

# TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August 19, 2003

The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor  
The Honorable David Dewhurst, Lieutenant Governor  
The Honorable Thomas R. Craddick, Speaker of the House  
Chief Deputy Commissioner Robert Scott

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Richards Independent School District (RISD).

This review is intended to help RISD further hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that more of every education dollar goes directly into the classroom with the teachers and students, where it belongs. To aid in this task, I contracted with Trace Consulting Services, Inc., a San Antonio-based consulting firm.

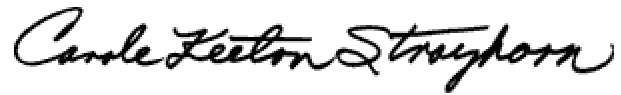
I have made a number of recommendations to improve RISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations? model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers and staff. This report outlines 47 detailed recommendations that could save RISD \$770,474 over the next 5 years, while reinvesting \$265,903 to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach \$504,571 that the district can redirect to the classroom.

I am grateful for the cooperation of RISD's board, staff, parents, and community members.

I commend them for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities for our most precious resource in RISD? the children.

I am also pleased to announce that the report is available on my *Window on State Government* Web site at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/richards/>.

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Strayhorn  
Texas Comptroller

c: Senate Committee on Education

House Committee on Public Education

The Honorable Stephen E Ogden, State Senator, District 5

The Honorable D. Todd Staples, State Senator, District 3

The Honorable Ruben Hope, Jr., State Representative, District 16

The Honorable Lois Kolkhorst, State Representative, District 13

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2003, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn announced her intention to review the Richards Independent School District (RISD). In April 2003, the Comptroller's Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) team began a review of RISD. Based upon more than four months of work, this report identifies RISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 47 recommendations could result in net savings of \$504,571 over the next five years.

## **Improving The Texas School Performance Review**

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

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

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

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

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

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

*For more information, contact TSPR by calling (512) 475-3676, or see the Legislative Budget Board's Web site at [www.lbb.state.tx.us](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us).*

### **TSPR In Richards ISD**

Comptroller Strayhorn selected Richards ISD for a review in February 2003 and began onsite work in April 2003. Trace Consulting Services, Inc. a San Antonio-based consulting firm, was awarded a \$30,000 contract in February 2003 to assist in performing this review. Onsite work began April 14, 2003.

During the review process, the review team interviewed administrators, district employees, school board members, parents and community members and held a public forum at Richards ISD's cafetorium on April 14th from 5p.m. to 8p.m. To obtain additional comments, the review team also conducted a focus group session with teachers.

To ensure that all stakeholder groups had an opportunity for input, TSPR sent surveys to students, parents and teachers. A total of 89 respondents answered surveys. Fifty-three parents; 15 teachers; and 21 students completed and returned written surveys as part of the review. Details from the surveys and public forums appear in **Appendices A through D**.

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

RISD selected four peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The districts selected by the superintendent were Aquilla, Calvert, Devers and North Zulch ISDs. TSPR also compared RISD to district averages in TEA's Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6), to which Richards ISD belongs and to the state as a whole.

During its four-month review, TSPR developed 47 recommendations to improve operations and save taxpayers \$770,474 by 2007-08. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach \$504,571 by 2007-08.

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 4**. Many TSPR recommendations do not have a direct financial impact but would improve the district's overall operations.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Comptroller's office and Trace Consulting Services, Inc. wish to express appreciation to the RISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent Martey Ainsworth and Ms. Joy Carraway, TSPR's district contact. The Comptroller's office also thanks all district employees, students, parents and community residents who helped during the review.

### **Richards ISD**

RISD is a small rural district serving 165 students as of June 2002-03. The district is primarily located in Grimes County approximately 30 minutes from Huntsville, Texas. Portions of this district also lie within Walker and Montgomery Counties. The economy of the area is primarily agribusiness.

Comptroller Strayhorn selected the district for review primarily due to its financial performance. Specifically, RISD had a negative fund balance of \$73,607 in 2000-01 and the deficit has risen to \$161,154 in 2002-03. The district continues to struggle financially because RISD experienced a substantial increase in the district's property values in 1999-2000 causing the local tax revenues to increase and the state's assistance to the district to decrease. Consequently, RISD was overpaid \$349,544 by the state in 2000-01.

RISD's budget for 2002-03 is \$1.1 million, while the district's tax rate is \$1.46 for 2001, up 26.1 cents since 1999. The district's final 2002 tax rate is \$1.46.

The district serves its students with one elementary school and one middle school/high school, although technically all RISD students are located under one roof. Economically disadvantaged students constitute 50.6 percent of the district's enrollment, as compared to a statewide average of 46.2 percent. Students are 79.9 percent Anglo; 2.8 percent Hispanic and 17.4 percent African-American, while teachers are 100 percent Anglo.

**Exhibit 1** details the demographic characteristics of RISD, its selected peer school districts, Region 6 and the state.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Demographic Characteristics**  
**RISD, Peer School Districts, Region 6 and State**  
**2002-03**

District	Enrollment	Ethnic Groups				Economically Disadvantaged
		Percent African-American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent of Student Enrollment
<b>Richards</b>	<b>*178</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>
Calvert	287	85.4%	10.0%	4.2%	0.0%	94.1%
North Zulch	330	0.0%	2.4%	96.0%	1.2%	46.4%
Aquilla	189	1.1%	4.8%	94.0%	0.0%	51.9%
Devers	163	18.4%	31.0%	51.0%	0.0%	45.4%
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>143,282</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>42.3%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>4,259,864</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>39.8%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>

*Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2002-03.*

*\* Enrollment number reported to PEIMS, however, district records for June 2002-03 indicate an enrollment of 165 students.*

**Exhibit 2** shows the percentage change of RISD's student enrollment for the past five years.

**Exhibit 2**  
**RISD Student Enrollment History**  
**1998-99 through 2002-03**

School Year	Actual Student Enrollment	Percent Change from 1998-99
1998-99	155	N/A
1999-2000	173	11.6%
2000-01	161	3.9%

2001-02	161	3.9%
2002-03	178	14.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02 and PEIMS 2002-03.

While the district reported an enrollment of 178 to the TEA for 2002-03, on June 24, 2003 the district communicated an end-of-year enrollment figure of 165 to the review team. Using the 165 student enrollment figure, the district's enrollment has only increased by 6.5 percent, instead of the 14.8 percent increase indicated when 178 enrollment figures are used.

For period 1998-99 through 2002-03, the district's accountability rating has been consistently *Academically Acceptable*. In 2002-03 the state replaced the TAAS with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). RISD's TAAS passing rates in 2001-02 were 76.0 percent for all tests taken, compared to the state average of 85.3 percent, a difference of 9.3 percentage points.

The greatest challenges facing RISD include:

- strengthening financial management and internal controls;
- improving student performance; and
- enhancing long range planning.

### ***Strengthen Financial Management***

***Realign the organizational structure functionally and hire a part-time Business manager to increase financial expertise and allow the superintendent to focus on the district's instructional needs.*** The district has not aligned its management functions efficiently, leaving the superintendent with oversight of all district functions and employees. In addition, the district is facing a financial crisis and the superintendent has little time or expertise in school finance to meet the district's complex financial challenges. By eliminating the assistant principal position and hiring a part-time teacher and business manager at a cost of \$20,800 each year and providing other staff financial training, the district will be better able to manage its financial interests and the superintendent can focus on the district's instructional needs.

***Develop and implement a policy regarding general fund balance management and provide monthly fund balance information to the board.*** RISD's board has not adopted a board policy to monitor their general fund balance nor does it receive information regarding the status of the monthly fund balance or the impact that its decisions will have on the fund balance. Since 2000-01, RISD has reported a negative

undesignated unreserved general fund balance. By developing a fund balance management policy, the board and administration will have a better idea of the district's financial condition and make sound decisions by fully understanding the impact of each decision on the district's financial condition.

***Develop a long-term compensation strategy for all positions in the district and increase teacher salaries to be more competitive with the market.*** RISD does not have a comprehensive salary program and its teacher salaries rank below surrounding districts peer districts and state averages. In 2001-02 the district's teacher turnover rate was 17.6 percent, or 1.9 percentage points higher than the state. In 2000-01 the district's turnover rate was 30.9 percent, or 14.9 percentage points higher than the state. By developing salary schedules and adjusting teacher salaries, RISD will be better able to manage teacher turnover.

***Aggressively pursue competitive grants and develop timelines for grant funding to ensure no funds go unused.*** RISD does not have timelines in place to ensure that all grant funding is used within its allotted time frame, nor does it aggressively pursue competitive grant funding. In 2002, RISD's external auditor disclosed that the district had not expended 85 percent of state block grants for the compensatory education and gifted and talented programs. If funds from grant programs go unused, funding for these programs will have to come out of the district's general fund. By aggressively pursuing grant funding and ensuring that all grant monies are used in a timely fashion, the district will be better able to provide needed educational programs for its students.

### ***Improve Student Performance***

***Develop local board policy and an instructional plan to provide direction for the district's curriculum design and management.*** RISD does not have a board policy providing direction for curriculum design and management and its teachers independently develop and evaluate curriculum with limited direction from administrators. By planning and implementing an integrated curriculum process, the district can organize curriculum content across subject matter lines and better prepare its students for lifelong learning.

***Identify gifted and talented students and establish a Gifted and Talented Program.*** RISD did not serve or identify students in a Gifted and Talented program in 2002-03, citing a lack of funds to hire a Gifted and Talented teacher or train all teachers to serve this population of students. State law requires school districts to establish a GT program and train teachers to meet the instructional needs of gifted and talented students in grades 1 through 12. By collaboratively establishing multiple criteria for



identifying G/T students, and training all teachers the district will not only be in compliance with state law but will also hold all teachers accountable by offering an enhanced and more appropriate curriculum to academically advanced students.

### ***Enhance Long Range Planning***

***Update Campus Improvement Plans(CIPs) and develop a District Improvement Plan (DIP).*** The district is out-of-compliance with Texas Education Code (TEC) Sections 11.252 and 11.253 which require the board to ensure district and CIPs are developed for each campus and revised annually, and that a DIP be developed to guide the district as a whole. The district's CIPs have not been updated for 2003-04 as required under TEC. By updating its CIPs and developing a DIP, RISD will be better able to set and achieve priorities and objectively measure districtwide performance in accordance with its legal obligations to the state.

***Create a comprehensive facilities master plan.*** RISD does not have a facilities master plan and, district facilities, built in 1967 are in need of repair and maintenance. Some exterior walls have holes and much of the campus needs paint and general maintenance. By developing a facilities master plan, the district can set priorities for facility maintenance, repair or renovation as funds become available or as groups of parents or community volunteers come forward to address various concerns.

### **Exemplary Programs and Practices**

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

- ***The RISD Parent Teacher Organization encourages students to pursue higher education by providing annual scholarships.*** Throughout the course of the year, the PTO conducts numerous fundraising events, such as their fall festivals and other benefit functions, to raise the needed funds for scholarships. The group provides two or three scholarships each year. Students are encouraged to achieve academic success while volunteering and contributing both to the school and community.

- RISD addresses the needs of students with disabilities by participating in a cost-effective special education cooperative.***  
 RISD is a member of the Grimes County Special Education Cooperative which assists member districts through shared-service arrangements. The cooperative provides services for each RISD student requiring full day placement in LIFE skills class while eliminating the need for the district to provide full-time personnel for this level of special education needs.

**Savings and Investment Requirements**

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

TSPR recommended 47 ways to save RISD \$770,474 in gross savings over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities will cost the district \$265,903 during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of \$504,571 by 2007-08. The savings identified by the review team will enhance the district's state-mandated cost reduction plan.

**Exhibit 3  
Summary of Net Savings  
TSPR Review of Richards Independent School District**

Year	Total
2003-04 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$68,422
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$99,931
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$99,931
2006-07 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$103,131
2007-08 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$103,131
One Time Net Savings (Costs)	\$30,025
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2003-08</b>	<b>\$504,571</b>

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 4**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some

items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

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

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Exhibit 4 Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

Recommendation	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Total 5 Year (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
<b>Chapter 1: District Organization and Management</b>							
1. Ensure board members complete state-mandated training requirements. p. 21	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Develop comprehensive appraisal criteria to evaluate the superintendent's performance annually. p. 23	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Realign the organizational structure functionally to increase the superintendent's focus on the district's instructional and strategic needs. p. 25	\$15,597	(\$43,819)	(\$43,819)	(\$43,819)	(\$43,819)	(\$190,873)	
	\$0	\$45,678	\$45,678	\$45,678	\$45,678	\$182,712	\$0
4. Update Campus Improvement Plans and develop a District	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0







	financial aid rules and the Texas Grant Program for parents of students considering college. p. 81							
19.	Establish a procedure for review and analysis of discipline problems and administered consequences. p. 86	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
20.	Develop and implement a board-approved Disciplinary Alternative Education Program policy. p. 88	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
21.	Develop a district truancy plan to increase attendance rates. p. 89	\$0	\$7,408	\$7,408	\$7,408	\$7,408	\$29,632	\$0
22.	Develop a comprehensive security plan that includes periodic inspections of facilities. p. 91	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Totals- Chapter 2</b>		<b>(\$260)</b>	<b>\$3,348</b>	<b>\$3,348</b>	<b>\$6,548</b>	<b>\$6,548</b>	<b>\$19,532</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Financial Management</b>								
23.	Develop and implement a policy for	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0



	general fund balance management and provide monthly balance information to the board. p. 105							
24.	Gain Texas Education Agency approval for the district's indirect cost rate annually and claim allowed indirect costs as general fund revenues. p. 106	\$3,575	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$19,175	\$0
25.	Implement a budget planning process that includes a budget calendar and involvement of the school board, the campus administration, staff and the community. p. 110	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26.	Provide the board with funding scenarios that maximize Tier II funding. p. 112	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

27.	Develop a written procedures manual to provide internal control of RISD cash management. p. 114	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
28.	Implement procedures to ensure PEIMS data accuracy before submission to the Texas Education Agency. p. 115	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
29.	Contract tax collection and increase the district's tax collection rate. p. 118	\$30,289	\$47,221	\$47,221	\$47,221	\$47,221	\$219,173	\$0
30.	Aggressively pursue competitive grants and develop internal timelines for grant funding and special revenue to ensure that no funds go unused or are returned. p. 121	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$200,000	\$0
31.	Develop a fixed asset system and conduct an annual inventory to comply with	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0



	efforts. p. 141							
38.	Establish a meals-per-labor-hour standard and staff the cafeteria accordingly. p. 145	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$23,265	\$0
39.	Develop strategies to ensure that all eligible students are identified for free and reduced-price meals. p. 147	\$0	\$7,370	\$7,370	\$7,370	\$7,370	\$29,480	\$0
40.	Restrict the use of vending machines during serving hours and comply with the Texas Department of Agriculture Policy. p. 149	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
41.	File transportation operations reports timely. p. 154	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,025
42.	Document and evaluate bus routes to improve linear density. p. 156	\$4,256	\$5,674	\$5,674	\$5,674	\$5,674	\$26,952	\$0
43.	Develop and implement a schedule for performing preventive	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	maintenance of the district's bus fleet. p. 157							
44.	Develop and implement a formal school bus replacement plan. p. 159	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
45.	Update the district's technology plan. p. 160	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
46.	Maintain the RISD network to ensure reliable Internet access for all district computers. p. 161	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
47.	Collect and maintain computer and software maintenance statistics. p. 162	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Totals Chapter 4</b>		<b>\$10,001</b>	<b>\$18,789</b>	<b>\$18,789</b>	<b>\$18,789</b>	<b>\$18,789</b>	<b>\$85,157</b>	<b>\$30,025</b>
<b>Total Savings</b>		<b>\$84,465</b>	<b>\$163,996</b>	<b>\$163,996</b>	<b>\$163,996</b>	<b>\$163,996</b>	<b>\$740,449</b>	<b>\$30,025</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>(\$16,043)</b>	<b>(\$64,065)</b>	<b>(\$64,065)</b>	<b>(\$64,065)</b>	<b>(\$64,065)</b>	<b>(\$265,903)</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net Savings (Costs)</b>		<b>\$68,422</b>	<b>\$99,931</b>	<b>\$99,931</b>	<b>\$103,131</b>	<b>\$103,131</b>	<b>\$474,546</b>	<b>\$30,025</b>

<b>5 Year Gross Savings</b>	<b>\$770,474</b>
<b>5 Year Gross Costs</b>	<b>(\$265,903)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$504,571</b>

# Chapter 1

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the organization and management of the Richards Independent School District (RISD) in the following sections:

- A. Board Governance and District Management
- B. Personnel Management
- C. Staff Development
- D. Community and Parental Involvement

The organization and management of a school district requires cooperation among the elected members of the board of trustees, the superintendent and district staff. The school board establishes the district's goals and policies and works to improve the district's performance in accordance with state laws and policies. District staff including the superintendent, administrators, teachers and other staff implement the board's vision and provide data and research to the board. Participation from all board members, the superintendent and the community is essential for strong school governance. Planning and adhering to an agenda may avoid unnecessary conflicts and following parliamentary procedures can keep meetings running smoothly.

As the chief executive officer of the district, the superintendent recommends and analyzes staffing levels and business trends and ensures the availability of resources to accomplish the board's goals and objectives. The superintendent manages the district's daily operations while the board creates and communicates the district's vision. Staff supports board-approved plans and policies and recommends modifications to ensure successful operation of all district programs, services and activities.

With effective community and parent involvement programs, school districts win the confidence, support and involvement of the local community.

### **BACKGROUND**

Located approximately 25 miles southwest of Huntsville, RISD covers portions of Grimes, Montgomery and Walker counties. A small, rural and agricultural community, Richards has a population of 296 residents, according to the Texas State Historical Association.

The Texas Legislature created RISD in 1911 and the district graduated its first class of four seniors in May 1917. By 1942, RISD had an accredited

four-year high school with seven teachers, offered 17 credits and served 160 students. Over the years, students from several of the surrounding small communities including Pools, Independence, Bays Chapel and Sandy ISD joined RISD. Prior to 1967, both of the RISD schools were racially segregated. In 1967, the district's two racially segregated schools merged.

RISD has two campuses: the elementary campus serves kindergarten through grade 6 and the high school campus serves students in grades 7 through 12. Although the two campuses are located in the same building in opposite wings separated by the central administrative offices, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) identifies and accredits each campus individually. RISD belongs to Regional Educational Service Center VI (Region 6) located in Huntsville.

After 10 years with the district, the former superintendent retired at the end of 2001-02. In July 2002, the board promoted the district's principal to replace the former superintendent. In December 2002, the superintendent obtained his superintendent's certificate.

The district has struggled financially as a result of an overpayment of state funds in 2000-01, which it had to repay. The overpayment occurred as a result of a substantial increase in the district's property values in 1999-2000 causing the local tax revenues to increase and the state's assistance to the district to decrease. RISD continues experiencing deficit spending as the funds are repaid in increments to the state. The current superintendent inherited a deficit fund balance of \$154,552 from 2001-02. Because of RISD's continuing financial deficit situation, TEA required RISD to prepare a Cost Reduction Plan and Statement of Tax Effort for period 2001-02 through 2002-03 to assist the district in containing costs. The superintendent has complied with the TEA's request by presenting 47 categories of targeted cost reductions, including freezing salaries for 2002-03 and 2003-04.

# Chapter 1

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *A. BOARD GOVERNANCE AND DISTRICT MANAGEMENT (PART I)*

Section 11.151(b) of the Texas Education Code (TEC) defines a school district's Board of Trustees as an elected corporate body with the exclusive power and duty to oversee the management of public schools in the district. As a legal agent of the State of Texas, the school board derives its status from the Texas Constitution and the Legislature. The board must function in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, regulations and relevant court decisions. Specific powers granted to the board under the TEC include the power and duty to:

- adopt rules and bylaws necessary to govern and oversee management of the district;
- acquire and hold real and personal property, sue and be sued and receive bequests and donations and other money or funds;
- dispose of property no longer necessary for the operation of the school district;
- levy and collect taxes; issue bonds, including determining the rate of tax to be levied within the dollar limits voted and specified by law (in instances when a specific tax rate has not been adopted at an election authorizing a tax);
- adopt and file a budget for the next fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year;
- ensure district accounts are annually audited at district expense by a certified public accountant following the closes of each fiscal year;
- approve a district-developed plan and campus-level plan for site-based decision-making (SBDM) and provide for implementation;
- publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance, including school performance objectives and the progress of each school toward the objectives; and
- adopt policies providing for the employment and duties of district personnel.

Section 11.201 of the TEC lists the following responsibilities of the superintendent, who serves the district as chief executive officer:

- assume administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision and evaluation of educational programs, services and facilities of the district;
- conduct annual performance appraisals of the district's staff;



- assume administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment of all personnel;
- recommend the selection of district personnel, other than the superintendent, as provided by TEC Section 11.163;
- terminate or suspend an employee or the non-renewal of an employee's term contract;
- manage the day-to-day operations of the district as its administrative manager;
- prepare and submit to the board of trustees a proposed budget as provided by TEC Section 44.002;
- recommend policies to be adopted by the board and oversee the implementation of adopted policies;
- develop appropriate administrative regulations to implement policies established by the board;
- provide leadership to attain student performance in the district based on indicators adopted under TEC Section 39.051 and other indicators adopted by the State Board of Education or the district's board of trustees;
- organize the district's central administration; and
- perform any other duties assigned by the board of trustees.

RISD has a seven-member Board of Trustees. The entire district elects each trustee, who serve three-year terms, at-large. **Exhibit 1-1** lists the RISD board members, their occupation and the end of their terms. In 2002-03, the district did not conduct board elections because each of the three members approaching the end of their respective terms ran unopposed. With the exception of a board member elected in May of 2001, each of the members and officers has served on the board at least six years.

**Exhibit 1-1**  
**RISD Board Members**  
**April 2003**

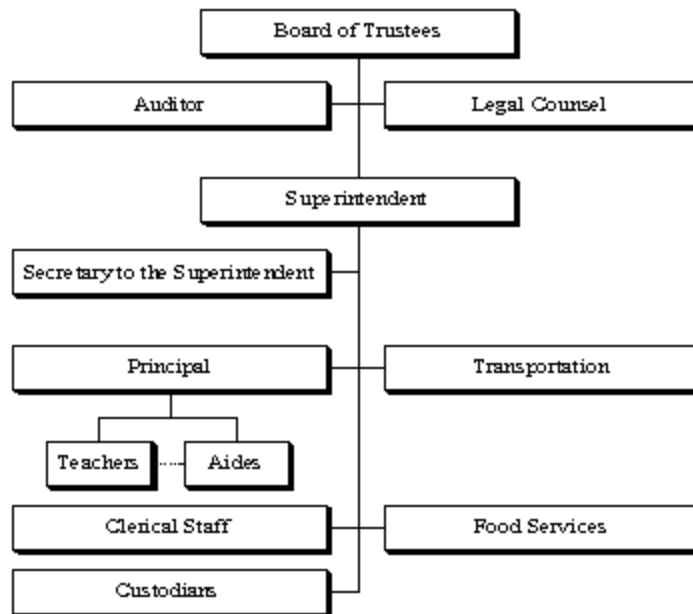
<b>Member</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>End of Term</b>
Bryant Wells, President	Texas Ranger	May 2005
Pam Conner, Vice President	Business Owner	May 2006
Jeannine Shead, Secretary	Bank Vice President	May 2005
Bevin Fuller	Self-Employed	May 2004
Nancy Keisler	Self-Employed	May 2006
Kelleyane Ketkoski	Sales	May 2006
Benny Lewis	Shop Foreman	May 2005

Source: RISD, Central Administration Office.

The superintendent manages the district; fulfills responsibilities as the principal; serves as the director for all support services including personnel, Food Services, Transportation and maintenance; and oversees the district's business affairs. RISD's central administration includes a half-time assistant principal who also teaches at the high school level; a secretary who also serves as finance clerk and business manager; a receptionist who is also a bus driver and cafeteria cashier; and a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) coordinator who also serves as the district's in-house tax collector.

**Exhibit 1-2** shows the organizational structure provided to the review team by the superintendent. However, the organizational chart in the exhibit does not accurately reflect the district's organization and staffing. All district personnel, including teachers and aides, report directly to the superintendent. For example, in interviews with the review team, the superintendent said that he eliminated the principal's position and performs the principal's duties to save money. In addition, the organizational chart provided to the review team by the district does not include the teacher who also serves as the half-time assistant principal. The auditor and legal counsel functions are external to the district. Most employers do not include external functions on their organizational charts.

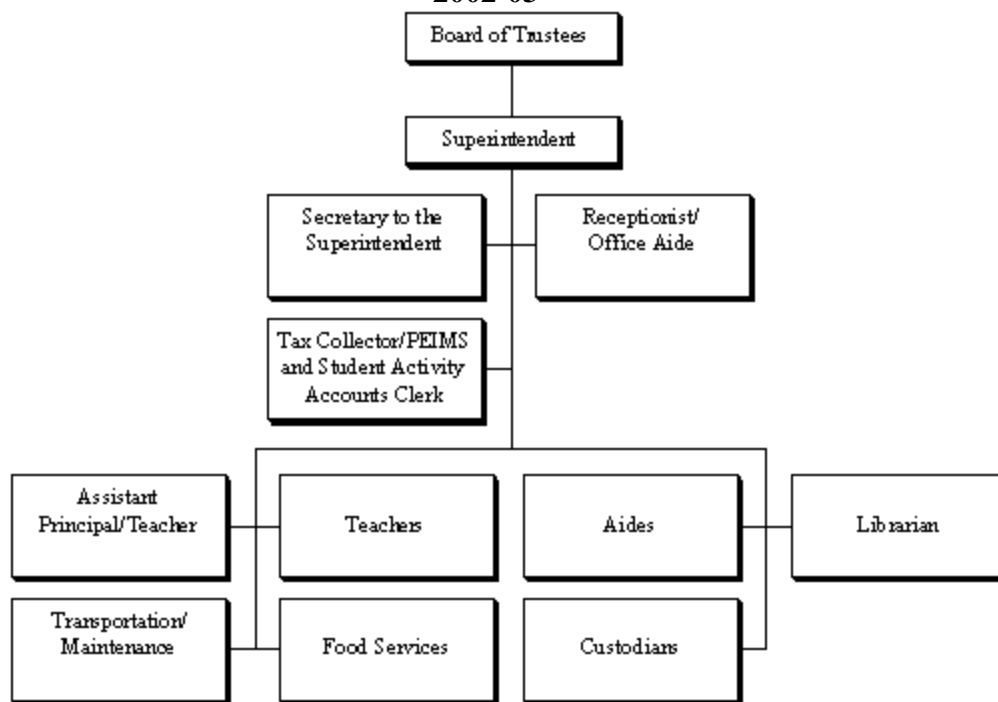
**Exhibit 1-2**  
**RISD Submitted Organizational Structure**  
**Submitted to the Review Team**  
**2002-03**



Source: RISD, Central Administration Office.

**Exhibit 1-3** more accurately shows the working organization of the RISD as reviewed and observed. The superintendent is also the district's principal and oversees the district's business operations. The secretary to the superintendent/finance clerk also serves as the district's business manager. The librarian is also the district's technology coordinator and acquired grant writing duties in 2002-03. The receptionist/office aide also drives a bus route and is the food service cashier. The tax collector/PEIMS and student activity accounts clerk conducts the district's tax collection, PEIMS data submissions and also handles all student activity accounts.

**Exhibit 1-3  
RISD Actual Organization Structure  
2002-03**



*Source: RISD staff interviews.*

In a survey by the review team, the majority of responses about the quality of RISD, the board, superintendent and central administration were positive. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, the 67 percent feel that school board members listen to the opinions and desires of others; 73.4 percent of teachers and 66 percent of parents said that the superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader (**Exhibit 1-4**).

**Exhibit 1-4  
RISD Teacher and Parent Survey Results  
Quality of District Leadership and Management**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/ Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/ Strongly Disagree</b>
School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	Teachers	67.0%	33.0%	0.0%
	Parents	41.4%	33.9%	24.4%
The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	Teachers	73.4%	26.6%	0.0%
	Parents	66.0%	11.3%	22.5%
The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	Teachers	46.6%	46.6%	6.6%
	Parents	58.5%	20.7%	20.7%
School board members work well with the superintendent.	Teachers	60%	40%	0.0%
The school board has a good image in the community	Teachers	59.9%	33.3%	6.6%
Central administration supports the education process.	Teachers	80%	20%	0.0%

*Source: TSPR Survey Results.*

## **FINDING**

The board and superintendent communicate with each other in several ways that facilitates open communication and results in mutual trust. All board members interviewed indicated an open, positive working relationship with the superintendent is achieved through face-to-face communication, ongoing telephone contacts and board meeting packages provided by the superintendent. All board members also interviewed indicated that the superintendent provides adequate and timely information in the board packets.

Board members said they feel free to contact the superintendent to discuss district issues and, in turn, perceive that the superintendent is open and responsive to their concerns. The superintendent said that administration and the board have formed an effective leadership team by working together to benefit the district and its students.

## **COMMENDATION**

**By maintaining open communication, the school board and superintendent work cohesively as a team on district issues.**

## FINDING

RISD board members have not completed continuing education hours as required by Chapter 61 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). TAC Chapter 61, subchapter A, reads: "Annually, at the meeting at which the call for election of board members is normally scheduled, the current president of each local board of trustees shall announce the name of each board member who has completed the required continuing education, who has exceeded the required hours of continuing education and who is deficient in the required continuing education. The president shall cause the minutes of the local board to reflect the information and shall make this information available to the local media."

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) maintains a continuing education credit reporting service (CECRS) online for all non-TASB sponsored events. TAC requires new board members to obtain a total of 16 hours of training annually. Under the same law, experienced board members also must obtain eight hours of training annually. In addition, after each session of the Texas Legislature, each school board member shall receive an update to the basic orientation provided by the Regional Educational Service Center "of sufficient length to familiarize board members with major changes," as shown in **Exhibit 1-5**.

### **Exhibit 1-5 TAC Continuing Education Requirements for School Board Members**

<b>Category of Continuing Education</b>	<b>First-Year Board Member</b>	<b>Experienced Board Member</b>
Local District Orientation	Required within 60 days of election or appointment	Not required
Orientation to the Texas Education Code	Three hours	Not required
Update to the Texas Education Code	Incorporated into Orientation to the Texas Education Code	After legislative session and of "sufficient length" to address major changes
Team-building Session/Assessment of Continuing Education Needs of the Board-Superintendent Team	At least three hours	At least three hours
Additional Continuing Education.	At least 10 hours	At least five hours

based on assessed need and Framework for School Board Development		
<b>Total Minimum Number of Hours</b>	<b>16 hours, plus local district orientation</b>	<b>Eight hours, plus TEC update</b>

*Source: TAC, Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 61, Rule 61.1.*

In February 2003, the superintendent and all but one school board member attended a TASB-sponsored financial workshop for three continuing education hours each for 2002-03. While each board member has completed various courses in teambuilding, policy review, introduction and legislative updates to the TEC, structure and accountability and superintendent evaluation since 1998-99, a review of board member files indicates they have not obtained the required training for 2002-03 (**Exhibit 1-6**). With the exception of a board member who was elected in May 2001, each of the members and officers has served on the board at least six years. Training hours for 2002-03 are through April 16, 2003.

**Exhibit 1-6**  
**RISD Board of Trustees Training Hours**  
**1998-99 through 2002-03**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Training Hours 1998-99</b>	<b>Training Hours 1999-2000</b>	<b>Training Hours 2000-01</b>	<b>Training Hours 2001-02</b>	<b>Training Hours 2002-03</b>	<b>Additional Training Hours Required for 2002-03 to Comply with TEC</b>
Member 1	6	6	3	3	3	5
Member 2	3	6	3	3	3	5
Member 3	3	6	3	3	3	5
Member 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	0	8
Member 5	3	5	3	3	3	5
Member 6	3	6	3	3	3	5
Member 7	3	6	3	3	3	5

Source: RISD, superintendent.  
 N/A: Data not available.

TASB provides training through its Online Learning Center, enabling board members to receive training in the privacy and comfort of their home. Using the TASB Online Learning Center, board members may obtain continuing education after work, on weekends or at any other convenient time. Among its wide menu of training offerings, TASB offers training on *Effective Approaches to Districtwide Planning* and *Critical Issues Planning*. The cost of online courses compares to other TASB offerings except that the online process eliminates travel expenses, travel time and non-productive time. The TASB online classes also allows self-paced completion of courses which allows board members to eliminate scheduling conflicts. Region 6 also offers a variety of services to meet local district needs for continuing education in accordance with TAC.

**Recommendation 1:**

**Ensure board members complete state-mandated training requirements.**

The school board president should announce each board member who has completed the required continuing education, exceeded the required training or who has not completed annual requirements. The superintendent may assist the board by listing upcoming TASB and other board trainings in the monthly board meeting agenda packet. The district may choose to schedule and receive board training in a cost-effective cluster workshop receiving credits for numerous continuing education courses by inviting neighboring districts to attend and share the expense.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The board president reviews training hours for all members and identifies those members not meeting state-required hours.	September 2003
2.	The board president announces training received by board members in open session of a regular board meeting, including identifying board members in need of required training.	October 2003 and Ongoing
3.	School board members complete minimum training requirements in accordance with TEC.	October 2003 - June 2004
4.	The board president monitors progress of school board training and continuing education credits earned.	Ongoing

5.	The superintendent lists available board trainings in the monthly board meeting agenda packets for consideration by each board member.	Ongoing
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**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Board Governance and District Management - Part 2



# Chapter 1

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *A. BOARD GOVERNANCE AND DISTRICT MANAGEMENT (PART 2)*

#### **FINDING**

The district's evaluation of the superintendent's performance is not comprehensive and is not linked to the superintendent's job description or contract. In interviews at least two board members indicated that the board needs more detailed performance evaluation criteria to evaluate the superintendent. One board member said that it had not been the board's practice to thoroughly evaluate the former superintendent. Another board member said that the district may have avoided some of its current problems if the board had historically performed more thorough superintendent evaluations. Although some board members said that they evaluated the superintendent in "early 2003," the review team did not initially find a written, completed performance evaluation in the superintendent's personnel file. After a subsequent onsite meeting, the district provided the review team with a copy of a completed "evaluation summary" dated February 20, 2003 and signed by the superintendent and the board president. The two-page document rates the superintendent's performance in the following categories:

- educational leadership;
- district management; and
- board and community relations.

For each of the performance categories listed, the rating scale ranges from one, (symbolizing needs improvement) to three (exceptional.) Although each board member rates the superintendent in each of the three categories, there are no specific comments provided in any of the categories. A single sentence summarizes the board's assessment of the superintendent's performance.

The second page of the evaluation summary lists two "priority performance goals" for the superintendent:

- completion of superintendent certification by 2003; and
- work toward resolution of district's current financial crisis.

TEC Section 21.354 states that administrators must be appraised annually based on job-related performance. The TEC and RISD local policy further

states that district funds may not be used to pay a superintendent who has not been evaluated in the preceding 15-month period.

RISD board policy BJCD (LEGAL) issued in October of 1998 regarding the process of evaluating the district's superintendent states that the board shall appraise the superintendent annually using either the state's recommended appraisal process and criteria or the board may use a process and criteria developed by the district in consultation with district and campus level committees.

TEC Section 39.054 also specifies that student performance must be a part of the locally developed appraisal instrument for evaluation of superintendents. Board policy BJCD (EXHIBIT) Procedures for Appraisal of Superintendent Recommended by the Education Commissioner states that in developing the appraisal instrument, the board should use the superintendent's job description as applicable. In addition, board policy identifies the following descriptors, which may also be considered in the evaluation of the superintendent:

- instructional management;
- school or organization morale;
- school or organization improvement;
- personnel management;
- management of administrative, fiscal and facilities functions;
- school or community relations;
- professional growth and development;
- academic excellence indicators and campus performance objectives; and
- board relations.

Crystal City ISD (CCISD) established a process that tied evaluation of its administrators to district goals and objectives to improve the quality of leadership and focus of vision within the district. To document performance, CCISD's evaluation process required school administrators to provide comprehensive documentation. By holding administrators accountable, CCISD ensured they were focused on the objectives necessary to move the district forward.

### **Recommendation 2:**

#### **Develop comprehensive appraisal criteria to evaluate the superintendent's performance annually.**

Comprehensive performance evaluation criteria for the RISD superintendent should include measurable criteria as recommended by the TEA, including management of administrative, fiscal and facilities

functions, academic excellence indicators and school performance objectives. The criteria should also be tied to the superintendent's job description.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The board defines and develops the standards, expectations, goals and objectives by which the superintendent will be evaluated and communicate this information to the superintendent.	September 2003
2.	The board and superintendent conduct an annual evaluation session with the superintendent to discuss his performance, including any areas in need of improvement.	January 2004
3.	The board president ensures that copies of the evaluation document are filed in a timely fashion in the superintendent's personnel file.	January 2004 and Annually Thereafter

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

The district has not functionally or efficiently aligned its management functions. The superintendent directly supervises all district employees and his range of responsibility spans all RISD education and business functions: superintendent, principal, education supervisor, personnel administrator, senior business administrator, maintenance and custodial services supervisor and food services and transportation manager. The superintendent also supervises three central administration support positions, including the PEIMS coordinator, receptionist and secretary. Given the superintendent's large span of control, some of the district's activities are not effectively managed. In addition, the superintendent is unable to provide curriculum guidance to RISD teaching staff.

While the district is facing a financial crisis the superintendent has no prior experience as a public school business manager and little formal training in school finance. The superintendent oversees all RISD financial operations. The superintendent said he relies on the secretary/finance clerk to serve as the district's business office manager. The secretary/finance clerk/business office manager handles most business office functions, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, payroll, financial statements preparation, budget amendments and other functions inherent to financial management of the district. In addition to budget preparation and administration, the superintendent's financial duties

include salary administration and management of business operations including purchasing, food service, transportation, accounting, data processing, maintenance programs, investment programs, risk management and employee benefits.

The tax collector/PEIMS and student activity account clerk and the secretary to the superintendent/finance clerk perform different aspects of PEIMS reporting duties. The secretary to the superintendent/finance clerk is responsible for the financial reporting function of PEIMS, while the tax collector/PEIMS and student activity account clerk tracks and reports enrollment data. School districts do not customarily segregate the performance of PEIMS duties in the manner described for RISD. The tax collector/PEIMS and student activity account clerk also works closely with county tax assessors and maintains the district's tax collection records; maintains and reconciles student activity accounts and records, in addition to handling PEIMS enrollment records. The receptionist/office aide works full-time; responds to incoming calls; receives and distributes mail; maintains student food service records; serves as the cafeteria cashier; and also performs routine bookkeeping for the district's Food Services Department. Although the district has experienced continuing financial challenges since 2000-01 when it spent an overpayment received from the state, RISD does not have a dedicated Business Office manager position. Many small districts typically do not fund an assistant principal position.

All RISD teachers also report directly to the superintendent. In addition, the superintendent supervises an assistant principal who also serves as a high school teacher. The superintendent's broad responsibilities create functional grouping and span of control problems and limit his focus on instruction and districtwide planning.

Functional grouping is the grouping of related tasks assigned to an individual. In such groupings, the knowledge and skill required for one task is also required in the performance of the other tasks. Span of control refers to the number of positions or functional areas a person can supervise in an efficient and effective manner. An individual can be responsible for a broad range of functions that are closely related; however, as the functions become more unrelated to each other, the number of areas a person can effectively control decreases.

Many districts hire dedicated business managers and functionally align all support services and operations areas to assist in managing financial strategies and challenges and better align their operational functions.

### **Recommendation 3:**

**Realign the organizational structure functionally to increase the superintendent's focus on the district's instructional and strategic needs.**

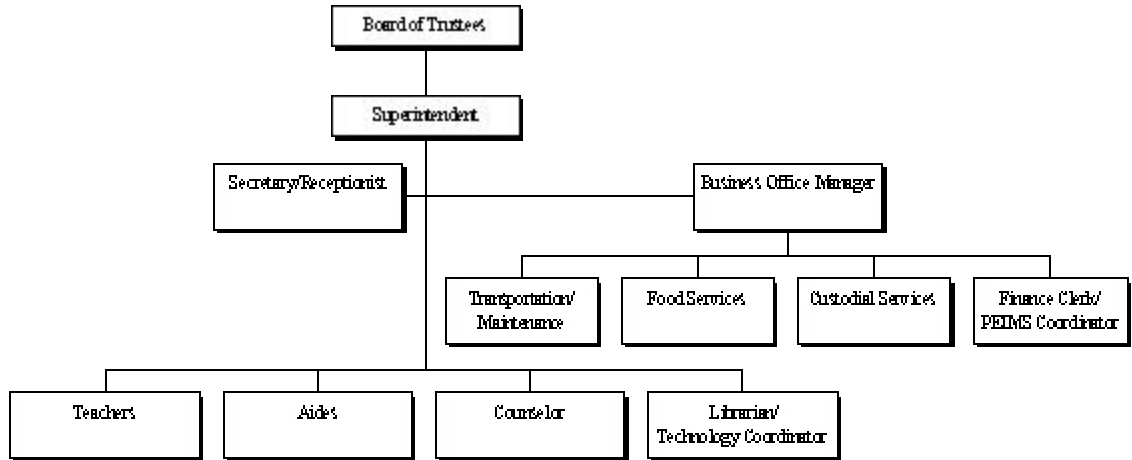
By consolidating all financial and support services under a qualified business manager, the district will improve its financial management strategy, allowing the superintendent to better focus on strategic and instructional goals and objectives. A part-time (20 hours weekly) business office manager will track, analyze and report financial data to the superintendent and to the board, bringing greater financial expertise to the district and freeing the superintendent to focus on instructional areas. The details and financial impact of hiring a certified public accountant is discussed in the financial operations chapter (three) of this report. The district may partially fund a business manager position by eliminating the assistant principal and tax collector positions, further flattening its central administration organizational layers.

Under the recommended structure, the business office manager will directly supervise district operations, including Food Services, Transportation, Maintenance and custodial services. The superintendent will be the instructional leader for all teaching staff and special programs, including the gifted and talented program; career and technology; and special education; eliminating the need for an assistant principal position. The recommended organizational structure creates two distinct functional areas and will unify the district's financial activities under an experienced financial professional.

The superintendent's secretary will provide some administrative support related to duties required as the district's finance clerk, coordinate PEIMS submissions and maintain activity accounts. The receptionist will serve as the district's half-time secretary and attendance clerk. The financial impact of eliminating the tax collection position is reviewed in the financial operations chapter of this report.

**Exhibit 1-7** shows the proposed organization structure.

**Exhibit 1-7  
Proposed Organization Structure**



Source: Trace Consulting Services, Inc.

Note: The assistant principal function is a half-time position that also serves as a high school teacher.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent prepares a job description, internal job posting and external job announcement(s), including through the area office of the Texas Workforce Commission seeking a part-time (20 hours weekly) qualified business office manager and seeks board approval to reorganize district staff.	September 2003
2.	The Board approves the reorganization.	October 2003
3.	The superintendent screens all applications and interviews qualified applicants for the position of business manager, selecting one qualified finalist for hire.	November - December 2003
4.	The newly hired business manager starts working for the district.	January 2003
5.	The superintendent eliminates the assistant principal position for the 2004-05 school year and budgets for a part-time teacher.	May 2004

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Due to the small size of the district, the business manager would be hired to work two-and-a-half days each week for a maximum of 20 hours weekly. The review team is recommending a salary of \$400 a week for 52 weeks without fringe benefits for a total of \$20,800 annually. First year

costs will be \$15,597 since the selected candidate will start work in January 2004.

Eliminate the assistant principal position with a salary of \$41,300 plus 10.6 percent benefits or \$4,378 for a total of \$45,678 (\$41,300 + \$4,378 = \$45,678). Hire a part-time teacher to teach four classes per day at a cost of \$23,019. Average teacher salary of \$31,219 plus benefits of \$3,309 = \$34,528/6 full load classes x 4 classes only = \$23,019. The net savings from this recommendation is \$1,859 starting in 2004-05 (\$45,678 - \$43,819 = \$1,859).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Realign the organizational structure functionally to increase the superintendent's focus on the district's instructional and strategic needs.	(\$15,597)	(\$43,819)	(\$43,819)	(\$43,819)	(\$43,819)
	\$0	\$45,678	\$45,678	\$45,678	\$45,678
<b>Net Savings (Costs)</b>	<b>\$15,597</b>	<b>\$1,859</b>	<b>\$1,859</b>	<b>\$1,859</b>	<b>\$1,859</b>

## **FINDING**

The district is out-of-compliance with TEC Sections 11.252 and 11.253. TEC Section 11.252 requires the Board of Trustees to ensure district and campus improvement plans are developed, reviewed and revised annually. It also requires the board to ensure the district and campus improvement plans support the district and campus performance objectives and support the state goals and objectives in TEC chapter four. TEC Section 11.253(a) requires each school district to maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making (SBDM) occur at each school to direct and support the student performance improvement. RISD does not have a SBDM committee. In addition, RISD has no District Improvement Plan (DIP) nor does it have any planning document that is linked to its budget.

