%	15.96%	39.36%	24.47%
12. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	6.38%	36.17%	31.91%	13.83%	11.70%

C. PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
13. There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	3.19%	26.60%	8.51%	41.49%	20.21%
14. Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	4.26%	42.55%	20.21%	22.34%	10.64%
15. Textbooks are in good shape.	0.00%	29.79%	12.77%	35.11%	22.34%
16. The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	30.85%	51.06%	12.77%	3.19%	2.13%

D. FOOD SERVICES

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
17. The school breakfast program is available to all children.	10.64%	41.49%	21.28%	12.77%	13.83%
18. The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	0.00%	7.45%	8.51%	26.60%	57.45%
19. Food is served warm.	0.00%	25.53%	19.15%	31.91%	23.40%
20. Students have enough time to eat.	18.09%	46.81%	11.70%	8.51%	14.89%
21. Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	2.13%	44.68%	19.15%	21.28%	12.77%
22. Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	3.19%	17.02%	10.64%	36.17%	32.98%
23. Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	3.19%	25.53%	23.40%	23.40%	24.47%
24. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	17.02%	31.91%	14.89%	22.34%	13.83%
25. Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	2.13%	36.17%	23.40%	22.34%	15.96%

E. TRANSPORTATION

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
26. I regularly ride the bus.	10.64%	15.96%	22.34%	15.96%	35.11%
27. The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	5.32%	14.89%	58.51%	6.38%	14.89%
28. The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	4.26%	17.02%	61.70%	6.38%	10.64%
29. The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	9.57%	26.60%	55.32%	6.38%	2.13%
30. The bus stop near my house is safe.	12.77%	24.47%	56.38%	3.19%	3.19%
31. The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	12.77%	21.28%	60.64%	2.13%	3.19%
32. Buses arrive and depart on time.	3.19%	10.64%	58.51%	12.77%	14.89%
33. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	5.32%	17.02%	61.70%	5.32%	10.64%
34. Buses seldom break down.	12.77%	13.83%	57.45%	8.51%	7.45%
35. Buses are clean.	2.13%	5.32%	50.00%	19.15%	23.40%
36. Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	13.83%	18.09%	54.26%	6.38%	7.45%

F. SAFETY AND SECURITY

SURVEY QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
37. I feel safe and secure at school.	3.19%	38.30%	14.89%	31.91%	11.70%
38. School disturbances are infrequent.	7.45%	18.09%	29.79%	32.98%	11.70%
39. Gangs are not a problem in this district.	6.38%	23.40%	11.70%	35.11%	23.40%
40. Drugs are not a problem in this district.	5.32%	7.45%	13.83%	34.04%	39.36%
41. Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	4.26%	4.26%	12.77%	47.87%	30.85%
42. Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	8.51%	28.72%	42.55%	9.57%	10.64%
43. Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	4.26%	17.02%	31.91%	26.60%	20.21%
44. A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	6.38%	26.60%	54.26%	7.45%	5.32%
45. Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	0.00%	17.02%	24.47%	27.66%	30.85%
46. Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	6.38%	15.96%	37.23%	28.72%	11.70%

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.	8.51%	39.36%	8.51%	30.85%	12.77%
48. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	15.96%	48.94%	12.77%	18.09%	4.26%
49. Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	13.83%	56.38%	12.77%	13.83%	3.19%
50. The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	7.45%	39.36%	17.02%	26.60%	9.57%
51. The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	12.77%	23.40%	28.72%	24.47%	10.64%
52. Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	15.96%	44.68%	13.83%	18.09%	7.45%