While smaller districts with only one campus are allowed to complete a single plan, the fact that RISD has two campuses makes it necessary for each campus to have a plan and for this district to have an overarching plan to link the two.

The district's sole planning documents are its 2002-03 Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) which have not been updated for 2003-04 as required under TEC. The CIPs do not contain measurable performance criteria or identify specific timelines for completion. Developed for 2002-

03, the elementary school CIP lists the following objectives: improve student academic performance; increase the amount of technology in classrooms; prepare for successful student performance on state-mandated tests; motivate students for academic success; recognize student performance; improve physical aspects of school grounds and building; improve parental and community involvement; and expand student knowledge. From 1998-99 through 2001-02, the district's accountability rating has been consistently *Academically Acceptable*. In 2001-02, 76 percent of all RISD students passed all Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests taken in grades 3 through 8 and 10, ranking lowest among its peer districts and 9.3 percent lower than the state average. Further, from 1997-98 through 2001-02 in comparisons to peer districts, the district shows the least positive trending in its student scores. TEC requires formative evaluation criteria in district planning to determine whether strategies are resulting in student improvement.

The 2002-03, CIP for the high school identifies objectives similar to those in the elementary school CIP. Additional objectives in the high school CIP include identifying and providing remedial support for at-risk students; improving the attendance rate; maintaining a zero percent dropout rate; identifying and improving student reading levels; and offering advanced academic courses. Neither CIP specifies the funds needed to meet each of the objectives nor do they suggest ways to evaluate the district's progress toward reaching objectives. The major activities/strategies the district identifies in the CIPs are broad in their description, as are the resources needed and evaluation design. For example, for the major activities relating to peer tutoring, the evaluation design is listed as "student improvement" with no objective measure(s) provided and no specific activities to serve as milestones. Similarly, in the RISD elementary CIP where resources may be needed, the CIP column shows "[Chapt.] Funds," with no specific information provided. With permission of the George West ISD, the TEA Division of School Financial Audits has placed an electronic version of the district's improvement plan and elementary campus improvement plan on the TEA website. The plan includes a mission statement, listing of SBDM committee members, clearly defined goals, implementation strategies, assignment of responsible parties, implementation timeline, funding source and amount, five-year calendar and list of district committees. The plans can be accessed online at [www.tea.state.tx.us/stcomped/gwisd\\_examples.html](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/stcomped/gwisd_examples.html).

#### **Recommendation 4:**

**Update Campus Improvement Plans and develop a District Improvement Plan.**



By developing a DIP, updating its CIPs and creating a SBDM committee, the district will comply with TEC Sections 11.252 and 11.253 and will also engage its stakeholders in the short and long-term success of RISD. In updating its CIPs, RISD may consider modeling the plans developed by the George West ISD. The district should use campus level committees consisting of staff and parents to assist in updating the individual CIPs.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent creates a SBDM committee of stakeholders.	September 2003
2.	The SBDM committee, the superintendent and the assistant principal convene to discuss and update the CIPs and develop a comprehensive DIP identifying clearly defined goals, objectives and priorities.	October 2003 - January 2004
3.	The superintendent submits the DIP and updated CIPs to the board for review and approval.	January 2004
4.	The board approves the DIP and updated CIPs.	February - March 2004
5.	The superintendent implements the CIPs and DIPs.	March 2004
6.	The superintendent and the SBDM committee meet regularly to monitor the district's progress toward meeting goals and objectives as defined in the CIPs and DIP.	March 2004 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 1

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *B. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT*

Education is a labor-intensive undertaking: personnel costs consume the largest percent of the average school district budget. Personnel management includes staffing analysis, recruiting, hiring, salary administration and performance evaluation. Effective personnel management requires compliance with equal employment opportunity statutes and other applicable federal and state laws. Recruiting and retaining competent staff requires establishing fair and workable policies, procedures and training programs.

The RISD superintendent administers all personnel functions with support provided by the superintendent's secretary. The superintendent manages hiring, teacher certification, recruiting, staffing, completing all performance evaluations, providing staff training, new employee training, professional development and other personnel and human resources management activities.

During 2002-03, RISD employed 28 personnel, including 16 teachers, one central administrator, one professional support employee (librarian), one educational aide and nine auxiliary personnel (bus drivers, cafeteria, maintenance and custodial staff). **Exhibit 1-8** shows the percentage of RISD's number of educational aides as a percentage of total staff decreased 75 percent from 1998-99 to 2002-03, while the number of auxiliary staff increased 60 percent during the same period. RISD's level of staffing for professional support positions (counselors, nurses, librarians, therapists) was consistently lower than both Region 6 and the state.

**Exhibit 1-8** shows the total number of full-time equivalent (FTEs) positions employed by the district by staff classification from 1998-99 through 2002-03. RISD's number of administrators decreased from two in 1998-99, to one in 2002-03. Auxiliary staff was the only classification to experience growth.

**Exhibit 1-8**  
**RISD Number of FTEs**  
**1998-99 through 2002-03**

Staff Classification	1998- 99	1999- 2000	2000- 01	2001- 02	2002- 03	Percent Change from 1998-99 to

						<b>2002-03</b>
Teachers	16	16	17	17	16	0.0%
Support Staff	1	1	1	1	1	0.0%
Administrators	2	2	2	2	1	(50.0%)
Educational Aides	4	3	3	3	1	(75.0%)
Auxiliary Staff	5	6	8	5	9	60.0%
Enrollment	155	173	161	161	178	14.8%
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1998-99 through 2002-03.

**Exhibit 1-9** compares RISD staffing to its peers for 2002-03.

**Exhibit 1-9**  
**Number of FTEs**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2002-03**

<b>Staff Classification</b>	<b>RISD</b>	<b>Calvert</b>	<b>North Zulch</b>	<b>Aquilla</b>	<b>Devers</b>
Teachers	<b>16</b>	24	33	17	15
Support Staff	<b>1</b>	2	0	0	0
Administrators	<b>1</b>	3	2	2	1
Educational Aides	<b>1</b>	18	6	4	3
Auxiliary Staff	<b>9</b>	17	16	7	9
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>
Number of Students	<b>178</b>	287	330	189	163
Number of Students per Staff Member	<b>6.4</b>	4.5	5.8	6.3	5.8

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

**FINDING**

RISD does not have a comprehensive salary administration program. According to interviews with the superintendent, the district does not

maintain salary schedules for any position. Salary schedules for clerical and technical positions such as secretaries and nurses, manual trade positions like cafeteria workers, custodians and maintenance workers and administrative and professional employees; principals and counselors are not available. Many districts maintain salary information in three ranges including minimum, midpoint and maximum by position and grade. The superintendent said he makes salary decisions based on salary levels for open positions in prior years. For example, when the superintendent hired a new custodian in April 2003, he calculated the position at the same hourly rate the previous employee received.

RISD's teacher salaries rank below surrounding school districts, peer districts and state averages. Three RISD teacher surveys showed 66.6 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the survey statement, "*District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.*" Teachers and board members expressed a need to make district's teacher salaries more competitive with neighboring districts but did not communicate any particular strategy to address the issue. The district's teacher turnover rate for 2001-02 was 17.6 percent, or 1.9 percentage points higher than the state. In 2000-01, RISD's turnover rate was high at 30.9 percent, or 14.9 percentage points higher than the state.

The superintendent provided the review team with a 2002-03 salary scale for the district's teaching positions. **Exhibit 1-10** shows teachers average salaries are \$500 higher than the Texas state base salary in the zero to five year range.

**Exhibit 1-10**  
**RISD Teacher Pay Scale for 2002-03**

<b>Years of Prior Experience</b>	<b>Texas State Base</b>	<b>RISD Teacher Salary at \$500 Above Base</b>
0	\$24,240	\$24,740
5	\$28,380	\$28,880
10	\$33,730	\$34,230
15	\$37,760	\$38,260
20	\$40,800	\$41,300

*Source: RISD Pay scale for 2002-03.*

The district also provided a spreadsheet created by the former superintendent reflecting a 2000-01 comparison of teacher salaries for RISD and area school districts as shown in **Exhibit 1-11**. The district was

below the salaries paid at each level of experience. According to the superintendent, no other salary surveys have been conducted in recent years.

**Exhibit 1-11  
Teacher Salaries  
RISD and Area Districts  
2000-01**

District	Number of Years of Experience				
	Beginning	5	10	15	20
Iola	\$24,890	\$29,030	\$34,380	\$38,410	\$40,800
Montgomery	\$30,000	\$32,544	\$37,479	\$42,458	\$45,465
Anderson-Shiro	\$25,240	\$29,380	\$34,730	\$38,760	\$41,800
Navasota	\$27,174	\$29,738	\$34,548	\$38,908	\$42,258
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$24,240</b>	<b>\$28,380</b>	<b>\$33,730</b>	<b>\$37,760</b>	<b>\$40,800</b>

*Source: RISD, superintendent.*

**Exhibit 1-12** compares average teacher salary by years of experience between RISD and selected peer districts for 2001-02. RISD paid less than its peer districts and the state averages at every level of teacher experience.

**Exhibit 1-12  
Average Teacher Salaries  
RISD, Peer Districts and State  
2001-02**

District	Beginning	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	More Than 20 Years
Calvert	\$25,452	\$30,404	\$32,493	\$40,762	\$44,892
North Zulch	\$30,481	\$29,293	\$36,287	\$42,648	\$43,298
Aquilla	\$24,154	\$25,687	\$35,640	\$39,783	\$42,436
Devers	N/A	\$30,685	\$34,675	\$37,000	\$45,433
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$25,240</b>	<b>\$26,990</b>	<b>\$30,335</b>	<b>\$37,258</b>	<b>\$34,336</b>
Peer Average	\$26,696	\$29,017	\$34,774	\$40,048	\$44,015

Percentage Below Peer Average	5.5%	7.0%	12.8%	7.0%	22.0%
<b>State Average</b>	<b>\$30,940</b>	<b>\$33,093</b>	<b>\$36,169</b>	<b>\$42,298</b>	<b>\$49,185</b>
Percentage Below State Average	18.4%	18.4%	16.1%	11.9%	30.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.  
N/A: Data not available.

**Exhibit 1-13** displays salary trends by employee classification. The professional support classification may include positions such as librarians, nurses and counselors. RISD increased central administration salaries by 17.9 percent and school administration salaries by 18.7 percent from 1997-98 to 2001-02 while professional support salaries dropped by 9.2 percent over the same period. Although teacher salaries have increased by 10.6 percent over those years, RISD remains below all peer district and state averages for teacher compensation.

**Exhibit 1-13**  
**RISD Average Salary Trends**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>Percent Change 1997-98 to 2001-02</b>
Teachers	\$28,240	\$28,202	\$31,464	\$32,770	\$31,219	10.6%
Professional Support	\$36,958	\$28,422	\$25,390	\$46,392	\$33,567	(9.2%)
School Administrators	\$40,437	\$41,500	\$47,000	N/A	\$48,000	18.7%
Central Administrators	\$58,000	\$60,000	\$63,000	\$41,970	\$68,400	17.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.  
N/A: Data not available

**Exhibit 1-14** compares average actual salaries for teachers, professional staff, school administration and central administration for RISD and peer

districts for 2001-02. RISD paid below the peer district average in the teacher and professional staff categories, but paid above the peer district average for administration. In 2002-03, the district reduced all teacher salaries by \$500 annually to comply with a cost reduction plan from TEA.

**Exhibit 1-14  
Average Salaries  
RISD and Peer Districts  
2001-02**

<b>District</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Professional Staff</b>	<b>Campus Administration</b>	<b>Central Administration</b>
Calvert	\$36,789	\$35,331	\$51,219	\$65,000
North Zulch	\$34,575	\$47,000	\$53,580	\$62,010
Aquilla	\$34,323	N/A	N/A	\$55,000
Devers	\$36,804	N/A	\$38,829	\$75,000
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$31,219</b>	<b>\$33,567</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>	<b>\$68,400</b>
<b>Peer Average</b>	<b>\$35,623</b>	<b>\$41,166*</b>	<b>\$47,869**</b>	<b>\$64,253</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.*

*N/A: Data not available.*

*\*Excludes Aquilla and Devers.*

*\*\*Excludes Aquilla.*

Some districts conduct annual salary surveys to stay updated in market trends. To determine how the district's pay compared with peer districts, Kingsville ISD (KISD) participates in the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA) annual salary surveys. These surveys assist the KISD personnel department in evaluating the market and recommending salary adjustments to the superintendent during the annual budget process.

**Recommendation 5:**

**Develop a long-term compensation strategy for all positions in the district and increase teacher salaries to be more competitive with the salary market.**

By conducting annual salary surveys, the district will ensure that it stays updated on area, regional and statewide labor market trends and shifts. In

order to ensure that salaries are administered consistently and objectively and to avoid salary compression issues, the district should also develop and use salary schedules. Salary surveys include using TEA data and contacting other district personnel offices to obtain and compare data and research local market conditions. RISD should also adjust teacher salaries as a strategy to better manage teacher turnover.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent's secretary documents the existing pay scale and salary schedule for all district employees for the superintendent's use.	October 2003
2.	The superintendent proposes a \$1,000 annual market-based teacher salary increase in 2004-05 to the board and submits necessary supporting salary documentation.	October 2003
3.	The board approves the proposed teacher salary increase submitted by the superintendent for 2004-05.	November 2003
4.	The superintendent communicates the salary increases to teachers.	November 2003
5.	The superintendent develops salary schedules by using existing salaries to create salary ranges with minimum, midpoint and maximum dollar amounts and hiring ranges for all positions districtwide.	November 2003
6.	The board president and superintendent develop short and long-term strategies for the district's salary administration practices.	December 2003 and Ongoing
7.	The superintendent includes the salary increases in the proposed 2004-05 budget.	May 2004

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

A salary increase of \$1,000 per year per teacher would cost the district \$16,000 (\$1,000 x 16 teachers = \$16,000). Benefits for teachers are a flat dollar amount so the salary increase will not cost the district additional funds in benefits.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Develop a long-term compensation strategy for all positions in the district and increase teacher	\$0	(\$16,000)	(\$16,000)	(\$16,000)	(\$16,000)



salaries to be more competitive with the salary market.					
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**FINDING**

The district's employee handbook is incomplete and has not been updated since 1997. The district does not have a personnel procedures manual. As a result, RISD cannot provide employees updated or detailed employee rights and responsibilities information, payroll policies and procedures, sexual harassment policies and complaint procedures and other employee-employer critical terms and conditions of employment. Lack of an updated employee handbook also results in the loss of institutional knowledge when one superintendent resigns and is replaced and makes the transfer of knowledge inefficient.

The district also lacks a personnel manual detailing its administrative procedures regarding issues such as term contracts, hiring, salary administration, updates and revisions to employee policy and procedure handbooks, benefits and leaves of absence. Personnel procedures manuals usually address employee compensation practices, including benefits, fringe benefits, vacations and holidays, expense reimbursement procedures, retirement programs, employee rights and privileges, employee standards of conduct, employee welfare, assignment and schedules, workload, professional development, performance appraisal and hiring practices. Many personnel procedures are often condensed and/or copied into a district's employee handbook for the benefit of all employees.

RISD staff do not have a reliable and accurate internal resource in the district to confirm processes and expedite procedures.

**Recommendation 6:**

**Update the employee handbook and develop a personnel procedures manual.**

The superintendent should form a committee consisting of teachers, the secretary to the superintendent and other district staff to update the employee handbook and develop a personnel procedures manual.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent forms a committee including the assistant principal and other staff to draft a district wide employee	October 2003
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	handbook including information regarding personnel procedures.	
2.	The superintendent and committee members benchmark with other districts and Region 6 to obtain and review handbook samples.	October 2003
3.	The superintendent and the superintendent's secretary simultaneously draft districtwide personnel procedures, including hiring procedures.	November - December 2003
4.	The superintendent, superintendent's secretary and committee members review and correlate the draft procedures to ensure that all major personnel procedures are appropriately addressed in the final draft of the employee handbook.	January - February 2004
5.	The superintendent approves and implements the personnel procedures.	February 2003
6.	The committee submits an updated employee handbook to the superintendent for review and approval.	March 2004
7.	The superintendent reviews the handbook prior to submitting a final draft to the school board for review and approval.	April - May 2004
8.	The board reviews and approves the employee handbook.	June 2004
9.	The superintendent distributes the handbook to all employees and new hires.	July 2004 and Ongoing
10.	The superintendent and committee review and update the employee handbook as necessary, including at the end of each legislative session.	Annually

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

RISD does not conduct regular performance evaluations and does not have updated job descriptions for its non-professional staff. The superintendent acknowledged that performance evaluations of the district's non-professional employees were not conducted in 2001-02. Interviews with bus drivers, cafeteria workers and maintenance and custodial staff revealed they had never, or very seldom, been evaluated regarding their job performance. Some staff said they had never seen their job description and had never been informed of specific job requirements, duties and expectations.

When asked about job standards some staff said they check with the superintendent frequently regarding work orders and prioritization. Job descriptions for non-professional staff were not signed by staff or dated. As of April 2003, evaluations had not been conducted for the current school year. As the supervisor for each support function, the superintendent must conduct evaluations for non-professional staff.

District board policy stipulates that all employees shall be appraised regarding the performance of their duties and be informed of criteria used for the evaluation (**Exhibit 1-15**).

**Exhibit 1-15**  
**RISD Board Policy DN (LOCAL)**  
**Performance Appraisals**

General Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All district employees shall be periodically appraised in the performance of their duties. The district's employee evaluation and appraisal system shall be administered consistent with the general principles set out below.</li> </ul>
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The employee's performance of assigned duties and other job-related criteria shall provide the basis for the employee's evaluation and appraisal. Employees shall be informed of the criteria on which they will be evaluated.</li> </ul>
Performance Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation and appraisal ratings shall be based on the evaluation instrument and cumulative performance data gathered by supervisors throughout the year. Each employee shall have at least one evaluative conference annually to discuss the written evaluation and may have as many conferences about performance of duties as the supervisor deems necessary.</li> </ul>
Documentation And Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appraisal records and forms, reports, correspondence, and memoranda may be placed in each employee's personnel records to document performance. All records that support appraisal ratings shall be maintained for at least two years. Official appraisal records shall be maintained throughout a person's employment with the district and for two years after an employee ceases to be employed with the district.</li> </ul>
Employee Copy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All employees shall receive a copy of their annual</li> </ul>

	written evaluation.
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Source: TASB, RISD, online school board policy.

RISD evaluates teachers annually as required by law. A review of personnel documents supports that all teachers have been evaluated at least once each year. The superintendent confirmed that teacher evaluations were prepared and issued in 2001-02. However, as of April 2003, the evaluations completed in 2001-02 had not been filed in the teachers' personnel files.

While performance evaluations can be time consuming, they provide many benefits to school districts such as:

- communicating areas needing performance improvement;
- identifying objective and measurable standards of performance that can be consistently applied;
- recognizing and rewarding high performance; and
- reminding employees of their responsibilities and the district's strategic vision.

**Recommendation 7:**

**Develop job descriptions that include objective and measurable standards of performance and evaluate all non-professional employees annually.**

The superintendent should develop job descriptions for all staff, as well as personnel evaluation procedure timelines and criteria. He should ensure that all RISD all employees have at least one performance appraisal per year and that the employee's personnel file contains the current job descriptions and all evaluations.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent updates job descriptions for non-professional staff to accurately reflect work performed and identify assigned duties and performance criteria and discusses with non-professional staff.	November 2003
2.	The superintendent submits the updated job descriptions for non-professional staff to the board for review and approval.	December 2003
3.	The superintendent revises district procedures for evaluating non-professional employees.	January 2004

4.	The superintendent develops procedures that include an evaluation format, timelines, measurable performance evaluation standards and the supervisory and management chain for evaluating non-professional employees.	January 2004
5.	The superintendent finalizes the evaluation policy, procedures and format and communicates the procedures districtwide.	February 2004
6.	The superintendent evaluates non-professional staff annually.	May 2004 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 1

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *C. STAFF DEVELOPMENT*

TEC Section 21.451 requires that staff development in Texas school districts:

- include training in technology, conflict resolution strategies and discipline strategies;
- instruct staff regarding what is permissible under law;
- be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving performance objectives; and
- be developed and approved by the campus site-based decision-making committee.

School staff development may include activities that enable campus staff to plan together and share effective strategies for curricular and instructional issues, to analyze student achievement results, to reflect on means of increasing student performance, to study educational research, to identify strength and weaknesses of students and curriculum, to development meaningful programs for students and to effectively implement site-based decision-making.

According to TEA, effective staff development policy includes:

- an explanation of how training needs will be identified;
- specific training requirements;
- focus on staff development aimed at student achievement;
- criterion for how school staff are to be reimbursed for attending training on personal time;
- training requirements for special programs such as G/T, athletics, Title I and students with disabilities.

### **FINDING**

RISD does not identify professional development needs for teachers and administrators nor does it maintain records on completed training or staff development. The district received \$30,565 in Title II, Part A funds for teacher and principal training and recruiting for 2002-03. **Exhibit 1-16** shows the district's staff development expenditures for 1998-99 through 2001-02.

**Exhibit 1-16**  
**RISD Staff Development Expenditures**  
**1998-99 through 2001-02**

<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>
\$4,080	\$5,984	\$7,150	\$50

*Source: RISD Audited Financial Statements 1998-99 through 2001-02.*

Although the RISD superintendent coordinates staff development, the district does not maintain any records of staff training and does not plan, track or monitor training activity to ensure each teacher obtains required training and staff development to meet RISD's student needs. RISD teachers said they were allowed to attend and obtain as much training from Region 6 as they wanted. In addition, according to the superintendent, RISD does not track teachers' training attendance other than placing the certificate of completion in a teacher's personnel file.

At the beginning of 2002-03 the district provided teachers with a professional development calendar, which included dates and training offered prior to the beginning of the school year. The superintendent also said that the district provides in-service training at the end of the school year. The professional development calendar did not reflect or include any training during the academic year. The superintendent also indicated that no orientation training for new teachers occurred in 2002-03 other than information provided to applicants at the time of interview.

Staff development ensures employees receive updated information to enhance student learning. TEC Section 21.451 states that staff development conducted by the school district should include technology training, conflict resolution and discipline strategies, classroom management, discipline policies and student code of conduct. TEC Section 11.251(b) states that school districts should also involve a campus-level committee in any decision in the area of staff development and the campus-level committee must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs. TEC Section 11.252 also requires school districts to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's staff development plan at least every two years, to ensure that they are effectively structured to positively impact student performance. Accordingly, RISD is not in compliance with any of the stated provisions of TEC related to its staff development activities.

Staff development activities are often campus-based, district-based or departmental-based. Scheduling planning time allows teachers to review effective strategies, curriculum and instruction techniques; analyze student

assessments; and implement new ideas. Staff development should provide teachers with information regarding:

- instructional guidelines;
- achievement testing;
- district policies;
- new teaching methods;
- classroom management;
- identifying student's academic needs;
- AEIS report training;
- alternative assessment;
- curriculum alignment; and
- technology training.

RISD board policy DMA (LEGAL) issued in November of 2001 is shown in **Exhibit 1-17**.

**Exhibit 1-17**  
**RISD Board Policy DMA (LEGAL)**  
**Professional Development: Required Staff Development**  
**November 2001**

Staff Development	The district shall budget adequate time and financial resources to support a comprehensive staff development program, approved in accordance with Education Code 11.253 and 21.451. This program shall be guided by the campus improvement plan developed through the site-based decision-making process and shall reflect best practices.
Identifying Needs	Guided by the strategies and activities of the district, campus improvement plans and individual growth plans, the campus and district committees shall identify staff development needs for teachers and administrators. When the committees determine that teacher involvement is appropriate, teachers will have input into the identification of those needs and in the planning of staff development. <i>19 TAC 153.1011(c)</i>
Training Specifics	Staff development training shall include training in technology, conflict resolution and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the Student Code of Conduct. The staff development must include training that relates to instruction of students with disabilities and is designed for educators who work primarily outside of the area of special education. The staff development program shall promote learning and collaborating with colleagues, reflect best practices, and be guided by the campus improvement plan developed through the site-based decision-making process. The staff development may



	include instruction as to what is permissible under law, including opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court, regarding prayers in public school. <i>Education Code 21.451(a); 19 TAC 153.1011(a)</i>
Development Activities	Staff development shall be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee. Campus staff development may include activities that enable the campus staff to plan together to enhance existing skills, to share effective strategies, to reflect on curricular and instructional issues, to analyze student achievement results, to reflect on means of increasing student achievement, to study research, to practice new methods, to identify students' strengths and needs, to develop meaningful programs for students, to appropriately implement site-based decision making, and to conduct action research. Staff development activities may include study teams, individual research, peer coaching, workshops, seminars, conferences and other reasonable methods that have the potential to improve student achievement. <i>Education Code 21.451(b); 19 TAC 153.1011(b)</i>
Student Achievement	The District and each committee shall plan for and promote student achievement for all students. Staff development shall focus on standards for student performance in the Texas essential knowledge and skills. 19 TAC 153.1011(f)
Records	Records of staff qualifications and professional development shall be maintained by the District and must be available for monitoring. 19 TAC 89.25(a)(6)

*Source: TASB, RISD, Online School Board Policy.*

Region 6 provides in-service training for school personnel to gain knowledge on issues relating to job duties or training to enhance current skills. Region 6 has also partnered with an education company called WebEd to offer online courses to kindergarten through grade 12 educators, administrators and other school personnel with self-paced, self-guided courses available on demand. These online courses provide a convenient and cost-effective training alternative at a discount if purchased through Region 6. **Exhibit 1-18** lists courses provided by WebEd through Region 6.

**Exhibit 1-18**  
**Region 6 Online Training**  
**2002-03**

<b>Titles of Training</b>
---------------------------

- Administrative Development
- Assessment
- Classroom Management
- ESL Education
- Gifted and Talented
- Health Education
- Health and Fitness
- Instructional Strategies
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Special Education
- Staff Development
- Technology Training
- World Languages

*Source: Region 6, WebEd professional development catalog.*

To ensure the district meets staff development and training needs, the Kingsville ISD (KIDS) centrally plans and coordinates staff development function through its Instructional Services Department. KISD communicates directly with school administrators regarding training needs and surveys staff at the end of each school year to identify training and development wishes and requirements for the coming year. KISD uses survey results to help identify training and development to be offered to staff and incorporated in staff training. Participants critique the value of the sessions once completed so the Instructional Services Department can incorporate changes based on staff feedback.

**Recommendation 8:**

**Provide staff development in accordance with board policy and centrally plan and coordinate all training and professional development.**

RISD should survey staff for training needs, then centrally plan and coordinate training and professional development. After identifying the desired training and professional development, the district may consider having staff development providers come to the district to provide training because it may be less expensive than paying employees travel to the provider. In addition, RISD may consider providing 'train the trainer' training. This method provides for formal training by one or a few employees who return to the workplace and subsequently provide training to coworkers and subordinates.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent designates a lead teacher to survey teaching staff to identify training and development they would like to attend or see offered by the district for the coming school year.	January 2004
2.	Teaching staff provide feedback to the designated lead teacher.	February 2004
3.	The lead teacher considers teachers' requests and the board policy regarding required staff development and submits a comprehensive staff development plan to the superintendent for review and approval.	March 2004
4.	The superintendent submits the comprehensive staff development plan to the school board for review and approval.	April 2004
5.	The superintendent implements the staff development plan and maintains records of training received.	May 2004
6.	Teaching staff participates in training and staff development offerings and complete form to evaluate the course value.	Ongoing
7.	The superintendent considers course critiques and conducts annual surveys of teaching staff to determine staff training and development for coming school year.	May 2004 and Ongoing

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 1

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *D. COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT*

Coordination and communication with the surrounding community including parents and other stakeholders contributes to a district's success. By actively seeking parent and community involvement, a district makes a strong statement of commitment to its students in the short- and long-terms. Effective communication, building trust and confidence in district leadership, includes accessible and ample opportunities for citizens to contribute ideas or criticism, dedicated and consistent use of print and electronic media to disseminate information and interaction with diverse community groups.

Texas school districts use a variety of methods to administer community involvement programs. Some school districts have departments exclusively dedicated to performing such duties. Larger districts distribute individual community relation duties among several positions and staff. However, smaller districts like RISD must rely on limited staff resources, with each staff member performing a variety of community relations functions in addition to their other duties. Board members can also play an important role in community involvement by being accessible and sensitive to community concerns. Districts also vary widely in how they involve the community in district affairs. Newsletters, town hall meetings, cable television programs, Internet Web sites, school calendars, brochures and inserts in news media published by other entities are just a few of the methods that districts use to communicate with parents and other citizens.

RISD has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) which recruits parent and community member involvement in the district and student activities, sponsors fundraising events for the district and awards student scholarships. Because it is a small town, RISD has only two small local businesses for the PTO to target for donations, contributions and mentoring efforts.

### **FINDING**

The district's PTO fosters higher education by providing annual scholarships to high school seniors. Throughout the course of the year, the PTO conducts numerous fundraising events such as fall festivals and barbecues to benefit the school and students and cover the expenses incurred by the organization. With funds received by the PTO, the group provides two or three \$500 scholarships each year. A panel of PTO officers select the scholarship recipients using criteria such as academic

performance, volunteer involvement and contributions to the school and the community.

**COMMENDATION**

**The RISD Parent Teacher Organization fosters higher education among students by providing annual scholarships.**

**FINDING**

While the district has an active PTO, some RISD parents and teachers indicate dissatisfaction regarding the district's community and parental involvement efforts. The superintendent and some board members said that they do not have funds to mail newsletters to the community or to appoint a district employee to handle community involvement activities.

Surveys completed by parents and teachers indicate an overall dissatisfaction regarding the efficiency of the district community and parental involvement efforts. Of parents surveyed, 41.4 percent said the district does not regularly communicate with parents while 35.8 percent of parents also feel that schools do not have enough volunteers to support student and school programs. During the public forum, more than one parent voiced an interest in helping the district in any way possible and expressed frustration at not being asked to become involved in the district's activities. Survey results regarding the district's community involvement efforts are shown in **Exhibit 1-19**.

**Exhibit 1-19  
TSPR Survey Results  
Community Involvement**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/ Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/ Strongly Disagree</b>
The district regularly communicates with parents.	Teachers	79.9%	6.6%	13.3%
	Parents	41.4%	16.9%	41.4%
District facilities are open for community use.	Teachers	53.2%	40.0%	6.6%
	Parents	28.2%	41.5%	30.1%
Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	Teachers	66.6%	20.0%	13.3%
	Parents	28.2%	35.8%	35.8%
The local television and radio	Teachers	33.3%	33.3%	33.2%

stations regularly report school news and menus.				
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*Source: TSPR Survey Results.*

*Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Many schools districts publish a newsletter, which they distribute to parents and other community members. However, the RISD superintendent and board members said the cost of printing and mailing a district newsletter was prohibitive.

The district does not submit press releases or articles to local newspapers and radio stations. If the district does not send information to the local media, the public must rely completely on information provided by word of mouth or by notes sent home with children. A representative from the Navasota newspaper attending one of the TSPR forums expressed an interest in the district.

During the TSPR public forums staff and community members expresses dissatisfaction with district communications to parents as well as the lack of community involvement:

- "I want to see the community do more to become involved. There is limited parental turnout. We need to stress the importance of being involved in our children's education. There is no communication from the district to parents other than occasional notes. This needs to be opened up by the district."
- "Anything involving the elementary children brings a crowd. The high school programs do not bring out the people. If you need help with something or you need donations for an event, you can usually make phone calls and get things done. There are not any business-school partnerships. The local businesses (the two stores and the propane company) always support the smaller things that need to be done, \$100 or less. Kindergarten, 8th grade and senior graduation draw large crowds, mostly community."
- "There is no community involvement or not much at all. At board meetings there is maybe one out of the year when someone speaks with comments."

Educational research suggests that children whose parents volunteer to participate in their education perform better in school. Nationally, districts are trying new ways to enlist parental involvement. One successful approach used by some districts has been to ask parents on the first day of each school year to sign an agreement committing to helping their children and the district in more tangible ways. By most accounts, the agreements

bind parents to the school and the school to the community in a way that proves more lasting than more traditional forms of communication and outreach such as written notes and telephone calls.

Some smaller school districts have found innovative and cost-effective ways to engage their local communities:

- Rivera ISD : The district's library hosts a family night once every six weeks for high school students. The library also is open every Thursday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for parents and the community to check out books and use the library resources, including Internet access.
- Ricardo ISD : The district opens its facilities to the public. Each year, the Boys and Girls Club have a community basketball league in the district gymnasium. Additionally, the student nurse runs a flu shot clinic for the community each fall.
- Falls City ISD : The district has a parent involvement coordinator paid through Title I who acts as a liaison between the community and the school district. The coordinator seeks new and innovative ways to reach out to the community and increase school-community relations. The district has developed outreach activities such as communicating regularly with parents by either a letter, note or student notebook; creating a monthly calendar that details school events, holidays and major test dates; notifying media for special events such as parent's night, school plays, band concerts and Veterans' Day Assembly; and providing intermittent social events for parents and students such as Walk To School Day, Grandparent's Day and Open House.
- Lasara ISD : The superintendent and administrators host a neighborhood chat at parent's homes. They bring food and visit with parents. The first chat had 50 participants.

### **Recommendation 9:**

#### **Provide a quarterly district newsletter to parents, community members and media.**

A newsletter serves as the main communication between the district and the community and indicates the district wants the community to be a part of RISD. The district could consider asking the journalism teacher and class, in conjunction with the community involvement liaison, to provide this service for the district.

RISD should consider implementing some of the district programs previously listed to further open their doors to the community. By adopting a plan similar to Socorro ISD and inviting parents to assist with

decorating the schools, RISD could have the parents help with the much-needed building renovations. The district and parents select dates to paint the school, replace antiquated fixtures and other necessary tasks to give the school a face-lift, and the school could provide meals and drinks for the volunteers.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent recruits a volunteer to coordinate community involvement.	October 2003
2.	The community involvement coordinators meet with district staff, parents, community and other school districts to continually assess and develop RISD community involvement programs.	October 2003
3.	Community involvement coordinator(s) work with the journalism teacher to begin writing a district newsletter with the assistance of the high school students.	November 2003
4.	The community involvement coordinators mail out the newsletters in December 2003 and every quarter thereafter.	December 2003 and Quarterly Thereafter

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This fiscal impact assumes that the district needs to prepare 200 newsletters and send them home with students or mail them to parents, community and media each quarter. A two-page newsletter, copied front and back, would require 400 pages per quarter and 1,600 pages annually (August through May).

The copy cost of 1,600 copies at 7 cents per copy totals \$112 annually. Assuming 150 newsletters are provided to district staff and sent home with children, the postage expense for the remaining 50 newsletters at 37 cents each totals \$18.50 per quarter. The total cost per year is \$112 for copies and \$74 (\$18.50 x 4) for postage for a total annual cost of \$186.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Provide a quarterly district newsletter to parents, community members and media.	(\$186)	(\$186)	(\$186)	(\$186)	(\$186)

**FINDING**



RISD has a board-approved policy allowing community use of facilities, however, the district has not promoted this service. The district's cafeteria/auditorium is one of very few facilities available to Richards and area community organizations. However, no evidence exists to indicate it has been used. The superintendent was unaware of a use fee schedule and indicated that the community does not use the district's facility.

Board policy GKD (LOCAL) issued in July 2002 specifies that the board permits public use of designated school facilities for educational, recreational, civic or social activities when the activities do not conflict with school use. The policy further states that the superintendent has the authority to approve school facilities use and that users shall be charged a fee for operation, supervision or clean-up costs at designated facilities. The principal collects all fees and remits them to the central office. The superintendent is supposed to publish a fee schedule for facility use. However, the district does not have a specific fee schedule.

Ysleta ISD (YISD) allows its district administration building and other facilities to be used for various after-school and weekend programs. After school hours and weekends the administration building is used approximately 75 percent of the time by community groups and about 25 percent of the time by district groups for programs and extracurricular events. Use of the building raised about \$7,000 for YISD during one school year.

**Recommendation 10:**

**Generate additional district income by publicizing availability of school facilities for community events and publish the fee schedule.**

The district should review its board policy on facility use to include requirements and a fee schedule for available facilities. A fee schedule should be developed on a cost-plus reimbursement basis for community members or other nonprofit groups. The district should also publish a list of all available facilities and disseminate to the community in an attempt to expand the outside use of facilities. The district may consider escalated fees for those functions using district facilities and charging a fee for admission.

The Raymondville ISD established a fee schedule for community use of its auditorium with rates as shown in **Exhibit 1-20**.

**Exhibit 1-20**  
**RISD Auditorium Agreement**  
**2001 Fee Schedule**

<b>Charges</b>	<b>Fee Schedule</b>
No Admission Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$40 per hour per performance or \$200 regardless of hours</li> <li>• \$20 per hour per rehearsal or \$100 regardless of hours</li> </ul>
Admission Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$80 per hour per performance or \$400 regardless of hours</li> <li>• \$40 per hour per rehearsal or \$200 regardless of hours</li> </ul>
A deposit of \$200 must be paid prior to use of the auditorium and will be returned to the lessee if there is no damage to the building or contents.	

*Source: Raymondville ISD Business Office.*

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent develops a fee schedule and agreement for use of district facilities and submits to the board for approval.	September 2003
2.	The board approves the fee schedule and agreement for use of district facilities.	September 2003
3.	The assistant principal drafts a flyer or article for the district newsletter to inform staff, parents and other member of the community of district facilities available for public use.	October 2003
4.	The assistant principal and superintendent assess community use and fees assessed for use of district facilities.	Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact assumes organizations, groups or members of the community rent district facilities five times a year at an average fee of \$200 per occurrence or \$1,000 annually. First year savings are reduced to three rentals to allow for implementation time or \$600.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Generate additional district income by publicizing availability of school facilities for community events and publish the fee schedule.	\$600	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000

## Chapter 2

# EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter reviews the educational service delivery of the Richards Independent School District (RISD) in the following sections:

- A. Student Performance and Instructional Delivery
- B. Special Programs
- C. Safety and Security

Education service delivery, a main component of student success, serves as the primary focus of school districts. In addition, appropriate instruction, guidance, proficient teachers, skilled staff, shared vision, communication, shared decision-making, adequate resources and understanding of student needs are each important elements of education delivery services. To meet the needs of its students, a school district must have a well-designed process for directing instruction, maintaining its curriculum and evaluating and monitoring the success of its educational programs.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2002-03, 178 students attended two RISD campuses. The elementary school served students in kindergarten through grade 6, and the high school served students in grades 7 through 12. One building with opposite wings separated by the central administrative offices houses the two schools. Each school is identified and accredited individually by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). RISD belongs to the Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6) located in Huntsville.

In addition to providing student performance information, TEA supplies demographic information, staffing and financial data to school districts and the public through its databases, the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). For purposes of this report, PEIMS data is used for 2002-03 and AEIS is used for all prior years. The AEIS is a summary of information from the more comprehensive PEIMS.

Richards ISD selected four Texas school districts to serve as peers for comparative purposes: Aquilla, Calvert, Devers and North Zulch ISDs. **Exhibit 2-1** displays student demographic information for RISD, its peer districts, Region 6 and the state. RISD is predominantly Anglo as are three of the peer districts. RISD identified 50.6 percent of its students as economically disadvantaged in 2002-03, which exceeds the regional average (42.3 percent) but is below the state average of 51.8 percent.

**Exhibit 2-1**  
**Demographic Characteristics**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and State**  
**2002-03**

District	Enrollment	Ethnic Groups				Economically Disadvantaged
		Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent Anglo	Percent Other	Percent of Student Enrollment
North Zulch	330	0.0%	2.4%	96.4%	1.2%	46.4%
Calvert	287	85.4%	10.5%	4.2%	0.0%	94.1%
Aquilla	189	1.1%	4.8%	94.2%	0.0%	51.9%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>178*</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>
Devers	163	18.4%	30.7%	50.9%	0.0%	45.4%
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>143,282</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>42.3%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>4,259,864</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>39.8%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

\*The district reported an enrollment figure of 178 to TEA in the fall of 2002; however, in July 2003 district administrators said the final 2002-03 enrollment was 165.

**Exhibit 2-2** shows that RISD's enrollment increased 14.8 percent from 1998-99 to 2002-03 from 155 to 178 students.

**Exhibit 2-2**  
**RISD Enrollment**  
**1997-98 through 2002-03**

Grade	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	Percent Change from 1998-99 to 2002-03
Early Childhood	0	0	0	1	0	N/A

Education						
Kindergarten	7	17	13	13	16	128.6%
First	15	9	13	13	12	(20.0%)
Second	15	19	5	12	13	(13.3%)
Third	8	13	15	7	12	50.0%
Fourth	15	10	13	13	5	(66.7%)
Fifth	13	16	11	16	19	46.2%
Sixth	11	15	16	10	14	27.3%
Seventh	9	11	14	17	13	44.4%
Eighth	10	18	13	16	21	110.0%
Ninth	8	9	10	14	17	112.5%
Tenth	23	11	8	9	14	(39.1%)
Eleventh	14	20	10	11	8	(42.9%)
Twelfth	7	15	20	9	14	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>14.8%</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02 and PEIMS, 2002-03.*

*Note: Percent change is calculated by subtracting the 1998-99 figures from the 2002-03 figures and dividing by the 1998-99 figures; division by zero is designated by N/A where applicable.*

**Exhibit 2-3** shows the breakdown of teacher experience for RISD, the peer districts, Region 6 and the state as a percentage of total teaching staff. RISD ranks second among the peer districts with 18.2 percent beginning teachers and has at minimum twice the state (7.8 percent) and regional (9.1 percent) averages in this category.

**Exhibit 2-3**  
**Teacher Experience**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and State**  
**2002-03**

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>1-5 Years</b>	<b>6-10 Years</b>	<b>11-20 Years</b>	<b>Over 20 Years</b>
Aquilla	11.6%	28.9%	7.5%	11.6%	40.5%

Calvert	12.5%	25.0%	20.8%	10.4%	31.3%
Devers	13.3%	33.3%	13.3%	20.0%	20.0%
North Zulch	60.6%	12.3%	6.2%	12.3%	8.6%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

**Exhibit 2-4** compares RISD with the peer districts, the region and the state in average number of years of teacher experience and teacher turnover rates for 2001-02. Three of the peer districts have a significantly higher teacher turnover rate than RISD. RISD's turnover rate of 17.6 percent for 2001-02 is higher than the state average, but lower than Region 6's average.

**Exhibit 2-4**  
**Average Years of Experience and Turnover Rate**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and the State**  
**2001-02**

District	Average Years of Experience	Average Years of Experience with District	Annual Teacher Turnover Rate
Aquilla	12.1	4.0	36.4%
Calvert	13.0	7.3	35.3%
North Zulch	7.6	3.8	30.4%
Devers	12.2	6.7	2.2%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>18.7%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>15.7%</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.

**Exhibit 2-5** shows the percentage of teaching degrees for RISD, the peer districts, Region 6 and the state. RISD has the highest percentage of

teachers with a bachelor's degree and the lowest percentage of teachers with a master's degrees among its peers.

**Exhibit 2-5**  
**Teacher Degree Status**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and State**  
**2002-03**

<b>District</b>	<b>No Degree</b>	<b>Bachelor</b>	<b>Master</b>	<b>Doctorate</b>
Aquilla	0.0%	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%
Calvert	4.2%	72.9%	20.8%	2.1%
Devers	0.0%	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%
North Zulch	0.0%	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>93.7%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

*Source: TEA, PEIMS 2002-03.*

*Note: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.*

**Exhibit 2-6** compares the number of teachers teaching with temporary or emergency permits in RISD with peer districts. The state issues temporary and emergency permits for a variety of reasons to individuals interested in teaching to help address the teacher shortage. RISD has more teachers working under emergency permits than all but one of the peer districts.

**Exhibit 2-6**  
**Number of Teacher Permits**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and the State**  
**2001-02**

<b>District</b>	<b>Emergency (certified)</b>	<b>Emergency (uncertified)</b>	<b>Non-renewable</b>	<b>Temporary Classroom Assignment</b>	<b>District Teaching</b>	<b>Temporary Exemption</b>
Calvert	0	3	0	0	1	0
North Zulch	2	0	0	3	0	1
Aquilla	0	0	0	0	0	0

Devers	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RISD</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>7,595</b>	<b>2,361</b>	<b>1,014</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>29</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.

**Exhibit 2-7** shows RISD's retention rates in kindergarten through grade 8 from 1997-98 through 2001-02. As the number of students in each grade level is small, the district reported that the impact of one or two students being retained has a significant impact on retention rates.

**Exhibit 2-7  
RISD Retention Rates  
Regular Education  
1997-98 through 2001-02**

Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1997-98	0.0%	16.7%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	12.5%	5.0%
1998-99	0.0%	35.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1999-2000	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2000-01	0.0%	14.3%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2001-02	7.7%	14.3%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	27.3%

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

**Exhibit 2-8** compares RISD's budgeted instructional expenditures with those of its peers and the state. The district budgeted \$3,964 per student for instructional expenditures in 2002-03, which is more than \$700 less than the state average. RISD also ranks last among its peer districts in budgeted instructional expenditures per student.

**Exhibit 2-8  
Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures by Program - All  
Funds  
RISD, Peer Districts and State  
2002-03**

District	Total	Instructional	Regular	Gifted	Special	Career and	Bilingual/
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	<b>Instructional Expenditures</b>	<b>Expenditure Per Student</b>		<b>and Talented</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Technology</b>	<b>ESL</b>
North Zulch	\$1,654,150	\$5,013	75.5%	0.5%	6.3%	7.8%	0.1%
Calvert	\$1,588,711	\$5,536	59.9%	0.3%	14.7%	6.8%	0.2%
Aquilla	\$959,800	\$5,078	79.8%	0.1%	8.5%	6.9%	0.0%
Devers	\$920,044	\$5,644	72.2%	1.3%	7.7%	2.7%	2.8%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$705,666</b>	<b>\$3,964</b>	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>\$19,923,420,735</b>	<b>\$4,699</b>	<b>66.4%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

*Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.*

*Note: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.*

# Chapter 2

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

### *A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY*

School districts need reliable systems for managing the instructional process. Administrators must ensure that the resources allocated to instructional programs produce continuous improvements in student performance.

Prior to 2002-03, TEA implemented the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) to measure student skills. Districts administered TAAS reading and mathematics tests in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10; writing tests in grades 4, 8 and 10; and science and social studies tests in grade 8. Spanish-version TAAS tests were administered in grades 3 and 4. Districts also administered end-of-course (EOC) examinations in Algebra I, Biology, English II and U.S. History. Up until 2002-03, to graduate from a Texas high school, a student had to pass the TAAS exit-level exam taken in grade 10. In 2002-03, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) testing program, which was mandated by the 76th Texas Legislature, replaced TAAS.

The TAKS measures statewide curriculum in: reading in grades 3 through 9; writing in grades 4 and 7; English Language Arts in grades 10 and 11; mathematics in grades 3 through 11; science in grades 5, 10 and 11; and social studies in grades 8, 10 and 11. The Spanish TAKS is administered in grades 3 through 6. Beginning with the graduating class of 2003-04, students must exhibit satisfactory performance on the TAKS in grade 11 to obtain a high school diploma. The TAKS expands the grades and subjects tested based on curriculum known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) adopted by the State Board of Education in 1997.

**Exhibit 2-9** shows the TAKS testing schedule for each grade and subject covered.

**Exhibit 2-9**  
**TAKS Testing Schedule**  
**2002-03**

TAKS	GRADE LEVEL									
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Reading	X	X	X	X	X	X				

Writing		X			X				
English/Language Arts								X	X
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Science			X					X	X
Social Studies						X		X	X

Source: TEA, Web site.

The exit-level test will assess English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, early American and U.S. History, World Geography and World History.

Up through 2001-02, under the state's education accountability system, TEA assigned annual ratings to each district and school based upon TAAS results, dropout rates and data quality. TEA's accountability system included five ratings for districts: *Exemplary*, *Recognized*, *Academically Acceptable*, *Academically Unacceptable* and *Unacceptable: Data Quality*. To receive an *Exemplary* rating, at least 90 percent of all students and 90 percent of African American, Hispanic, Anglo and economically disadvantaged students had to pass the reading, writing and mathematics portions of the TAAS.

To achieve a *Recognized* rating, 80 percent of all students and each student group had to pass the reading, writing and mathematics portions of the TAAS, while only 50 percent of each student group had to pass these portions to achieve an *Academically Acceptable* rating. Effective in 2000, scores for students with disabilities and scores from all grade levels of the Spanish version of the TAAS reading and mathematics portions were included in the accountability calculations. Although the state accountability system also considered dropout rates, TAAS was the key-determining factor in ratings. As explained, the TAKS has replaced the TAAS; however, the state is in the process of establishing standards for the new accountability rating system.

From 1997-98 to 2001-02, RISD received an *Academically Acceptable* rating as shown in

**Exhibit 2-10.** Over the five-year period of comparison, the district has never been rated as *Recognized* or *Exemplary*.

**Exhibit 2-10**  
**Accountability Ratings**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

<b>District</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>
Calvert	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Unacceptable
North Zulch	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized
Aquilla	Recognized	Academically Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary	Recognized
Devers	Exemplary	Recognized	Exemplary	Exemplary	Academically Acceptable
<b>RISD</b>	<b>Academically Acceptable</b>	<b>Academically Acceptable</b>	<b>Academically Acceptable</b>	<b>Academically Acceptable</b>	<b>Academically Acceptable</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.*

RISD has printed several publications detailing the history of the district's schools, students and teachers of each graduating class since 1917. Publications feature profiles of former students and track information dating back to 1917 including year of graduation, marital and family status, college education attained, employment and interests.

The district relies on small-town relationships, word-of-mouth and local research avenues to gather information on its former graduates. Publications include a history of the community as gathered by the high school journalism class of 1975 and provide other information regarding businesses, students, teachers, photographs and maps of the community dating back to 1917.

The materials hold a wealth of information and constitute a well-documented history of the town of Richards, its schools and its students. The district's special education teacher has voluntarily taken on this endeavor as a hobby and made the information available for public record.

## **FINDING**

RISD does not have a board policy providing direction for curriculum design and management. Policies for curriculum design and management help guide districts in developing and updating curricula to ensure students are being taught TEKS, the state-developed curriculum standards.

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) has a number of policies related to instruction and several that may be used by school districts to supplement curriculum management programs. Board policies provide commonly understood curriculum standards and a framework for

districtwide consistency in decision-making across all instructional settings. An effective curriculum management policy provides clear direction for district staff and identifies the use of available district resources.

Curriculum policies establish guidance to district administrators by defining curriculum, outlining the overall process of curriculum development and requiring written documents in all subject areas and courses. They also establish expectations for how the curriculum, instructional materials and assessment program will be coordinated, provide for staff training and tie the budget process with curriculum priorities.

As specified in the Texas Education Code (TEC) 28.002, each district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 shall offer, as a required curriculum, a foundation of curriculum and an enrichment curriculum at all levels. TASB incorporates this legal mandate in its board policies as shown in **Exhibit 2-11**.

**Exhibit 2-11**  
**Board Policy EHAA (LEGAL)**  
**Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (All Levels)**

<p>Foundation Curriculum</p>	<p>The district shall provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills of the appropriate grade level in the foundation curriculum in all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English, Language Arts and Reading</li> <li>2. Mathematics</li> <li>3. Science</li> <li>4. Social studies, which consists of history, government, and geography of Texas, the United States and the world</li> <li>5. Spanish language arts and English as a second language</li> </ol> <p>The district may add elements at its discretion but must not delete or omit instruction in the foundation curriculum specified above.  <i>Education Code 28.002; 19 TAC 74.1(b)</i></p>
<p>Enrichment Curriculum</p>	<p>The district shall use the essential knowledge and skills as guidelines in providing instruction in the enrichment curriculum. The enrichment curriculum shall include all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Languages other than English, to the extent possible</li> <li>2. Health</li> <li>3. Physical education</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Fine Arts</li> <li>5. Economics, with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits</li> <li>6. Career and technology education</li> <li>7. Technology applications</li> </ol> <p><i>Education Code 28.002(a), (d); 19 TAC 74.1(c)</i></p>
Local Instructional Plan	<p>The district's local instructional plan may draw on state curriculum frameworks and program standards as appropriate. The District is encouraged to exceed minimum requirements of law and State Board rule.</p> <p><i>Education Code 28.002(g)</i></p>

*Source: TASB, RISD, Online Policy Manual.*

### **Recommendation 11:**

#### **Develop local board policy and an instructional plan to provide direction for the district's curriculum design and management.**

The superintendent should consult with TASB for information regarding local policies established for curriculum design and management.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent contacts TASB for information on districts with locally developed and adopted policies related to curriculum design and management.	October 2003
2.	The superintendent appoints and chairs a committee of staff with instructional responsibilities to develop local policy for curriculum development and management for board consideration and adoption.	November 2003
3.	The committee develops local policy for curriculum development and management.	November 2003 - January 2004
4.	The superintendent submits the committee's proposed policy to the board for review, approval and inclusion in the RISD policy manual.	February 2004
5.	The superintendent submits the policy to TASB's Policy Services for formatting and inclusion in the Internet-accessible version of RISD's policy manual.	March 2004
6.	The superintendent establishes procedures to inform teachers	April 2004 -

and support staff of curriculum management policy updates and additions.	Ongoing
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## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

The district does not have curriculum guides for teachers to use in classroom instruction. Teachers said that RISD does not have curriculum guides for the various grade levels and subjects. In a focus group of teachers asked about curriculum guide use, teachers conveyed individualized methods and practices of using guides to direct and evaluate instruction. In addition, teachers indicated limited direction from administrators in use of curriculum guides. Curriculum guides develop scope and sequence to detail what is to be taught in each subject and the order in which it is to be taught and include strategies for teaching the subject. The use and review of curriculum guides helps ensure there are no gaps or overlaps in the instruction provided to students.

Scores on state-mandated tests are not formally disaggregated to assess and update curriculum guides in an effort to enhance student performance. RISD's student performance on the TAAS fell below state and Region 6 averages in nearly every category between 1997-98 and 2001-02. **Exhibit 2-12** shows TAAS passing rates for RISD compared to the Region 6 and state averages from 1997-98 through 2001-02. In 2001-02, scores in writing were 16.8 percentage points below the state average. For all tests taken in 2001-02, RISD scored 76 percent. This was below the state average by 9.3 percentage points and below the Region 6 average by 10.7 percentage points.

**Exhibit 2-12**  
**TAAS Passing Rates Reading, Mathematics, Writing and All Tests**  
**RISD, Region 6 and the State**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

Year	Reading			Mathematics			Writing			All Tests		
	RISD	Region	State	RISD	Region	State	RISD	Region	State	RISD	Region	State
1997-98	86.2%	87.6%	87.0%	80.6%	84.6%	84.2%	77.4%	87.5%	87.4%	74.3%	78.2%	77.7%
1998-99	91.0%	87.8%	86.5%	78.3%	86.7%	85.7%	88.2%	88.4%	88.2%	73.2%	79.7%	78.3%
1999-2000	84.3%	89.0%	87.4%	82.6%	89.0%	87.4%	74.1%	88.7%	88.2%	73.2%	81.9%	79.9%

2000-01	86.8%	90.6%	88.9%	85.5%	91.6%	90.2%	78.6%	88.5%	87.9%	75.4%	84.0%	82.1%
2001-02	90.1%	92.4%	91.3%	87.7%	93.7%	92.7%	71.9%	89.0%	88.7%	76.0%	86.7%	85.3%

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

In 2002-03 the state replaced the TAAS with the TAKS. While the official scores have yet to be released, TEA sent TAKS preliminary reports to the school districts. **Exhibit 2-13** compares RISD's preliminary TAKS scores per grade level to the state averages. In grades 3 and 4, RISD students outperformed the state as a whole in reading and math, but they scored significantly below the state average in writing. RISD students scored below the state averages in all categories in grades 5 and 6. In the higher grades, RISD students scored well in grades 7 and 8 reading and in grade 11 science and English/Language Arts. Overall, RISD had lower passing rates in math than the state averages.

**Exhibit 2-13**  
**RISD TAKS Preliminary Report**  
**Percentage Passing by Grade and Subject**  
**Grades 3-11**  
**2002-03**

Grade Level	Percent Passing Reading	Percent Passing Math	Percent Passing Writing	Percent Passing Science	Percent Passing Social Studies	English/Language Arts
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
<b>RISD</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>				
State	89%	90%				
<b>Grade 4</b>						
<b>RISD</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60%</b>			
State	86%	88%	86%			
<b>Grade 5</b>						
<b>RISD</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>56%</b>		<b>56%</b>		
State	80%	86%		74%		
<b>Grade 6</b>						
<b>RISD</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>75%</b>				
State	86%	79%				



<b>Grade 7</b>						
<b>RISD</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>89%</b>			
State	88%	73%	85%			
<b>Grade 8</b>						
<b>RISD</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>77%</b>			<b>92%</b>	
State	88%	72%			93%	
<b>Grade 9</b>						
<b>RISD</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>67%</b>				
State	82%	63%				
<b>Grade 10</b>						
<b>RISD</b>		<b>67%</b>		<b>67%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>88%</b>
State		71%		69%	86%	72%
<b>Grade 11</b>						
<b>RISD</b>		<b>43%</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>100%</b>
State		68%		67%	90%	69%

Source: RISD superintendent, TAKS preliminary report, 2002-03.

Note: Shading tests not administered at that grade level.

**Exhibit 2-14** shows the percentage of RISD students passing all TAAS tests taken in grades 3 through 8 and 10 compared to scores for peer districts, Region 6 and the state. In 2001-02, RISD scores ranked the lowest among its peers. The district has shown the least positive progression in scores compared to all peer districts.

**Exhibit 2-14**  
**Percentage of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken (Grades 3-8 and 10)**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and State**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	Percentage Point Change from 1997-98 through 2001-02

Devers	89.3%	87.8%	95.1%	97.8%	94.9%	6.3%
North Zulch	66.5%	66.1%	83.2%	87.5%	88.1%	32.5%
Aquilla	76.1%	75.3%	86.0%	90.6%	81.0%	6.4%
Calvert	36.0%	42.5%	45.6%	58.3%	77.0%	113.9%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>75.4%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>78.2%</b>	<b>79.7%</b>	<b>81.9%</b>	<b>84.0%</b>	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>77.7%</b>	<b>78.3%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.*

On the TAKS, students in grade 5 scored nearly 20 percentage points below the state average in math and 30 percentage points below the state average in science. The RISD superintendent and teachers do not attribute the low scores to any particular reason.

Region 6 assists districts in building a unified, aligned curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12 addressing the union of TEKS and TAKS. It provides the first day of assistance free of charge and charges between \$350 and \$400 a day for any subsequent days. The region provides assistance to help districts with interpretation of state curriculum requirements and to assist in course sequencing.

Lyford Consolidated ISD has created vertical alignment teams to help prepare district students for the TAKS. It has organized the teams, which are composed of expert teachers at each grade level, to revise the K-12 curriculum guides. Teams have been created in mathematics, science, social studies and language arts. The teams are amending curriculum guides offered through Region 1 to meet the district's specific needs and to ensure that they meet Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives. TEKS are a set of educational objectives for each grade level developed by TEA to guide teachers in curriculum development. The teams of expert teachers assign content as well as competencies to particular grade levels. Their efforts help to do the following: eliminate gaps and redundancies; design a curriculum of skill building from one grade to the next; and ensure that the curriculum increases in difficulty so that its content, and the skills required to understand it, are more complex as a student progresses through the grades. The teams meet once a month to discuss and identify group tasks and objectives.

**Recommendation 12:**

**Develop and update curriculum guides to help improve student academic performance.**

The superintendent should contact Region 6 to coordinate assistance with developing and updating curriculum guides.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 6 for assistance with developing and updating curriculum guides.	March 2004
2.	The superintendent selects three lead teachers from the elementary and secondary levels to develop and update curriculum guides.	March 2004
3.	The three lead teachers assess curriculum and the need for curriculum guides at each grade level.	April - May 2004
4.	The teachers work with Region 12 to develop and update curriculum guides.	June 2004 and Ongoing in summer months

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The three lead teachers will be paid \$1,000 to review curriculum and develop guides over a three year period (during the summer months) and to develop and update the guides annually thereafter at a cost of \$200 per lead teacher.

Region 6 staff will provide technical assistance with the process. They will provide the first day of assistance free of charge and charge between \$350 and \$400 a day for any subsequent days. This fiscal impact assumes that the district will pay a Region 6 consultant \$400 a day for two days of training during the first two summers of developing curriculum guides with the first day free of charge. There will be no cost during 2003-04 because the process of updating the curriculum guides will begin in summer 2004.

The annual cost will be \$3,800 per year during the first two years (3 teachers x \$1,000 stipend + \$800 two days of technical assistance) and \$3,000 in 2006-07 (3 teachers x \$1,000). Beginning in 2007-08 and annually thereafter, the cost would be \$600 (\$200 x 3 teachers).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Develop and update curriculum guides to help improve student	\$0	(\$3,800)	(\$3,800)	(\$600)	(\$600)

academic performance.					
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**FINDING**

Less than 50 percent of RISD students take college entrance exams and less than half of these students score at or above the minimum criterion for college acceptance.

The College Board's Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Program Assessment (ACT) assess a student's potential for college success. The SAT I consists of verbal and math tests. The verbal test focuses on critical reading. Students read passages from the sciences, social sciences and humanities and discuss the author's points of view, techniques and logic. The math test requires students to apply problem-solving techniques and use math flexibly in thinking about solutions to new and different problems. The ACT examination includes more than 200 multiple-choice questions covering English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning based on high school curriculum. It also includes an interest inventory that provides information for career and educational planning.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-15**, RISD's percentage of students taking the college entrance exams is well below the Region 6 and the state averages and in the middle compared with its peers. Devers ISD provides education for students in grades kindergarten through 8 only and is not included in the comparison. In 2001-02, 63.5 percent of students in Region 6 took the college entrance exams, while only 46.7 percent of RISD students participated. RISD's average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score at 893 was well below the Region 6 and state averages of 1,009 and 987, respectively. The American College Testing Program (ACT) for RISD was unavailable on AEIS, because information on five or fewer students are not reported for privacy reasons.

**Exhibit 2-15**  
**College Entrance Examination Participation and Scores**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and the State**  
**Class of 2001**

<b>District</b>	<b>Percentage of Students Meeting Criteria</b>	<b>Percentage of Students Taking Examinations</b>	<b>Average SAT Score</b>	<b>Average ACT Score</b>
Aquilla	16.7%	54.5%	*	19.5
North	12.5%	66.7%	945	20.8

Zulch				
Calvert	0.0%	40.0%	*	14.6
<b>RISD</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>20.9</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>26.9%</b>	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>20.2</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.

\*Data for Class of 2001 not available through TEA, AEIS.

The percentage of RISD students taking the college test has not fluctuated much from 1999 to 2001 but a large drop in the percentage of students scoring at or above criterion occurred in 2001 (**Exhibit 2-16**).

**Exhibit 2-16**  
**Percentage of Students Tested**  
**Percentage of Tested Students Scoring At or Above Criterion**  
**Classes of 1999, 2000 and 2001**

	Percentage of Students Tested			Percentage Scoring At or Above Criterion		
	Class of 1999	Class of 2000	Class of 2001	Class of 1999	Class of 2000	Class of 2001
<b>RISD</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>63.1%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>61.8%</b>	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>26.9%</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000 through 2001-02.

\*Data not available.

In Texas, most four-year post-secondary institutions require either the SAT or ACT in some combination with other criteria for entry. Although the standards vary based on the selectivity of the college or university, most often, the higher the score on the entrance examination, the lower the grade point average required for entrance. Texas colleges and universities must admit applicants who graduate with grade point averages in the top 10 percent of their class regardless of the entrance examination score. Therefore, scoring well on the SAT I or ACT is of particular importance to

a student whose grade point average is not in the top 10 percent of the class.

The College Board and American College Testing Program both offer various strategies for assisting students with test preparation. The College Board encourages students to take the PSAT to prepare for the SAT. It also offers free analysis of areas needing strengthening and methods for making improvements. Both the College Board and American College Testing Program can provide schools with test preparation software.

To increase the district's SAT and ACT scores, Robstown ISD began offering after-school tutorial services in the 2000-01 school year. During intersession periods, the district also offered enhancement classes designed to teach test-taking skills. During 2000-01, RISD attempted to increase the number of students taking the SAT and ACT tests by offering to pay the examination fee. Pre-accelerated Programs (Pre-AP) and AP classes have been designed to correspond with the SAT and ACT testing format, and enrollment in those programs has increased significantly.

**Recommendation 13:**

**Increase student participation and pass rates on college entrance examinations.**

As part of the process of identifying various strategies to improve student performance, the RISD superintendent, assistant principal and teachers should identify any deficiencies in the curriculum for core content areas related to ACT and SAT testing. The district may also consider paying test fees for students taking the entrance exams.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent identifies deficiencies in teaching or curriculum related to ACT/SAT scores.	November 2003
2.	The superintendent consults with teachers and parents from the high school to evaluate possible gaps and overlaps in curriculum and devise ways to motivate student participation on college entrance exams.	January 2004
3.	The superintendent develops a plan of action to increase student participation and student performance on ACT/SAT tests and presents to the school board for review and approval.	February 2004
4.	The board approves the plan and directs the superintendent to implement.	March 2004

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact assumes the district purchases ACT or SAT preparation software and books for students in addition to paying the basic registration fee for students taking the exam. Assuming 10 students take the ACT exam and the district pays the basic registration fee of \$26 for each student, the fiscal impact will be \$160 for testing ( $\$26 \times 10 \text{ students} = \$260$ ).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Increase student participation and pass rates on college entrance examination.	(\$260)	(\$260)	(\$260)	(\$260)	(\$260)

## Chapter 2

# EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

### *B. SPECIAL PROGRAMS (PART 1)*

School districts offer additional educational programs in addition to the regular education curriculum to meet the needs of students with special needs. As shown in **Exhibit 2-17**, RISD identified 20 students for special education programs, 27 students for Career and Technology programs, 12 students for Gifted/Talented programs and 90 students of its total population as economically disadvantaged in 2002-03.

**Exhibit 2-17**  
**Student Enrollment by Program**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2002-03**

<b>District</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>Special Education</b>	<b>Bilingual/ ESL</b>	<b>Career/ Technology</b>	<b>Gifted/ Talented</b>	<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>
North Zulch	330	31	2	104	22	153
Calvert	287	58	9	55	10	270
Aquilla	189	26	0	50	16	98
<b>RISD</b>	178*	20	0	27	12	90
Devers	163	20	24	0	22	74

*Source: TEA, PEIMS 2002-03.*

*\*The district reported an enrollment figure of 178 to TEA in the fall of 2002; however, in July 2003 district administrators said the final 2002-03 enrollment was 165.*

### *Gifted and Talented*

Since 1987, state law has required that all Texas school districts have educational programs to serve the needs of the gifted and talented (G/T) student. A G/T student, as defined by the state, is a "child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkable level of accomplishment when compared with others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; possesses an unusual capacity for leadership or excels in a specific academic field."



Section 29.122 of TEC states that school districts "shall adopt a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students in the district and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level." Section 29.123 requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) to "develop and periodically update a state plan for the education of gifted and talented students" to be used for accountability purposes "to measure the performance of districts in providing services to students identified as gifted and talented." The SBOE plan, adopted in 1996 and revised in 2000, provides direction for the refinement of existing services and the creation of additional curricular options for gifted and talented (G/T) students.

## **FINDING**

RISD did not identify or serve gifted and talented students in 2002-03. Interviews with the superintendent and teachers indicated that the district discontinued the "pull-out" Gifted and Talented program because of the district's financial situation and lack of funding to hire a Gifted and Talented teacher or train all teachers to serve this population of students. TEC Section 29.122 requires that school districts serve gifted and talented students with a specialized curriculum.

Teachers said that students previously identified are served with differentiated curriculum in the regular classroom, but the review team found no evidence of this. Examination of a sample of the district's personnel records indicated that not all teaching staff has received training in Gifted and Talented programs. TEC requires 30 hours of training for teacher G/T certification and an additional 6 hours of annual training in special topics related to teaching G/T students. In an effort to adequately serve G/T students, the district recently joined Region 6's Advanced Academic Services effective 2003-04. Through this service, Region 6 will provide the necessary G/T training to RISD teachers, administrators and professional staff at no additional cost to the district.

TEA has not conducted a District Efficiency and Compliance (DEC) review to assess the district's G/T program. However, the review team's examination of the program revealed G/T students have not been identified by any other means than recommendations from teacher to teacher.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-18**, survey respondents rate RISD's G/T services as ineffective. As shown, 52.3 percent of students, 41.4 percent of parents and 26.6 percent of teachers surveyed believe the G/T program is not effective.

**Exhibit 2-18**  
**RISD Parent and Student Survey Results**  
**Gifted and Talented Program**

Survey Statement	Group Surveyed	Agree/Strongly Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
The district has effective programs for honors/Gifted and Talented education.	Teachers	20.0%	53.3%	26.6%
	Parents	16.9%	41.5%	41.4%
	Students	19.0%	28.5%	52.3%

*Source: TSPR Survey Results, 2002-03.*

Comments received on surveys and during the public forum regarding district programs include:

- "There is no counselor, no college-directed teaching. This school does not even try to teach the college bound student. There are no advanced classes for eager learners. This school really needs help. Their TAAS scores speak for themselves. They need to consolidate or receive state assistance. Our children are the only ones to suffer. I will move if I have to in order to find better schools."
- "I don't feel I've learned what I need to learn to be prepared for college."
- "Many programs such as the Gifted and Talented Program were available in the past. I would like to see this program rejuvenated. Too many programs 'used to be' here and are not here now, nor is there any interest to bring them back. U.I.L Academic Competition - no effort from (7-12) teachers to utilize this competition to help students with special abilities, knowledge, or interests."

**Exhibit 2-19** compares RISD's 2002-03 budgeted expenditures for the G/T program with those of the state and the peer districts. RISD and three of the peer districts spend significantly less per student than the state average. RISD only budgeted \$700 for its G/T program in 2002-03.

**Exhibit 2-19**  
**RISD Budgeted Expenditures for Gifted/Talented Education**  
**All Funds**  
**RISD, Peer Districts and the State**  
**2002-03**

District	Budgeted G/T Expenditures	G/T Expenditures as Percent of Total	Expenditure per Student
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		<b>Instructional Operating Expenditures</b>	
Devers	\$12,219	1.3%	\$75
North Zulch	\$8,791	0.5%	\$27
Calvert	\$4,900	0.3%	\$17
Aquilla	\$700	0.1%	\$4
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>\$4</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>\$348,603,099</b>	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>\$82</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

According to the *Texas State Plan for Education of Gifted/Talented Students*, meeting the curricular and instructional needs of gifted and talented students requires modifications to the regular school program. The plan outlines specific performance measures related to curriculum and instruction required by state law or State Board of Education (SBOE) rule for students in grades 1 through 12 in G/T programs. **Exhibit 2-20** shows G/T program requirements for *Acceptable*, *Recognized* and *Exemplary* status according to the state plan.

**Exhibit 2-20**  
**Gifted and Talented Program Requirements**  
**Acceptable, Recognized and Exemplary Status**

<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Recognized</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An array of appropriately challenging learning experience is offered emphasizing content from the four core academic areas.</li> <li>A continuum of learning experiences is provided leading to the development of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options are provided for students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines through guided and independent research.</li> <li>A comprehensive manual or program guide is provided describing all programs and services for gifted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options are provided in intellectual, creative or artistic areas; leadership; and specific academic fields.</li> <li>Students in G/T programs for more than one year will develop advanced-level products evaluated by external evaluators knowledgeable about the area of</li> </ul>

<p>advanced-level products or performances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities are provided for students to accelerate in areas of student strengths.</li> <li>• District and campus improvement plans include provisions related to the needs of gifted and talented students.</li> </ul>	<p>students in grades K-12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities are provided for career and leadership assessment and training in areas of student strength.</li> <li>• Students at all levels are involved in experiences resulting in development of advanced-level products or performances targeted to audiences outside the classroom.</li> <li>• Flexible pacing is used allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills. Curriculum is modified based on annual evaluations.</li> <li>• Resources and release time for staff are provided for curriculum development</li> <li>• Guidelines are developed and used for evaluating resources and in selecting appropriate materials.</li> <li>• Release time or contract extensions are</li> </ul>	<p>the product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduling modifications are used to meet the needs of individual students.</li> <li>• Specialists in content areas, instructional teachings and gifted/talented education collaborate with curriculum planning as curriculum is being designed and evaluated</li> <li>• Administrators monitor the development of curriculum for gifted/talented students.</li> <li>• Student performance is assessed by standards developed by experts in the areas served in the district's program.</li> </ul>
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	<p>provided to enable teachers at all levels to collaboratively develop services for gifted and talented students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student progress or performance is periodically assessed and communicated to parents.</li> </ul>	
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*Source: TEA, Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, May 2000.*

While the approach among districts seeking "exemplary" status may be different based on locally identified needs, all modify the general school program in ways that best meet the needs of G/T students. By providing G/T training for staff and parents and encouraging all teachers to receive training in gifted and talented education, Crystal City ISD (CCISD) improved the quality of instruction and the educational opportunities available for gifted and talented students.

In July 2000, CCISD held a week-long Gifted and Talented Institute. More than 25 staff members and 10 parents attended the Gifted and Talented Institute. CCISD's Gifted and Talented coordinator reviewed identification processes, rules and regulations. Consultants presented all-day sessions on: The Nature and Needs of Gifted Students; Differentiated Curriculum, Creative Thinking, Problem Solving; Depth and Complexity; Creative Thinking for Teachers; Parents of Gifted and Talented Students; and How to be Scholarly.

**Recommendation 14:**

**Identify gifted and talented students and establish a Gifted and Talented Program.**

RISD can either choose to establish a G/T program in which G/T students are served with a differentiated curriculum in the regular classroom or provide a pull-out program in which students spend a part of each week in a separate classroom engaged in enrichment activities with a certified G/T teacher. Under either option, the teachers serving these students must be G/T certified. RISD teachers and administrative staff will receive training

through Region 6's Advanced Academic Services which the district joined effective 2003-04.

The district should also establish multiple criteria for identifying G/T students. Program modifications should meet the needs of the gifted student.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent appoints a committee consisting of district staff, parents and community members to review options for developing services for G/T students.	September 2003
2.	The committee selects a chair.	October 2003
3.	The committee chair works with Region 6's Advanced Academic Services to develop G/T options for students and shares information with the G/T committee.	October 2003
4.	The committee reviews options for re-establishing a G/T program and submits recommendations to the superintendent.	January 2004
5.	The superintendent reviews and approves the recommendations and submits them to the school board for review and approval.	March 2004
6.	The superintendent implements the G/T plan effective 2004-05.	May 2004
7.	The superintendent and committee monitor implementation, make modifications as appropriate and provide regularly scheduled status reports to the superintendent and board.	June 2004 and Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### ***Special Education***

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

According to the IDEA, an effective special education program must have the following elements:

- *Prereferral intervention in general education*: When a student has an academic problem in the general education program, the teacher should try to solve the problem. If this does not help, the problem is referred to special education staff.
- *Referral to special education for evaluation*: To refer a student to special education means writing an official request supported by documentation that details what steps have already been taken to solve the problem.
- *Comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation*: Once a student has been referred, the district must provide a "full and individual evaluation" within a certain period of time.
- *Initial placement through an ARD committee*: After the evaluation is completed, a committee of educators, administrators, parents and others decides if the student qualifies for special education services. If so, the committee writes a plan for the student's education.
- *Provision of educational services and support according to a written IEP*: The IEP includes information about the classes, subject areas, developmental areas and/or lifeskills courses in which the student will be instructed, how much time will be spent in general education and related needs like speech therapy or counseling.
- *Annual program review*: An ARD committee conducts an annual review to ensure the student's program is appropriate.
- *Three-year re-evaluation*: Every three years, the student undergoes a comprehensive individual assessment to determine if the student is still eligible for special education services.
- *Dismissal from the special education program*: If and when a student no longer meets the eligibility criteria, the student is dismissed from special education, by recommendation of the ARD committee.

Special education instructional arrangements are based on the individual needs and individualized education programs of eligible students receiving special education services. Students who receive all of their instruction and related services in a regular classroom are considered to be in a mainstream instructional setting. Additional instructional arrangements include a resource room where the student is removed from the regular classroom less than 50 percent of the day, or a self-contained class where the student is removed from the regular classroom more than 50 percent of the day. If a student's disability is so severe that satisfactory education cannot take place for any part of the school day in a regular classroom, they may be served in a separate "self-contained" classroom. In addition, a

school district must be prepared to provide an appropriate setting such as a day treatment program, or even residential treatment placement if the student's needs and educational program requires a that type of placement.

RISD's special education students are served in a pull-out program with services provided by a certified special education teacher and classes conducted on a content need basis. The special education program served 20 students in 2002-03.

Each student has an individualized education plan and folder with ARD documentation. The folders are maintained at the Grimes County Special Education Cooperative, of which RISD is a member. The cooperative, which provides a range of programs designed to include all students with disabilities into the general education program, sends folders to RISD at the end of each school year.

Section 39.023 of the Texas Education Code was amended by the 75th Texas Legislature to address the assessment of students receiving special education services:

- all special education students for whom TAKS is an appropriate measure of their academic achievement will take TAKS;
- students in grades 3 through 8 who are being instructed in the state-mandated curriculum in an area tested by TAKS, but for whom TAKS is not an appropriate measure of academic progress, even with allowable accommodations, will participate in the State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA); and
- students who are not being instructed in the state curriculum at any grade level in an area tested by TAKS will be exempted from TAKS and from the SDAA.

The percent of RISD students tested on the SDAA exceeded the Region 6 and statewide averages. The percent of RISD students not tested at all was below the Region 6 and state averages as shown in **Exhibit 2-21**.

**Exhibit 2-21**  
**Students Tested/Not Tested on TAAS**  
**RISD, Region 6 and the State**  
**2001-02**

District	Students Tested			Students Not Tested		
	Not Counted		Counted	Total Not Tested	LEP Exempt	ARD Exempt
	Mobile Subset	SDAA	Accountability Set			



<b>RISD</b>	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>77.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.

**Exhibit 2-22** compares RISD's special education student and teacher information with the peer districts for 1999-2000 through 2001-02.

**Exhibit 2-22**  
**Special Education Students and Teachers**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2000-01 through 2002-03**

<b>District</b>	<b>2000-01</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2002-03</b>	
	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
Calvert	51	2.1	58	2.0	58	2.0
North Zulch	29	1.6	35	1.8	31	1.0
Aquilla	31	1.0	24	1.2	26	1.0
Devers	27	1.3	19	1.0	20	0.9
<b>RISD</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1.0</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01 through 2001-02 and PEIMS 2002-03.

**Exhibit 2-23** compares RISD's 2002-03 budgeted special education expenditures with those of the peer districts. All but one of the peer districts budgeted less per student than the state average. RISD budgeted 10.4 percent of its instructional operating expenditures to provide services for special education students.

**Exhibit 2-23**  
**Budgeted Expenditures for Special Education**  
**All Funds**  
**RISD, Peer Districts and State**  
**2002-03**

<b>District</b>	<b>Budgeted Special Education Expenditures</b>	<b>Special Education Expenditures as Percent of Total Instructional Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>Expenditure per Student</b>
North Zulch	\$104,136	6.3%	\$316
Calvert	\$233,250	14.7%	\$813
Aquilla	\$81,888	8.5%	\$433
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$73,088</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>\$411</b>
Devers	\$70,546	7.7%	\$433
<b>State</b>	<b>\$2,877,983,372</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>\$679</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

## **FINDING**

RISD belongs to the Grimes County Special Education Cooperative assisting member districts through shared-service arrangements by providing educational services to students with disabilities. RISD pays the cooperative \$2,940 annually for each of the district's students requiring full-day placement in LIFE skills class. Navasota ISD is the cooperative's fiscal agent and serves other local school districts including the Anderson-Shiro ISD (ASISD). RISD provides transportation for its students to ASISD and ASISD transports the RISD students to the special education cooperative location daily. The prorated share of annual transportation costs to RISD is \$2,240.

This cooperative provides service for students with special needs while eliminating the need for RISD to provide full-time certified personnel for this level of special education needs.

## **COMMENDATION**

**RISD addresses the needs of students with disabilities by participating in a cost-effective special education cooperative.**

### *State Compensatory Education*

Compensatory education is defined by law as programs and services designed to improve and enhance the regular education program for students at-risk of dropping out of school. The compensatory education

seeks to increase the academic achievement of identified students and reduce dropout rates.

The federal government provides funds to districts to help students who are not meeting performance standards. These Title I funds are sent via TEA to schools based on the district's number of economically disadvantaged students (typically, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts). The students served, however, are selected based on educational need, not economic status. The federal government allows a school to be designated as a Title I, Part A schoolwide program, if 50 percent or more of its students come from low-income households. These funds must be supplemental in nature and must not replace regular funds, but must be added to the regular program. In Texas, state funding for compensatory programs began when the TEC was amended to include reporting and auditing systems covering appropriate use of compensatory education allotment funds. Senate Bill 702 requires state compensatory funds, like federal Title I funds, to be supplemental to the regular education program and used to support a Title I, Part A program. RISD received \$64,282 in Title I, Part A funds for 2001-02 and \$102,340 in 2002-03 designated to serve its at-risk students.

The criteria for identifying students at-risk of dropping out of school was changed and although local criteria can be used, the criteria must be approved by the local board of trustees and the number of students served using local criteria is limited. **Exhibit 2-24** lists the current criteria for identifying students at-risk of dropping out of school.

**Exhibit 2-24**  
**Student Eligibility Criteria**  
**State Compensatory Education Program**

- Each student who is under 21 years of age and who:
- is in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or grade 1, 2 or 3 and did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or assessment instrument administered during the current school year;
- is in grade 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 and did not maintain an average equivalent to 70 on a scale of 100 in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum during a semester in the preceding or current school year or is not maintaining such an average in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum in the current semester;
- was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years;
- did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered to the student under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, and who has not in the previous or current school year subsequently performed on that instrument or another appropriate instrument at a level equal to at least 110 percent of

- the level of satisfactory performance on that instrument;
- is pregnant or is a parent;
  - has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with Section 37.006 during the preceding or current school year;
  - has been expelled in accordance with Section 37.007 during the preceding or current school year;
  - is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution, or other conditional release;
  - was previously reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to have dropped out of school;
  - is a student of limited English proficiency, as defined by Section 29.052;
  - is in the custody or care of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or has, during the current school year, been referred to the department by a school official, officer of the juvenile court, or law enforcement official;
  - is homeless, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11302, and its subsequent amendments; or
  - resided in the preceding school year or resides in the current school year in a residential placement facility in the district, including a detention facility, substance abuse treatment facility, emergency shelter, psychiatric hospital, halfway house, or foster group home.

*Source: TEA, Financial Accountability System Resource Guide, State Compensatory Education module, January 1, 2002.*

**Exhibit 2-25** shows the RISD student population identified as economically disadvantaged from 2000-01 to 2002-03 compared to peers. The district ranks third among its peers for its percentage of total enrollment identified as economically disadvantaged. The number of students so identified increased from 79 to 90 students, or 13.9 percent, from 2001-02 to 2002-03.

**Exhibit 2-25**  
**Economically Disadvantaged Students**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and State**  
**2000-01 through 2002-03**

District	2000-01		2001-02		2002-03	
	Number	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Number	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Number	Percentage of Total Enrollment
Calvert	298	93.4%	279	93.3%	270	94.1%

Aquilla	92	50.0%	88	49.7%	98	51.9%
North Zulch	128	37.3%	142	42.9%	153	46.4%
Devers	89	50.6%	88	50.6%	74	45.4%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>50.6%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>55,645</b>	<b>40.9%</b>	<b>56,556</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>60,437</b>	<b>42.2%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>2,001,697</b>	<b>49.3%</b>	<b>2,093,511</b>	<b>50.5%</b>	<b>2,208,000</b>	<b>51.8%</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01 through 2001-02 and PEIMS, 2002-03.*

### Special Programs - Part 2

# Chapter 2

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

### *B. SPECIAL PROGRAMS (PART 2)*

#### **FINDING**

The district is out of compliance with state law in that it is not using its allotment of state compensatory funds to provide programs for students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school. For 2002-03, RISD identified 50.6 percent of its student enrollment as economically disadvantaged as shown in **Exhibit 2-25**. The state bases a district's allotment of SCE funds based on the number of identified economically disadvantaged students. Audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2002 included a finding from the district's external auditor stating RISD did not expend 85 percent of its state funds for compensatory education. Instead, the district expended its compensatory education monies on the salary of the school librarian rather than providing programs targeted for at-risk students. The amount of librarian expenditures allocated by RISD to the compensatory education program was \$41,144 in 2001-02. In 2002-03, the district received Title II, Part A grant funds which went undistributed until the end of the year when a member of the review team brought it to the district's attention.

Unused monies must be returned to the grantor when a school district consistently neglects to properly allocate the available funds. If funds are not spent evenly through the year, the district accepts the risk that unplanned last-minute expenditures must be made to avoid returning any monies to the grantor.

State compensatory education program funding supplement funds for programs targeting students at-risk of dropping out of school, not to supplant the regular education program. **Exhibit 2-26** shows the district's budgeted expenditures for at-risk programs compared to the peer districts for 2001-02. RISD ranked fourth among the peer districts for the percentage of instructional operating expenditures on compensatory education with only 0.6 percent of instructional expenditures used for compensatory education.

**Exhibit 2-26**  
**Budget Expenditures for State Compensatory Education**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2002-03**

District	Number of	Budgeted	Percentage of
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	<b>Economically Disadvantaged Students</b>	<b>SCE Expenditures</b>	<b>Instructional Operating Expenditures</b>
Aquilla	98	\$353	0.0%
Calvert	270	\$20,6437	8.5%
Devers	74	\$88,902	5.4%
North Zulch	153	\$97,530	4.0%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2002-03

State law requires districts to have written policies and procedures addressing specific aspects of the compensatory education program and that the program be described in the district improvement plans (DIP) if it is implemented districtwide and in campus improvement plans (CIPs) if it is implemented at the campus level. The law requires that SCE resources be redirected when evaluations indicate that programs and/or services are unsuccessful in producing desired results for students at-risk of dropping out of school. RISD does not have a DIP and the CIP does not address the use of SCE funds, as is required by law.

#### **Recommendation 15:**

**Evaluate the use of State Compensatory funds and prepare strategies to provide appropriate programs for at-risk students.**

#### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent meets with the teachers and staff working with at risk students to review allocation of SCE funds.	October 2003
2.	The superintendent works with the site-based decision-making committee (SBDM) to ensure that objectives, strategies, budgeted expenditures and evaluation measures for SCE funds are included in the 2003-04 CIP.	November - December 2003
3.	The superintendent ensures that SCE funds are spent as specified in the CIP.	January - May 2004
4.	The superintendent evaluates the SCE objectives and strategies as outlined in the CIP.	May 2004
5.	The SBDM adjusts the CIP for the incoming year based on the results of the superintendent's evaluation.	June 2004

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### *Career and Technology*

The TEC, Section 29.181, states that "Each public school student shall master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner; and for gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student's education at the post-secondary level." The Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 74, Subchapter A, requires school districts to offer "Programs of study for broad career concentrations in areas of agricultural science and technology, arts and communication, business education, family and consumer science, health occupations technology, trade and industry and technology education that will prepare students for continued learning and postsecondary education in employment settings."

**Exhibit 2-27** compares RISD's 2002-03 budgeted expenditures devoted to career and technology (CATE) with similar figures for the peer districts. RISD and all peer districts, except Devers, budgeted more CATE funds per student than the state average for 2002-03.

**Exhibit 2-27**  
**RISD Budgeted Expenditures for Career and Technology Education**  
**All Funds**  
**RISD, Peer Districts and State**  
**2002-03**

<b>District</b>	<b>Budgeted CATE Expenditures</b>	<b>CATE Expenditures as Percent of Total Budgeted Instructional Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>Expenditure per Student</b>
North Zulch	\$129,210	7.8%	\$392
Calvert	\$108,389	6.8%	\$378
Aquilla	\$66,385	6.9%	\$351
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$39,662</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>\$223</b>
Devers	\$24,974	2.7%	\$153
<b>State</b>	<b>\$777,847,349</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>\$183</b>

Source: TEA, AEIS, PEIMS, 2002-03.



In RISD, CATE course offerings shown in **Exhibit 2-28** are provided to students in grades 9 through 12. In addition, the district provides an agriculture class for students in grade 8.

**Exhibit 2-28**  
**RISD Career and Technology Course Offerings**  
**2002-03**

Course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to Agricultural Mechanics</li><li>• Agricultural Mechanics</li><li>• Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology</li><li>• Applied Agricultural Science and Technology</li><li>• Wildlife/Food</li><li>• Wildlife and Recreation Management</li></ul>

*Source: RISD, master schedule of classes, 2003-03.*

Section 74.3 of the TAC requires districts to offer courses in career and technology education in at least three of the following eight areas:

- agricultural science and technology education;
- business education;
- health science technology education;
- family and consumer sciences education/home economics;
- technology/industrial technology education;
- marketing education;
- trade and industrial education; and
- career orientation.

The state encourages districts to develop school-to-work arrangements such as tech prep and dual credit programs and articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions. Tech prep programs begin in high school and continue at a post-secondary institution, frequently a community college. These programs provide for a coherent sequence of courses involving classroom instruction and on-site training. Participation allows students to enter the work force with both technical skills and practical work experience. Dual credit courses allow students to fulfill graduation requirements and complete college credits simultaneously by registering and taking courses at either the high school or on a college campus. School districts and colleges establish articulation agreements after it is determined that alignment exists between specific courses. Students receive high school credit upon course completion and college credit upon enrollment.

## FINDING

RISD does not offer diverse CATE instruction in accordance with TAC Section 74.3. The district's course offerings in the CATE program are limited to a keyboarding class and several agriculture-related courses. The district does not offer trade or industrial courses, home economics, health sciences, business or marketing and only a limited technology class. CATE course offerings include only courses from the agricultural science and technology category and not in three of the eight categories as required by law.

The district attempted to expand its CATE course offerings through an interlocal agreement with Blinn College. Students can take courses via distance learning, but must travel to another school district to participate because RISD's distance learning center has outdated computers and technology equipment. In 2003-04, the district received a \$40,000 Target grant through Region 6 to update the distance learning lab. Tuition and fees at Blinn College range from \$130 for one to three semester hours to \$301 for nine semester credit hours. In 2001-02, one student participated in this program; none participated in 2002-03.

In an effort to improve its CATE program the district has entered into a CATE Shared Services Agreement through Region 6. The contract is effective from July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004 and will provide RISD with staff development for teachers and counselors and with assistance in developing a coherent sequence of CATE courses.

In addition to a lack of diversity in course offerings, the district does not have a process for reviewing its CATE program. RISD does not have a process or procedures in place for securing broad-based input to determine the relevance of CATE programs to the workforce or guide direction of the program's long-term goals. Some districts engage in program evaluation, obtain reviews from high school graduates and have students complete surveys.

Surveys from the community indicate dissatisfaction with the program as shown in **Exhibit 2-29**.

**Exhibit 2-29**  
**RISD Parent and Student Survey Results**  
**CATE Program**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>
The district has	Teachers	39.9%	46.6%	13.3%

effective programs in place for business education.	Parents	20.7%	39.6%	39.5%
	Students	28.5%	14.2%	57.0%
The district has effective programs in place for vocational (career and technology) education.	Teachers	60.0%	33.3%	6.6%
	Parents	18.8%	49.0%	31.9%
	Students	28.5%	14.2%	57.0%
The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	Teachers	59.9%	20.0%	20.0%
	Parents	15.1%	28.3%	56.5%
	Students	14.2%	47.6%	38.0%
The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	Teachers	73.3%	20.0%	6.6%
	Parents	20.7%	32.0%	47.1%
	Students	33.2%	33.3%	33.3%

*Source: TSPR Survey Results, 2002-03.*

*Note: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.*

The State Plan for Career and Technology Education 2000-02 includes strategies for evaluating career and technology education programs, including the following:

- evaluate each CATE program and its individual components to determine strengths and weaknesses;
- evaluate CATE program facilities, equipment and instructional resources;
- use business and industry partnerships in CATE program evaluations;
- at the district's discretion, use information about graduates' post-high school activities in evaluating CATE programs; and
- develop and implement a plan to improve or enhance CATE programs based on evaluation results.

Although not required by state law, many districts use advisory committees at the school or district level to help evaluate program relevance and to assist in developing long-range plans. District-level advisory committees work closely with area and regional workforce development councils and post-secondary educational institutions in securing input on workforce trends and standards against which to evaluate local programs.

Elgin ISD developed unique CATE courses such as Agricultural Biotechnology, Animal Bio-Med Science, Intergenerational Professions and the Cisco Lab to meet not only the needs of non-college bound students but address critical workforce needs as well. Respectively, the courses provide instruction on the basics of molecular biology, animal health, care of the young and elderly, computer networking and cabling.

**Recommendation 16:**

**Develop a long-term CATE plan that broadens the course offerings.**

As a member of Region 6's CATE Shared Services Agreement, RISD should develop a plan that will prepare students for the workforce or for pursuing additional training in college.

As part of the shared services agreement, Region 6 will help the district with curriculum and support material and equipment for an expanded CATE program.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent ensures that the CATE teacher works closely with Region 6's CATE Shared Services Agreement to develop an expanded CATE program.	October 2003 - February 2004
2.	The CATE teacher presents the plan for an expanded CATE Program to the superintendent and board for approval.	March 2004
3.	The superintendent implements the plan.	April 2004
4.	The CATE teacher conducts annual surveys to assess the needs and effectiveness of the CATE program.	March 2005 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

***Library Services***

In May 1997, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission adopted a series of recommended standards and published *School Library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards*. According to the publication, the school library programs should ensure that students and staff become effective users of ideas and information and literate, life-long learners. To accomplish this task, library programs must provide instruction in research and the evaluation of resources, individual guidance and access to materials in multiple formats. The guidelines also offer criteria that

identify library programs as exemplary, recognized, acceptable or below standard in a library-learning environment, curriculum integration, resources, program management and facilities.

RISD's library serves all students in kindergarten through grade 12. It is staffed by a full-time certified librarian who also acts as the district's grant writer and its technology coordinator. The librarian said that the library's active collection contains 9,948 active materials.

## **FINDING**

RISD's library program ranks below standard according to the *School Library Standards* published by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission because the district provides limited access to its resources to students throughout the day. According to the district's students and survey comments, the library is often locked and unavailable for their use even when the librarian is there.

A full-time certified librarian, who also acts as the district's Technology coordinator, staffs the library. The librarian said she must often assist teachers and staff with computer problems and software applications, but the district lacks records that document computer and software repairs or document the amount of time the librarian spends performing those duties. The district also assigned the librarian the responsibility of writing grants during the 2002-03 school year. However, the librarian's job description does not include technology or grant writing in her duties. Administrators said that effective 2003-04, the librarian will no longer have grant writing responsibilities since RISD has contracted with Region 6 for this service.

Though 80 percent of teachers feel the library program is effective, students and parents rate the library's collection of reading material as out-of-date and said does not meet the needs of all reading levels.

A school library program is below standard, according to the *School Library Standards*, when it:

- provides minimal or limited access to professional staff and support staff;
- provides limited resources to support curriculum and student assignments and leaves some areas of the curriculum unsupported;
- has limited class or individual access to resources throughout the instructional day; and
- offers little or no access to the library or staff beyond the instructional day.

In addition, surveys and comments from students, teachers and parents revealed dissatisfaction with the RISD school library program as shown in **Exhibit 2-30**. Thirty percent of parents and 42.7 percent of students said the district does not have effective library service.

**Exhibit 2-30**  
**RISD Parent and Student Survey Results**  
**Library Program**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>
The district has effective special programs for the library service.	Teachers	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Parents	43.4%	26.4%	30.0%
	Students	52.3%	4.7%	42.7%

*Source: TSPR, Survey Results, 2002-03.*

The American Association of School Libraries (ALA) offers Internet resource guides on collection development and grant sources. Another Web site that compiles a list of federal, state and foundation grants targeted for schools is [www.schoolgrants.org](http://www.schoolgrants.org). This site allows the user to search by area of interest, type of grant or area. The Texas Library Connection, a free service from TEA, provides online resources equivalent to \$32,000 of printed materials.

**Recommendation 17:**

**Increase the school library program's availability to students to meet the state's Acceptable standards and seek grants to update the library collection.**

The library should be made more available to students for purposes of research and reading during the school day. Although the library's collection of books is above standard for a school district of RISD's size, students and parents rate the collection as out-dated and not relevant to student needs. The librarian should document the time spent away from library duties while performing duties as the technology coordinator to determine if there is a need to reassign those duties. The district should explore new ways to access future needed funds for improving the library program such as grant funds to ensure an up to date collection with a wide selection of items for all reading levels.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent instructs the librarian to keep track of the hours spent on technology coordination duties and determines whether or not those duties need to be assigned elsewhere.	September - November 2003
2.	The librarian establishes set hours during which the library will be open for student use.	September 2003
3.	The librarian meets with teachers and plans for how she can best provide resources to support curriculum and student assignments.	September 2003 and Ongoing
4.	The librarian seeks opportunities for cooperative planning with teachers to provide for the collection of teachers' specialized departmental materials.	November 2003 and Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### ***Guidance And Counseling***

In 1998, TEA published *A Model Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools*. The guide addresses achieving program balance by allocating resources to four components of developmental guidance and counseling:

- a guidance curriculum that addresses students' interests and career objectives to help them develop their full educational potential;
- a responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put his or her educational, career, personal, or social development at-risk;
- an individual planning system to guide students as they plan, monitor and manage their educational, career, personal and social development; and
- system support to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents and other community members to promote the educational, career, personal and social development of students.

The guide recommends that school counselors divide their time between these four components depending on the developmental and special needs of the students served. Each district or school will determine the amount of counselor time devoted to each component.

Allocations will vary, but TEA's suggested allocations are shown in **Exhibit 2-31**.

**Exhibit 2-31**  
**Recommended Percentage Distribution of**  
**Counselor Services by Level**

<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
Guidance Curriculum	35-45%	35-40%	15-25%
Responsive Services	30-40%	30-40%	25-35%
Individual Planning	5-10%	15-25%	25-35%
System Support	10-15%	10-15%	15-20%

*Source: TEA, A Model Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program for Texas Public Schools, 1998.*

State law also states that the primary responsibility of a school counselor is to counsel students to fully develop their academic, career, personal and social abilities. Counselors must:

- participate in planning, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive developmental guidance program to serve all students and to address the special needs of students who are at-risk of dropping out of school, becoming substance abusers, participating in gang activity or committing suicide; who are in need of modified instructional strategies; or who are gifted and talented, with an emphasis on identifying and serving gifted and talented students who are educationally disadvantaged;
- consult with student parents or guardians and make referrals as appropriate, in consultation with the parents or guardians;
- consult with school staff, parents and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success;
- coordinate people and resources in the school, home and community;
- interpret standardized test results and other assessment data with the assistance of school staff, to help students make educational career plans; and
- deliver classroom guidance activities or serve as a consultant to teachers, offering lessons based on the school's guidance curriculum.

In addition to these responsibilities, school counselors must advise students and parents of the importance of higher education and recommend strategies for preparing for college, academically and financially.



The American School Counselor Association recommends an ideal ratio of one counselor per 100 students and a maximum ratio of one counselor per 300 students. The Texas School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of one counselor per 350 students. The TEC Section 33.002 requires school districts with 500 or more enrolled elementary students to employ a certified counselor for each 500 students.

**FINDING**

RISD provides few opportunities to students and parents to explore college or post-graduation training options. The district's counselor works one day a week and focuses primarily on the needs of the elementary school students. The counselor works extra days at the end of the school year to compile and file all reports and records for the year and to assist high-school students with testing and scholarship information, but year-round services primarily benefit the elementary grades.

The superintendent said the limited counseling resulted from budget cutbacks for 2002-03. The superintendent offered the part-time opportunity to the counselor before the start of the 2002-03 school year. The counselor's job description states the primary purpose is to plan, implement and evaluate a comprehensive program of guidance including counseling services and provide a proactive, developmental guidance program for all students to maximize personal growth and development. The job description also states that services are to be provided to both the elementary and secondary schools.

Survey results regarding the effectiveness of the district's counseling efforts are shown in **Exhibit 2-32**.

**Exhibit 2-32  
RISD Teacher, Parent and Student Survey Results  
Guidance and Counseling Program**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>
The district has effective special programs for career counseling.	Teachers	33.3%	40.0%	26.6%
	Parents	5.6%	54.7%	39.5%
	Students	4.7%	23.8%	71.3%
The district has effective special programs in place for college counseling.	Teachers	39.9%	40.0%	20.0%
	Parents	9.4%	49.0%	39.5%
	Students	9.5%	19.0%	71.3%

Source: TSPR Survey Results, 2002-03.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

### **Recommendation 18:**

#### **Host a Parents Night meeting to explain financial aid rules and the Texas Grant Program for parents of students considering college.**

To better meet the needs of students pursuing college or vocational training after high school graduation, the counselor should design a brief questionnaire to assess the needs and desires of students and parents of students in the upper grade levels. The counselor should contact local universities, vocational schools and college admission offices to obtain degree plan and financial aid information to place in the counseling office or school library where it is readily available to students.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The counselor drafts a questionnaire and distributes to students and parents of students in grades 9 through 12 to assess the needs of parents and students regarding the college and career counseling.	September 2003
2.	The counselor assesses survey results and contacts colleges, local universities, trade and vocational schools to obtain admission and financial aid information for availability to all students.	October 2003
3.	The counselor hosts a biannual Parent Night meeting to explain financial aid and the Texas Grant Program to students and parents.	December 2003 and Ongoing

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 2

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

### *C. SAFETY AND SECURITY*

Safety and security of students, teachers and school district staff are important requirements for an environment conducive to teaching and learning. School districts must develop effective policies, procedures and programs to adequately address the security of students and district staff.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Account's Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) publication *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School* is based on numerous school performance reviews. TSPR has found that districts with the most effective security programs have a security plan that includes prevention, intervention and enforcement strategies.

Chapter 37 of the TEC provides the legal authority for school districts to impose student discipline. The code requires each district to develop a Code of Conduct detailing acceptable and unacceptable behavior, consequences and fair and equal treatment. School districts report school discipline actions using the PEIMS.

The RISD Student Handbook/Code of Conduct addresses its expectations for student conduct and its rules of behavior. The student code of conduct prohibits certain behaviors and establishes standards of acceptable behavior, both on and off school grounds, and consequences for violation of the standards.

RISD's student discipline policy FO (LOCAL) issued in October 1998 is contained in the district's Student Handbook/Code of Conduct. General guidelines in the policy state that discipline will be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and maintain essential order and discipline; and that students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. Factors to consider include:

- seriousness of the offense;
- student's age;
- frequency of misconduct;
- student's attitude;
- potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment;
- requirements of Chapter 37 of the Education Code; and
- Student Code of Conduct adopted by the board.

### **FINDING**

The district addresses student discipline management in its Student Handbook/Code of Conduct, but it has no system in place for review and analysis of discipline problems and corrective actions. The lack of a system to review discipline and associated consequences has resulted in a perception that discipline actions are unfair and inconsistent. In TSPR surveys, teachers, parents and students all said fair and equitable discipline measures are not administered among all students.

Survey results revealed 39.9 percent of teachers, 33.9 percent of parents, and 57.0 percent of students disagree or strongly disagree with the survey statement "Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct". Comments received from survey instruments and the public forum hosted in the school district revealed a general dissatisfaction with the district's discipline management practices as shown in **Exhibit 2-33**.

**Exhibit 2-33**  
**Survey and Public Forum Comments**  
**RISD Discipline Management**

Group	Statements
Public Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student discipline is a huge problem. One student should have been placed in an alternative education program. He was very violent. I inquired as to why he was here after several serious violations. The answer I received was, "We cannot afford it." Endanger everyone else. If something would have happened, what would the cost be? What was the cost to the feelings of the teachers and students who had to put up with his behavior? Finally, he was arrested at school by the local law enforcement agency.</li> <li>• Student discipline policies need to be reviewed. <u>Zero Tolerance</u> should still be enforced. There needs to be a solution to students who continually report the bad behavior.</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachers need to stop favoritism of students.</li> <li>• Teachers are allowed to lower themselves to a child's level by saying demeaning things to the students. Teachers and staff get in a person's personal space, which can problems such as fear, aggressive behavior and other problems. Staff and teachers need to keep hands off students.</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers shouldn't allow the students to walk all over them and some of them do. Students aren't all treated fairly and big plans are never set in stone.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel that every teacher here at RHS does not treat all students equally in regards to discipline. Teachers should treat all students the same way.</li> <li>• Very few of them (teachers) are concerned for their students. They choose a few favorite students and all others are on their own. Students and teachers are constantly getting into petty arguments where students lose because the teacher disciplines the students they don't like and no one else. They use their authority with juvenile spite to accomplish their own purpose.</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The discipline for fighting in school is not being enforced.</li> <li>• There is very little discipline in the classrooms and NONE in the cafeteria.</li> </ul>

Source: TSPR Survey Results and Public Forum.

The RISD Student Handbook/Code of Conduct accurately ties to the student discipline policy. Students and parents must acknowledge receipt and understanding of the student code of conduct each year by signing and returning a form to the central administrative office. The RISD Code of Conduct details expectations for student behavior, prohibited conduct, possible consequences for unacceptable behavior and the appeal process. The code of conduct allows flexibility in disciplinary consequences based on factors such as the seriousness of the offense, the student's age, the frequency of misconduct, the student's attitude and the potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment. **Exhibit 2-34** shows the four categories of misconduct, examples of offenses within each category and disciplinary options. Section 21.451 of the TEC mandates training in student discipline for district staff in such roles.

**Exhibit 2-34**  
**RISD Student Handbook/Code of Conduct**  
**Misconduct Offenses and Disciplinary Options by Category**

Category	Offenses	Disciplinary Options
I Teacher Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• profanity/unacceptable language;</li> <li>• textbooks not covered;</li> <li>• missing/skipping teacher assigned detention;</li> <li>• horseplay;</li> <li>• disruptive behavior considered minor;</li> <li>• not doing required work in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal corrections</li> <li>• Conference with student</li> <li>• Change seat arrangement</li> <li>• Telephone/note to parent</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class/not on task;</li> <li>• no supplies in class;</li> <li>• possession of prohibited articles (toys, tapes, earphones, etc.);</li> <li>• discourteous/rude;</li> <li>• name calling that is offensive to others in class;</li> <li>• disobeying class rules;</li> <li>• cheating/plagiarism;</li> <li>• public display of affection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent conferences</li> <li>• Withdrawal of privileges</li> <li>• Time Out in classroom</li> <li>• Detention after school</li> <li>• Behavioral contracts</li> <li>• Counselor referral</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">II Administrator Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extreme disruptive behavior;</li> <li>• skipping class;</li> <li>• leaving school grounds without permission;</li> <li>• throwing objects that could cause harm;</li> <li>• inappropriate/objectionable literature or written material;</li> <li>• selling anything without approval;</li> <li>• matches;</li> <li>• being in an unauthorized area of the building or campus;</li> <li>• agitating/instigating a fight;</li> <li>• profanity directed at another student or district employee;</li> <li>• serious disobedience that undermines teacher authority;</li> <li>• truancy;</li> <li>• extortion/threats;</li> <li>• spitting in building or on school grounds;</li> <li>• continuation of category I behaviors;</li> <li>• inappropriate restroom behaviors;</li> <li>• misbehavior at school-sponsored activity;</li> <li>• unintentional harm on a teacher or other individual;</li> <li>• possession or use of tobacco products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warning</li> <li>• Telephone/note to parent</li> <li>• Teacher/parent conference</li> <li>• Detention</li> <li>• Suspension (3 days)</li> <li>• Corporal punishment</li> <li>• Behavioral contracts</li> <li>• Withdrawal of privileges</li> <li>• Restitution of damages</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Placement in an alternative education program</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• violations of law;</li> <li>• interference with the movement of people in an exit, entrance, or hallway;</li> <li>• interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building;</li> <li>• use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly;</li> <li>• use force, threats, or violence to cause disruption during an assembly;</li> <li>• interfere with the movement of people at an exit or entrance to district property;</li> <li>• use force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator;</li> <li>• disrupt classes while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property;</li> <li>• interfere with the transportation of students in district vehicles;</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;">III Suspension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• theft;</li> <li>• vandalism;</li> <li>• bomb threats;</li> <li>• incorrigible conduct;</li> <li>• fireworks (use/possession);</li> <li>• false fire alarm;</li> <li>• physical fighting;</li> <li>• persistent violations in category I and II;</li> <li>• joining an unauthorized organization.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;">IV Expulsion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses, exhibits, or possess a firearm, illegal knife, club, or weapon as defined or listed in section 46 of the state Penal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expulsion</li> </ul>

	<p>Code;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of aggravated assault, aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping under state Penal Code.</li> </ul>	
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Source: RISD Student Handbook/Code of Conduct 2002-03.

San Angelo ISD has developed a student code of conduct reference chart to help ensure discipline is administered fairly and consistently and that students and parents understand the consequences of misbehavior. To respond to student and parental comments that discipline was not consistently administered throughout the district, the director of Pupil Services and several school principals developed the a matrix that is designed to visually depict the consequences of nearly 100 inappropriate behaviors. The matrix lists the consequences across the top of the chart and the violations alphabetically down the left side as shown in **Exhibit 2-35**. Principals have a copy of the chart in their offices and go over it with students and parents when an infraction has occurred. Each violation refers to the page number in the code of conduct where the violation and punishment are described and, in some cases, specific statutes and penal codes are also designated. All principals have been trained in using the chart.

**Exhibit 2-35**  
**Excerpts of Student Code of Conduct**  
**Reference Chart**

<b>VIOLATIONS</b>	<b>Detention</b>	<b>OCS</b>	<b>SAC</b>	<b>CLC</b>	<b>Expulsion</b>	<b>ACES</b>	<b>Page #</b>	<b>Statute</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Arson					X	X	19	37.007	Penal Code 20.02
Blackmail				X			15		
Bus Violations	X						9		
Cheating	X						8		
Criminal mischief				X				37.007	Graffiti
Firearms					X	X	19	37.007	



Indecent Exposure					X	X	14	37.006	Felony: Penal Code 21.08
Stealing; theft			X				11		
Vandalism			X				11		Includes employee property

*Source: SAISD director of Pupil Services, April 2001. Copyrighted by SAISD.*

To be effective, many school districts consistently apply discipline according to defined rules in their code of conduct. Although administrators can exercise discretion to ensure consequences are appropriate to the circumstances, there should not be wide disparities between consequences for similar fact situations.

#### **Recommendation 19:**

#### **Establish a procedure for review and analysis of discipline problems and administered consequences.**

A quarterly review of discipline problems and subsequent consequences will help ensure consistency in discipline management across the district.

To reinforce the importance of consistently administering discipline actions among students throughout the district, the superintendent should provide the school board with a quarterly report detailing discipline violations and outcomes.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent establishes a procedure for a quarterly review of discipline problems and associated consequences and submits to board for review and approval.	November 2003
2.	The school board approves the procedure.	December 2003
3.	The superintendent informs and teachers and staff of the new procedure and it is implemented.	January 2004
4.	The superintendent reviews discipline actions for the quarter and submits a report to the board.	March 2004 and Ongoing
5.	The superintendent, with input from teachers and staff, makes	March 2004

adjustments to the Student Code of Conduct based on the review of disciplinary actions, as needed.	and Ongoing
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**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

RISD has no board-approved guidelines for establishing a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) to educate students with severe discipline management problems.

The district had no need for a DAEP in 2003-03, but did require the use of a DAEP in 2000-01 and in 2001-02. In 2001-02, the district had three incidences of aggravated assault against a non-employee. To deal with serious violations, a classroom has been set up as a DAEP and a certified substitute teacher hired when needed. This is the current undocumented plan the district intends to use for future DAEP requirements. However, the plan is based purely on past experience with no board-approved policy or written guidelines for establishing a DAEP.

A board-approved policy helps ensure that districts meet both the safety and educational needs of all students. A DAEP provides an alternative education program designed to educate students with severe discipline problems in an environment away from the other students in the district. An effective DAEP provides for student's behavioral needs and educational needs and supports re-entry into the regular classroom.

**Exhibit 2-36** shows the type and number of disciplinary incidents, which occurred at RISD from 1999-2000 to 2001-02, as reported through the PEIMS.

**Exhibit 2-36  
RISD Disciplinary Incidents  
1999-2000 through 2001-02**

Incident	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Disruptive behavior	3	11	7
Possessed, purchased, used or accepted a cigarette or tobacco product	0	0	0
Conduct punishable as a felony	0	0	0

Assault or terroristic threat	0	0	0
Possessed, sold or used marijuana or other controlled substance	0	0	0
Possessed, sold, used or was under the influence of an alcoholic beverage	0	0	0
Public lewdness/indecent exposure	0	0	0
Retaliation against school employee	0	0	0
Conduct occurring off campus while student is not in attendance at school related activity for felony offenses in title 5	0	0	0
Conduct occurring off campus while student is not in attendance at school related activity for felony offenses not in title 5	0	0	0
Used, exhibited or possessed a illegal knife	0	0	0
Used/possessed prohibited weapon	0	0	0
Serious or persistent misconduct violating the student code of conduct while placed in alternative education program	0	0	0
Violation of student code of conduct not included in codes 33 and 34	0	0	0
Criminal mischief	0	0	0
Other-student Code of Conduct	0	0	0
Terroristic threat	0	0	0
Assault against a school district employee or volunteer	0	0	0
Assault against someone other than a school district employee or volunteer	0	0	0
Aggravated assault against employee/volunteer	0	0	0
Aggravated assault against a non employee/volunteer	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1999-2000 through 2001-02.

Many districts unable to fund or house DAEP students enter into partnerships with other districts to provide needed services for this group of students. Walnut Springs ISD participates in an eight-district

disciplinary alternative education program, which provides excellent services to the students assigned to the program at an affordable cost to the participating districts.

**Recommendation 20:**

**Develop and implement a board-approved Disciplinary Alternative Education Program policy.**

The school board should develop and adopt policy regarding the establishment of a DAEP and include the policy in a revised edition of the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct for distribution to all students and staff.

The district should contact Region 6 to explore options for serving students with severe disciplinary problems given to the district's size, wealth and existing facilities.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent contacts Region 6 for assistance in developing a policy regarding establishment of a DAEP.	January 2004
2.	The superintendent develops the policy and presents to the board for review and approval.	February 2004 - March 2004
3.	The board approves the new DAEP policy and the superintendent establishes associated procedures.	April 2004
4.	The superintendent revises the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct based on changes to board policy.	May 2004
5.	The district distributes revised Student Handbook/Code of Conduct to all students and staff.	August 2004

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

RISD's attendance rates (95.2 percent) rank below the peer district (96.2 percent) and state (95.5 percent) averages. Attendance rates for RISD and the peer districts are compared below with the Region 6 and state averages for 2000-01 (most current data available). **Exhibit 2-37** shows that RISD ranked lowest in student attendance among its peer districts with an attendance rate for all students of 95.2 percent compared to 95.5 percent

for the state and Region 6 averages. RISD is a 1 percent, or almost two students, below the peer district average. Student attendance directly affects state revenues provided to districts.

**Exhibit 2-37**  
**Percent of Attendance**  
**RISD, Peer Districts, Region 6 and the State**  
**2000-01**

District	Attendance Rate				
	African American	Hispanic	Anglo	Economically Disadvantaged	All Students
Calvert	96.2%	93.7%	93.5%	96.0%	95.9%
North Zulch	*	95.1%	95.7%	95.7%	95.7%
Aquilla	*	98.6%	97.0%	97.4%	97.2%
Devers	96.6%	97.3%	95.3%	96.3%	96.0%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>95.0%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>
<b>Peer District Average</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>95.5%</b>	<b>95.0%</b>	<b>95.5%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>95.3%</b>	<b>95.5%</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.*  
*\*Not reported due to privacy reasons.*

The district has an attendance clerk who receives daily attendance from classroom teachers. However, attendance records are not updated daily and sometimes not until immediately before report cards are due. The district sends letters of excessive absenteeism to parents, but there is no consistency on how many absences occur before a letter is sent. Parent survey responses reported a student could be absent four to nine days before the district contacts a parent. The review team's inspection of letters sent out to parents show a span of four to 19 days of absences prior to a letter being sent to parents.

Based on 2003-04 state aid projections, increasing the level of student attendance would generate additional revenue for the district at a rate of \$3,704 per student annually. Studies have also shown a decline in campus disciplinary incidents and local community juvenile incidents as truancy rates decrease and attendance rates increase.

TEC, section 25.094, states an individual commits an offense if a student fails to attend 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period. Section 25.095, subsection (a), states a school district shall notify a student's parent in writing if, in a six-month period, the student has been absent without an excuse five times for any part of the day. The written notice must state that if the student is absent without an excuse for 10 or more days or parts of a day in a six-month period, the student and student's parents are subject to prosecution.

In San Perlita ISD, the school nurse makes home visits for every student that has more than two consecutive absences in an effort that has served both to inform community members of health services and increase attendance rates.

**Recommendation 21:**

**Develop a district truancy plan to increase attendance rates.**

The attendance clerk should update attendance records on a daily basis. The district should develop an aggressive plan to promptly contact parents of absent students and conduct outreach to those students with excessive absenteeism. District teachers should develop incentives for classrooms or grade levels experiencing perfect attendance. Daily attendance is directly tied to a district's share of state funding, so efforts to improve student attendance will benefit the district, as a whole.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent and district staff develop a plan to reduce student truancy.	October 2003
2.	The superintendent submits the plan to the board for approval.	November 2003
3.	The superintendent informs the teachers, staff and parents of the new plan.	December 2003
4.	The superintendent implements the plan.	January 2004
5.	The superintendent reviews the success of the plan and makes adjustments as necessary.	April 2004 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This fiscal impact assumes an increase in the district's average daily attendance (ADA) to the peer district average of 96.2 percent, which is a 1 percent increase overall and exceeds the Region 6 and state average. This

would result in an additional two students, based on 2002-03 enrollment of 178 students (1 percent of 178 = 1.78 students and is rounded up to 2 to reflect two students). This would generate an additional \$7,408 in state funding each year (2 students at \$3,704). Savings are calculated with additional income first recognized in 2004-05 to account for the time necessary to develop and implement the plan and procedures for increasing student attendance levels.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Develop a district truancy plan to increase attendance rates.	\$0	\$7,408	\$7,408	\$7,408	\$7,408

## **FINDING**

RISD does not have a comprehensive districtwide security plan. For example, at the time of the review team's onsite visit, the district's agriculture buildings and gymnasium lacked fire alarms. The district's agriculture buildings are used for activities such as welding and maintenance and repair of small garden equipment with gasoline engines. These facilities also store combustible items such as paint and chemicals posing a serious fire potential.

In addition, telephones located in the agriculture buildings and gymnasium could not be used to place outside calls such as emergency 911. Classrooms located in these facilities had no communication capabilities other than to the main office. Administrators said that the district install a new phone system in May 2003.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Account's Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) publication *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School* is based on the results of its numerous school performance reviews. TSPR has found that districts with the most effective security programs have a security plan that includes prevention, intervention and enforcement strategies. An effective program includes the steps shown in **Exhibit 2-38**.

**Exhibit 2-38**  
**Keeping Texas Children Safe in School**  
**January 2000**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Steps to be Taken</b>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know your goals and objectives: where your district is going and what you want to accomplish.</li> <li>• Establish clear expectations for students, parents, teachers and administrators.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address warning signs before they turn into trouble.</li> </ul>
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for trouble before it finds you.</li> <li>• Recognize trouble when you see it.</li> <li>• Have individuals in the right place and at the right time to intervene.</li> <li>• Have a plan of action appropriate for the occasion and practice it.</li> </ul>
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave no room for double standards.</li> <li>• Ensure that discipline management extends inside and outside the classroom.</li> <li>• Alternative programs are not just a matter of compliance with the law; they are many student's last chance at success.</li> </ul>

Source: TSPR, *Keeping Texas Children Safe in Schools*, January 2000.

**Recommendation 22:**

**Develop a comprehensive security plan that includes periodic inspections of facilities.**

The superintendent should form a committee including of school staff, community members and local law enforcement to develop a comprehensive security plan. The district should incorporate this plan into the district or campus improvement plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent forms a committee including district staff, community members and law enforcement representatives to develop a comprehensive security plan.	October 2003
2.	The committee conducts an assessment of the district's safety and security needs.	November 2003
3.	The committee develops a security plan based on the needs assessment.	December 2003 - January 2004
4.	The committee submits the plan to the superintendent for review.	February 2004
5.	The superintendent submits the plan to the board for review and approval.	March 2004
6.	The superintendent implements the plan.	May 2004



		and Ongoing
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**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 3

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the financial management of Richards Independent School District (RISD) in the following sections:

- A. Financial Management
- B. Asset and Risk Management
- C. Purchasing and Contracts Management

Effective financial management helps a school district make sound financial decisions, prepare adequate budgets and ensure that it gets all the revenue that is available from local, state and federal resources. Financial management in school districts requires effective planning, budgeting and ongoing evaluation of the use of district resources. Good financial management includes timely, accurate and comprehensive financial reports; adequate internal controls; current technology; skilled personnel; and consistent, unbiased external audits. Financially sound school districts maximize limited resources and plan for future needs.

School districts must accurately account for the use of resources to taxpayers, the state and the federal government. The accounting process must have safeguards to reduce the risk of loss of assets and internal control procedures to ensure appropriate resource use. Managing school district resources well is crucial to providing a free and appropriate education for all students.

Asset management involves the management of the district's cash resources and physical assets in a cost-effective and efficient manner. This includes accounting for and safeguarding these elements against theft and obsolescence. Effective cash management collects district funds in a timely manner and invests them in instruments with maximum earning potential. Fixed asset management keeps track of district property and provides safeguards against theft and obsolescence.

Purchasing provides for the identification and purchase of supplies, equipment and services needed by the district. Purchasing must ensure that the goods and services obtained by the district meet the specifications of the users, at the lowest possible cost and within state laws and regulations. School districts may enter into cooperative purchasing agreements with other governmental entities to consolidate buying power and attain the lowest possible price.

# Chapter 3

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### *A. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (PART 1)*

Texas public school district financial management requirements include those established by federal and state laws, rules and regulations; internal policies and procedures; generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the guidelines of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

By law, Texas school districts must operate in accordance with the state constitution. The Texas Education Code (TEC) lists specific requirements that school districts must comply with and authorizes the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish standards for all school districts. The TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG) outlines accounting and reporting requirements for Texas school districts.

In 2001-01, RISD expended an overpayment of state assistance, and the district continues to struggle with financial recovery as a result. The overpayment occurred because of a substantial increase in RISD property values because of oil and gas properties in 1999-2000 that increased local tax revenues and reduced state assistance to the district the following year, in accordance with the state funding formula for school districts.

Funding for Texas public education is allocated through a system of statutory formulas known as the Foundation School Program (FSP). The FSP provides equal access to similar revenue per student at a similar tax effort, considering all state and local tax revenues of districts, after acknowledging all legitimate student and district cost differences. To compensate for variations in local property wealth among school districts and to equalize overall school funding, a district with high property wealth will receive less assistance from the state because it earns more local revenue from property taxes. RISD total property values increased by \$29,306,053 from 1997-98 to 1999-2000 due to an increase in oil and gas property values. TEA also includes funding equalization adjustments based upon the size of a district. Because RISD is classified as a small district, the number of students in average daily attendance (ADA) is adjusted or weighted to obtain a weighted average daily attendance (WADA) figure for use in the state's funding calculations.

**Exhibit 3-1** shows the property value for each pupil in RISD compared to the state for 2001-02 using the adjusted WADA figures.

**Exhibit 3-1**  
**RISD Property Value for Each Pupil**  
**2001-02**

<b>Wealthy District</b>	<b>RISD</b>	<b>State</b>
\$305,000	\$215,520	\$234,607

*Source: TEA, Financial Accountability Division.*

Because local taxes are levied against current values and state funding formulas are a year behind, there can be differences in state funding property values and those used for tax levying. This disparity is favorable for districts whose values are on the increase. But where values are decreasing, the delay could cause school districts to increase tax rates just to cover district funding requirements.

RISD's revenues from local taxes increased by slightly more than 89.1 percent from 1997-98 to 2001-02, while revenues from state programs decreased by more than 50 percent. **Exhibit 3-2** shows RISD's actual general fund revenues for 1997-98 through 2000-01 and budgeted revenues for 2001-02 through 2002-03.

**Exhibit 3-2**  
**RISD Actual and Budgeted General Fund Revenues**  
**1997-98 through 2002-03**

<b>Revenue Source</b>	<b>Actual Revenues 1997-98</b>	<b>Actual Revenues 1998-99</b>	<b>Actual Revenues 1999-2000</b>	<b>Actual Revenues 2000-01</b>	<b>Actual Revenues 2001-02</b>	<b>Budgeted Revenues 2002-03</b>	<b>Percent Increase/ (Decrease) 1997-98 through 2002-03</b>
Local tax	\$417,962	\$551,208	\$739,328	\$734,069	\$733,943	\$790,222	89.1%
Other local and intermediate	\$24,699	\$22,450	\$47,067	\$28,270	\$18,883	\$13,500	(45.3%)
State programs	\$627,193	\$609,122	\$635,306	\$293,619	\$334,369	\$311,216	(50.4%)
Federal programs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A
Total revenue	\$1,069,854	\$1,182,780	\$1,421,701	\$1,087,145	\$1,213,406	\$1,114,938	4.2%

General fund revenues per student	\$6,645	\$7,631	\$8,218	\$6,108	\$7,537	\$6,264	(5.7%)
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Source: TEA, Public Education Information System (PEIMS), 1997-98 through 2001-02; RISD, Business Office, 2002-03.

**Exhibit 3-3** shows RISD property values from 1997-98 through 2001-02. From 1997-98 to 1999-2000, oil and gas property values increased by \$24,497,539, with a direct impact on the amount of local tax RISD earned.

**Exhibit 3-3  
RISD Property Values  
1997-98 through 2001-02**

Category	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	Percent Change 1998 through 2002
Business	\$7,177,541	\$7,669,090	\$8,645,082	\$9,854,946	\$9,258,583	29.0%
Residential	\$9,832,104	\$10,570,520	\$10,844,770	\$11,193,205	\$11,706,340	19.1%
Land	\$21,148,367	\$22,744,010	\$24,415,077	\$24,257,541	\$25,611,220	21.1%
Oil and Gas	\$417,190	\$6,437,620	\$24,914,729	\$16,878,960	\$14,215,090	330.7%
Other	\$600,580	\$727,360	\$607,250	\$1,038,080	\$1,104,880	84.0%
<b>Total (after exemptions)</b>	<b>\$32,819,751</b>	<b>\$40,982,496</b>	<b>\$62,125,804</b>	<b>\$55,387,499</b>	<b>\$53,823,955</b>	<b>64.0%</b>

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

Because state assistance is provided to "equalize" available funds among wealthy and poor districts, RISD's 2000-01 state aid was reduced, based on its property values and local tax revenue from 1999-2000. In 2000-01, RISD received \$643,163 from the state, an overpayment of \$349,544. However, the former superintendent and the school board did not realize that this was an overpayment and used those funds on school programs. The state eventually notified RISD about the overpayment and arranged repayment of the \$349,544.

In October 2001, the RISD superintendent requested a delay from TEA in making the repayment. TEA agreed to accept payment from RISD in two equal amounts in 2001-02 and 2002-03, contingent on the district's submission of the following four items to TEA:

- the projected cash flow statement for 2001-02;
- the projected fund balance schedule for 2002-03 through 2004-05 with the previous four years included;
- a board-approved cost reduction plan identifying areas of reduction and the actual dollar amounts reduced; and
- a statement of tax effort, assuming that RISD will tax up to the rollback level for at least 2002-03 through 2004-05

RISD submitted all documents to TEA as required in November 2001. A cost reduction plan, approved by the Board of Trustees on November 15, 2001, was submitted to TEA that projected savings for 2001-02 and 2002-03. Reductions included staff and payroll actions, salary freezes, and eliminating stipends, teacher's general supplies, purchase of library books, staff development costs, maintenance and repairs on buses and facilities, other miscellaneous operating expenses and financing the purchase of new buses with payments beginning in 2002-03. In addition to the cost reduction plan, RISD submitted a statement of tax effort signed by the board president and secretary, which stated the board's commitment to adopting either the rollback rate or \$1.50 for 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05. **Exhibit 3-4** summarizes the RISD cost reduction plan.

**Exhibit 3-4**  
**Summary of Cost Reduction Plan and Statement**  
**Approved by Board of Trustees, November 2001**

Description of Savings	Amount of Savings 2001-02	Amount of Savings 2002-03
Staff and payroll reductions	\$50,751	\$96,881
Other expenditure reductions	\$87,364	\$87,518
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$138,115</b>	<b>\$184,399</b>

*Source: RISD, Cost Reduction Plan and Statement of Tax Effort, November 2001.*

After reviewing RISD's 2000-01 financial report for the year ended August 31, 2001, TEA sent a letter, dated February 11, 2002, to the RISD superintendent that identified deficiencies that required the district's immediate action. Two of those deficiencies are quoted below:

- "The Balance Sheet discloses a fund deficit of \$73,607 in the General Fund as of August 31, 2001. Funds of a current year may not be used to pay the debts of a preceding year, thus making end-of-year fund deficits unlawful. Although this is not an illegal deficit in that the district has deferred revenues attributable to delinquent property taxes totaling \$216,613 that is still larger than the deficit, this should be of serious concern to all parties involved. We note that the district has increased the tax rate, and has inserted a copy of the next budget indicating proposed cuts in expenditures for the next fiscal year. Please send us a statement indicating what corrective actions are being taken to eliminate this deficit, including the latest projected General Fund Balance as of August 31, 2002."
- "The auditor indicates in the overall opinion, although unqualified, that there is a possible question about whether the district can continue as a going concern over the long run. Note Q indicates that the district has taken steps to repay an over allocation of \$349,544 over two years back to the state and is taking other measures to alleviate cash flow difficulties. The next independent auditor should review any new developments or ongoing concerns in determining the scope of the 2001-02 audit."

In December 2002, TEA's Division of School Financial Audits conducted an on-site visit to RISD to review its progress toward eliminating the fiscal deficit reported in fiscal year 2001 and to review RISD's fiscal management activities. On December 16, 2002, TEA released its findings and recommendations, including a request for written response within 20 business days. TEA's findings and recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 3-5**.

**Exhibit 3-5**  
**TEA Findings and Recommendations**  
**Special Financial Audit**  
**December 2002**

<b>Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenditures in excess of budget appropriations and deficit fund balance in the General Fund.</li> <li>• Failure to book a tax anticipation note, causing the under-reporting of "other sources."</li> <li>• Insufficient oversight over the district's cash receipts.</li> <li>• Coding of expenditures in the wrong fiscal year for goods received in August but not billed and paid until September.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare an undated deficit reduction plan in light of</li> </ul>

	<p>the forecasted increase in the district's deficit as of August 31, 2002. In addition, the district should consider preparing a multi-year budget forecast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the budget is amended prior to expending funds that would exceed the appropriation in a functional area.</li> <li>• Review internal control procedures over cash receipts to ensure there is adequate oversight.</li> <li>• Ensure that expenditures are recorded in the fiscal year in which the goods are received.</li> <li>• Establish a written procedures manual fully documenting the procedures utilized for various accounting functions.</li> </ul>
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*Source: TEA, letter to RISD superintendent, December 16, 2002.*

RISD responded to TEA's request on April 22, 2003. In addition to the December 2002 TEA financial review, the TEA auditor estimated that, before any adjustments were made by the external auditor, RISD would have a general fund deficit of \$163,568 as of August 31, 2002. This estimate is confirmed by the external auditor's financial report for the year ended August 31, 2002. Despite the district's cost reduction efforts, its expenditures were \$92,407 more than income generated in taxes and other revenues. As a result, the RISD general fund balance at the end of fiscal 2002 was at a deficit of \$154,552.

In the external auditor's notes to the fiscal 2002 financial statements, violations of finance-related legal and contractual provisions were reported, including:

- The district did not expend 85 percent of state block grants for Compensatory Education and Gifted and Talented programs;
- The district did not prepare campus improvement plans (CIPs) for fiscal year 2001-02; and
- The Food Service fund exceeded budgeted expenditures by \$3,247 for fiscal year 2001-02.

Under the audit section regarding commitments and contingencies, the external auditor also reported uncertainty about the district's ability to continue as an on-going concern contingent upon success of its cost reduction plan, increased tax rates and ability to implement its cost savings plan.

On April 22, 2003, RISD submitted a formal response to TEA, addressing the preliminary report. The financial information RISD included



information on the district's projected 2003-04 budget, reflects an increase in local taxes resulting from a higher M&O tax rate and a projected increase in RISD's general fund balance for the year ending August 31, 2004. The letter stated that RISD was drafting a procedures manual to fully document procedures used for the accounting functions mentioned in TEA recommendations. No updated cost reduction plan was provided as requested by TEA.

In addition to continued financial stress, RISD could face sanctions for substandard achievement as determined by the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (School FIRST). School FIRST was established by TEA in compliance with the mandate of the 77th Legislature's Senate Bill 218, which requires districts to implement a financial accountability system. In 2002-03, the School FIRST rating system will issue preliminary and final papers to each district and its regional educational service center. When the rating system is fully implemented in 2003-04, each Board of Trustees will publish an annual report that describes the financial management performance of the district.

School FIRST seeks to improve school district financial management. The rating system is designed to assess school financial management and measure the extent to which funds are directly used for instruction. When the system is in place, school district ratings will be publicly available.

Ratings are based on numerical scores expressed as the number of "No" answers and on 21 other indicators. Answering "no" to as few as one or two of the 21 questions could cause a district receive a low rating. The ratings and scores are shown in **Exhibit 3-6**.

**Exhibit 3-6  
School FIRST  
Rating Criteria**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Score (Number of "No" Answers )</b>
Superior Achievement	0-2
Above Standard Achievement	3-4
Standard Achievement	5-6
Substandard Achievement	7 points, OR "No" to one of the five critical criteria indicators
Suspended - Data Quality	Serious data quality issues

*Source: TEA, School FIRST.*

Failure to meet criteria for one of three critical indicators, or both of two additional criteria, will result in a "Substandard Achievement" rating. **Exhibit 3-7** details the five indicators.

**Exhibit 3-7  
School FIRST  
Critical Criteria Indicators**

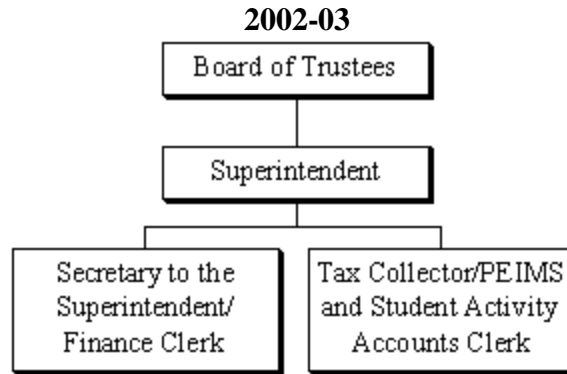
Criteria Number	Criteria Description	Result of a "No" answer
1	Was total fund balance less reserved fund balance greater than zero in the general fund?	Automatic Substandard Rating
2	Were there NO disclosures in the annual financial report and/or other sources of information concerning default on bonded indebtedness obligations?	Automatic Substandard Rating
3	Was the annual financial report filed within one month after the deadline depending on the district's fiscal year end?	Automatic Substandard Rating
4	Was there an unqualified opinion in the annual financial report?	4 AND 5 Automatic Substandard Rating
5	Did the annual financial report NOT disclose any instance(s) of material weakness in internal controls?	4 AND 5 Automatic Substandard Rating

*Source: TEA, School FIRST.*

Districts that earn a Substandard Achievement rating will be sanctioned, with additional sanctions for data quality issues. Sanctions could result in assignment of a TEA financial monitor or master, or an accreditation investigation.

**Exhibit 3-8** shows the district's organizational structure for the business office.

**Exhibit 3-8  
RISD Business Office Organization**



Source: RISD, business office.

Hired in July 2002, the new RISD superintendent also acts as the district business manager and investment officer. The superintendent is supported by a secretary, who is also the finance clerk, and a PEIMS coordinator who collects RISD taxes and accounts for the activity funds. The business office staff are responsible for financial reporting, accounting, payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, tax collection, investing and fixed assets management.

**Exhibit 3-9** shows 2002-03 budgeted financial data. RISD budgeted a 2002-03 surplus of \$22,993.

**Exhibit 3-9**  
**RISD Budgeted Financial Data - All Funds**  
**2002-03**

Revenue/ Expenditure	Budgeted Revenues	Budgeted Expenditures
Local Tax	\$790,222	-
Other Local and Intermediate	\$28,700	-
State programs	\$313,676	-
Federal programs	\$37,500	-
Total Revenue	\$1,170,098	-
Revenues per Student	\$6,574	-
Non-Operating Expenditures	-	\$44,964
Operating Expenditures	-	\$1,102,141
Total Expenditures	-	\$1,147,105
Expenditures per Student	-	\$6,444

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

RISD's budgeted expenditures per student for 2002-03 decreased by 25.8 percent from actual expenditures in 1999-2000, as shown in **Exhibit 3-10**.

**Exhibit 3-10**  
**Actual and Budgeted Expenditures per Student - All Funds**  
**RISD, Peer Districts and State**  
**1999-2000 through 2002-03**

<b>District</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures 1999-2000</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures 2000-01</b>	<b>Budgeted Expenditures 2001-02</b>	<b>Budgeted Expenditures 2002-03</b>	<b>Percent Increase/ (Decrease) from 1999-2000 through 2002-03</b>
North Zulch	\$7,898	\$8,076	\$7,646	\$7,354	(6.9%)
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$8,680</b>	<b>\$11,180</b>	<b>\$8,696</b>	<b>\$6,444</b>	<b>(25.8%)</b>
Devers	\$11,169	\$10,600	\$10,946	\$11,974	(7.2%)
Aquilla	\$7,236	\$8,833	\$10,841	\$8,240	(13.9%)
Calvert	\$8,546	\$10,688	\$9,806	\$8,677	1.5%
<b>State</b>	<b>\$7,928</b>	<b>\$8,245</b>	<b>\$8,643</b>	<b>\$7,088</b>	<b>(10.6%)</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1999-2000 through 2002-03.

**Exhibit 3-11** summarizes RISD budgeted expenditures by function, compared to the state average budgeted for 2002-03. RISD spent 51.5 percent of its total 2002-03 budgeted operating expenditures on instruction, which was higher than the state budgeted average of 50.8 percent.

**Exhibit 3-11**  
**RISD Budgeted Expenditures by Function**  
**As a Percentage of Total Expenditures**  
**2002-03**

<b>Function(Code)</b>	<b>RISD Budgeted Expenditures</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>State Budgeted Expenditures</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Instruction (11,95)	\$591,137	51.5%	\$15,258,107,372	50.8%

Instructional Related Services (12,13)	\$45,208	3.9%	\$815,176,913	2.7%
Instructional Leadership (21)	\$0	0.0%	\$360,073,948	1.2%
School Leadership (23)	\$23,592	2.1%	\$1,588,708,640	5.3%
Support Services Student (31,32,33)	\$11,729	1.0%	\$1,204,538,130	4.0%
Student Transportation (34)	\$35,295	3.1%	\$788,729,993	2.6%
Food Services (35)	\$65,160	5.7%	\$1,470,996,886	4.9%
Cocurricular/Extracurricular Activities (36)	\$17,138	1.5%	\$682,584,402	2.3%
Central Administration (41,92)	\$182,398	15.9%	\$1,090,220,713	3.6%
Plant Maintenance and Operations (51)	\$130,484	11.4%	\$2,995,707,896	10.0%
Security & Monitoring Services (52)	\$0	0.0%	\$181,806,687	0.6%
Data Processing Services (53)	\$0	0.0%	\$348,481,432	1.2%
Other*	\$44,964	3.9%	\$3,269,293,923	10.9%
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,147,105</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$30,054,426,935</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 2002-03.

\*Includes any operating expenditure not listed above and all non-operational expenditures such as debt service, capitol outlay and community and parental involvement services.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

## FINDING

RISD's board has not adopted a policy to monitor the general fund balance nor does it require the general fund balance status in the board agenda packets. Since 2000-01, RISD has reported a negative undesignated, unreserved general fund balance.

Fund balance is a key indicator of a district's financial condition. The fund balance is the difference between the assets and liabilities, as reflected on the balance sheet. It shows district financial resources available for future use after payment of all obligations.

TEA sets target or optimum fund balances for the general fund. The formula for optimum fund balances calls for the general fund balance (unencumbered and unallocated) to equal the estimated amount needed to cover cash flow deficits for the fall period of the following fiscal year, plus an estimated one-month average of cash disbursements from the general fund for the nine months of the following fiscal year.

RISD's fund balance is far below the optimum fund balance recommended by TEA. RISD's optimum fund balance is calculated and demonstrated in **Exhibit 3-12**. The general fund balance deficit for 2002-03 is a projected figure that is based on information provided by RISD to TEA in April 2003.

**Exhibit 3-12**  
**Optimum Fund Balance Calculation**  
**RISD General Fund**  
**For Fiscal Years Ended August 31, 1999 through 2003**

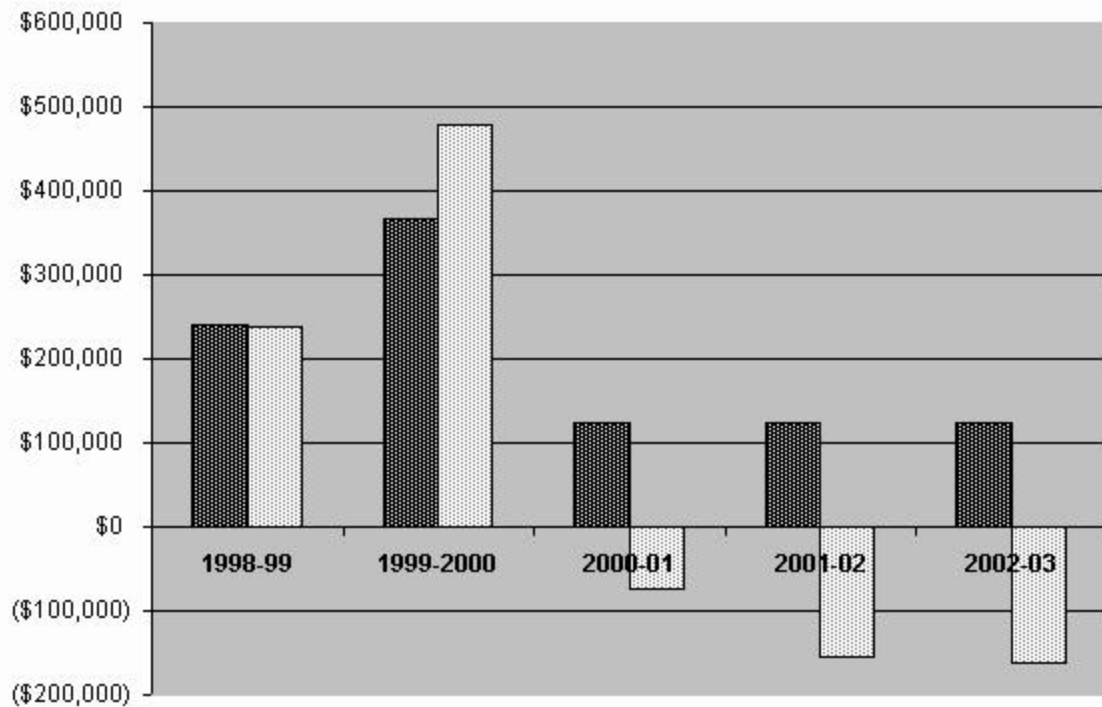
<b>Component</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
Total General Fund Balance 8/31/YY	\$237,836	\$477,694	(\$73,607)	(\$154,552)	(\$161,154)
Total Reserved Fund Balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Designated Fund Balance	\$140,000	\$242,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Estimated amount needed to cover fall cash flow deficits in the General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Estimated one-month average cash disbursements during regular school session	\$99,869	\$125,140	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000
Optimum Fund Balance and cash flow	\$239,869	\$367,140	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000
Excess/(Deficit)	(\$2,033)	\$110,554	(\$198,607)	(\$279,552)	(\$286,154)

Undesignated Unreserved General Fund Balance					
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Source: RISD, Audited Financial Reports for fiscal years ending August 31, 1998 through August 31, 2002. 2002-03 general fund balance projected by RISD in letter to TEA dated April 22, 2003.

**Exhibit 3-13** depicts the RISD fund balance compared to the TEA-recommended optimum general fund balance.

**Exhibit 3-13  
Comparison of RISD Fund Balance to TEA Optimum Fund Balance  
1999 through 2003**



Source: RISD, Audited Financial Reports for fiscal years ending August 31, 1998 through 2002. 2002-03 general fund balance projected by RISD in letter to TEA dated April 22, 2003.

Sound financial management practices dictate that a school district accumulate and maintain adequate levels of undesignated, unreserved fund balances in the general fund to ensure its ability to finance monthly operating expenditures in each fiscal year.

Christoval ISD implemented financial and budgetary controls and used TEA's fund balance formula to control its expenditures and maintain a three-month recommended positive fund balance.

Many districts use a fund balance management policy that establishes goals for the district optimum fund balance and includes an aggressive way to maintain a desirable level. The policy clearly defines how the district will increase revenues and decrease expenditures to meet its general fund balance goals.



# Chapter 3

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### A. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (PART 2)

#### Recommendation 23:

**Develop and implement a policy for general fund balance management and provide monthly balance information to the board.**

#### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board requires the superintendent to develop a fund balance policy.	September 2003
2.	The superintendent consults with a Region 6 representative for guidance in developing a fund balance management policy.	September 2003
3.	The superintendent drafts a fund balance policy and submits it to the board for review and approval.	November 2003
4.	The board approves the policy and directs the superintendent to implement it.	December 2003
5.	The superintendent reports fund balance activity and status to the board monthly.	January 2004 and Ongoing
6.	The board reviews the fund balance policy to determine if fund balance goals still apply to the district's current financial condition.	May 2004 and Ongoing

#### FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

#### FINDING

RISD does not compute or submit indirect cost rates for TEA approval. Without TEA-approved indirect cost rates, the district cannot claim indirect costs for federally funded grants. Indirect costs are administrative costs incurred by a district for the benefit of all programs that are not easily assignable to a specific project or program. TEA allows districts to charge indirect costs to federal programs, based on an approved indirect cost rate that is recalculated annually by each district. Once a district has an approved indirect cost rate, the indirect costs associated with the federal

programs are budgeted as revenues in the general fund and shown as expenditures in the federal programs' application for funds.

In 2001-02, RISD received more than \$80,000 in federal grant funds, and more than \$100,000 in federal grant funds in 2002-03. In RISD's 2001-02 external audit report, the indirect cost rate is estimated to be 3.9 percent. Based on the estimated rate, RISD was unable to claim more than \$7,000 in general fund revenue for both years 2001-02 and 2002-03, associated with its federal grants. Federal law, grant conditions and funds availability may limit indirect cost revenues. The total of direct and indirect grant program costs is limited by the maximum dollars available in the entitlement program.

Many school districts apply for and receive TEA-approved indirect cost rates so they can claim the resulting indirect cost revenues in the general fund. Most of these districts maximize indirect cost revenues by using TEA's Indirect Cost Calculation template and applying the highest allowable indirect cost rate to the grant expenditures. This process provides additional general fund revenue for districts that receive federal grant monies.

**Recommendation 24:**

**Gain Texas Education Agency approval for the district's indirect cost rate annually and claim allowed indirect costs as general fund revenues.**

The district could dedicate these revenues to the fund balance of the general fund as part of the plan to increase the fund balance.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent or designee computes the indirect cost rate using the TEA indirect cost calculation template.	September 2003
2.	After approval is received, the superintendent or designee budgets appropriate indirect costs as revenues in the general fund, shown as expenditures in the federal program application for grant funds.	October 2003
3.	The superintendent computes the indirect cost rate and submits it to TEA for approval annually.	February 2004 and Annually

**FISCAL IMPACT**

In 2002-03, the district received more than \$100,000 in federal grant funds that were eligible for indirect cost reimbursement. Using the most recent external auditor's report (2001-02), RISD spent \$54,327 on indirect costs and \$1,400,091 for General and Special Revenue Funds. The estimated indirect cost rate of 3.9 percent is calculated as follows: \$54,327 indirect costs/ \$1,400,091 total General and Special Revenue Funds expenditures = 3.9 percent. The amount of indirect costs that can be claimed as general fund revenues is \$100,000 federal grant funds x 0.039 indirect cost rate = \$3,900 per year. For 2003-04, savings are assumed to begin in October, which would be 11 months, for first year savings of \$3,575 (\$3,900 annual savings x 11/12 months).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Gain Texas Education Agency approval for the district's indirect cost rate annually and claim allowed indirect costs as general fund revenues.	\$3,575	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$3,900

## **FINDING**

Budget planning at RISD is exclusively handled by the superintendent with little input from functional support staff, teachers or administrators or a budget calendar. The budget is developed by the superintendent and approved by the board. The current process does not allow cooperative interaction among departments and campuses so that everyone understands where district resources are being spent.

The superintendent develops the budget based on prior-year revenues and expenditures, with little input from teachers and support staff or a site-based decision-making committee. The CIPs do not identify the specific monetary resources that the district will use to achieve its goals and objectives. Teachers and support staff, including cafeteria and maintenance workers, stated that they are not involved in budget planning and they do not get financial reports to keep them aware of the budget status, profit and loss and overall expenditures. Public hearings are scheduled and conducted in accordance with state law.

Responses in surveys administered to parents and teachers by the review team indicated little awareness or involvement about RISD financial operations, as shown in **Exhibit 3-14**. The majority response for all questions was "no opinion," indicating a lack of awareness or perhaps no involvement in the process of budget development. The district conducts meetings that are open to the public before adoption of the budget, but

board members and the superintendent stated that there is little community participation.

**Exhibit 3-14**  
**RISD Teacher and Parent Survey Results**  
**District Financial Management**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>
Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	Teachers	26.6%	66.6%	6.6%
	Parents	22.6%	56.6%	20.7%
Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	Teachers	26.6%	60.0%	13.3%
	Parents	13.2%	60.3%	26.4%
The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	Parents	15.1%	62.2%	22.5%
Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	Teachers	18.8%	62.2%	18.8%
Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	Teachers	39.9%	46.6%	13.2%

*Source: TSPR, teacher and parent survey results.*  
*Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

RISD board policy CE (LOCAL) requires budget planning to be an integral part of overall program planning. **Exhibit 3-15** shows excerpts of RISD board policy regarding the annual operating budget.

**Exhibit 3-15**  
**RISD Board Policy CE (LOCAL)**  
**Annual Operating Budget**  
**As of November 2001**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Budget Planning	Budget planning shall be an integral part of overall program planning so that the budget effectively reflects the district's programs and activities and provides the resources to implement them. In the budget planning process, general educational goals, specific program goals, and alternatives for achieving program goals shall be considered, as well as input from the district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees. Budget planning and evaluation are continuous processes and shall be a part of each month's activities.
Availability of Proposed Budget	After it is presented to the board and prior to adoption, a copy of the proposed budget shall be available upon request from the business office or superintendent. The superintendent or designee shall be available to answer questions arising from inspection of the budget.
Budget Meeting	The annual public meeting to discuss the proposed budget and tax rate shall be conducted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board president shall request at the beginning of the meeting that all persons who desire to speak on the proposed budget and/or tax rate sign up on the sheet provided.</li> <li>• Prior to the beginning of the meeting, the board may establish time limits for speakers.</li> <li>• Speakers shall confine their remarks to the appropriation of funds as contained in the proposed budget and/or the tax rate.</li> <li>• No officer or employee of the district shall be required to respond to questions from speakers at the meeting.</li> </ul>
Authorized Expenditure	The adopted budget provides authority to expend funds for the purposes indicated and in accordance with state law, board policy, and the district's approved purchasing procedures. The expenditure of funds shall be under the direction of the superintendent or designee who shall ensure that funds are expended in accordance with the adopted budget.
Budget Amendments	The budget shall be amended when a change is made increasing any one of the functional spending categories or increasing

revenue object accounts and other resources.
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*Source: RISD, Online Board Policy Manual, updated 11/12/01.*

TEC Sections 44.002-44.006 establish the legal basis for budget development in school districts. The following five items summarize the legal requirements from the code:

- the superintendent is the budget officer for the district and prepares or causes the budget to be prepared;
- the district budget must be prepared by a date set by the state board of education, currently August 20;
- the president of the board of trustees must call a public meeting of the board of trustees, giving ten days public notice in a newspaper, for the adoption of the district budget. Any taxpayer in the district may be present and participate in the meeting;
- no funds may be expended in any manner other than provided for in the adopted budget (The board does have the authority to amend the budget or adopt a supplementary emergency budget to cover unforeseen expenditures.); and
- the budget must be prepared in accordance with GAAP and state guidelines.

The FASRG states that the budget process has three major phases: planning, preparation and evaluation. The process begins with sound planning. Planning defines the goals and objectives of campuses and the school district and develops programs to attain those goals and objectives. Once these programs and plans have been established, budgetary resource allocations are made to support them. Budgetary resource allocations are the preparation phase. Allocations cannot be made until plans and programs have been established.

Public hearings are the final step in the budget development process. Public hearings are the final opportunity for public review of the proposed budget and typically include presentation of a summary of the proposed district budget by the board president, the superintendent or a designee. Individuals and interest groups then have a chance to present feedback on the proposed budget before the school board legally adopts it. Once the budget is adopted, funds are considered available for expenditure.

RISD does not use a formal budget calendar to plan. Such a calendar identifies key points in the process and an overall timetable that extends through board approval. The calendar can be a useful planning tool because it establishes specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines for all committees and campus-level staff members. A calendar shows the steps needed to develop and adopt the budget within the time established by

law. Without a budget calendar, the board and administration can miss important dates and overlook tasks or perform them out of sequence.

**Exhibit 3-16** contains excerpts of a sample budget calendar as recommended in the TEA FASRG, which many districts modify to meet their own organization structure and requirements.

**Exhibit 3-16  
Budget Calendar Sample**

<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Activity/Process</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
February	Budget process approved	Superintendent
February	Projected enrollments and developed revenue estimates	Business manager
March	Budget process outlined to principals and staff	Assistant superintendent of finance and business manager
March	Beginning of campus, department and special program budget preparation	Principals, staff, campus improvement committee and other budget managers
April	Completed budgets sent to the business office	Budget managers
May	Budgets compiled by the business office and non-allocated requests sent to superintendent and assistant superintendent	Business manager
May	Budget managers may be asked to meet with the superintendent and/or the assistant superintendent to justify non-allocated requests	Superintendent, assistant superintendent and budget managers
May	Complete prioritization of non-allocated requests	Superintendent and/or assistant superintendent
May	Review personnel staffing and proposed salary schedule	Superintendent and assistant superintendents
May	Complete superintendent review of preliminary district budget, personnel requirements, facility requirements and projected revenue	Superintendent and assistant superintendents
June	Budget workshop	Superintendent and school

		board
August	Budget workshop	Superintendent and school board
August	Prepare newspaper notice of public hearing (notice must be published 10 days before)	Business manager
August	Official public budget hearing	School board, superintendent, assistant superintendent and business manager
August	Budget adopted	School Board

*Source: TEA, FASRG.*

Eagle Pass Independent School District (EPISD) effectively involves parents, teachers and community representatives in the decision-making process through its SBDM councils (SBDMC). EPISD intends the SBDM process to "bring about improved student performance...which in essence empowers the community with the obligation of assuring that through responsibility and participation, student achievement will improve."

### **Recommendation 25:**

**Implement a budget planning process that includes a budget calendar and the involvement of the school board, the campus administration, the staff and the community.**

The superintendent should establish an annual budget calendar and distribute it to all appropriate personnel. The RISD staff and community should be made aware of the calendar and provide input during the budget development process. The process should be tied to goals and objectives identified in the CIPs, consider multiyear planning efforts and incorporate the financial impact of short and long-term objectives. The budget development process should include opportunities SBDMC for the community, staff and board to provide input to budget development. The process should also include an assessment of district needs and a list of prioritized budget requests.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent develops a budget calendar and presents it to the board for review and approval.	February 2004
2.	The board approves the district budget calendar.	March



		2004
3.	The superintendent explains the budget development process to the assistant principal, campus administration, staff and community members.	March 2004
4.	The assistant principal and departmental/program staff develop program budgets.	March 2004
5.	The SBDM committee reviews campus budgets and recommends amendments where necessary.	April 2004
6.	The assistant principal and departmental/program staff review the proposed budget, provide recommendations and submit it to the superintendent for review and approval.	April 2004
7.	The superintendent submits the proposed budget to the board for review and approval.	May 2004
8.	The superintendent and the school board participate in budget workshops and consider community input in development of the budget.	June 2004
9.	The school board conducts the legally mandated public hearing for budget review, encourages public participation and adopts the budget.	August 2004
10.	The superintendent prepares monthly budget status reports for departmental/ program staff for information and monitoring.	Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

RISD is not maximizing its Tier II funding. The two categories of property levies made by school districts are maintenance and operations (M&O) and interest and sinking (I&S). The M&O portion is used to cover routine operating costs of the district and the I&S portion is used to pay principal and interest on bonds sold to finance construction projects. The RISD 2000-01 M&O tax rate of \$1.46 per \$100 of taxable value is \$0.04 below the maximum authorized level of \$1.50.

Due to the district's decreasing fund balance and budgetary needs that exceed revenue produced from its current tax rate, TEA and Region 6 advised RISD to increase the M&O tax rate to maximize Tier II funding. As shown in **Exhibit 3-17**, for every dollar that RISD gets by increasing its M&O tax rate, it would receive an additional \$1.55 cents in state

revenue. The calculation assumes property values accurately reflect current values and that the district will raise its tax collection rate to 100 percent.

**Exhibit 3-17**  
**RISD Tier II Yield Calculations**  
**June 2003**

<b>M&amp;O Tax Rate</b>	<b>\$1.46</b>	<b>\$1.50</b>	<b>Increase in Yield</b>
State Yield	\$464,514	\$496,552	\$32,038
Local Yield	\$754,397	\$775,065	\$20,668
<b>Total Increase in Tier II Yield</b>			<b>\$52,706</b>

*Source: RISD, Summary of Finance, June 9, 2003.*

Texas funding for public education is allocated through the FSP system of statutory formulas. The FSP is designed to provide substantially equal access to similar revenue per student at a similar tax effort, considering all state and local tax revenues of districts after acknowledging all legitimate student and district cost differences. To compensate for variations in local property wealth among school districts and to equalize overall school funding, Texas reallocates funding to districts in inverse relation to property wealth.

Public education is appropriated to school districts through three tiers of funding. Tier I funding is designed so that the state and district share the basic cost of education. Funding allotments under the Tier I formula are based on student attendance as adjusted by the WADA calculations. Tier I allotments are adjusted for the individual district's property tax base, making district property wealth a significant factor. Tier II funding rewards the district's local tax efforts by guaranteeing that tax efforts beyond the annual required local share in Tier I will yield a minimum amount of money per WADA. Tier III funds allow local school districts to receive partial state funding for debt service requirements on previously issued bonds.

While the purpose of Tier I is to fund the basic program, Tier II is for the purpose of enriching the basic program. The idea behind Tier II is to ensure that school districts with low property values generate a guaranteed level of revenue with their tax effort. Like Tier I, Tier II is a shared arrangement between the state and the local school district. The school district's tax effort above the Tier I requirement up to a maximum level established by the legislature is guaranteed to yield a certain amount of revenue per weighted student (\$27.14 for 2002-03).

Key ingredients in Tier II funding include guaranteed yield, property values, local tax effort and number of weighted students. Property values are the same Comptroller's Property Tax Division (CPTD) values used in Tier I. Because local taxes are levied against current values and the values used in the funding formulas are a year behind, there could be considerable differences in the property values used for state funding and those used for levying taxes. This disparity creates a favorable situation for school districts whose values are on the increase. But in a case where values are decreasing, the one-year lag time could cause some school districts to increase their tax rates just to cover Tier I and Tier II requirements.

Tier II, sometimes referred to as a "guaranteed yield," guarantees that the tax effort produces a minimum amount of revenue per WADA by establishing a guaranteed yield level. A property-poor school district whose CPTD value is one-third of the guaranteed level would receive \$2 from the state for \$1 generated in local taxes in Tier II. This matching of tax revenue with state funds continues until the district reaches its tax effort limit. Any district whose wealth per WADA produces more than the guaranteed yield level for each cent of effective tax rate receives no Tier II revenue from the state. The third factor in Tier II is the number and types of students being educated by the district. Just as in Tier I, costs related to students with differing needs vary. To treat school districts fairly in funding, WADA is used to measure the extent to which students participate in special programs. Calculating WADA is a complex exercise; a district WADA will be greater than its ADA. The greater the number of students eligible for special entitlements, the greater the WADA will be.

**Recommendation 26:**

**Provide the board with funding scenarios that maximize Tier II funding.**

The superintendent should present the funding scenarios to the board during the budget development process to show the impact of raising the M&O tax rate on district finances.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent develops funding scenarios for adjusting the RISD M&O tax rate and the impact on Tier II funding.	April 2004
2.	The superintendent explains to the board the affect that adjusting the M&O tax rate will have on Tier II funding.	May 2004
3.	The board considers the funding scenarios and adopts a tax rate to maximize the amount of local and state funding the district	August 2004

	collects.	
4.	The superintendent reviews new legislation relative to tax rate adoption to determine how it will affect district funding.	Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

The district does not have an administrative procedures manual to explain and govern procedures for cash management. RISD's lack of strong internal control over activity funds, tax collection and other cash receipts may result in financial loss. Districts that have no internal controls in place risk not being in compliance with laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of district operations.

Dating back to the TEA audit report of December 2002, RISD has insufficient oversight of its cash receipts, as illustrated in the following examples. The in-house tax collector collects cash from taxpayers, issues a receipt, then prepares a deposit slip for monies collected. The cash count is reviewed by the superintendent's secretary/finance clerk and reconciled to the deposit slip, but the superintendent's secretary/finance clerk does not reconcile the monies to receipts issued, nor is reconciliation done on a daily basis.

Student activity funds are turned over to the tax collector who gives a receipt to the group sponsor. A deposit is prepared, and cash is deposited in the bank. The tax collector maintains a computerized accounting of student activity receipts and expenditures, but a reconciliation report for each student activity account is provided to sponsors only by request.

The cafeteria cashier collects cash from students and teachers at lunch and breakfast. The cashier prepares a deposit slip for cash receipts and gives them to the superintendent's secretary to reconcile the cash to the deposit slip. RISD uses a cash receipt software system to account for payments for meals served and to generate a reconciliation report.

The cafeteria cashier does not collect monies paid by students or teachers for a-la-carte or snack-bar items. One of the two cafeteria workers collects and counts monies and gives them to the other worker, who in turn counts the monies a second time and completes a deposit slip. One cafeteria worker takes the deposit to the bank and gives a copy to the secretary, who does not reconcile the deposit slip to cash receipts before monies are deposited at the bank. The two cafeteria employees are blood relatives.

After the review team visit, RISD prepared a letter to TEA that stated that a procedure manual was being drafted to fully document accounting procedures, as recommended by TEA. The development of a written procedures manual enables an organization to continue critical functions in the event of staff absences. Such manuals form a basis to evaluate and improve district processes. When written procedures are evaluated, inefficient steps can be eliminated, possibly reducing staffing needs.

The FASRG (Section 1.5.1) defines internal accounting controls for school districts. The board, management and other personnel use internal controls to ensure reliable financial reporting and efficient operations that comply with applicable laws and regulations. Internal controls are the control environment, the accounting system and control procedures. The control environment reflects the attitude, awareness and actions of the board, management and others about the importance of control and its emphasis in the entity. The accounting system comprises methods and records to identify, assemble, analyze, classify, record and report transactions and to maintain accountability for related assets and liabilities. Control procedures help ensure that objectives are achieved.

Many districts have accounting manuals that include policies and procedures for accounting and other finance-related responsibilities such as accounts payable, payroll, budgeting, investments, cash receipts and financial reporting. Some districts prescribe routines to ensure that work done by one individual is checked automatically by the results reported by other individuals. Documented procedures offer a system of checks and balances to detect and correct error or loss.

# Chapter 3

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### A. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (PART 3)

#### Recommendation 27:

#### **Develop a written procedures manual to provide internal control of RISD cash management.**

Internal controls help ensure that school district assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use or disposition. Development procedures that include internal control elements are critical and emphasize segregation of duties and staff cross-training. Documenting the procedures in a written manual will help the district to hold staff accountable for the financial performance of the district.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent and the secretary/finance clerk collaboratively document all business and financial procedures performed by district staff.	September 2003
2.	The superintendent and the secretary/finance clerk meet to discuss the contents of the procedures manual.	October 2003
3.	The secretary/finance clerk prepares the procedures manual, including internal control procedures, with assistance from a Region 6 representative.	October - November 2003
4.	The superintendent reviews and submits the procedures manual to the board for review and approval.	December 2003
5.	The superintendent distributes the approved procedures manual to staff, discusses procedural changes and provides cross-training.	January 2004
6.	The superintendent updates the procedures manual.	Annually and as Needed

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

#### **FINDING**

RISD does not have documented procedures for reviewing data submitted by the PEIMS coordinator to Region 6. This has resulted in a number of reporting errors in data submitted by the PEIMS coordinator to TEA. In reviewing data available from the TEA, AEIS and PEIMS, the review team found several reporting errors.

The 2001-02 total for budgeted revenues from all funds was overstated in PEIMS. The actual total was \$1,225,351, but the PEIMS total was \$1,265,361. In 2002-03, the number of support staff reported in PEIMS showed no employees in this category. However, a counselor's salary of \$8,815 and an average salary of \$38,343 were recorded for the same category of staffing.

In 2001-02, the average salary for teachers with more than 20 years of experience was \$34,336, significantly lower than in 2000-01. The district teacher pay scale for 2001-02 showed a figure of \$41,800. In meeting with administration, RISD told the review team it had 159 students but reported 178 students to PEIMS. However, records given to the review team indicate a count of 165 students.

RISD maintains its accounting records with RSCCC software. The district contracts with Region 6 for financial software technical support to include review of PEIMS data prior to submission to TEA.

According to the PEIMS coordinator, financial and educational data intended for PEIMS submission are provided to her by other district personnel. Data other than financial are entered into Chancery WINSCHOOL software and imported into PEIMS. Financial data are entered directly into PEIMS. Only the superintendent reviews the information entered by the PEIMS coordinator before it goes to Region 6. The PEIMS coordinator works with Region 6 to review PEIMS information to ensure accuracy. The PEIMS coordinator is told of errors and has an opportunity to correct them. Once completed, Region 6 returns the data to RISD, and the district then submits the revised data to TEA. Erroneous student enrollment and attendance rates could have a negative impact on RISD's academic rating, on state funding and on district planning and other critical functions.

Eagle Pass ISD (EPISD) implemented a detailed system of checks and balances that includes a published calendar of events for PEIMS submissions, extensive annual training, internal preliminary reports generated every six weeks with a list of required signatures, scheduled data review meetings and software safeguards that prohibit data changes after report verification. EPISD administrators stated that this process has helped EPISD to ensure accuracy and accountability for its data. EPISD also has been able to ensure that the board and campus and program

administrators have an accurate picture of budgeted funds for current year expenditures and actual expenditures for previous years.

**Recommendation 28:**

**Implement procedures to ensure PEIMS data accuracy before submission to the Texas Education Agency.**

A system of checks and balances to ensure accurate data collection, review and submission should be implemented. Before submitting the data to TEA, RISD should include a review and sign-off by anyone who has submitted information to the PEIMS coordinator.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent directs the secretary/finance clerk and the PEIMS coordinator to develop a process for PEIMS data collection, sign-off, reporting and cross-training with the secretary/finance clerk and the PEIMS coordinator.	September 2003
2.	The secretary/finance clerk and the PEIMS coordinator research PEIMS submission processes of other school districts and suggestions from Region 6.	September - October 2003
3.	The PEIMS clerk develops a process and presents it in draft form to the superintendent for review and approval.	November - December 2003
4.	The superintendent approves the PEIMS submission process.	December 2003
5.	The superintendent directs the PEIMS coordinator to implement the process.	December 2003

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

RISD's use of an internal tax collector does not result in a high tax collection rate, as the district only collected 92.5 percent of taxes levied in 2002. RISD performs collection of district taxes with in-house resources. Most school districts are located within one county, but RISD's boundaries include Grimes, Montgomery and Walker counties. Properties are appraised and taxes are assessed for each county. Property taxes are levied by October 1 in conformity with Subtitle E of the Texas Property Tax Code. Taxes are due upon receipt of the tax bill and are delinquent if not



paid before February 1 of the year following the year they were imposed. On January 1 a tax lien attaches to a property to secure the payment of all taxes, penalties and interest.

**Exhibit 3-18** shows the funds received from RISD property tax collections for 1997-98 through 2001-02. As a percentage of total revenue, local tax revenues increased from 39.0 percent to 56.9 percent. The district's local tax revenue as a percentage of total revenues exceeded the state average in 2000 and 2001.

**Exhibit 3-18**  
**RISD Local Property Tax Revenue**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>
Local Tax Revenue	\$405,100	\$451,881	\$582,890	\$714,823	\$719,378
Percentage of Total Revenue	39.0%	40.7%	45.0%	51.4%	56.9%
State Average	47.0%	47.8%	46.0%	48.5%	50.4%

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.*

**Exhibit 3-19** compares RISD's annual tax rate to those of its peer districts for 1997-98 through 2001-02. RISD has not assessed taxes for I&S in the years shown.

**Exhibit 3-19**  
**Comparison of Total Tax Rates**  
**RISD, Peer Districts and State**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

<b>District</b>	<b>1997-98</b>		<b>1998-99</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>2001-02</b>	
	<b>M&amp;O</b>	<b>I&amp;S</b>	<b>M&amp;O</b>	<b>I&amp;S</b>	<b>M&amp;O</b>	<b>I&amp;S</b>	<b>M&amp;O</b>	<b>I&amp;S</b>	<b>M&amp;O</b>	<b>I&amp;S</b>
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$1.350</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$1.380</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$1.222</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$1.400</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>	<b>\$1.460</b>	<b>\$0.000</b>
Calvert	\$1.380	\$0.000	\$1.431	\$0.000	\$1.338	\$0.000	\$1.369	\$0.000	\$1.420	\$0.000
North Zulch	\$1.360	\$0.200	\$1.406	\$0.204	\$1.367	\$0.069	\$1.366	\$0.000	\$1.256	\$0.000
Aquilla	\$1.500	\$0.075	\$1.500	\$0.000	\$1.504	\$0.000	\$1.420	\$0.000	\$1.420	\$0.000
Devers	\$1.500	\$0.000	\$1.500	\$0.000	\$1.520	\$0.000	\$1.460	\$0.000	\$1.500	\$0.000

<b>State Average</b>	<b>\$1.305</b>	<b>\$0.191</b>	<b>\$1.34</b>	<b>\$0.199</b>	<b>\$1.358</b>	<b>\$0.153</b>	<b>\$1.384</b>	<b>\$0.094</b>	<b>\$1.391</b>	<b>\$0.094</b>
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Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

RISD's adopted tax rate for 2002-03 is \$1.46 per \$100 of property valuation, unchanged from the previous year. The tax rate is composed wholly of \$1.46 for M&O.

**Exhibit 3-20** shows property values by category. Although the total declined from 2000-01 to 2001-02, RISD property values have appreciated in every category, for a 330.7 percent increase in valuation of its oil and gas property.

**Exhibit 3-20**  
**RISD Property Values**  
**1997-98 through 2001-02**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>Percent Change 1998 to 2002</b>
Business	\$7,177,541	\$7,669,090	\$8,645,082	\$9,854,946	\$9,258,583	29.0%
Residential	\$9,832,104	\$10,570,520	\$10,844,770	\$11,193,205	\$11,706,340	19.1%
Land	\$21,148,367	\$22,744,010	\$24,415,077	\$24,257,541	\$25,611,220	21.1%
Oil and Gas	\$417,190	\$6,437,620	\$24,914,729	\$16,878,960	\$14,215,090	330.7%
Other	\$600,580	\$727,360	\$607,250	\$1,038,080	\$1,104,880	84.0%
<b>Total (after exemptions)</b>	<b>\$32,819,751</b>	<b>\$40,982,496</b>	<b>\$62,125,804</b>	<b>\$55,387,499</b>	<b>\$53,823,955</b>	<b>64.0%</b>

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

In 2001-02, the Grimes County tax collection rate was 91.98 percent and the Montgomery County tax collection rate was 96 percent. Walker County collects taxes for nine entities. The county could not provide a consolidated tax collection rate; however, the collection rate for 2001-02 for Huntsville ISD for which the county collects taxes, was 97.28 percent. **Exhibit 3-21** shows the tax collection rates (current year taxes only) for RISD for 1999 through 2002. The collection rates dropped from 98.2 percent in 2000 to 92.5 percent in 2002.

**Exhibit 3-21**  
**RISD Tax Collection Rates**  
**1998-99 through 2001-02**

Entity	1999	2000	2001	2002
Amount Levied	\$546,908	\$737,797	\$773,243	\$776,764
Amount Collected	\$529,209	\$724,397	\$721,330	\$718,414
Collection Rate	96.8%	98.2%	93.3%	92.5%

*Source: RISD, audited financial statements, 1998-99 through 2001-02.*

RISD tax collection is performed in-house by the tax collector/PEIMS and student activity accounting coordinator, who collect the district's taxes. **Exhibit 3-22** summarizes the cost of collecting the taxes, as recorded in audited financial statements for 2001-02.

**Exhibit 3-22**  
**RISD Cost of In-House Tax Collection**  
**2001-02**

Element	Expense
Payroll	\$22,554
Tax appraisal and collection	\$20,254
Supplies and materials	\$717
Travel, subsistence and stipends	\$844
Miscellaneous operating expenses	\$3,687
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48,056</b>

*Source: RISD, Annual Financial Report for the year ended August 31, 2002.*

**Recommendation 29:**

**Contract tax collection and increase the district's tax collection rate.**

The district should negotiate with one of the County Appraisal Districts (CADs) for appraisal and collection of RISD taxes and eliminate the internal tax collection portion. The CAD should provide the district with weekly reports of monies received and electronically transfer funds to the district's depository. The tax collector's other duties, including PEIMS coordination and accounting for activity funds, should be realigned.

By working more closely with the delinquent tax attorneys RISD should also improve the delinquent tax collection rate. FIRST states that a total collection rate of 96 percent or greater is favorable. A total tax collection rate of less than 96 percent creates a negative response to indicator 6 of FIRST.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent contacts and negotiates with a CAD to collect RISD taxes.	September 2003
2.	The superintendent submits the proposed CAD agreement and the proposal to eliminate the tax collection position to the board for review and approval.	September 2003
3.	The board approves the agreement and the elimination of the tax collection position.	October 2003
4.	The superintendent contracts with the county tax assessor-collectors to provide tax billing and collection services.	November 2003
5.	The county tax assessor-collectors provide weekly or monthly reports of collection to RISD.	January 2004
6.	The superintendent monitors contract performance and reports monthly to the board.	Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The total cost of RISD's in-house tax collection, including the tax collector, is \$48,056 as shown in **Exhibit 3-22**. The fiscal impact assumes RISD will negotiate an agreement with one of the three tax assessor-collectors to provide services for a fee of 1 percent of the levy. The 2001-02 levy, per audited financial statements, was \$776,764; a 1-percent fee would be \$7,768. The charge of \$20,254 for tax appraisal and collection will not be eliminated by contracting with a county tax assessor-collector. The total cost to the district for collection of its taxes by a county tax office would be \$28,022 ( $\$20,254 + \$7,768 = \$28,022$ ) for an overall reduction in tax collection costs of \$20,034 per year ( $\$48,056 - \$28,022 = \$20,034$ ), beginning in 2004-05. For 2003-04, the in-house tax collection function is assumed to be replaced effective November 1, 2003 by an interlocal agreement with the county Tax Assessor-Collector in one of the three counties covered by RISD. The reduced annual savings for 2003-04 is \$16,695 ( $\$20,034$  annual savings x 10/12 months).

In addition, by increasing RISD's tax collection rate by 3.5 percent from the 2002 rate of 92.5 percent, the district will generate an additional \$27,187 in collections ( $\$776,764 \times 3.5$  percent = \$27,187). One half of the

increase in tax collection is anticipated to begin in 2003-04 for a total first year savings of \$30,289 (\$27,187 additional collections/2 + \$16,695). Total annual savings beginning in 2004-05 will be \$47,221 (\$20,034 +\$27,187).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Contract tax collection and increase the district's tax collection rate.	\$30,289	\$47,221	\$47,221	\$47,221	\$47,221

## **FINDING**

RISD does not have timelines in place to ensure that all grant funding is available and used within the allowable time for each grant, nor does it aggressively pursue competitive grant funding. This lack of internal control over distribution of grant funds threatens the loss of grant funds and special revenue received.

In 2002-03, RISD was the recipient of a Title II, Part A grant in the amount of \$30,565. The grant was to be used for teacher and principal training and recruitment. As of the review team's April 2003 visit, more than 90 percent (\$28,020) of the grant's funds had not been allocated. At the request of the review team, the RISD superintendent's secretary/finance clerk contacted a Region 6 representative to find out if the assistant principal's salary could be charged to the grant. Region 6 said it could, and the secretary began making plans to allocate the allowable \$10,050 charge to be paid with grant funds rather than general funds. The secretary/finance clerk stated that she was unaware of how the grant funds could be used and had made no allocations of grant funds for the year.

In the 2002 financial statements, RISD's external auditor's disclosed that violations of finance-related legal and contractual provisions were reported, indicating that RISD did not expend 85 percent of state block grants for its compensatory education and gifted and talented programs. Also, the district expended its compensatory education monies on the school librarian's salary. The purpose of the compensatory education program is to supplement at-risk student expenditures, not to supplant the regular education program.

Also, RISD received special revenue and grant program funds to provide services to students, based on their needs. A review of special revenue accounts indicated that a large percentage of special revenue funds went unused near the end of 2002-03. **Exhibit 3-23** shows the balances in the special revenue programs as of February 28, 2003. Each of the grant programs ran from July 2002 through June 2003. Seven of 11 months or

64 percent of the grant period remained to expend the funds. Based on the figures shown, RISD had not spent 24.5 percent of its special revenue funds. The district is required to return unspent funds to the agency responsible for the program at the end of the program year, unless the agency allows the district to roll a portion of the funds forward into the next program year. If funds from these grant programs go unused by RISD, funding for the programs will have to come from the district's general fund.

**Exhibit 3-23**  
**RISD Special Revenue Funds**  
**February 28, 2003**

Description	Grant Amount	Balance	Percent Unused	End Date
Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title I, Part A	\$102,340	\$3,957	3.9%	2/28/2003
ESEA, Title II, Part A Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund	\$30,565	\$28,090	91.9%	2/28/2003
ESEA, Title IV, Part A Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities	\$2,798	\$1,519	54.3%	2/28/2003
ESEA, Title V, Part A Innovative Programs	\$1,036	\$0	0%	2/28/2003
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$136,739</b>	<b>\$33,566</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	

*Source: RISD, Business Office.*

Unused monies must be returned to the grantor when a district consistently neglects to properly allocate available funds. Use of grant funds to pay staff salaries reduces the amount used from the general fund to pay district operating expenses and allows the district to channel more funds into the classroom and improve educational services for students. Without controls in place to ensure that the district uses all grant funds available, RISD risks having to return unused funds.

Some school districts include timelines for the implementation of federal programs in the planning and budgeting process. These timelines show when funds will be expended to benefit program participants and students in the current-year program that generated the revenue for the districts.

The librarian coordinates the district's technology efforts. During 2002-03, the librarian was in her second year with the district, her first year as the Technology coordinator. The district received more than \$11,000 under the Small, Rural School Achievement Program grant in 2002-03. The district did not submit other technology grants because it does not have a grant writer. Starting in 2002-03, the librarian assumed grant-writing duties and has attended training in Basics of Resource Development and Responsibilities of the Grantee. The librarian, however, has not aggressively pursued grants because of time constraints performing other duties. The district has submitted an application for the federal E-Rate grant for 2003-04.

The lack of alternative funding sources prevent RISD from expanding its spending for education programs.

In addition to the standard federal and state grants, many public and private grants exist to address specific programs. Some examples of competitive grants that have not been pursued by RISD are:

- Improving Teaching and Learning (all subjects);
- Texas Dropout Grant (limited subjects);
- Investment Capital Fund Grant (All subjects);
- Enhancing Education Through Technology, E2T2 or TARGET, and
- 9th Grade Initiative Grants/Success Initiative.

According to grant writers who have successfully obtained more than \$55 million in grant funds for school districts over the last two years, it is not uncommon to receive at least \$100,000 in funding from any of the above names grants, at a cost of \$5,000 per grant application. The usual grant writing periods are September through October, December through January, and April through May.

### **Recommendation 30:**

**Aggressively pursue competitive grants and develop internal timelines for grant funding and special revenue to ensure that no funds go unused or are returned.**

The district should hire a part-time grant writer to aggressively pursue competitive grants. The district also should charge the grant writer with administrating and monitoring all grants, as well as developing grant funding timelines to determine allowable expenditures for each grant.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The secretary/finance clerk prepares monthly budget and expenditure information for all grant and special revenue funding.	September 2003 and Ongoing
2.	The secretary/finance clerk distributes the monthly reports to the superintendent and the assistant principal.	September 2003 and Ongoing
3.	The superintendent and the assistant principal review the planned expenditures and develop a timeline for expending grant funding and special revenue.	October 2003
4.	The superintendent distributes the timeline to the secretary/finance clerk to allocate funds.	November 2003
5.	The secretary/finance clerk provides monthly status reports to the superintendent about distribution of grant funding and special revenue.	December 2003 and Ongoing
6.	The superintendent monitors distribution of funds for intended use and timeline.	December 2003 and Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Hire a part-time grant writer for \$20,000. Considering the student' low performance scores and the number of economically disadvantaged students, the grant writer should conservatively be able to generate additional revenues of \$60,000 annually resulting in a net annual increase of \$40,000 ( $\$60,000 - \$20,000 = \$40,000$ ) starting in 2003-04.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Aggressively pursue competitive grants and develop internal timelines for grant funding and special revenue to ensure that no funds go unused or are returned.	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000



# Chapter 3

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### *B. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT*

Texas school districts are responsible for protecting publicly financed assets provided to educate children. District assets include cash, fixed assets, real property and personnel. Asset and risk management programs control risks by protecting against significant financial and physical losses and paying the lowest possible insurance premiums. Effective asset and risk management includes investing idle cash to achieve optimum rates of return, providing adequate and affordable health and workers compensation insurance to employees, managing debt with timely principal and interest payments, taking advantage of opportunities to reduce interest expenses and safeguarding property against loss from damage, theft and obsolescence,

Risk management is an essential part of district operations. Successful risk management programs start with strong support from the governing board, superintendent and senior financial administrators. Sound risk management includes: analyzing alternatives to insurance coverage such as self-insurance and other industry trends; analyzing insurance plans, including deductible amounts, co-insurance levels, and types of coverage provided; assessing hazards and creating programs to minimize exposure to potential losses and continuously monitoring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

An effective risk management program provides a safe environment for students and employees, minimizes workers compensation claims and costs, controls costs by ensuring that the district is adequately protected against significant losses with the lowest possible insurance premiums and provides sound, cost-effective employee health insurance. To guard against significant losses, the district must have accurate insurable values for district property and document all district property. Annual appraisals of property values and inventories of fixed assets lead to accurate insurable values and documentation. Districts assess hazards and implement programs to reduce those hazards to minimize claims and reduce workers compensation premiums.

The Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) Risk Management fund carries RISD's commercial insurance coverage. **Exhibit 3-24** summarizes that coverage.

**Exhibit 3-24**  
**RISD Commercial Insurance Coverage**  
**2002-03**

Policy	Coverage Limits	Deductible	Annual Premium
Property	\$3,344,158 Blanket Replacement Cost Limit on Buildings, Personal Property and Auxiliary Structures	\$1,000	\$7,892
General liability (includes personal injury and employee benefits liability)	\$1,000,000 per occurrence personal injury \$100,000 per occurrence employee benefits	\$1,000	\$750
School professional legal liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence \$1,000,000 annual aggregate	\$1,000	\$3,200
Increase Sublimits to Sexual Misconduct Claims Endorsement	\$1,000,000 per occurrence \$1,000,000 annual aggregate	\$1,000	\$900
Vehicle Coverage - Fleet liability	\$100,000 per person \$300,000 per occurrence bodily injury \$100,000 property damage	\$250	\$720
Automobile comprehensive	Actual cash value	\$250	\$0
Automobile collision		\$250	\$0
All other vehicles: Specified Perils		\$250	\$159
Collision		\$250	\$208
<b>Total - all coverage</b>			<b>\$13,829</b>

*Source: RISD, TASB Risk Management Fund Contribution and Coverage Summary.*

TASB also carries the district workers compensation policy, which is renewable on or before September 1 of each year. TASB provides claims administration and payment, claims adjustment and risk management analysis services. **Exhibit 3-25** compares RISD's workers compensation premiums by employee classification for 2001-02 and 2002-03.

**Exhibit 3-25**  
**RISD Estimated Annual Workers Compensation Premiums**  
**2001-02 and 2002-03**

Classification	2001-02			2002-03		
	Estimated Payroll	Experience Adjusted Rates	Estimated Annual Contribution	Estimated Payroll	Experience Adjusted Rates	Estimated Annual Contribution
Bus drivers	\$15,480	.04364	\$676	\$18,000	.04364	\$786
Professional/administrative	\$772,257	.00552	\$4,263	\$691,579	.00552	\$3,818
All others	\$77,660	.08719	\$6,771	\$72,111	.08719	\$6,287
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$865,397</b>		<b>\$11,710</b>	<b>\$781,690</b>		<b>\$10,891</b>

*Source: RISD, TASB Workers Compensation Contribution and Coverage Summary, 2001-02 and 2002-03.*

**FINDING**

RISD does not have a detailed fixed asset listing for all property in the district and did not conduct an inventory of fixed assets in 2001-02. RISD does not conduct inventories at the beginning or end of each year, does not tag assets as they are received and does not track an asset if it has been transferred or disposed of. In addition, teachers do not maintain an inventory of classroom assets.

Board CFB (LOCAL) states that the superintendent or designee shall conduct an inventory of all fixed assets each year for the purpose of inventory control. The inventory is required to list and control all fixed assets that cost \$300 or more and that have a potential useful life of at least two year. Records must be maintained so as to facilitate audits and must identify the description, location and value of individual assets and assets accounted for in groups.

RISD board policy states that fixed assets include land and improvements, buildings and improvements, furniture and equipment, vehicles, capital leases, infrastructure (roads, drainage systems, water systems and sewer systems), art and collections and historical treasures. The policy further states that fixed assets include items that are not consumed as a result of use, have a useful life of at least one year and a per-unit cost of at least \$5,000, can be identified and reasonably accounted for with an inventory system and are owned outright (purchased, constructed or donated).

Efficient management of fixed assets provides information for planning and control and is necessary for inventory records and for calculating annual depreciation. The information also provides a basis for insurance valuations and insurance purposes such as calculating premiums and determining replacement values for claims. These records identify the type of asset, its original cost and its physical location.

GASB issued the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 34 (GASB 34) in 1999. GASB 34 significantly changes the way Texas school districts and other state and local government entities must report their finances to the public. According to GASB 34, districts are required to report capital assets net of depreciation and the cost of a fixed asset through depreciation over its useful life. There are a few allowable exceptions such as land, permanent infrastructure, assets acquired long ago and assets with low value or a short life. The RISD secretary attended a training workshop to learn the principles of GASB 34 implementing GASB 34, but has been trained in the RSCCC fixed-asset module software.

The FASRG recommends annual physical inventories at schools and that assets costing \$5,000 or more be recorded in a district's group of fixed asset accounts. TEA guidelines call for less-expensive items to be recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund. The guidelines also allow districts to establish lower thresholds for control and accountability. For example, computer and audiovisual equipment that costs less than \$5,000 does not have to be accounted for in the fixed asset group of accounts, but some districts choose to maintain lists of such assets.

**Recommendation 31:**

**Develop a fixed asset system and conduct an annual inventory to comply with the Government Accounting Standards Board.**

The assistant principal and staff at each campus should conducting inventory each year. The business office should provide each campus and department with yearly inventory listings for asset reconciliation. As part of the physical inventory, every teacher, custodian, secretary, counselor, nurse, bus driver, administrator and food service worker should reconcile every piece of furniture and equipment in their rooms with the inventory listing provided by the business office.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The secretary receives training from Region 6 on using the fixed-asset module of the RSCCC software and provides GASB	March 2004
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	34 compliance information to the assistant principal and departmental staff.	
2.	The superintendent develops RISD's physical inventory and tells the assistant principal, food service workers, maintenance worker, counselor, nurse and teachers to help conduct an inventory of district property and equipment.	April 2004
3.	The assistant principal, teachers, food service workers, bus drivers, nurse, counselor and librarian conduct a physical inventory of assets by providing a listing of their equipment to the secretary.	May 2004
4.	The secretary enters asset data into the RSCCC system.	June 2004
5.	Using the RSCCC system, the secretary tracks the acquisition, transfer and disposition of assets in accordance with GASB 34.	June 2004 and Ongoing

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 3

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### *C. PURCHASING AND CONTRACTS MANAGEMENT*

Effective purchasing ensures that a can provide high-quality materials, supplies and equipment in a timely manner, at the best price and in accordance with all applicable purchasing and bid requirements. Purchasing is one of the most highly specialized activities in school business administration and educational resource management. A sound purchasing system begins with sound policies and systematic procedures. Careful planning, strong internal controls and cost-efficient practices such as bulk purchasing and price/bid solicitation provide a framework for the most efficient procurement of goods and services.

An effective purchasing system has several key components. One of the most important is well-trained staff. School administrators must clearly define roles and related responsibilities and adapt them to meet their district's operating environment. Although purchasing organization structures vary, most perform similar functions. A centralized purchasing function is essential to efficient purchasing for the following reasons:

- small volume purchases can be consolidated into larger volume purchases for the entire district;
- vendors and the business community have a single central contact within the district;
- purchasing personnel have experience and are trained in purchasing, sourcing, prices and vendor relations that save the district money and allow for a more efficient process; and
- purchasing personnel are trained in state and federal laws and local district policies applicable to purchasing, for better compliance.

TEA FASRG Section 3 describes purchasing as a major management process with links to overall accountability initiatives. The links are described as:

- *Strategic Link.* The overall mission of purchasing is to use available fiscal resources to obtain the maximum product or service for the resources expended.
- *Operational Link.* Purchasing supports instructional delivery, administration and other services. Performance and goal achievement in the district depend on its effectiveness.
- *Tactical Link.* The purchasing process influences day-to-day financial functions including budget management, accounting and accurate financial reporting.

Texas school districts must comply with TEC Chapter 44, Subchapter B in procuring goods and services, as summarized in **Exhibit 3-26**.

**Exhibit 3-26**  
**Purchasing Requirements**

	<b>Purchase of \$25,000 or More</b>	<b>Purchase of Personal Property \$10,000 - \$25,000</b>
Procurement methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive bidding</li> <li>• Competitive sealed proposals</li> <li>• Request for proposals</li> <li>• Catalog purchases</li> <li>• Interlocal contracts</li> </ul>	Use methods for purchases at or more than \$25,000 OR Obtain quotes from the vendor list established by the district
Exceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce and vehicle fuel</li> <li>• Sole source</li> <li>• Professional services</li> <li>• Emergency repairs</li> </ul>	Produce and vehicle fuel must be purchased using the purchasing methods above
Factors to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase price</li> <li>• Vendor reputation</li> <li>• Quality of goods or services</li> <li>• District needs</li> <li>• Vendor past performance</li> <li>• Historically underutilized businesses</li> <li>• Long-term cost</li> <li>• Other relevant factors</li> </ul>	Lowest responsible bidder

*Source: TEC, Sections 44.031 through 44.033.*

In 1995, the TEC was revised to expanded school district purchasing options by adding three new methods of competitive procurement: design-build contracts, competitive sealed proposals, and requests for proposals for personal property and construction contracts. In 1997, the legislature

included two additional methods: job order contracts and using construction managers. In 2001, the legislature added the reverse auction procedure. Texas school districts now have nine ways to competitively purchase goods valued at \$25,000 or more or for multiple like items with a cumulative value of more than \$25,000 in a 12-month period(Exhibit 3-27).

**Exhibit 3-27**  
**Competitive Procurement Methods**

<b>Purchasing Method</b>	<b>Method Description</b>
Competitive bidding	Requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based solely on bid specifications, terms and conditions contained in the request for bids, bid prices offered by suppliers and factors that affect contract performance. Forbids negotiation of prices of goods and services after proposal opening.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after proposal opening.
Request for proposals	Generates competitive sealed proposals and includes newspaper advertisement, notice to proposers, standard terms and conditions, special terms and conditions, a scope-of-work statement, an acknowledgment form/response sheet, a felony conviction notice and a contract clause.
Catalog purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for acquisition of computer equipment, software and services only.
Interlocal contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state or a state agency to perform governmental functions and services.
Design/build contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a "single entity" for both the design and construction of a project (usually a team including a general contractor, an architect and sometimes an engineer. One firm almost never does both design and construction).
Job order contracts	Provides for the use of a particular type of contract for jobs (manual labor work) for minor repairs and alterations.
Construction management contracts	Outlines the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter or repair facilities using a professional construction manager.
Reverse auction	Outlines a process that involves submission of bids by multiple



	suppliers, unknown to each other, so as to allow the suppliers to bid against each other.
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*Source: TEA, FASRG.*

For purchases worth \$25,000 or more, school districts must advertise bids at least once a week for two weeks in any newspaper published in the county in which the district is located. The TEC requires advertisements to specify the categories of property the district will purchase and to solicit vendors who are interested in supplying them.

Exceptions to competitive bidding requirements include contracts for professional services such as architects, attorneys and fiscal agents. The TEC also allows districts to make "sole-source" purchases for an item for which competition is precluded because of the existence of a patent, copyright, secret process or monopoly; for a film, manuscript or book; for a utility service (electricity, gas, water) or for a replacement part or component that is specific to a particular piece of equipment and is not available from more than one vendor.

For sole-source purchases, a school district must get documentation from the vendor that clearly states why the purchase requires a sole source. Such exceptions do not apply to mainframe data processing equipment and peripheral attachments with a single-item price of more than \$15,000.

## **FINDING**

RISD does not use encumbrance accounting or purchase orders to record anticipated expenditures. RISD uses the RSCCC software for accounting and contracts with Region 6 for support. The software has a purchasing module that issues purchase orders and encumbers the budgeted funds when a purchase order is issued, but RISD has not used this module.

RISD maintains a centralized purchasing system in which purchasing requests from teachers, principals, administrators and directors are submitted and processed by the superintendent's secretary/finance clerk in the central office. Purchase orders flow from the primary or secondary schools or departments to the superintendent's secretary/finance clerk for review and processing, who forwards them to the superintendent for review and approval.

As a result, RISD does not have accurate up-to-date information on its budget balances at all times. Knowing how much money has been spent to date is generally not sufficient. The amount committed must also be known to avoid over expenditure of budgeted funds. RISD exceeded the budget categories in its general fund by \$1,653 and in its food service fund

by \$15,304 from 1999-2000 through 2001-02, according to annual audit reports. The FASRG requires school districts to use encumbrance accounting because districts often issue purchase orders or sign contracts to purchase goods and services that will be received in the future.

Districts use the RSCCC software and purchasing module to prepare purchase orders and check the appropriate account for available funds. If the account has an adequate balance, the system charges the amount of the purchase order to the account. This marks, or "encumbers," the money for the purchase order, to protect it from further spending. An encumbrance accounting system ascertains the availability of funds and then reserves the funds to cover outstanding obligations. Encumbrances are commitments that are related to contracts that have not yet been performed. The encumbrance accounting system controls expenditures for the year and enhances cash management.

**Recommendation 32:**

**Use the purchasing module to issue purchase orders and encumber funds.**

RISD should use encumbrance accounting and purchase orders to control its expenditures. The RSCCC software includes the purchasing module. Region 6 can help RISD to implement this module.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES**

1.	The board directs the superintendent to establish an encumbrance system and issue purchase orders for all purchases.	September 2003
2.	The superintendent and secretary contact Region 6 for assistance in using the RSCCC encumbrance and purchasing module.	September 2003
3.	The superintendent informs all employees that RISD must issue a purchase order for every purchase and directs the secretary to use the RSCCC purchasing module to record all purchase orders.	October 2003
4.	The superintendent ensures that RISD issues purchase orders and uses the RSCC module to record all purchase orders by monitoring the amount of encumbrances in the financial statements.	October 2003 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 4

## OPERATIONS

This chapter reviews the Richards Independent School District's (RISD's) operations in the following sections:

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

Efficient, effective school operations and quality student services support a school district's educational mission. Facilities must be adequately planned to accommodate projected student enrollment, effectively managed to create an environment conducive to learning, energy efficient and appropriately maintained to ensure student and employee safety. Meals must be nutritious, appealing and available to all regardless of economic status. Student transportation must be safe and deliver children in a timely manner to and from school and extracurricular activities. The district's technology program must be organized to attain the entire organization's requirements for planning, implementation, integration and support of existing and new technology for both instructional and administrative purposes.

# Chapter 4

## OPERATIONS

### *A. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT*

A comprehensive facilities management program includes:

- conducting facilities planning;
- analyzing facilities use;
- performing plant maintenance;
- providing custodial services; and
- implementing an energy management program.

Facilities planning ensures a district gathers facilities data and uses it to develop effective educational programs. Facilities use relates to the efficient use of facilities based on student enrollment, educational program requirements and school board and state-mandated regulations. Plant maintenance ensures that facilities are safe and in working order to provide an effective learning environment for students. Custodial services provide general cleanliness and upkeep of facilities. An energy management program ensures the efficient use of utilities through energy conservation and monitoring.

A comprehensive facilities, maintenance, custodial and energy management program should coordinate all of the district's physical resources. The program must integrate facilities planning with all other aspects of school planning, including the district's strategic plan. Facilities management personnel should be involved in planning, design and construction and be knowledgeable about operations and maintenance. In addition, clearly defined policies, procedures and activities should accommodate changes in the district's resources and needs.

RISD's primary facility is a main building built in 1967, which houses central administration offices, the elementary campus and a high school campus. The elementary school serves students in kindergarten through grade 6 and the high school serves students in grades 7 through 12. Other district facilities include a gymnasium and two buildings used for agriculture/vocational education classes and shared by maintenance staff. In 2002-03, the district's facilities served 178 students in pre-Kindergarten through grade 12.

RISD maintains 37,697 square feet of facilities space. The district has one facility maintenance worker who handles all grounds work, performs maintenance on district vehicles and maintains the district's wastewater

treatment plant. The maintenance worker reports directly to the superintendent.

**Exhibit 4-1** lists RISD facilities, year built and square footage for each building.

**Exhibit 4-1  
RISD Facilities  
2002-03**

Facility	Year Built	Total Square Footage
Main Building	1967	23,284
Gymnasium	1955	8,433
Agriculture Classrooms	1965	1,800
Agriculture Shop	1984	4,180
<b>Total</b>		<b>37,697</b>

*Source: Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Property Appraisal Packet, August 2001.*

*Note: RISD has not added any additional square footage since the TASB appraisal conducted in August 2001.*

**Exhibit 4-2** shows RISD's maintenance expenditures as a percentage of the total budget for 2001-02 compared to peer districts. RISD spent 10.1 percent of the district's operating budget on maintenance and operations in 2001-02, below three of its four peer districts.

**Exhibit 4-2  
Maintenance and Operations Budgeted Expenditures  
RISD, Peer Districts, and the State  
2001-02**

District	Maintenance and Operations Expenditures	Total District Expenditures	Percentage of Total Operating Expenditures
Devers	\$247,793	\$1,571,637	15.8%
Calvert	\$292,561	\$2,587,208	11.3%

North Zulch	\$262,382	\$2,352,501	11.2%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$147,191</b>	<b>\$1,458,575</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
Aquilla	\$125,944	\$1,663,539	7.6%
<b>State</b>	<b>\$2,899,134,491</b>	<b>\$28,667,838,747</b>	<b>10.1%</b>

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2001-02.

## FINDING

RISD does not have a facilities master plan. District facilities, which were built in 1967, have not been maintained. Some exterior walls have holes, and the majority of the building needs paint and general maintenance.

District facility planning documents consist of a 2001 Texas Association of School Board (TASB) property appraisal packet, which includes a description of each of the district's buildings, the square footage of each building, and their appraised value as of 2000-01.

Some essential components of a comprehensive facilities master plan include:

- identification of the current and future needs of district facilities and educational programs;
- analysis of the condition of existing schools;
- student growth projections and community expansion plans ;
- cost and capital requirements analysis; and
- facilities program management and design guidelines.

RISD does not have a district improvement plan (DIP) or any other type of strategic planning document to detail its goals and objectives for district facilities and buildings.

Although RISD's enrollment has remained static for several years, the district has not projected the number of students it expects to serve in future years. In 2001-02, the district enrollment matched its enrollment from 1997-98 - 161 students. The district misreported enrollment figures to Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 1999-2000. In 2002-03, the district reported a 10.6 percent increase, serving 178 students.

Maintenance staff and central administrative staff could not provide information about the number of permanent classrooms for enrolled

students. In addition, maintenance staff did not know total acreage available for future facilities use.

**Exhibit 4-3** shows the TEA-recommended facilities planning process. A planning model allows a variety of issues to be identified and addressed in the development of a master plan.

**Exhibit 4-3  
Facilities Planning Process Recommended by TEA**

<b>Program Element</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
Planning	Needs Assessment	Identify current and future needs.	Demographics, enrollment projections, facilities survey, boundary, funding, education program, market, staff capability, transportation analysis.
	Scope	Outline required building areas; develop schedules and costs.	Programming, cost estimating, scheduling, cost analysis.
	Strategy	Identify structure.	Facilities project list, master schedule, budget plan, organizational plan, marketing plan.
	Public Approval	Implement public relations campaign.	Public and media relations.
Approach	Management plan	Detail roles, responsibilities and procedures.	Program management plan and systems.
	Program strategy	Review and refine details.	Detailed delivery strategy.
	Program guidelines		Educational specifications, design guidelines, computer-aided design standards.

*Source: TEA, Facility Standards.*

**Recommendation 33:**

**Create a comprehensive facilities master plan.**



The district should incorporate this information into a strategic planning document, district improvement plan and campus improvement plan (CIP) developed by RISD to guide the district in achieving district goals and objectives. RISD should maintain a master list of district staff to facilitate prompt location of shut off valves and evacuation routes; assist in measuring space capacity and use; identify insurance needs; ensure accurate energy costs; monitor efficient use of facilities; and determining custodial staffing.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent uses the TEA model to assess RISD's status in facility planning.	January 2004
2.	The maintenance worker conducts an inventory and assessment of the district's facility needs.	January 2004
3.	The superintendent meets with the assistant principal and the maintenance worker to assign responsibilities for completing the district's facilities planning.	February 2004
4.	The superintendent and the assistant principal design a method for obtaining community involvement in the facilities planning process.	February 2004
5.	The community provides input.	March - April 2004
6.	The superintendent compiles components of the facilities master plan and develops a formal facilities master plan document.	April 2004
7.	The superintendent presents the facilities master plan to the board for review.	May 2004
8.	The board approves the facilities master plan.	June 2004
9.	The superintendent monitors progress in implementing the facilities master plan.	June 2004 - Annually Thereafter

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

RISD does not formally prioritize maintenance requests, schedule preventative maintenance or document facility repairs. Without work

orders and maintenance records, district management has insufficient information for planning purposes and no way to establish standards and accountability for district facilities.

The district uses work orders to identify repairs needed; however, the maintenance worker destroys work orders once the repairs are completed, leaving no history of the work order or the repair made. District personnel write needed repairs on blank work orders and place them in the maintenance worker's box. The maintenance worker estimated he receives five or six work orders per month. The maintenance worker completes the repairs and destroys the work order. If several work orders are submitted at the same time, the maintenance worker sets the priority based on his own experience and expertise.

Survey responses from students, teachers and parents show they are dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the district's facilities maintenance (**Exhibit 4-4**).

**Exhibit 4-4**  
**RISD Teacher, Parent and Student Survey Results**  
**Facilities Maintenance**

Survey Statement	Group Surveyed	Agree/ Strongly Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	Teachers	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
	Parents	26.4%	30.1%	43.3%
	Students	33.3%	23.8%	42.8%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	Teachers	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
	Parents	22.6%	33.9%	43.3%
	Students	38.0%	19.0%	42.8%

*Source: TSPR Survey Results, 2003.*

*Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Preventive maintenance ensures the periodic inspection, cleaning and adjustment of building exteriors and mechanical/electrical systems performed to extend the life of equipment and buildings. Preventive maintenance occurs throughout the building's lifetime and keeps systems in good working order and to avoid spending large sums of money on repairs.

Written work order priorities help principals and other district personnel determine the severity of a problem and communicate the problem to maintenance staff. In the event the maintenance worker leaves the district or is absent from work, no tracking method exists to establish the status of outstanding work orders or prioritize incoming work orders.

The following is an example of a work order system with completion timeframes:

- **Urgent:** If corrective actions are not taken immediately, operation of the facility could be in jeopardy. Must be completed within 24 hours.
- **Routine:** Corrective actions that should be performed at the first opportunity, but their nature is such that the primary function of the facility is not significantly affected. Should be completed within seven to 10 days.
- **Deferred:** These are corrective actions that will in no way affect the primary function and service of the facility. They will be scheduled with similar work in the preventive maintenance schedule or into the weekly schedule as opportunity permits.

Work orders can help notify the maintenance staff of requests for repairs or maintenance. Work orders also can be used to define the location of the work, to detail the repair needed, to identify how much time was required to fix the problem and to document repair costs. Work orders also assist district management in budgeting for future maintenance needs

**Recommendation 34:**

**Develop and implement a maintenance prioritization work order process.**

The work order process should include work order priorities and provide a list of typical maintenance work for each priority level. The list should also include an estimate of the timeframe within which the work order will be completed.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The maintenance supervisor identifies types of projects for each work order system priority level.	September 2003
2.	The maintenance supervisor distributes the information to the schools and central office departments.	November 2003
3.	The superintendent and maintenance worker select items or components to be included in the preventive maintenance.	November 2003

	program.	
4.	The maintenance worker implements and monitors planned maintenance.	December 2003
5.	The maintenance supervisor conducts follow-up visits to each school to ensure each principal understands the system, priority levels and completion time frames.	January 2004
6.	The maintenance supervisor creates a feedback system to all work order originators.	February 2004

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

Custodians are unclear about their job responsibilities. RISD's two full-time custodians report directly to the superintendent and provide custodial services for the district's 37,697 square feet of facility space. RISD's custodial staffing level meets the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) standards, which state custodial staffing should be based on an expected average productivity of 20,000 square feet during a typical eight-hour period per custodian.

The first custodian, who works from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., cleans the high school classrooms, restrooms, library and cafeteria. The second custodian, who works from 4:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., cleans the elementary classrooms, restrooms and administrative offices. One custodian has been with the district for about five years, while the district hired the other custodian in 2002-03.

The custodians said they are unaware of their job requirements and have not received a performance evaluation. They do not have assigned duties or schedules for cleaning requirements. The superintendent said he verified the duties with the custodians when they were hired. The custodians develop their own cleaning schedule, including the mopping, waxing and buffing of floors. Without clearly defined and stated job requirements and schedules for cleaning tasks, custodians have no idea of what is expected of them.

Surveys among students, parents and teachers show school facilities are not clean (**Exhibit 4-5**).

**Exhibit 4-5**  
**RISD Teacher, Student and Parent Survey Results**  
**Cleanliness of District Facilities**

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Group Surveyed</b>	<b>Agree/ Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree/ Strongly Disagree</b>
Schools are clean.	Students	23.7%	9.5%	66.6%
	Parents	39.6%	13.2%	47.0%
	Teachers	60.0%	26.6%	13.3%

*Source: TSPR Survey Results, 2003.*

Comments received from RISD parents, teachers and community members at the public forum regarding district facilities also showed dissatisfaction with the district's custodial services:

- "Custodial services - great on elementary side, high school - we are looking!"
- "Custodial services are adequate but not easy in an older building. Could be much better."
- "A big need for cleanliness! Custodial services need to improve."
- "Very unclean."
- "Building is not cleaned properly. I have never seen a maintenance person. The blinds are filthy. For a long time floors looked like they had never been buffed."

**Recommendation 35:**

**Schedule cleaning duties and evaluate the custodians' performance of these duties.**

The superintendent should determine custodial cleaning responsibilities and detail them in thorough job descriptions for each custodian. Assigned tasks should be coordinated with the school program so that work during school hours does not disturb students and school personnel. The superintendent should consider altering the custodians' work schedule to hours after school is dismissed, but still schedule one custodian to be at the school for part of the day. To better meet the needs of the school during the day and provide more thorough cleaning before and after school hours, one custodian could work from 11 a.m., when student lunches begin, until 7 p.m., and the second custodian could work from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent works with custodial staff to design cleaning schedules and develop detailed job descriptions and performance guidelines.	September 2003
2.	The custodial staff submits redesigned cleaning schedules to the superintendent for review.	November 2003
3.	The superintendent approves redesigned cleaning schedules.	December 2003
4.	Custodians implement the new work schedule as approved.	January 2004

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

RISD does not track energy expenses and has not conducted an energy audit. The district's heating and air conditioning units are old and require frequent repairs. From January through July 2002 and January through March 2003, the district paid a monthly average of \$1,092 for electricity. The district does not track utility expenses to determine facility performance and has not implemented an energy management program.

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) has helped more than 400 Texas school districts identify \$11 million in potential annual utility savings through participation in the Energy Efficient Partnership Program.

SECO states that savings result from installing: energy efficient lamps and ballasts, high efficiency air conditioners, computerized energy management systems and energy-efficient equipment. The SECO suggests efficient maintenance and operation methods, such as:

- turning off lights in unoccupied rooms,
- changing out air filters on a regular basis,
- keeping thermostat covers secure and in place,
- and operating chillers to take maximum advantage of utility demand rates.

The Energy Efficient Partnership Service delivers on-site technical assistance to the partner districts. Partners pay no fee but agree to institute energy efficient maintenance and operation procedures and pursue financing for capital energy projects, which yield a high return on investment. The service is delivered in two phases: utility bill analysis,

and on-site inspection and follow-up meetings and assistance. Program deliverables include:

- individual energy performance assessments of each facility,
- energy-saving maintenance and operation recommendations,
- identification of cost effective capital projects, and
- assistance in finding financing for these projects.

SECO has engineering firms under contract that will, at no cost to the district, conduct a preliminary audit of buildings and identify maintenance and operations procedures, projects for retrofit and financing options. These audits often find low-cost or no-cost projects to save energy and lower utility costs. Districts initially target low-cost/no-cost projects for energy savings that can be implemented before major capital investments are made in energy retrofits. Some districts have used savings from low-cost/no-cost projects to fund capital projects.

Through an energy audit, districts identify and prioritize areas where energy retrofits could save money. These energy retrofits can be used to upgrade facilities and equipment and generally pay for themselves within eight to 10 years through energy savings and reduced maintenance costs.

A district's maintenance budget needs to cover day-to-day maintenance as well as preventative maintenance to keep the facility running efficiently. In recent years, school districts have been faced with higher operating costs and less funding. A number of districts have paid for the higher operating costs by reducing maintenance and other budgets that affect a district's facilities.

Districts successful in keeping their energy costs down typically have implemented a districtwide energy management program. The most successful energy management programs reflect a number of common denominators that can guide the novice in setting up a locally controlled energy management program.

### **Recommendation 36:**

#### **Request a utility audit from the State Energy Conservation Office.**

SECO has engineering firms under contract that will, at no cost to RISD, conduct an audit of district buildings and identify maintenance and operations procedures, projects for retrofit and financing options. These audits often find low-cost or no-cost projects that can be undertaken immediately to save energy. Low-cost/no-cost projects are initial targets for energy savings and can be implemented before major capital

investments are made in energy retrofits. Some districts have used savings from low-cost/no-cost projects to fund capital projects.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent contacts SECO and schedules an audit.	September 2003
2.	SECO completes the audit and provides RISD a report.	October 2003
3.	The superintendent reviews the report and prepares a recommended implementation plan for board approval.	November 2003
4.	The board approves the plan and directs the superintendent to begin implementation in budget year 2004-05.	December 2003

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **FINDING**

RISD does not have an energy awareness program for students or staff and does not promote student and staff involvement in energy conservation.

In addition to conducting utility audits for school districts, SECO has developed an Energy Education Outreach Program that provides assistance to schools in setting up student-involved energy projects and develops educational materials for schools, residential consumers and small businesses.

The WATT Watcher and WATT Team programs educate students in energy efficiency and promote activities that instill an energy-efficient ethic in all aspects of school operations. Student teams patrol assigned areas of the school, checking for lights left on in unoccupied rooms. Start-up kits and training for the patrols are free. Lighting accounts for at least 25 percent of energy use in schools. This program gives students an opportunity to make a difference.

In high schools, the WATT Watcher Program is called the "Energy Council." Students can choose to expand the program to include school energy audits and serve as mentors for elementary school patrols. The Energy Council can exist as a project of the Student Council, other existing groups or a new school organization. SECO provides materials and information free of charge. The WATT Team Web site is located at <http://wattwatchers.utep.edu>.



Spring ISD developed and implemented a rebate program. This program rewards schools that reduce energy usage below the budgeted amount with a check for one-half of the savings generated.

**Recommendation 37:**

**Involve students and staff in energy efficiency and conservation efforts.**

RISD should promote student and staff involvement in energy conservation. Utility expenditure information should be reviewed every month to make staff aware of energy use and the effect that conservation has on the district's finances and efficiency.

Implementing a reward system in which schools share savings from efficient energy use is a way to encourage student and staff involvement.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent acquires materials to develop programs such as SECO's Watt Watchers to promote student and staff involvement in energy conservation.	September 2003
2.	The superintendent and maintenance worker cooperate to identify maintenance projects to help the district conserve energy.	September 2003
3.	The assistant principal and teachers promote school involvement in selected energy conservation programs.	October 2003
4.	The superintendent forwards monthly reports to the assistant principal on the district's energy use.	October 2003 and Ongoing
5.	The superintendent submits quarterly energy reports to the school board.	December 2003 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Energy savings from school conservation measures could potentially result in significant savings to RISD. To calculate a fiscal impact, a conservative estimate of 10 percent savings is applied to the district's average monthly electricity expenditure of \$1,092. The annual savings would be approximately \$1,092 ( $\$1,092 \times .10 \times 10$  school months).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Involve students and staff in	\$1,092	\$1,092	\$1,092	\$1,092	\$1,092

energy efficiency and conservation efforts.					
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# Chapter 4

## OPERATIONS

### *B. FOOD SERVICES*

The Federal government sponsors the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). THE NSLP serves more than 25 million children each year in nearly 99,000 schools across the United States. TEA's Child Nutrition Programs Division oversees these programs in Texas public schools.

The NSLP and the SBP are administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through its Food and Nutrition Service. Recognizing the importance of a nutritious breakfast, the USDA has actively promoted both programs and has made a commitment to improve the nutritional quality of all school meals.

The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to 25 million children every school day. The federal government also provides schools with surplus food products, or commodities, through the USDA.

School food service operations provide students and staff an appealing and nutritionally sound breakfast and lunch at a reasonable cost in an environment that is clean, safe and easily accessible. Several factors are used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a school's food service operation to include staffing, productivity, food costs, the amount of waste, maximum participation in breakfast and lunch programs, nutritional value, the variety of meals served, the wait time per student served, financial self-sufficiency and the ratio of meals served to the labor hours taken to create them. A well-managed and proactive food service department is critical to the health and academic success of all students.

School food and nutrition programs are important to learning readiness, health promotion and disease prevention. Childhood obesity has become the third most prevalent disease of children and adolescents in the United States. Many districts view school meals as an integral part of the education process and strive to ensure quality and maintain affordability. Policy decisions are made with the goal of providing all students the skills and environment needed in order to adopt good eating habits.

The Texas School Food Service Association (TSFSA) has identified Standards of Excellence for evaluating school food service programs. TSFSA states that effective programs:

- identify and meet current and future needs through organization, planning, direction and control;
- maintain financial accountability through established procedures;
- meet the nutritional needs of students and promote the development of sound nutritional practices;
- provide appetizing, nutritious meals through effective, efficient systems management
- maintain a safe and sanitary environment;
- encourage student participation in food service programs;
- provide an environment that enhances employee productivity, growth, development and morale;
- promote a positive image to the public; and
- measure success in fulfilling regulatory requirements.

RISD participates in programs that the USDA funds including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and Donated Commodities Program. Like all school food service departments in Texas, RISD must comply with USDA and U.S. Department of Education regulations, TEA regulations and state and local health codes.

**Exhibit 4-6** shows the Food Services expenditures for RISD and its peer districts. Food Services accounted for 4.9 percent of RISD's total budgeted expenditures in 2001-02, which was the lowest percentage among all peer districts.

**Exhibit 4-6**  
**Percentage of Food Services Expenditures**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2001-02**

<b>District</b>	<b>Food Services Expenditures</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Budgeted Expenditures</b>
Devers	\$104,453	7.1%
Calvert	\$146,000	5.9%
Aquilla	\$66,500	5.7%
North Zulch	\$130,511	5.6%
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$65,554</b>	<b>4.9%</b>

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 2001-02.*

RISD's Food Services Department is funded from meal and snack bar sales and federal reimbursements for all students who qualify for free or

reduced-price meals. Based on figures for October 2002 and March 2003, the district serves an average of 202 meals daily. The district has one central cafeteria, which houses the kitchen and pantry space for food storage. The cafeteria operates one serving line featuring the regular menu. RISD employs two full-time cafeteria workers and a part-time cashier who also serves as the district's receptionist and bus driver.

The NSLP permits approved snacks to be sold in the cafeteria, in addition to breakfast and lunch. RISD does operate a snack bar line in the cafeteria but also has snack and soda vending machines accessible to students throughout the day.

## FINDING

RISD's Food Services serves fewer meals per labor hour (MPLH) than recommended by food service standards. MPLH is a standard measure of performance used to gauge the efficiency of food services in school districts, hospitals, restaurants and other food service-oriented industries. MPLH is the number of meal equivalents served in a given period divided by the total labor hours worked during that period. School districts typically use the following conversion rates to assist in calculating the number of meal equivalents served as shown in **Exhibit 4-7**.

**Exhibit 4-7**  
**Conversion Rates for RISD Meal Equivalents**

Lunch Meal	1 lunch	1 meal equivalent
A la carte sales	\$3	1 meal equivalent
Breakfast Meal	3 breakfasts	1 meal equivalent

*Source: Food Service Operations for the Business Manager, January 2003.*

**Exhibit 4-8** shows the industry staffing guidelines for on-site food production used to evaluate RISD's level of staffing. The conventional system for preparing meals consists of preparing food on site from scratch with raw vegetables and other ingredients, and it includes washing dishes. The convenience system of meals consists of using processed foods when possible and disposable trays and utensils. The cafeteria workers said they prepare a majority of meals from scratch.

When the MPLH rate is lower than the recommended rate, either the number of meals served is low or the number of hours worked is high. The number of hours worked is a function of two variables: the number of staff employed and the hours worked per worker. The district can control both variables.

**Exhibit 4-8  
Recommended Meals Per Labor Hour**

Number of Equivalents	Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)			
	Conventional System		Convenience System	
	Low Productivity	High Productivity	Low Productivity	High Productivity
Up to 100	8	10	10	12
101-150	9	11	11	13
151-200	10-11	12	12	14
201-250	12	14	14	15
251-300	13	15	15	16
301-400	14	16	16	18
401-500	14	17	18	19
501-600	15	17	18	19
601-700	16	18	19	20
701-800	17	19	20	22
801-900	18	20	21	23
901 up	19	21	22	23

*Source: School Food Service Management for the 21st Century, 5th Edition.*

MPLH is calculated by dividing the total number of meal equivalents by the total number of labor hours associated with providing those meals. Information provided reflects the MPLH calculated for a typical school day at RISD. The recommended MPLH for the conventional method is used in evaluating RISD's kitchen productivity as shown in **Exhibit 4-9** using the average daily number of meals served in March 2003. The district operated 16 days in March 2003, serving 1,659 student lunches and 748 student breakfasts. The district served 103 lunches per day or 103 meal equivalents. The district served, on average, 47 breakfasts per day, or 15.7 meal equivalents. A la Carte sales for the month totaled \$193.50, equating to four daily meal equivalents ( $\$193.50/\$3$  per equivalent/16 days).

**Exhibit 4-9  
RISD Meals Per Labor Hour  
2002-03**

Actual Meal Equivalents	123
Actual Labor Hours	14.5
Recommended Labor Hours	16.8
Variance in Hours	2.3
Actual MPLH	8.5
Recommended MPLH	11.0
Variance in MPLH	(2.5)

Source: RISD Food Services Department.

Food Services staff have combined annual salaries of \$27,000. The average hourly salary for staff is \$10.34.

**Recommendation 38:**

**Establish a meals-per-labor-hour standard and staff the cafeteria accordingly.**

The cafeteria manager should establish an overall departmental productivity standard of 11 MPLH and staff cafeterias to meet that standard.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The cafeteria manager sets the meals per labor hour standard and establishes monthly work schedule.	September 2003
2.	The cafeteria manager incorporates the new MPLH standards into district cafeteria.	September 2003
3.	The director of Food Services reviews the prior month's MPLH results with the business manager.	October 2003 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

By reducing the number of staff hours per day by 2.5 hours, the district could save \$4,653 annually (2.5 hours x 180 days x \$10.34 per hour).

Recommendation	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Establish a meals-per-labor-hour standard and staff the cafeteria accordingly.	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$4,653	\$4,653

## FINDING

The district is losing state compensatory education funds by not identifying all students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

At the beginning of each school year, RISD gives each student an application form for free and reduced-price meals. Parents complete and return the form to the central office. The central office sends reminder notices to parents to encourage them to submit applications. Cafeteria workers are not involved in the identification and enrollment process and do not receive completed applications from students. Eligible students receive free or reduced-price meals according to federal guidelines. The federal government reimburses RISD for each free and reduced-price breakfast or lunch served to eligible students. **Exhibit 4-10** represents the federal reimbursement rates for each eligible breakfast and lunch served.

**Exhibit 4-10**  
**RISD Federal Reimbursement Rates**  
**Breakfast and Lunch**  
**2002-03**

Category	Breakfast	Lunch
Regular Price	\$0.22	\$0.20
Reduced-Price	\$0.87	\$1.74
Free	\$1.17	\$2.14
Severe Need	\$.23	N/A

*Source: TEA Reimbursement Claim for School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. RISD Food Services Department, October 2002.*

Severe Need breakfast funding is available to schools that have served 40 percent or more of their lunches free or at reduced-price for two previous, consecutive years and that have breakfast costs higher than regular breakfast reimbursement rates. RISD receives severe need breakfast funding for each free and reduced-price student breakfast served.

During 2002-03, the district reported 50.6 percent, or 90 students from total enrollment of 178 as economically disadvantaged. **Exhibit 4-11** shows RISD's students identified as economically disadvantaged increased by 26.6 percent, from 79 to 90 students, from 2000-01 to 2002-03.



**Exhibit 4-11**  
**RISD Economically Disadvantaged Students**  
**2000-01 through 2002-03**

2000-01		2001-02		2002-03	
Number of Students	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Number of Students	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Number of Students	Percentage of Total Enrollment
79	49.1%	79	49.1%	90	50.6%

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01 through 2001-02 and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2002-03.*

According to district food service records, in March and April of 2003, 89 students were approved for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. In these programs, students who live in households where the household income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level receive a reduced-price meal. Students receive a free meal if the household income is less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level.

Identifying students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches and breakfasts is a difficult process. Parents are sometimes reluctant to complete program applications because of pride or because they may not understand the forms. Also, students may not want to be identified as economically disadvantaged and request that parents leave them off the applications. This may be the case in RISD. The cafeteria cashier said there some families could probably qualify for the program, but choose not to apply. An April 2003 lunch report, for example, showed some students owed money for more than 30 lunches each.

In school districts where at least 80 percent of the children enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, a district may qualify for all of its students to eat both breakfast and lunch free of charge.

By failing to identify all students who would be eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch and breakfast programs through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program, school districts lose state compensatory education and federal Title I funds. These funds flow to a school district based on the number of students approved for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. **Exhibit 4-12** summarizes free and reduced-price lunch participation initiatives offered by various Texas school districts.

**Exhibit 4-12**  
**Meal Participation Strategies for Increasing**  
**Identification of Economically Disadvantaged Students**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Direct Certification	Some districts do not require families to complete an application for the federal free and reduced-price meal programs if they are pre-certified as eligible by the Texas Department of Human Services through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
Family Identification	If a parent fills out a form for one child, all of the siblings in the same household are automatically qualified.
Campus-Based At-Risk Budgeting	Principals are encouraged to aggressively qualify eligible students because funds for at-risk programs in their campus budget depend on the number of identified students. In the Texarkana ISD, for example, principals are motivated to identify every eligible child for the program because their campus' Compensatory and Title I budget is linked directly to the number of children identified in the program.
Parental Assistance	Providing all parents a user-friendly form and campus-based assistance to complete the forms. This approach can be critical for non-English speaking or illiterate parents. The El Paso ISD provides applications in both English and Spanish. Other districts have staff available during registration and the first days of school to help parents read and complete paperwork.
Advertising Campaigns	Billboards, posters and flyers extol the virtue of the free and reduced-price meal program and encourage participation.
Incentive Awards	Giving prizes to students and parents for completing an eligibility application. Houston ISD placed all of the applicants' names in a hat and drew for prizes, with the top prize a television. Some of the prizes were donated by local businesses, and some were purchased from the Food Service budget.

*Source: TSPR Food for Thought: Ideas for Improving School Food Service Operations, May 1999.*

The district receives \$737 in compensatory education funds for each student identified as economically disadvantaged.

**Recommendation 39:**

**Develop strategies to ensure that all eligible students are identified for free and reduced-price meals.**

RISD should research techniques used by other school districts to encourage involvement in the free and reduced price meal program. The superintendent should explain the program to staff and parents and the benefits the program provides to the district. Cafeteria workers should also be involved in the identification and enrollment process.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent and cafeteria manager develop strategies to identify students eligible for free and reduced meals and submit to the board for review and approval.	September 2003
2.	The school board directs the superintendent to implement the identification strategies.	September 2003
3.	The superintendent and cafeteria manager begins a contest to award prizes for students and/or classes submitting completed applications.	September 2003
4.	The superintendent and cafeteria manager assist parents in completing applications during registration and answer questions in person and by telephone.	September 2003
5.	The superintendent submits a report on participation to the school board.	October 2003

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The district could receive \$737 for each additional student identified as economically disadvantaged. If the number of students identified as eligible for free meals increased by 10 students, the district would receive an additional \$7,370 annually beginning in 2004-05 (\$737 x 10).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Develop strategies to ensure that all eligible students are identified for free and reduced-price meals.	\$0	\$7,370	\$7,370	\$7,370	\$7,370

**FINDING**

RISD has three vending machines operating directly outside the cafeteria during meal serving times that compete with the food served in the

cafeteria. The review team observed many high school students eating snacks and drinking soft drinks from the vending machines instead of eating food from the cafeteria during the lunch hour.

School districts must establish rules or regulations as necessary to control the sale of foods in competition with meals served under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Such rules and regulations must prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value in the food service area during the breakfast and lunch periods or in areas where students are likely to eat their meal.

The Competitive Food Regulation restricts certain categories of food items including:

- soda water - any carbonated beverage (No products shall be excluded from this definition because it contains discrete nutrients added to the food such as vitamins, minerals and protein.);
- water ices - any frozen sweetened water such as Popsicles and flavored ice with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juices;
- jellies and gums - a mixture of carbohydrates made predominately from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing; and
- certain candies - any processed foods made predominately from sweeteners or artificial candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy and coated popcorn.

The high school students buy carbonated drinks and snacks from the vending machines and take them into the cafeteria or elsewhere for lunch. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) supports efforts to improve the school nutrition environment by reemphasizing the requirements to prohibit serving foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) in the food service area during meal periods. Under the regulations of FMNV, school food authorities must establish rules to control the sale of FMNV to include carbonated beverages. The availability of FMNV found in the vending machines jeopardizes the nutritional effectiveness of the school meal program and may contribute to the trend of unhealthy eating practices among children.

In July 2003, the Texas Commissioner of Education transferred authority over child nutritional programs to the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). On July 28, the Agriculture Commissioner issued a policy change that took effect August 1, 2003. The amended policy included:

- An elementary campus may not serve or provide access for students to FMNV at any time or any where on school premises

during the school day. Elementary is defined any grades 6 or lower. If a middle school has only one such grade, for example 6th through 8th, this policy would not apply.

- Middle school campuses may not serve or provide access for students to FMNV anywhere on the school premises during meal periods (breakfast, lunch and snack.) Middle school is defined any campus with grades 6th through 8th. The exception is a high school that has 8th grade, which does not fall into this prohibition.
- In addition, the middle school campus may not serve or provide access for students to have carbonated beverages in excess of 12 ounces any where on the school premises during the day. If there is an existing contract for vending of larger volume containers, the policy does not apply, but all contract renewals must prohibit sale of any carbonated beverages in excess of 12 ounces.

The Commissioner of Agriculture stated that the "TDA will aggressively enforce and diligently monitor this policy to insure continued compliance. When violations of this policy are noted, the TDA will disallow all new reimbursement for the day and require the school to reimburse the food service account for the lost reimbursement. A documented correction plan will be required and diligently monitored to insure continued compliance."

**Recommendation 40:**

**Restrict the use of vending machines during serving hours and comply with the Texas Department of Agriculture Policy.**

The district should prohibit student use of vending machines during meal serving hours or move the machines to a location that will not conflict with the cafeteria. Since RISD does not receive revenue from the vending machines, restricting machine use will not have a financial impact on the district. Additionally, lunch participation rates may increase.

The district should also consider removing the vending machines and replacing them with machines from a contract that provides income to the district on sales of merchandise or providing up-front monies for the district to use as it wishes.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent informs the board of the Competitive Food Regulation and the nutritional implication for students eating from vending machines for lunch.	September 2003
2.	The school board directs the superintendent to restrict student use of vending machines during meal serving hours.	October 2003

3.	The superintendent drafts a memo for distribution to staff and students to explain the change in vending machine availability.	October 2003
4.	The superintendent includes the information in an updated Student Handbook/Code of Conduct.	January 2004

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Chapter 4

## OPERATIONS

### *C. TRANSPORTATION*

The primary objective of an effective school transportation function is to provide timely, efficient and safe transportation services to all eligible students.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) authorizes school districts to provide student transportation services between school and home, from school to career and technology training destinations and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) further requires districts to provide transportation services to students who must travel to receive special education services.

School districts receive state funding for the transportation of regular and special education students based on funding rules established by the Texas Legislature. The TEC states that districts are eligible to receive state funding for the transportation of regular and special students between home and school and of career and technology students to and from vocational training locations. A district may also receive an additional amount of up to 10 percent of its regular transportation allotment to be used for the transportation of children living within two miles of the school they attend who would be subject to hazardous traffic conditions if they walked to school.

TEA requires school districts to provide information such as ridership, mileage and transportation operating expenses annually. TEA reimburses districts for qualifying expenses according to a formula based on linear density as specified by the TEC for regular home-to-school transportation services.

Linear density is the average number of regular eligible students transported daily divided by the daily route miles traveled. TEA uses this calculation to assign each school district to one of seven groups eligible to receive a different maximum per-mile reimbursement. TEA evaluates these group assignments every two years by recalculating linear densities with data from the first of the previous two school years.

TEC Section 42.155 provides for a legislative appropriation for regular school program transportation is shown in **Exhibit 4-13**. The allotment for special education miles driven is \$1.08 per mile.

**Exhibit 4-13**  
**Linear Density Allotment for Regular Transportation**

<b>Linear Density Grouping</b>	<b>Allotment Per Mile of Approved Route</b>
2.40 and up	\$1.43
1.65 to 2.40	\$1.25
1.15 to 1.65	\$1.11
.90 to 1.15	\$0.97
.65 to .90	\$0.88
.40 to .65	\$0.79
Up to .40	\$0.68

*Source: TEA, Handbook on School Transportation Allotments, May 2003.*

**Exhibit 4-14** compares the expenses per mile for regular and special transportation for RISD, its peer districts and the state average from 1998-99 through 2001-02. RISD's information for 2001-02 was not provided to TEA and is not included in charts for the purpose of comparisons. RISD's 2000-01 expenses per mile for regular and special transportation ranked second lowest among its peers. Cost per mile is calculated by dividing the district's total annual transportation operating costs by the total number of miles driven.

**Exhibit 4-14**  
**Transportation Operation Costs Per Mile**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**1998-99 through 2001-02**

<b>District</b>	<b>1998-99</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>2001-02</b>	
	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Special</b>
Aquilla	\$0.82	\$0.51	\$0.99	\$0.95	\$0.69	\$0.89	\$1.36	\$0.00
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$0.91</b>	<b>\$0.59</b>	<b>\$0.93</b>	<b>\$0.93</b>	<b>\$1.10</b>	<b>\$0.63</b>	*	*
North Zulch	\$0.72	\$0.00	\$2.11	\$1.14	\$1.38	\$0.00	\$0.74	\$0.00
Calvert	\$1.19	\$1.17	\$2.46	\$0.88	\$1.56	\$1.45	*	*
Devers	\$2.00	\$0.00	\$2.12	\$0.00	\$2.00	\$0.00	\$0.93	\$0.00



Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1998-99 through 2001-02.  
 \*Data not available.

RISD and peer district transportation expenditures have increased slightly since 1998-99. **Exhibit 4-15** shows the annual transportation expenditures for RISD and its peer districts from 1998-99 through 2001-02.

**Exhibit 4-15**  
**Transportation Operation Expenditures**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**1998-99 through 2001-02**

District	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	Percent Change 1998-99 to 2001-02
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$41,892</b>	<b>\$41,412</b>	<b>\$44,563</b>	*	<b>6.4%</b>
Calvert	\$38,489	\$51,559	\$53,869	*	40.0%
North Zulch	\$56,274	\$68,107	\$47,761	\$63,405	12.7%
Aquilla	\$29,559	\$27,093	\$24,760	\$34,208	15.7%
Devers	\$51,818	\$36,561	\$44,143	\$45,279	(12.6%)

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1998-99 through 2001-02.  
 \*Data not available from TEA.

Note 1: Percent change for Richards and Calvert calculated from 1998-99 through 2000-01.

Note 2: Capital outlay and debt service for bus purchases has been deducted from Operation Expenditures for better comparison.

**Exhibit 4-16** shows the categorical operating costs for the RISD Transportation function from 1997-98 through 2000-01.

**Exhibit 4-16**  
**RISD Transportation Operating Costs by Category**  
**1997-98 through 2000-01**

Category	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Percent Change 1997-98 to 2000-01
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Salaries and Benefits	\$13,606	\$14,182	\$20,123	\$18,006	32.3%
Purchased and Contracted Services	\$2,872	\$10,342	\$11,183	\$15,299	432.7%
Supplies and Materials	\$3,625	\$5,714	\$7,645	\$9,030	149.1%
Other Operating Expenses	\$2,555	\$2,654	\$2,461	\$2,228	(12.8%)
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$9,000	\$0	\$0	0.0%
<b>Total Operation Costs</b>	<b>\$22,658</b>	<b>\$41,892</b>	<b>\$41,412</b>	<b>\$44,563</b>	<b>96.7%</b>

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 1997-98 through 2000-01.

RISD's 2000-01 route mileage (including deadhead miles) totaled 36,648 miles. The total annual mileage for regular program transportation was 28,980 miles and for special program transportation was 7,668 miles. RISD reported no miles driven for extra- and co-curricular events.

In comparison to peer districts, RISD tied with North Zulch as the highest cost per rider for 2000-01 as shown in **Exhibit 4-17**.

**Exhibit 4-17  
Costs Per Rider  
RISD and Peer Districts  
2000-01**

District	Total Annual Operating Costs	Average Daily Ridership	Cost Per Rider
<b>RISD</b>	<b>\$44,563</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>\$2.53</b>
North Zulch	\$47,761	105	\$2.53
Calvert	\$58,616	142	\$2.29
Devers	\$62,749	161	\$2.17
Aquilla	\$32,133	85	\$2.10
<b>Peer Average</b>	<b>\$50,315</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>\$2.27</b>

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 2000-01.

Note 1: RISD did not file their 2001-02 Transportation Operation Report to TEA until

May 2003. 2000-01 data are the most current for comparison.

Note 2: Cost per rider is determined by dividing the total annual operating costs by the average daily ridership multiply by 180 days of riding.

RISD has four bus drivers who also perform other duties within the district. One serves as the district's receptionist and cafeteria cashier, two work as aides and the fourth is a maintenance worker. The bus drivers each report directly to the superintendent. The superintendent also has his commercial driver's license and drives a bus when needed. The district's maintenance worker also coordinates bus repairs and maintenance.

## FINDING

Since RISD did not submit Transportation operation data to TEA by the December 2002 deadline, the district was not reimbursed for Transportation expenses for 2001-02. At the time of the review team's April 2003 on-site visit, the superintendent located the data necessary to file the 2001-02 transportation reports and indicated he planned to enter the information into TEA's web-based Foundation School Program so the district could be reimbursed.

The deadline for reporting the district's mileage reports was December 1, 2002. The superintendent said he knew the district had missed the deadline for filing but was unaware that the report could be filed retroactively. The superintendent later reported that he had filed the report with TEA in May 2003.

**Exhibit 4-18** shows the linear density for RISD and its peer districts for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

**Exhibit 4-18**  
**Linear Density Data**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2000-01 and 2001-02**

School District	Annual Ridership		Annual Mileage		Linear Density	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
Devers	20,700	22,860	24,624	36,936	0.841	0.619
<b>RISD</b>	<b>17,460</b>	*	<b>29,980</b>	<b>31,877</b>	<b>0.603</b>	*
Calvert	6,120	5,040	10,620	9,027	0.576	0.558
North Zulch	18,900	18,180	44,226	43,980	0.427	0.413
Aquilla	14,940	14,400	29,772	23,688	0.502	0.608

Source: TEA, School Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000-01 and 2001-02.  
 \*Data not available.

The district made spreadsheets and mileage logs summarizing the district's 2001-02 annual mileage available to the review team at the time of April 2003 on-site review. At that time, the district had not calculated the average daily ridership for 2001-02, but could still file its report retroactively to receive reimbursement. The district's 2001-02 transportation mileage indicated 31,877 miles driven for regular education and 7,685 miles driven for special education. An August 2003 printout of TEA's 2001-02 Transportation Route Services Report showed the district was entitled to \$30,025 in reimbursed costs.

**Recommendation 41:**

**File transportation operations reports timely.**

The superintendent should ensure the Transportation reports are timely filed to TEA at the end of 2002-03 and subsequent years.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent receives monthly transportation data submitted by bus drivers.	September 2003 and Ongoing
2.	The superintendent files the annual transportation report with TEA accurately and timely.	November 2003 and Annually Thereafter

**FISCAL IMPACT**

By submitting timely transportation operations reports, RISD would receive funds in 2003-04. Additionally funds in future years would be available to the district, but cannot be estimated.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
File transportation operations reports timely.	\$30,025	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**FINDING**

RISD does not have documented bus routes. Each bus driver has a list of students riding his or her bus and their address. Since substitute drivers used by the district are long-time residents, they know where students live.

However, if drivers quit or are ill and substitutes are unavailable, no written bus route exists to guide a replacement driver to pick-up locations.

Some districts design bus routes with the use of manual bus logs with specific stops, turns and distances. This type of planning may limit the efficiency of routes and result in overcrowding or under-utilization of buses.

Selecting stop locations helps a district to maximize the number of students picked up and dropped off at each location, reduce the number of stops made, estimate walking distances for students and prevent stops in hazardous or undesirable locations. Route coupling allows a district to combine a group of bus runs into schedules that minimize fleet requirements, student wait time and overall bus travel distance.

Linear density can be adversely affected when buses have to drive greater distances to pick up a small number of students. Linear density is also adversely affected when buses operate below capacity, which is typical in rural school districts such as RISD. Routes with a large number of riders per mile help the district receive more revenue from the state.

RISD's five operating buses provides services for regular, special and extracurricular transportation. Daily bus mileage logs indicate average daily ridership and bus capacity utilization as shown in **Exhibit 4-19**. District buses have a total seating capacity of 258. With average daily ridership of 69 students, RISD buses have a low utilization rate of 29.2 percent. The review team used May 2002 bus logs because they were the most recent information available.

**Exhibit 4-19**  
**RISD Average Daily Ridership and Bus Utilization**  
**May 2002 Bus Mileage Log**

<b>Bus Number</b>	<b>Average Daily Ridership</b>	<b>Bus Capacity</b>	<b>Bus Utilization Rate</b>
2	23	60	38.3%
3	18	60	30.0%
4	8	18	44.4%
5	1	60	1.7%
6	19	60	31.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>29.2%</b>

*Source: RISD Bus Mileage Log, May 2002.*

A district may also receive an additional amount of up to 10 percent of its regular transportation allotment to cover the transportation of children living within two miles of the school they attend if they are subject to hazardous traffic conditions when they walked to school. A rural district with farm road inlets surround the town, RISD has not identified any hazardous routes in 2002-03.

**Recommendation 42:**

**Document and evaluate bus routes to improve linear density.**

Analyzing and improving bus routes may increase linear density, identify hazardous route mileage and increase the district's eligible mileage reimbursement rates. The district should consider consolidating sparse routes. Using smaller capacity buses to transport smaller numbers of children could also increase RISD's bus capacity utilization. In addition, the superintendent may choose to ride each bus route every few months to monitor whether or not bus routes are the most efficient possible.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The bus drivers for regular and special routes document their daily route plans and analyze them.	September 2003
2.	The bus drivers establish restructured routes to improve linear density and bus capacity.	October 2003
3.	The superintendent rides bus routes annually to assess their efficiency, capacity and linear density.	January 2004 and Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact assumes RISD can achieve a conservative increase from its 2000-01 reported linear density of 0.603 to 0.65, which would increase the state reimbursement rate from 79 cents per mile to 88 cents per mile, an increase of \$.09 cents per mile. Using the 2001-02 documented regular education mileage of 31,877, the increased reimbursement from the state would be \$2,869 annually (31,877 miles x \$.09 per mile reimbursement increase = \$2,869).

Further assuming RISD identifies 10 percent of its mileage within a two-mile radius of the school to be designated as a hazardous route, the impact would be an additional 3,188 miles claimed (31,877 x .10 = 3,188) and reimbursed at a rate of 88 cents per mile for \$2,805 of additional funding annually. (3,188 miles x \$0.88 cents per mile = \$2,805) The total fiscal impact would be \$5,674 annually (\$2,869 + \$2,805 = \$5,674). First-year

savings only includes 75 percent to allow time for implementation (\$5,674 x .75 = \$4,256).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Document and evaluate bus routes to improve linear density.	\$4,256	\$5,674	\$5,674	\$5,674	\$5,674

## **FINDING**

RISD does not perform and has no schedule for preventive bus maintenance. The district does not keep maintenance and repair records for its bus fleet. All buses are taken to a local shop for maintenance, washing and any necessary repairs prior to the start of each school year. The maintenance worker said that the district does not perform any maintenance during the year unless a bus breaks down or needs tires.

RISD has no schedule for documenting vehicle inspections and repairs or tracking the cost of parts and labor for its fleet. The district does not maintain daily log checks for each vehicle or require documentation of routine daily maintenance performed, such as checking air and oil levels.

The district neglects routine maintenance. At the time of the review team's April 2003 visit, one of the buses was past due for its state inspection. Another bus's state inspection expired in November 2001. While the maintenance worker said the bus over due for inspection had just been returned from major repairs, the mileage reports obtained from the district indicated that the vehicle had been used on routes through December 2001 when the inspection expired.

Lack of preventive maintenance on its bus fleet puts the district at risk of breakdowns and accidents. One of the bus drivers said that during one of her regular routes, two tires came off the bus while she drove down the road. No injuries or property damage occurred, but the incident had a potential for disaster and could have been prevented had maintenance been performed on the vehicle more frequently than once annually.

Many districts use daily checklists completed by bus drivers. Many districts also schedule regular preventive maintenance such as oil changes, wiper blade replacement, checking tire air levels and replacing worn belts and hoses. Performing and documenting such maintenance can help protect districts against liability in the event of accident or mishap. Tracking of repair and maintenance costs could also help a district identify when vehicles become too costly to maintain.

### **Recommendation 43:**

**Develop and implement a schedule for performing preventive maintenance of the district's bus fleet.**

Bus drivers should complete a daily checklist to indicate they have inspected the bus and identify any maintenance required. The bus drivers and maintenance work should develop a schedule for performing preventive maintenance actions at regular intervals. The district should track all repair and maintenance costs for work performed on the vehicle fleet. The cost of preventive maintenance on the district's buses would be offset by a reduction in expenses for costly repairs and extend the useful life of the fleet.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The maintenance worker and bus drivers develop a daily checklist to document inspection and identify any maintenance required.	September 2003
2.	Bus drivers complete daily vehicle checks and submit completed checklists to the maintenance worker.	October 2003 and Ongoing
3.	The maintenance worker reviews each daily checklist for action items and maintains the checklists, preventive maintenance schedule and all associated costs per vehicle.	November 2003
4.	The bus drivers identify types of projects for preventive maintenance on district buses and develop a schedule for completion.	November 2003 and Ongoing
5.	The bus drivers submit the preventive maintenance schedule to the superintendent for review and approval.	December 2003
6.	The superintendent approves the preventive maintenance schedule and directs the maintenance worker to schedule preventive maintenance of vehicles at regular intervals.	December 2003

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

RISD has no formal bus replacement plan. In October 2001, the district purchased two new 60-passenger buses. The average age of RISD's bus



fleet is 4.8 years for regular education buses and 13 years for the special education bus as shown in **Exhibit 4-20**.

**Exhibit 4-20**  
**RISD Bus Inventory by Model Year**  
**April 2003**

School Bus Type and Model Year	Date of Purchase	Number of Buses	
		Regular	Special
1987 GMC 60 passenger	9/03/1987	1	
1995 Ford 60 passenger	11/06/1995	1	
1995 Ford 60 passenger	1/11/1996	1	
1990 Chevrolet 18 passenger	2/13/1999		1
2002 Freightliner 60 passenger	10/09/2001	1	
2002 Freightliner 60 passenger	10/09/2001	1	
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Average Age</b>		<b>4.8 years</b>	<b>13 years</b>

*Source: RISD Vehicle Log, April 2003.*

Districts that establish replacement plans based on an analysis of the fleet's age and condition and the district's capacity needs obtain maximum bus use. Replacement plans also allow districts to budget funds for the orderly replacement of buses. A district can opt to purchase buses through the Texas Building and Procurement Commission if the specifications of available buses meet its needs.

**Exhibit 4-21** shows how the age of RISD buses compared to the age of peer district buses for 2001-02. RISD had the newest fleet of buses compared to all peer districts. No information for Calvert ISD was available for 2001-02.

**Exhibit 4-21**  
**Comparison of Bus Age**  
**RISD and Peer Districts**  
**2001-02**

District	Age			Total Number of Buses	Percentage of Buses Older than 10 Years
	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10 Years or Greater		

<b>RISD</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
Aquilla	0	2	2	4	50.0%
Devers	1	1	1	3	33.3%
North Zulch	3	0	4	7	57.1%

*Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Reports, 2001-02 and RISD Vehicle Log, April 2003.*

Many districts use a 15-year bus replacement cycle when determining the useful lifecycle of a bus. Districts with good maintenance programs can extend bus life beyond the 15-year cycle before requiring a replacement. Some districts adopt a vehicle replacement plan designed to maintain the necessary fleet size and concurrently reduce bus hazards by replacing buses once they reach the end of their useful life. This replacement plan allows for staggered replacement costs over time rather than large one-time costs in a given year.

#### **Recommendation 44:**

##### **Develop and implement a formal school bus replacement plan.**

The bus replacement plan should be based on an analysis of the age, condition, and capacity of each bus in its fleet. This will help the district ensure that buses wear evenly and ensure that bus mileage can be accumulated evenly. Rotation of buses may also help identify which route combinations most evenly accrue mileage. Implementing a 15-year bus replacement plan with a fleet of 6 buses, Richards ISD should budget for the purchase of one bus every 3 years. The bus replacement plan should remain flexible and anticipate changes in student enrollment.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The superintendent determines a maximum age and mileage target for all district buses.	February 2004
2.	The superintendent adopts a bus rotation plan, which considers level of preventive maintenance, mileage targets and age of buses.	March 2004
3.	The superintendent and bus drivers monitor overall condition of the bus fleet to include annual mileage, wear and tear on rough routes, repair expenditures and age of individual buses.	May 2004 and Ongoing

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. With the recent purchase of two new large-capacity buses, RISD should not need to purchase another bus in the next five years. Planning for the purchase of smaller capacity buses in the future could also save the district in fuel expenses, insurance and decreased maintenance expenses. The district may consider establishing a savings plan to set aside funds for future bus purchases.

# Chapter 4

## OPERATIONS

### *D. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY*

Technology services in Texas public school districts vary. Some support administrative technology only, while others support administrative and instructional operations through single or separate departments. Regardless of structure, a school district must be organized to create an environment for using and supporting new technologies and providing strong integration between instructional and technology resources. The organization structure or operating structure must support district goals for the planning, implementation, integration and support of existing and new technology.

The district is using funds from the Small, Rural School Achievement Program grant to purchase computers, improve the district's current Internet access capabilities and purchase and install an internet filtering system to ensure students do not enter inappropriate or unauthorized Internet sites. As of April 2003, the district had not spent the entire fund allocation from the grant; however the funds are available until June 2004. The technology coordinator said the upgrades and maintenance scheduled for this summer would exhaust all remaining grant funds.

The district has 100 total computers including 17 laptop computers for teacher checkout and 14 Macintosh computers for the Advanced Reading program. The district is part of the Texas Library Connection (TLC) providing the students and teachers access to a wide range of research information via the Internet. Students and parents can use TLC on personnel computers at their homes. The technology coordinator has provided teachers training on accessing and using the TLC.

### **FINDING**

RISD did not update its technology plan for 2002-03. The technology committee met twice during the fall to discuss revisions to the technology plan. However, a copy of the technology plan provided to the review team was not updated with new goals and objectives and still listed committee members who were no longer district employees, such as the former superintendent.

The assistant principal teaches a computer class titled "Business Applications." The technology plan does not support the DIP and CIPs by identifying classes for elementary and high school students in addition to required teacher training and staff development.

**Recommendation 45:**

**Update the district's technology plan.**

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The technology committee assesses the current status of the technology programs in the district.	November 2003
2.	The technology committee updates the technology plan to reflect goals and objectives of the DIP and CIPs.	December 2003
3.	The technology committee and technology coordinator work cooperatively to continuously assess the district's technology.	Ongoing

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

All computers on the RISD network do not have Internet access, and server performance has been unreliable because of computer virus infections. The technology coordinator is working with Region 6 personnel to solve the reliability problems and connect more computers to the Internet. After inspecting the district's server, Region 6 personnel determined the district server is so severely infected that new software cannot be installed and existing software does not work properly. To solve the problem, the server will have to be completely erased of all information and reloaded with software to include virus protection. The district has virus protection software; however, it was not maintained and updated. In addition, the district did not have procedures in place to ensure students and staff did not contaminate the system with personal diskettes. Region 6 has agreed to help correct the problem during the summer 2003. RISD also has firewall software, from Sonic Wall, Inc., to restrict student's access to Web sites that district officials do not want the students to view. The software is not currently installed on the district server because of the virus infection.

**Exhibit 4-22** shows the number of computers available for students at RISD. With this large number of computers available for student use, without obtaining virus protection software, RISD's system reliability in the future may be an area of concern.

**Exhibit 4-22**  
**RISD Computer Inventory-Student to Computer Ratio**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Number of Computers</b>	<b>Student-to-Computer Ratio</b>
Kindergarten	16	4	4:1
Grade 1	12	2	6:1
Grade 2	13	4	3.3:1
Grade 3	12	4	3:1
Grade 4	5	2	2.5:1
Grade 5	19	5	3.8:1
Grade 6	14	3	4.7:1
Grades 7-12	87	38	2.3:1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>2.9:1</b>

Source: RISD Programs Evaluator.

**Recommendation 46:**

**Maintain the RISD network to ensure reliable Internet access for all district computers.**

The district should correct current network and Internet access problems with the assistance of Region 6 personnel. The district also should update current virus prevention capabilities and develop guidelines restricting the use personal diskettes and other media.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The technology coordinator corrects current network and Internet access problems with assistance from Region 6 personnel.	September 2003
2.	The technology coordinator updates the virus protection capabilities.	September 2003
3.	The technology coordinator develops guidelines for student and staff use of district technology equipment.	September 2003

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

RISD does not maintain statistics to track the frequency and nature of computer and software problems. The technology coordinator also serves as district librarian for students in kindergarten through grade 12. As technology coordinator she is responsible for computer and software maintenance. Although she developed technology work orders and asked district personnel to complete them for all problems incurred, the staff has not been willing to complete the work orders as requested. Interviews with the technology coordinator reveal she spends a significant amount of time assisting district personnel with computer and software problems, leaving the library closed and unavailable to students. However, there is no active work order tracking to determine the total time spent performing computer and software maintenance and computer repairs.

Some Texas school districts use innovative ways to report and record computer and software maintenance problems. Taft ISD uses its Web site to report computer and software problems and collect maintenance statistics.

**Recommendation 47:**

**Collect and maintain computer and software maintenance statistics.**

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

1.	The assistant principal instructs the technology coordinator to develop a proposal to track computer and software maintenance work.	October 2003
2.	The assistant principal designates the technology committee to work with technology coordinator to determine the best methods for RISD to collect computer and software maintenance work statistics.	October 2003
3.	The assistant principal and technology coordinator present the proposal to the superintendent and board for approval.	November 2003
4.	The technology coordinator communicates the decision to the appropriate personnel and begins collecting computer maintenance statistics.	December 2003

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

# Appendix A

## PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS

The following comments convey the public forum and focus group's perception of Richards Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Comptroller or review team. The narrative comments are the actual comments received.

### **DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

- My children have been going to this school district for five years. Before Mr. Ainsworth became superintendent there was no communication to the parents of the students. There was minimal communication to the school board and staff. This year, the parents, the school board and the staff are all given free access to the same information. If it concerns our school or our students we receive information about it and what the district intends to do to follow up on the issue. As a parent I truly appreciate this.
- RISD is a small intimate school - most students have known each other since pre-k. There are no secrets - staff, faculty, students and parents know when something needs attention almost immediately - things (problems) are handled on a 'need to take care of it' basis as they arise.
- I think we have a great board. It is made up of good everyday people who are respected and looked up to in the community. They all have good ties to family here. I think the superintendent has too much on his plate at times but he does a good job of handling it and putting everything into place. I think their strategic planning could use a few pointers. This is a good school but it could be a great school. It seems sometimes we get something good going and they knock it down. This area could use help. Everything we do now effects the future.
- Board and superintendent relations have always been good, comfortable, situations - meetings are designed to allow community input, board comments, superintendent and principal reports. Site-based committees are not involved as they used to be. Probably need strategic planning committees to make decisions about the future and where the school is headed. The management of the district is left to the board and superintendent - maybe if more of superintendent duties could be delegated to a full-time principal, the superintendent could focus more on what his specific duties really are.
- Being a small school, we generally don't have the problems that the larger districts do. Although occasionally we will get a student that has problems. We have help from the sheriff's department



when needed. Our policies are good ones. If a student needs to be reprimanded they are talked to or if greater problems persist the parents are contacted and like I said the authorities are called.

- I feel that there are a lot of good things going on at Richards ISD. There are some areas that I feel need improving. Over the last several years it seems that some programs have been dropped or not kept up for whatever reason. (ex: AP English) I feel that we need these types of programs to challenge our college bound students. I feel that our high school kids are not being challenged and I wonder if they are ready for college. I did not feel this way several years ago and I think we need to get back to where we were and beyond that. I also have a concern for those that are not passing TAKS at the junior high and high school level. What is being done to help these kids? Our kids deserve the best and I want to see them get it.
- We have a very supportive, positive and caring superintendent. The board has been very supportive as well.
- The teachers were told to answer questions if asked but to not bring up any issues. I don't feel that is right.
- The district had an opportunity to consolidate with Anderson last year. They voted it down. Funds went to an out-of-county school. If they consolidated, a lot of teachers would lose jobs because they aren't certified.
- One individual I know was receiving \$50,000 per year to work for the district and I never saw the person at the school or in the area of the school where the person was supposed to be working.
- Direct threats were made to not bring up issues. Windows were broken and tires were slashed.
- We had the opportunity to consolidate. It would be beneficial for the district. There are no extracurricular activities other than basketball.
- I'm very disappointed with the district. There is a real lack of communication. The superintendent is very personable, but teachers and administrators were told not talk to each other. There is no communication between teachers and parents and staff can't tell parents when progress reports are due.
- The superintendent was very responsive when I approached him about my child being bullied by another student.
- The school board is very good.
- It feels GREAT being in the Richards school district!
- The school board was responsive to my suggestion for a cheerleading squad and it was implemented after a vote.

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DELIVERY**

- Richards ISD has no music program at any grade level. There is a great need for a music program, especially at the elementary level (grades K-6). Countless studies have shown the positive effects that music has on student's learning ability. By depriving the kids of this type of program, we are doing them a great injustice.
- The teachers and principals here are very fun and nice and understanding.
- We get to get a lot of practice for TAAS, or well the TAKS now. We get through with everything we need to learn before the test, and even get to go on field trips to help us also.
- Curriculum - needs to be changed. The way things are in the world today our students need health education starting at the 4th grade level. At this school they do not teach it until 10th grade. Also, I think we need a sex education program. Not all parents know how to talk to their kids about these subjects. Not all kids want to talk to their parents about these issues. I think they need to be taught about anxiety and relaxation. These are very important. Kids get too overwhelmed because they lack the skills to deal with the issues of everyday life. Chances are their parents do not have these skills either. The high school math could use help. Lots of the kids get no explanation on how to do these problems. Other than that, I think this school has wonderful teachers. The after school tutoring was an incredible deal. Good job there!
- Many programs such as the Gifted and Talented Program were available in the past year(s). I would like to see this program rejuvenated. Too many programs 'used to be' here and are not here now, nor is there any interest to bring them back. U.I.L. Academic Competition - no effort from (7-12) teachers to utilize this competition to help students with special abilities, knowledge, or interests.
- Wonderful teaching experience here. Supportive staff and co-workers. Students are taught respect for others. Students have the opportunity to have an almost one-on-one instruction with caring teachers and staff. Have no worry of violence or gangs being present. Would like more parent involvement but with working parents it's hard!
- When we get out of debt I would like Richards ISD to try to have the Gifted and Talented program again. We have some very gifted students here. Special Ed - we have a very good program here. In the future we may have to expand the services due to the larger numbers of special ed students moving into the district.
- Curriculum: we have a good curriculum. This year we are scheduled to get updated textbooks in several areas. That is exciting. TAAS - I strongly disagree with the witchhunt mentality of the TAAS implementation. Iowa Skills tests tested on the retention of previous years knowledge. TAAS tests on the current

year's curriculum 2-3 months before the teaching year is over. Consequently teachers teach to the test. Out guess it and you keep your job. I have substituted in various districts, including Richards. All teachers say the same thing. The math TAAS are unfair! To the extreme to low readers. A child is penalized for a handicap they already know they have and are struggling with. Then the math TAAS is all word problems making the student look as if they can't do math either. Their general math skills may be on level or higher yet their word problem skills are low due to their reading. You cannot say there should be no low readers in this new system. Everyone learns at their own rate. The new system of teaching is supposed to accommodate all students at their individual levels and not let anyone fall through the cracks. The TAAS test creates cracks to dump students in by the gross.

- Recruitment of teachers should be better! Children will be safe and taught! That means a higher salary for teachers. We need teachers to teach and make sure children are learning. Their knowledge at the end of the year should meet other schools.
- Called to get help regarding scholarships for child in RISD but staff could not help the parent and there was no advisor to assist the caller either. Kids think they don't care to help them to go on to scholarships.
- All things could improve.
- I was not told when my child had 15-20 missing assignments until 2 or 3 days after the report card came. Had I known when they were due or what, it could have been prevented. As a result, my child failed some assignments.
- In extracurricular activities like Little Dribblers, there were no notices sent home with a schedule. The dates and times of practices changed without notice.
- The quality of teachers leaves a lot to be desired. When my child transferred in from another school district, nobody in RISD examined my child's transfer records or knew the special circumstances about my child.
- One teacher didn't care if my child had already taken a subject prior to transfer but school said an adjustment would be made. My child failed that first term. When I asked for a makeup project, I was told 'no'. Some RISD teachers have a bad attitude. Some classrooms are disorganized piles of paper everywhere and some teachers are unable to produce student papers. I met with the Superintendent but nothing happened.
- Progress reports are all different and not standardized in RISD. Teachers here don't know when the progress reports go out. When I asked one teacher for a progress report, the teacher said he doesn't do them. Same with the report cards. Don't know when they come out. Calls to RISD - nobody seems to know when the

report cards come out. I was referred to the Tax Office - nobody could tell me.

- Basketball from October to February is the only sport here. Students either play or sit on the bench. My child was told he could bring a sander and sand benches. My child was docked because my child wouldn't put gym clothes on because my child doesn't play basketball. There should be a greater variety.
- There is no stretching kids or pushing them to excel. There is no college push. It's like they're training farmers, no college-bound orientation or focus. It's like teachers are just putting in time. They need to consider how to get quality teachers, or consolidate, or something.
- There are not very many athletics. The Homecoming game was a volleyball game. Kids in small towns have nothing to do and need an out - a variety of things. It's important to me as a parent.
- The coach is wonderful to the kids! He has a gift, a talent. He is not here for the money. He is good for morale, teaches skills and molds students.
- There is no music class. Teachers try to do music throughout the day. It's important for growth. Teachers are doing a whole lot for the students instead of asking parents to be involved. The second grade teacher is very good. So are most of the teachers.
- Accessibility to teachers is not very good. There is no email for teachers - needs to be implemented.
- Only one teacher for each grade is good.
- RISD is great with the younger kids in sports. The coach makes sure of that with Little Dribblers and volleyball, etc... There is opportunity for kids to be involved in different things. He sends letters to parents regarding the different activities on the elementary end.
- The elementary teachers are amazing! Teachers are willing to give their own time to help students even if not in their class.
- The teachers have been super! The Superintendent and the Assistant Principal are very helpful and spend quality time with parents as needed.
- I have seen the kids all stop and interact with the coach. They love him! He spends extra time with the kids and puts in extra hours with Little Dribblers and other sports activities.

## **PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

- Even though we are a small town, the 'good old boy network' does not exist when it comes to hiring. The current staff seeks out applicants from all around Richards, all the way to Bryan. They look at your qualifications versus who you are related to.

- The superintendent and district need to utilize the websites that coaches look at. You can kill two birds with one stone. A history teacher is needed for next year. The district should hire a coach with the teaching field of history. Just as they should have last year, but they did not. Then, the district should hire a female for the elementary P.E. and girls sports.
- The current financial restrictions on the district budget are unfortunate. However these problems were brought on by mismanagement of the previous superintendent. Since taking over in the current management has an open door policy. Anyone may stop in to speak to both the assistant principal/teacher or the superintendent/principal. They listen to your concern or complaint and discuss it with you to diffuse the situation if necessary. However they don't take sides or jump to hasty conclusions. Both administrators check out both sides or multiple sides to problems before they make decisions. As a staff member before and currently I can say the atmosphere is 100 percent better among the staff. The morale and the team spirit is emerging again. The staff is not afraid to ask for things, changes, or to criticize. They know they won't lose their job as they were told in the past. As soon as the debt is repaid to the state all salaries will return to their normal levels. We may not be rich in Richards but the benefits outweigh the base pay. We are growing, hooray! We need more staff to meet the needs of Special Ed - ISS, ABU and AEP students who move here. Unfortunately there are some students who need these more structured teaching arrangements to flourish. We need more space to grow into as we grow. We need to offer more electives and core classes to expand our curriculum and the horizons of our children. All of our staff are encouraged to go to as many conferences as the superintendent can squeeze the money out for. The superintendent and assistant principal are pursuing all the recruitment venues available to them. The more applicants the better the choices to choose from.
- One of my concerns here is that some employees have not received raises in several years. I think we miss out on great teachers, aides, etc...because there is no money. I think most of the employees deserve a long awaited raise. I do believe that management does a good job hiring. We have great teachers. The process they use works. But I have to say I was recently disappointed when a contract was not renewed. I thought they wanted this school to grow, but sometimes it seems they let the good ones go. I think the superintendent wears too many hats. He is a good superintendent but one man can't do it all. Some do the work but he holds the title. They do not get the pay for doing that work. It all goes back to being in the mess with the state. Things need to be straightened out.

- I have called in many times and teachers are gone to meetings, seminars, etc. They are not at school. Once I called and the superintendent and the assistant principal were both out for 4 or 5 days.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- Anything involving the elementary children brings a crowd. The high school programs do not bring out the people. If you need help with something or you need donations for an event, you can usually make phone calls and get things done. There are not any business-school partnerships. The local businesses (the two stores and the propane company) always support the smaller things that need to be done, \$100 or less. Kindergarten, 8th grade and senior graduation draw large crowds, mostly community.
- If a parent wants to be involved in their child's class or team events, they are welcomed with open arms. The elementary side is always looking for extra hands, readers, listeners, etc. The high school side always needs another parent to help chaperone, drive, provide supplies or sponsor a group. We might look into business-school partnerships in the 5-7 year range when we get the budget fixed. About half of our students don't want to go to college. They want to get into the workforce immediately. Business and technical schools would be good options for them. We have good communications with the community. Our facilities are used by several churches asking for help to computerize something and print it. Our spare is used by many organizations. Our students have great satisfaction making a flyer they will see all around town. The school belongs to the community. The community supports the school. Without each other you have neither.
- We don't have many volunteers, but those we have are great. We have those parents that are involved in everything and will do anything for the school and those you never see. The school has a good relationship with the businesses in the community.
- There is no community involvement or not much at all. At board meetings there is maybe one out of the year when someone speaks with comments.
- There is a great amount of support in the K-8 area. Parents help with Little Dribblers Basketball, Little Spikers Volleyball and all other programs including PTO, Talent Show, Open House, etc.
- The local PTO program is doing an excellent job. I would always like to see more parents and community involved in the school.
- Community involvement is very important to a district. Our community is pretty close knit. I think we have good relations with the people. And there are a few that you can always count on. But there's always room for more involvement. With the athletics,

elementary programs, and drama, the community is always there to support our kids. Our businesses are always there for the school.

- There is definitely not enough parental involvement. There needs to be some solutions to how to get the parent involved. Maybe mandatory class time with their child?
- The school here is very good with parents and newcomers. They treat everyone equally and very fair.
- The community is very involved. We have had an active PTO since 1930's I know. They support our sports activities. They have built the baseball field. We have worked on the playground and had workdays inside and outside the building. The school has its doors open to the community at all times. We work well together.
- I want to see the community do more to become involved. There is limited parental turnout. We need to stress the importance of being involved in our children's education. There is no communication from the district to parents other than occasional notes. This needs to be opened up by the district.

## **FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT**

- The locker rooms and bathrooms in the gym are very dirty and have a very bad odor to them. Only one of the two stalls work. The toilets and bathrooms in the building are very clean and pretty, and smell very good and have not one sign of graffiti.
- Where do I start? Facilities - this whole area needs to be looked at. Building capacity - we need to grow. Maintenance - this area is very gray! Do we have a maintenance department? You can't tell. Custodial services - great on elementary side, high school - we are looking! Energy use - one thing I have noticed is that if the air conditioners had good filters on them they would run a lot better. The custodial department once again failed - but they are looking.
- Maintenance - always room for improvement. Needs paint (really every year), new windows, new interior doors, more storage space in classrooms. Custodial services are adequate but not easy in an older building. Could be much better. Yard and grounds should be perfect with the full-time maintenance man that the district employs.
- We utilize our facilities to the maximum. We have good usage by the community. As such we have to plan for the future expansion in small steps to keep up with our needs. Considering the mismanagement of the previous superintendent we are lucky the buildings are in as good a shape as they are. Due to the combined effort of students and staff to keep everything up we have managed. Finally we have a superintendent who will listen to the maintenance needs, prioritize with the staff the needs and work on implementing the needs. After the debt is paid off we may expand

our facilities. Until then we keep the maintenance up and the buildings in tip top shape. Energy use - the current heat-air systems is superior to central air-heat systems. Each teacher can regulate their room. With the use of the windows there are many months when no heat or air is needed.

- It is quite amusing, and quite sad at the same time, how so much was done over the last few days to get things 'ready' for the comptroller people. If everyone would do their jobs like they did the past few days, our school would be wonderful. Large mounds of trash that were located by the gym were removed over the weekend. All of the grass was finally mowed. The bathrooms were cleaned.
- Maintenance on campus is very poor. You must harass someone to get anything done. The best method is to do it yourself. However, some things cannot be completed by all people. No hot water in gym, high school bathrooms, elementary girls bathroom or office bathrooms.
- A big need for cleanliness! Custodial services need to improve. At times at ball games no water, toilets won't flush. Kids go to bathrooms and can't wash their hands then go back and play ball.
- School needs more money to bring it up to being equal with other schools. Taxes are at an all time high for the shape the school is in! At ballgames sometimes commodes don't flush. No water. Very unclean.
- Building is not cleaned properly. I have never seen a maintenance person. The blinds are filthy. For a long time floors looked like they had never been buffed.
- I'm concerned about asbestos in the floor. I'd like to know as a parent.

## **ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

- The health insurance is good compared to other districts. The dental is not good but we didn't find out until we went with another insurance company. Next year we will know and vote differently. It's hard for a small district to negotiate and get good insurance with such a small client base.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- The district is in current financial crisis - and efforts are being made to remedy situation. Want to see board and administration continue making progress toward this goal.
- The story goes...three years ago TEA or the state funding agency overpaid the district in the amount of \$350,000. The school district, of course, spent all of the funds. On what? I am unsure.



Now the school has to operate without funding until the difference is paid back. It seems to me, that the superintendent and administration should have noticed such a large overpayment or distribution of funds. Then, the school would not suffer as it now does. Insurance coverage is not very good.

- The school budget is almost non-existent. The athletic program received \$1,100 in funds for the year to fund cross country, volleyball, girls and boys basketball, and track and field for the high school and junior high.
- The current staff made sure all staff would be able to go to continued development training. They worked in basic fiscal operations. Then they asked the senior staff to take a pay cut. The pay cut hurt - however it is worth it to keep our school open. Two - three years without pay raises to get us out of this mess is worth what we can give the students at Richards that a large school district can't. The school reports openly to the school board, staff and parents, just where we stand. As a community we are working to repair the damage left by the previous management. We have very low school taxes compared to all the counties around us. That is why we live here.
- My main concern here is, where is all the money? I know the state overpaid the school then the school had to repay it. That's why the state has not given the school any money for the last 3 years. But there are still areas in the school that need constant care and upkeep. I'm afraid certain things have gone astray. Isn't there money somewhere for these things? No hot water in girls' bathrooms. Water heater needs to be fixed. Isn't there money for something as important as hot water to wash our hands properly? Our school tax is the highest around - where does it go? I know after salaries and bills there isn't any left over? What about school fundraisers? It seems there is enough for this purpose.

## **PURCHASING**

- It is very easy to buy or purchase something here, for a good and low cost too. We can buy snacks and t-shirts, have lots of parties and play outside.
- The current staff utilizes all forms of bidding, purchase, or group purchase plans, which will enable us to get the best quality for our dollar. Especially due to the restrained finances of the past year, current year, and future years budgets. We are growing. As such we may have to look into ways to expand the facilities to expedite storage away from the main building to open main building space for other options.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

- The food is good. One of the ladies is rude. If you are late she yells at you and even the teachers.
- The food is very good here! One of the lunch ladies though is very rude. I know of twice, once at lunch and once in the morning, there has been a roach in one of the student foods on their tray.
- Food could improve.
- We are lucky to have the large cafeteria/auditorium. Makes a really nice gathering place. Kitchen needs to be updated and probably all new equipment. The lunches and breakfasts are good and my child rarely complains when asked. My child eats both meals at school.
- The cafeteria facilities are great. We have almost 80 percent or more elementary students participating and almost 50 percent high school participating. That is pretty good since it is uncool to be seen eating healthy food on the high school side. The food is good and affordable. They always have fruit and vegetables.
- The cafeteria staff works very hard with what they have. During lunch, however, the children are treated like there is a time schedule. The whistle is blown, "Kindergarten come empty your trays," is said. "Kindergarten go out and play for the rest of lunch." This continues for K-6th. Some kids eat slow. Some eat fast. Some get a lunch and do not eat at all. I feel more attention should fall on this aspect of the lunch procedure. I do not feel the children realize they can finish their lunch.
- Oh - please help this area. Sink needs to be fixed, floor needs to be fixed, it wouldn't hurt to exterminate. The two ladies who work in food service are the best. They make sure everything is okay for the students who eat. They provide good nutritious meals. But due to the budget they have been paying out of their own pockets to have things fixed. The ladder - they bought, and it is used by other staff for maintenance. You won't find the kind of service they give. They know each student's name. That makes the students feel very special. The equipment is in good working order. I wish I had an oven like that at my home! This area is well trained in nutrition, but the sink really needs to be fixed.
- The food here is like home cooking. Of course the cooks use the foods sent from the state (government food). These cuts of meat are poor so it is a challenge to prepare them. They do a great job. I have eaten in several schools. This one seems to flavor food well. I can not speak for the equipment as I do not use it.
- Better nutritional variety is needed. The food is mostly carbohydrates.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- The buses break down all the time. We do not have enough buses. If there is a trip that will be gone past the bus route schedule

(routinely there is) everything is a mess. "Little Smokey" the van-like bus, is terrible. It provides enough smoke from the exhaust to kill a small nation. I have no idea how it passes inspection! The two new buses are great, though!

- We are growing. We now have four bus routes. The drivers are all good and safe. The dirt/mud roads they drive are not always easy or safe. That's how it is in the country. We will never get rock on all the country roads. In the future we will need to buy another new small bus, big enough for the basketball team, because we now have a junior high team to go along.
- School buses always need cleaning on the outside because of all of the dirt roads (or mud roads)! Inside of the buses (the few times I have seen the inside) have always been clean. The two new buses make the routes much easier because no routes are doubled because of a breakdown. No route is overly long. Maintenance is not as big an issue the last year because of the new buses. They seem to be well maintained on a daily basis. My child has never been hurt on a bus and I have never heard of any child being hurt. This leads me to believe that the bus drivers have control of the kids.
- My only concern is the behavior of some of the students on these buses. Zero tolerance should be enforced here also. This school has an excellent selection of bus drivers. One knows exactly where and when and who and how. She knows when someone isn't on the bus and when someone extra is there. She once came back because she realized one had missed the bus. This area is good.
- The bus drivers here are very fun and funny. They all play with us and have a very good sense of humor.
- I feel safe on my bus. Our art teacher is our bus driver. She is very nice and is very safe and careful.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

- Student discipline is a huge problem. One violent student should have been placed in an alternative education program. The student had several serious violations. I inquired why the student was still here. The answer I received was, "We cannot afford it." Endanger everyone else. If something would have happened, what would the cost be? What was the cost to the feelings of the teachers and students who had to put up with his behavior? Finally, local law enforcement became involved.
- Relationships with local law enforcement handled very well.
- Student discipline policies need to be reviewed. Zero Tolerance should still be enforced. There needs to be a solution to students who continually report the bad behavior.
- I feel very safe. The discipline is well handled.

- I think that I am very safe here. The discipline here is very harsh and I think that the teachers can get a little rough and can be a little hard-headed sometimes.
- After a year of the current administration, students don't want to go to the office. Going to the office is no longer an easy cop out to doing the class work. The current administration talks to the students as well as discusses the situation and the appropriate discipline. Now students are ashamed to go back to the office. In our school I feel safe. You are always watching as a teacher, but you don't have to worry about these students attacking you behind your back. We don't have an alternative education program yet on our campus. It is something to consider down the road 3-5 years as more students with these needs more into our district.
- The school, I think, is a very safe place. We have a great relationship with the law enforcement. Since this is a small school, safety and security has not seemed to be a problem. We seem to keep discipline problems down to very few. As in all places these can become problems. Our administration keeps on top of this situation. I would feel safer here in this school than most in the area.
- Most of our discipline policies aren't tested to the extreme. Most disciplinary procedures are handled by the superintendent if they involve secondary students, usually. Most of the time it is the same students. Parents are notified of any disciplinary measures. Safety and security programs are basic and are adequate. Gun control and weapons have been in the programs but have been more emphasized in the last several years. Most of the local officers (Grimes County) patrol this area on a regular basis. They are always at school functions, if notified, and especially at sporting events.
- The district has had mold and mildew problems for a couple of years. I was told outright that the problem wouldn't be looked into because it would shut the school down. I was offered a HEPA filter in my child's classroom if I didn't file a complaint. There is visible mold and mildew throughout the school. It's my understanding the custodian can't spray for roaches because there is asbestos in the flooring and the spray would affect the asbestos, causing it to break down into particulate matter.
- Roof was replaced last year because of asbestos on ceiling.
- When there are student issues the district handles the issues and involve parents as opposed to giving the kid a ticket. I like the way RISD handles such issues. RISD calls parents immediately regarding any concerns. There is great parent/teacher communication. The assistant principal has been great and she spends quality time with parents. She is very good.

- There are no racial tensions here. They treat each other as they should, even trying to help a student who is slow. There is no graffiti or vandalism at the school or in the bathrooms.

## **COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY**

- School should be equal to other schools regardless of size in computers and technology
- It took a year of begging, pleading, and griping to receive the internet and a working computer in the gymnasium. Physical education teachers are teachers, too!
- Continue to expose students (especially secondary students) to 'real world' applications of technology - business software, internet for online purchasing, tracking, job requirements, online education. Also some level of computer programming or language.
- District has had success in obtaining previous grants for technology/computer systems and networking. Would like to see additional efforts made to obtain newer equipment through grant process and continue expansion of district technology program.
- The office staff has very modern technology. The only thing we really need is more phone lines. However this will come when we get out from under the debt to the state. We have great access to computers/per student ratio. The elementary teachers are looking forward to having a full budget again. There are several programs for literacy and science they are interested in. Possibly combining the tutorials in literacy and math with more computer follow-up exercises. The high school teachers enjoy equipment that is the envy of any school district. All schools need faster more modern computers to employ programs and training for our students. That will rival the current job market applications. Richards is headed in the right direction. Our students are gobbling up the technology training we give them and taking it beyond with their imaginations.
- We do not have very many computers here at this school for the students at all. However we do have very good teachers that teach us a lot and hopefully everything that we need to learn.
- Out of fourth, fifth and sixth grades we have 6 computers. Three can't be used the other three can hardly be used.
- We have gotten a grant to get computers in each room. This has been a great help. Our computer lab is better today than it was several years ago. This area can always use help. You buy the best today it is old tomorrow. All our children know how to use a computer.
- I feel there is a definite need for basic computer skills to be taught at the elementary school level.

# Appendix B

## TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

*Richards Independent School District Management and Performance  
Review  
Demographic Data  
(n=15)*

*\*Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

1.	<b>Gender (Optional)</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>				
		13.3%	20.0%	66.6%				
2.	<b>Ethnicity (Optional)</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>African-American</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Other</b>	
		20.0%	60.0%	6.6%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%	
3.	<b>How long have you been employed by Richards ISD?</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>1-5 Years</b>	<b>6-10 Years</b>	<b>11-15 Years</b>	<b>16-20 Years</b>	<b>20+ Years</b>	
		6.6%	46.6%	20.0%	13.3%	6.6%	6.6%	
4.	<b>What grade(s) do you teach this year?</b>	<b>PK</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		0.0%	13.3%	13.3%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%
		<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
		6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%	6.6%

### A. District Organization & Management

Survey Questions		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings	20.0%	46.6%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	20.0%	46.6%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%

3.	School board members work well with the superintendent.	13.3%	46.6%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	13.3%	46.6%	33.3%	6.6%	0.0%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	13.3%	60.0%	26.6%	0.0%	0.0%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	6.6%	40.0%	46.6%	6.6%	0.0%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	13.3%	46.6%	33.3%	6.6%	0.0%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process	13.3%	66.6%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	20.0%	53.3%	20.0%	6.6%	0.0%

### **B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement**

<b>Survey Questions</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	46.6%	46.6%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	13.3%	46.6%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	20.0%	53.3%	20.0%	6.6%	0.0%
14.	The district provides	6.6%	40.0%	40.0%	13.3%	0.0%

	curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.					
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	6.6%	26.6%	53.3%	13.3%	0.0%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	6.6%	26.6%	53.3%	13.3%	0.0%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	33.3%	53.3%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Writing	33.3%	40.0%	26.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	26.6%	60.0%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%
	d) Science	20.0%	73.3%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	26.6%	66.6%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	20.0%	66.6%	6.6%	6.6%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	20.1%	73.3%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	20.0%	60.0%	13.3%	6.6%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	13.3%	80.0%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	j) Business Education	13.3%	26.6%	46.6%	13.3%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	20.0%	40.0%	33.3%	6.6%	0.0%
	l) Foreign Language	0.0%	53.3%	33.3%	6.6%	6.6%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0.0%	20.0%	53.3%	26.6%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	13.3%	66.6%	6.6%	13.3%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even	6.6%	6.6%	60.0%	26.6%	0.0%



	Start programs					
	e) Dyslexia program	6.6%	6.6%	53.3%	20.0%	13.3%
	f) Student mentoring program	0.0%	33.3%	53.3%	6.6%	6.6%
	g) Advanced placement program	0.0%	26.6%	60.0%	13.3%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	6.6%	40.0%	46.6%	6.6%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	6.6%	40.0%	40.0%	6.6%	6.6%
	j) Summer school programs	0.0%	6.6%	53.3%	33.3%	6.6%
	k) Alternative education programs	0.0%	20.0%	53.3%	26.6%	0.0%
	l) "English as a second language" program	0.0%	6.6%	73.3%	20.0%	0.0%
	m) Career counseling program	0.0%	33.3%	40.0%	26.6%	0.0%
	n) College counseling program	6.6%	33.3%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	13.3%	40.0%	33.3%	13.3%	0.0%
	p) Drop out prevention program	0.0%	20.0%	53.3%	26.6%	0.0%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	13.3%	6.6%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	33.3%	33.3%	20.0%	6.6%	6.6%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	26.6%	26.6%	33.3%	6.6%	6.6%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	20.0%	40.0%	26.6%	13.3%	0.0%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	0.0%	33.3%	53.3%	13.3%	0.0%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less than	13.3%	33.3%	33.3%	13.3%	6.6%

	satisfactory performance.					
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	20.0%	60.0%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	26.6%	60.0%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
27.	The student-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	40.0%	46.6%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	20.0%	46.6%	13.3%	13.3%	6.6%

### C. Personnel

	<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	0.0%	33.3%	53.3%	6.6%	6.6%
31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	20.0%	33.3%	26.6%	6.6%	13.3%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	6.6%	26.6%	53.3%	6.6%	6.6%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	6.6%	20.0%	66.6%	0.0%	6.6%
34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	26.6%	26.6%	26.6%	6.6%	13.3%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel	33.3%	46.6%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	evaluations.					
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	0.0%	13.3%	66.6%	20.0%	0.0%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	6.6%	26.6%	53.3%	0.0%	13.3%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	6.6%	33.3%	46.6%	6.6%	6.6%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	13.3%	20.0%	33.3%	20.0%	13.3%

#### D. Community Involvement

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	33.3%	46.6%	6.6%	13.3%	0.0%
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	26.6%	6.6%
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	6.6%	60.0%	20.0%	13.3%	0.0%
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	26.6%	26.6%	40.0%	0.0%	6.6%

#### E. Facilities Use and Management

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans for facilities far enough into	6.6%	6.6%	73.3%	0.0%	13.3%

	the future to support enrollment growth.					
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	13.3%	6.6%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	13.3%	6.6%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	0.0%	20.0%	66.6%	0.0%	13.3%
48.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	60.0%	26.6%	13.3%	0.0%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	6.6%	60.0%	6.6%	13.3%	13.3%

#### **F. Financial Management**

	<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	0.0%	26.6%	66.6%	6.6%	0.0%
53.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	26.6%	60.0%	13.3%	0.0%
54.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	6.6%	33.3%	46.6%	6.6%	6.6%

#### **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.	6.6%	26.6%	40.0%	26.6%	0.0%
56.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	13.3%	33.3%	46.6%	6.6%	0.0%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	20.0%	26.6%	40.0%	6.6%	6.6%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	6.6%	40.0%	40.0%	6.6%	6.6%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	13.3%	20.0%	60.0%	6.6%	0.0%
60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	13.3%	20.0%	46.6%	20.0%	0.0%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape	6.6%	40.0%	40.0%	6.6%	6.6%
62.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	13.3%	66.6%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

## H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	26.6%	60.0%	6.6%	6.6%	0.0%
64.	Food is served warm.	20.0%	66.6%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	33.3%	60.0%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	26.6%	60.0%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%

67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	26.6%	46.6%	6.6%	13.3%	6.6%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	26.6%	60.0%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	26.6%	66.6%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%

### **I. Safety and Security**

<b>Survey Questions</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	13.3%	53.3%	20.0%	6.6%	6.6%
71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	53.3%	40.0%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	26.6%	33.3%	26.6%	6.6%	6.6%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	20.0%	40.0%	13.3%	20.0%	6.6%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	6.6%	0.0%	86.6%	6.6%	0.0%
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0.0%	0.0%	86.6%	6.6%	6.6%
76.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	20.0%	26.6%	40.0%	13.3%	0.0%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	20.0%	33.3%	6.6%	26.6%	13.3%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	6.6%	66.6%	13.3%	6.6%	6.6%

### **J. Computers and Technology**

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79.	Students regularly use computers.	40.0%	46.6%	6.6%	6.6%	0.0%
80.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	40.0%	53.3%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
81.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	26.6%	53.3%	13.3%	6.6%	0.0%
82.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	13.3%	80.0%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%
83.	The district meets student needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	13.3%	66.6%	13.3%	6.6%	0.0%
84.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	6.6%	73.3%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
85.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	33.3%	46.6%	6.6%	6.6%	0.0%

### Verbatim: Teachers

The following comments convey the perceptions of those teachers responding to the survey and do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or review team.

- For such a small, rural school the faculty and staff are unusually competent and dedicated. The questions about "new" facilities and "security personnel" do not apply to our small campus.
- The discipline for fighting in school is not being enforced.
- We are a small school working with minimal money it seems. Our students that apply themselves have performed well in colleges and universities. Our faculty and staff work well with administration and together. We do not have every program but all programs are not needed in our setting. As a small school we can reach students individually and apply some programs even though not by name.

We work with the educational system with love for our students and community.

- Being such a small district the teachers here share a camaraderie not usually experienced in larger districts. We have helped each other by sharing material and advice on dealing with educational issues.
- We have a good school, good students, and good teachers. We are just a small district.
- This is a wonderful school district with competent and effective administration and staff. I came from a larger school district where cleanliness was a problem as well as discipline. There seemed to be chaos at all times. This school district maintains decorum and respect as well as professional ambiance.
- We have teachers who don't get to school on time and those to leave the classroom unattended for as much as 10 minutes or so at a time. Also there is very little discipline in the classrooms and NONE in the cafeteria. As far as maintenance goes, there is very little and the work that does get done is very poor. We do have some good teachers and staff but some are there just for a paycheck. The honor system of recording your own hours is a joke. Some have NO honor. Clean halls, restrooms and classrooms on one side of the school is very good, on the other side is awful.
- I have not been in the district long enough to effectively evaluate most areas of the district. This is a very pleasant place to work.
- Richards Elementary has a safe, loving environment for our children to learn in. The teachers are supportive of one another and administration and the board are supportive of the teachers. We are always looking for ways to improve and I hope that this review does that.



# Appendix C

## PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions  
Verbatim: Parents

*Richards Independent School District Management and Performance  
Review  
Demographic Data  
(n=53)*

*\*Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

<b>1. Gender (Optional)</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>				
	7.5%	24.5%	67.9%				
<b>2. Ethnicity (Optional)</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>African-American</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Other</b>	
	16.9%	54.7%	16.9%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%	
<b>3. How long have you lived in Richards ISD</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>0-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 Years</b>	<b>11-15 Years</b>			
	7.5%	41.5%	18.8%	32.0%			
<b>4. What grade level(s) does your child(ren) attend?</b>	<b>PK</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	1.9%	13.2%	7.5%	9.4%	15.0%	0.0%	16.9%
	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	13.2%	9.4%	15.0%	15.0%	16.9%	9.4%	9.4%

### A. District Organization and Management

<b>Survey Questions</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings	5.6%	41.5%	37.7%	11.3%	3.7%
2.	School board members	5.6%	35.8%	33.9%	20.7%	3.7%

	listen to the opinions and desires of others.					
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	9.4%	56.6%	11.3%	15.0%	7.5%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	1.9%	56.6%	20.7%	11.3%	9.4%

### **B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement**

	<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	0.0%	32.0%	16.9%	28.3%	22.6%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	9.4%	32.0%	37.7%	13.2%	7.5%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	1.9%	13.2%	28.3%	30.1%	26.4%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	1.9%	18.8%	32.0%	33.9%	13.2%
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	9.4%	52.8%	18.8%	16.9%	1.9%
	b) Writing	9.4%	52.8%	18.8%	15.0%	3.7%
	c) Mathematics	7.5%	52.8%	15.0%	13.2%	11.3%
	d) Science	7.5%	60.3%	18.8%	11.3%	1.9%
	e) English or Language Arts	9.4%	56.6%	18.8%	13.2%	1.9%
	f) Computer Instruction	7.5%	39.6%	24.5%	18.8%	9.4%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	5.6%	52.8%	16.9%	15.0%	9.4%

	h) Fine Arts	1.9%	35.8%	30.1%	22.6%	9.4%
	i) Physical Education	1.9%	47.1%	18.8%	22.6%	9.4%
	j) Business Education	0.0%	20.7%	39.6%	24.5%	15.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	18.8%	49.0%	15.0%	16.9%
	l) Foreign Language	1.9%	11.3%	41.5%	22.6%	22.6%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	1.9%	41.5%	26.4%	15.0%	15.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	1.9%	15.0%	41.5%	18.8%	22.6%
	c) Special Education	5.6%	18.8%	45.2%	13.2%	16.9%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	0.0%	9.4%	64.1%	11.3%	13.2%
	e) Dyslexia program	0.0%	5.6%	66.0%	15.0%	13.2%
	f) Student mentoring program	0.0%	16.9%	52.8%	7.5%	22.6%
	g) Advanced placement program	0.0%	7.5%	50.9%	24.5%	15.0%
	h) Literacy program	1.9%	18.8%	60.3%	5.6%	13.2%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	1.9%	3.7%	47.1%	15.0%	30.1%
	j) Summer school programs	0.0%	5.6%	50.9%	15.0%	28.3%
	k) Alternative education programs	0.0%	1.9%	58.4%	16.9%	22.6%
	l) "English as a Second Language" program	0.0%	1.9%	73.5%	3.7%	20.7%
	m) Career counseling program	0.0%	5.6%	54.7%	15.0%	24.5%
	n) College counseling program	0.0%	9.4%	49.0%	15.0%	24.5%
	o) Counseling the parents	1.9%	13.2%	37.7%	20.7%	26.4%

	of students					
	p) Drop out prevention program	1.9%	3.7%	49.0%	16.9%	28.3%
11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	3.7%	5.6%	32.0%	16.9%	41.5%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	13.2%	26.4%	43.3%	7.5%	9.4%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	3.7%	16.9%	32.0%	18.8%	28.3%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	5.6%	39.6%	22.6%	18.8%	13.2%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	9.4%	43.3%	15.0%	18.8%	13.2%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	1.9%	47.1%	15.0%	15.0%	20.7%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	1.9%	35.8%	7.5%	18.8%	35.8%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	3.7%	30.1%	33.9%	20.7%	11.3%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	1.9%	45.2%	16.9%	13.2%	22.6%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	7.5%	32.0%	15.0%	22.6%	22.6%

### C. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	9.4%	32.0%	16.9%	24.5%	16.9%
22.	District facilities are open	13.2%	15.0%	41.5%	16.9%	13.2%

	for community use.					
23.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	3.7%	24.5%	35.8%	26.4%	9.4%

#### 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.	0.0%	22.6%	49.0%	15.0%	13.2%
25.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	39.6%	13.2%	32.0%	15.0%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.0%	26.4%	30.1%	18.8%	24.5%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0.0%	22.6%	33.9%	22.6%	20.7%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	18.8%	32.0%	33.9%	3.7%	11.3%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	7.5%	7.5%	67.9%	7.5%	9.4%

#### 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.	5.6%	22.6%	32.0%	18.8%	20.7%
31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	1.9%	13.2%	39.6%	18.8%	26.4%

#### 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.	1.9%	20.7%	56.6%	9.4%	11.3%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0.0%	13.2%	60.3%	13.2%	13.2%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	1.9%	13.2%	62.2%	7.5%	15.0%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	1.9%	16.9%	62.2%	7.5%	11.3%

### G. Purchasing and Warehousing

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	5.6%	43.3%	11.3%	15.0%	24.5%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape	1.9%	54.7%	9.4%	16.9%	15.0%
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	1.9%	45.2%	13.2%	22.6%	16.9%

### H. Food Services

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	24.5%	56.6%	0.0%	9.4%	9.4%
40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	24.5%	60.3%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%

41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	1.9%	43.3%	20.7%	22.6%	11.3%
42.	Food is served warm.	11.3%	52.8%	18.8%	5.6%	11.3%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	7.5%	49.0%	13.2%	16.9%	13.2%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	18.8%	64.1%	11.3%	1.9%	3.7%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	13.2%	43.3%	20.7%	16.9%	5.6%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	9.4%	62.2%	16.9%	7.5%	3.7%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	11.3%	54.7%	20.7%	9.4%	3.7%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	3.7%	50.9%	22.6%	15.0%	7.5%

### I. Transportation

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	32.0%	37.7%	15.0%	7.5%	7.5%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus	28.3%	35.8%	30.1%	5.6%	0.0%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	28.3%	41.5%	26.4%	1.9%	1.9%
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	24.5%	52.8%	18.8%	3.7%	0.0%
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	24.5%	49.0%	22.6%	3.7%	0.0%
54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	24.5%	45.2%	26.4%	0.0%	1.9%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	28.3%	45.2%	26.4%	0.0%	0.0%

56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	22.6%	41.5%	28.3%	5.6%	1.9%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	11.3%	28.3%	37.7%	7.5%	15.0%
58.	Buses are clean.	9.4%	37.7%	37.7%	9.4%	5.6%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	15.0%	37.7%	32.0%	11.3%	3.7%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	9.4%	41.5%	45.2%	3.7%	0.0%

### J. Safety and Security

	<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	9.4%	50.9%	30.1%	7.5%	1.9%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	9.4%	49.0%	24.5%	11.3%	5.6%
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	28.3%	35.8%	28.3%	7.5%	0.0%
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	11.3%	26.4%	37.7%	18.8%	5.6%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	7.5%	26.4%	37.7%	22.6%	5.6%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	5.6%	11.3%	73.5%	3.7%	5.6%
67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	3.7%	5.6%	77.3%	5.6%	7.5%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	7.5%	33.9%	50.9%	7.5%	0.0%



69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	5.6%	22.6%	37.7%	22.6%	11.3%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	5.6%	16.9%	56.6%	5.6%	15.0%

### **K. Computers and Technology**

<b>Survey Questions</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
71.	Teachers know how to teach computer science and other technology-related courses.	3.7%	32.0%	43.3%	9.4%	11.3%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	7.5%	30.1%	41.5%	15.0%	5.6%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	7.5%	22.6%	43.3%	15.0%	11.3%
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	0.0%	15.0%	54.7%	11.3%	18.8%
75.	Students have easy access to the Internet.	5.6%	20.7%	50.9%	7.5%	15.0%

Verbatim: Parents

# Appendix C

## PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Data/Survey Questions

Verbatim: Parents

### **Verbatim: Parents**

The following comments convey the perceptions of those teachers responding to the survey and do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or review team.

- We need more advanced educational books for advanced grades. We have good teachers but our pay scale is too low. We need more up-to-date equipment and furniture.
- My child enjoys school and we feel she is getting a good education in a fairly safe environment.
- The teachers do not have enough computer knowledge. There is not enough computer technology for the students. There is no school nurse, only a counselor on Monday. The needs for special needs children are not met. The athletic training is terrible and the gym is so old that even the games inside get rained out due to the leaking roof. Someone needs to come spend time at this school and look at it and the programs. The library is really behind the times too. I would be willing to pay higher taxes for a better school.
- It is my opinion that Richards ISD should be CLOSED! The school structure is old and antiquated. Rodents run wild in the school, and the kitchen is a disgrace. The heating and air conditioning is out-dated (most a/c units do not work, if they have them at all). The teachers are made up of local family members, which are kin to each other and graduated from Richards High School or just graduated from college. Sports program is an embarrassment being that they perform in a closed-in pole barn. The showers facilities in the gym do not operate. They have no track, only a softball field. Unless you were born and raised in this town the children are picked on and the staff will not stop it. Students who cannot pass the TAAS test and are the favorites can have a teacher and take the test alone with the teacher so they can pass. I could continue with this for about 100 pages but to sum it up, this school is a joke and substandard compared to other small schools.
- I am overall happy with this school, but there are places that I see a need for improvement. The main thing is sanitation in the kitchen. It's awful. Also the restrooms are not cleaned well on a regular basis. The library is lacking the books the kids need and the variety in their reading level.

- The school does not employ a nurse but office personnel are competent and always find me when my child is ill. Emergency situations are handled by "911." Education is a priority for administration and staff. We have dedicated teachers who can meet the individual needs of each child. There are a lot of programs that aren't offered, but the programs that are, are handled effectively. My child is not a good student; he has even been a discipline problem in the past, but the administration handles the situations in school. I am notified by phone and by letter of any situation. Communication with parents is effective in elementary, but my son, a freshman, rarely brings any communication home, not a problem for most high school parents, just me. The information is sent home, I just don't receive it from my son. The facilities could be cleaner by most people's standards, but the restrooms and cafeteria are always clean. My son eats breakfast and lunch at school, prepared by cafeteria staff, most every day, generally a hot meal. Each child, if they choose so, can be an achiever. You are allowed to be a part of every program offered. There are no "groups" of children set apart from others, so very little peer pressure, which leads to fewer disturbances. All of these children are friends and grow up with each other. All of these things lead to an effective classroom, in my opinion, less stress for the teacher, which means an atmosphere conducive to learning. As an involved parent of a RISD student I am quick to point out deficiencies and areas of excellence within the school. I am also aware of the reasons for this survey. I am sure it is because of fund balances and deficiencies. I know that budgets are at a minimum, and even because of this, the students of Richards ISD have suffered minimally. It is the teachers who have suffered because they no longer receive a stipend, among other things. But the education that they provide has not suffered. This is evidence of the high quality of teachers that are employed and their commitment to education. Administration and staff at Richards ISD have to work harder than at some school districts because of many things. In elementary because of one teacher per grade level, you must be effective to be able to stay employed. Parents can't move their child to a different teacher. In Jr. and Sr. high the teachers are teaching English, history, science and math for six grade levels, which means six different class preps per day. Our P.E. teacher has K-12 each day. You have to be a dedicated teacher to even want to be in the Richards school district! We are committed to Richards ISD because we believe that it is still a part of who we are today. I guess because of the length of this comment you can see I am passionate about school and the education of my children.
- There is no gifted and talented program but there is a need for one. Some of the questions I answered no opinion because I don't have

any knowledge. I wasn't aware that the school has school board meetings. I am not being properly informed of them. There is no security personnel, however, this is a small school. I do have a problem with an elementary school teacher who has been known to yell at students. My child did not want to attend school for fear of being yelled at by an elementary school teacher. This yelling situation should really be checked into. I'm in fear that my child may not like school at a young age therefore ruining my child's learning potential. I am considering home school because of this.

- The teachers are very low quality and do not care if the students learn. There is no counselor, no college directed teaching. No computer classes at all. Teachers frequently leave the classroom for extended periods of time. Three substitutes in three months; is that acceptable? Very little, if any, communication between school and parents. Building is dirty and daily cleaning is not done (dirty floors and windows). My tax bill is very low, but I would willingly pay more for better schools. There are not enough schoolbooks for all students. Misbehaving students disrupt classes and are not removed or dealt with. This school does not even try to teach the college bound student. The teachers don't care and don't even try to get children excited about learning. There are no advanced classes for eager learners. They have to do the exact same work as others with no extra chance to do more. This school really needs help. Their TAAS scores speak for themselves. They need to consolidate or receive state assistance. Our children are the only ones to suffer. I will move if I have to in order to find better schools.
- Things are done differently here than I am used to. I have been having some problems with a teacher but am unsure of how to handle the situation. It is very difficult when there is only one teacher per grade.
- The teacher needs to stop showing favoritism of students.
- Much should be done to prepare students in RISD for post-graduate classes/careers.
- I think the teachers should contact the parent concerning their children more than they do. I have a child who has some medical issues and has a hard time in his classes. I had recommended special education classes and the teacher wasn't going to say anything and just let my child stay in the same classes. I feel they should work on this.
- The library, computer and special needs programs need much improvement. The athletic program is terrible and the gym is falling apart and old. There is no school nurse. A counselor only comes on Monday. The grounds need improving. I do not believe there are enough programs for the children. The foreign language is Spanish and taught over the Internet where the teacher is at

another school. Someone really needs to look at this school carefully and over a period of time. They are way behind the times.

- Need more funds to take care of school buildings.
- School superintendent never at school to listen to or respond to problems. Computers are available but students are not allowed to use them. They are mostly used for teachers' personal use. Library is always locked and students don't have access. Some teachers are not knowledgeable in their assigned subject and are unable to control a small class of even three students. Restrooms on high school side and gym are in poor repair and very poorly cleaned. Toilet paper, paper towels and soap are not readily available.
- The school does very well with the little money it has for student education. They need to be able to offer better salaries in order to keep good teachers. They seem to use us for background on their resumes and then move on to greener pastures. We need better student furniture, computers and more books for the library.
- My child was in the gifted and talented program when they offered it. When they stopped, my child's behavior in his regular classes went downhill. My child is bored due to lack of that extra challenge. On most of the "no opinion" answers it is because I am not aware of some of these things.
- My child had a rough time last year with one particular teacher and is doing great with a different teacher this year.
- At times it is nice to be in a small school district but other times it is a disadvantage. Our teachers are overloaded at times and unable to take on extra activities such as National Honor Society and things like that. We could definitely use more computers and school furniture. The school kitchen does not have enough hot water.
- I noticed my child's schoolwork was, to me, that of a kindergarten or first grade student, even though my child is in higher grade. It seems all of my child's subjects here fail to meet my child's learning ability. There used to be a substitute teacher replacing a teacher whose husband was ill. My child had a hard time adjusting. I think the school is not very involved with the students on a personal level.
- School is not involved on a personal level with new students.
- They need to have better programs for special needs students. They also need an air-conditioned gym.
- My child sometimes doesn't get along with one of his teachers.
- I believe we could have a better district for the students if there were nicer facilities. More computer-related activities would be nice as well as extra curricular programs.
- When a child gets into fights at school they don't say anything to the other child(ren).

- Teachers are allowed to lower themselves to a child's level by saying demeaning things to the students. Teacher and staff get in a person's personal space, which can cause problems such as fear, aggressive behavior and other problems. Staff and teachers need to keep hands off students. Teachers and staff should not discuss student's grades, behavior, religion, etc. with class. No head-butting from coaches.
- In need of outside monitor!
- I believe that an extraordinary job is being done in the elementary. Unfortunately I believe that in grades 7-12 more could be done. There is much down time, which could be used for more educational activities to enhance classroom instruction as well as prepare for state-mandated tests. I also believe the requirements for graduation credits should be increased. It seems senseless to have the entire senior class leave at lunch because all have already fulfilled graduation credits. I would like to see more offered and required at the high school level.
- The school is so small a student may be forced to have the same teacher every year; maybe for four years. For a good student that might be fine, but for a student with problems, such as attention problems or other learning or personal problems, this could lead to poor attendance, poor grades, poor attitude toward learning. I myself had a mean teacher. I could not imagine having that same teacher for four years of high school. Please help!
- I have no opinion on a lot of things because I am not familiar with much at the school. They rarely send any communication except for six-week reports. I do know I feel my child is not quite getting the education he deserves. In other districts where my child attended, my child was in five G.T. classes; in Richards and they have no G.T. classes offered. My child missed two days straight because of illness and had never never missed school before. I have yet to receive a phone call on my child's absence. Thank you.
- I am very impressed with the Ag program at this school.
- I think that there should be more than one math teacher. All children are not on the same level and need more help. Some teachers in RISD teach as if everyone is an "A" student and do not take time to help the slower kids. I also have a strong feeling that it is not what you know but whom you know.
- There seems to be more favor to the Anglos than the African-American.
- I feel that the teachers are not taking care of the needs of the children as far as schoolwork. One of my children has been cussed at and taught the bible in the teacher's own way. The children openly talk about sex in an unsafe manner.
- I feel that Richards ISD does not meet the education requirements that our children need. The vast majority of graduating seniors

does not go to college or acquire any additional education. The kindergarten to twelfth grade is in one school. I feel that there aren't enough after-school programs or activities to keep our children off the streets. Please take my comments into consideration.

- I believe there are some great teachers at Richards ISD. There are a few I would definitely get rid of. They are tired of teaching, and I think they have given up on the students. The comments they make are of no use. The main problem at Richards ISD is no money. The story I got is that the state overpaid the school its allotted amount. The school spent the money. Then the state came in and wanted the money back. For the past three years our school has been without help. Do you really expect a school not to go downhill when it has no help? To keep up we need support. I feel this school can improve a great deal. The education programs have benefited my children.
- The kitchen is nasty and needs renovations terribly. When is the last time you have seen a wood cabinet top surrounding a sink?
- The food needs help. Kill what is crawling in it. When was the last time the health inspector was in there? Get some new cooks that know what they are doing.
- Library is very small. Does not have updated reading material.
- There is no nurse at all!
- We are sorely lacking volunteers.

# Appendix D

## STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

*Richards Independent School District Management and Performance  
Review  
Demographic Data  
(n=21)*

*\*Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

<b>1. Gender (Optional)</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>				
	0.0%	57.1%	42.8%				
<b>2. Ethnicity (Optional)</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>African-American</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Other</b>	
	4.7%	61.9%	14.2%	4.7%	0.0%	14.2%	
<b>3. What is your classification?</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Senior</b>				
	0.0%	38.0%	61.9%				

### A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

<b>Survey Questions</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	4.7%	9.5%	47.6%	23.8%	14.2%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	19.0%	14.2%	33.3%	23.8%	9.5%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	14.2%	66.6%	4.7%	14.2%	0.0%
	b) Writing	4.7%	66.6%	4.7%	23.8%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	9.5%	61.9%	4.7%	9.5%	14.2%



	d) Science	19.0%	66.6%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%
	e) English or Language Arts	19.0%	52.3%	9.5%	19.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	19.0%	47.6%	0.0%	14.2%	19.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	9.5%	47.6%	9.5%	14.2%	19.0%
	h) Fine Arts	9.5%	47.6%	14.2%	4.7%	23.8%
	i) Physical Education	14.2%	38.0%	4.7%	19.0%	23.8%
	j) Business Education	0.0%	28.5%	14.2%	4.7%	52.3%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	0.0%	28.5%	14.2%	28.5%	28.5%
	l) Foreign Language	0.0%	33.3%	14.2%	9.5%	42.8%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	9.5%	42.8%	4.7%	14.2%	28.5%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0.0%	19.0%	28.5%	23.8%	28.5%
	c) Special Education	9.5%	28.5%	14.2%	33.3%	14.2%
	d) Student mentoring program	0.0%	14.2%	28.5%	23.8%	33.3%
	e) Advanced placement program	0.0%	4.7%	33.3%	23.8%	38.0%
	f) Career counseling program	0.0%	4.7%	23.8%	19.0%	52.3%
	g) College counseling program	0.0%	9.5%	19.0%	19.0%	52.3%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	4.7%	14.2%	14.2%	23.8%	42.8%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	14.2%	23.8%	14.2%	33.3%	14.2%
7.	The district provides a high quality education.	0.0%	33.3%	9.5%	23.8%	33.3%
8.	The district has high	9.5%	9.5%	28.5%	28.5%	23.8%

	quality teachers.					
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### B. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Schools are clean.	4.7%	19.0%	9.5%	42.8%	23.8%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	0.0%	33.3%	23.8%	23.8%	19.0%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	4.7%	33.3%	19.0%	23.8%	19.0%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled timely.	0.0%	47.6%	38.0%	9.5%	4.7%

### C. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	9.5%	9.5%	14.2%	14.2%	52.3%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	9.5%	52.3%	14.2%	14.2%	9.5%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape	4.7%	19.0%	9.5%	38.0%	28.5%
16.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	4.7%	19.0%	14.2%	47.6%	14.2%

### D. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	4.7%	71.4%	9.5%	4.7%	9.5%

18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	4.7%	14.2%	23.8%	19.0%	38.0%
19.	Food is served warm.	19.0%	38.0%	19.0%	9.5%	14.2%
20.	Students have enough time to eat.	9.5%	28.5%	9.5%	38.0%	14.2%
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of the day.	23.8%	66.6%	4.7%	0.0%	4.7%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	19.0%	33.3%	14.2%	19.0%	14.2%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	14.2%	28.5%	23.8%	9.5%	23.8%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	14.2%	23.8%	19.0%	33.3%	9.5%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	19.0%	28.5%	14.2%	28.5%	9.5%

### E. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	4.7%	19.0%	28.5%	9.5%	38.0%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus	9.5%	23.8%	57.1%	4.7%	4.7%
28.	The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	4.7%	23.8%	57.1%	4.7%	9.5%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	9.5%	33.3%	52.3%	0.0%	4.7%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	9.5%	28.5%	57.1%	0.0%	4.7%
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	4.7%	28.5%	57.1%	0.0%	9.5%
32.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	14.2%	19.0%	57.1%	4.7%	4.7%

33.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	14.2%	28.5%	52.3%	0.0%	4.7%
34.	Buses seldom break down.	4.7%	14.2%	47.6%	14.2%	19.0%
35.	Buses are clean.	9.5%	4.7%	57.1%	4.7%	23.8%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	14.2%	14.2%	61.9%	4.7%	4.7%

### F. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	14.2%	42.8%	19.0%	14.2%	9.5%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	19.0%	28.5%	38.0%	9.5%	4.7%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	57.1%	33.3%	4.7%	0.0%	4.7%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	28.5%	38.0%	19.0%	14.2%	0.0%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	9.5%	28.5%	14.2%	28.5%	19.0%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	0.0%	0.0%	61.9%	9.5%	28.5%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	0.0%	9.5%	52.3%	9.5%	28.5%
44.	A good working arrangement exists between local law enforcement and the district.	4.7%	4.7%	76.1%	0.0%	14.2%
45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	9.5%	19.0%	14.2%	14.2%	42.8%

46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	4.7%	19.0%	38.0%	23.8%	14.2%
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### 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.	23.8%	38.0%	9.5%	9.5%	19.0%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	19.0%	47.6%	23.8%	0.0%	9.5%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	19.0%	42.8%	28.5%	4.7%	4.7%
50.	The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	9.5%	23.8%	23.8%	28.5%	14.2%
51.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	9.5%	9.5%	33.3%	23.8%	23.8%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	23.8%	38.0%	4.7%	23.8%	9.5%

### Verbatim: Students

The following comments convey the perceptions of those students responding to the survey and do not necessarily reflect the findings or opinions of the Comptroller or review team.

- I feel that our one of our departments is totally out of control. I don't think most of the students understand completely because the teacher explains work one time and if you don't get it then you just don't get it. I also feel that the staff treats the seniors like elementary kids. I don't believe that we have enough freedom to be ourselves. It's supposed to be a privilege to be a senior, but not here.

- I think that our school could be better if they can do a little bit better. I think it should be shut down and kids go to a different school.
- In my opinion this school needs to be shut down. It is dirty and the teachers aren't the best. We go to school in a barn. Our food is nasty and some students have gone through three teachers in a year. I would be ashamed for my kids to go here if I had any. We don't learn anything. The school has no school spirit. I am embarrassed to tell people I go to Richards. Please do us all a favor and shut this nasty and embarrassing so-called school down.
- The Ag shop is dark so it must be dangerous to students. Counseling staff is only here once a week which is not much help to college-bound students. Most of the time the library is locked and students are unable to get to books. The gym is so old that it can't be taken down. In my opinion this must be one of the worst schools. There are no advance classes and not enough textbooks. In my opinion students would most likely get a better education if they transferred to a school nearby. This school should be shut down. There is no heat. The heaters that do work are loud and dangerous. A/C is only provided by window units. The elementary playground is dangerous. There is really no athletic program. Since they knew you were coming they cleaned up the school, including cutting the grass and filling in holes.
- To me the education they are teaching at Richards ISD is really bad. I came from a big school and was making good grades. I am still making good grades but don't feel I am learning anything. This school is so relaxed and we play around all the time in classes because our teachers don't care. Somebody needs to do something because I've become stupid and it's going to hurt me in college.
- Our school should do a little more to make it better for the rest of the kids that have to continue to go here. They can do so much better in this school. If they are not able to have this school looking like a normal school then maybe this school should be shut down. There are some bathrooms that stink. The smaller kids need to have more things out there for them to play on. We need new maps. They had us up here cleaning up because they knew that you were going to come up here. That is one reason why our grass is cut.
- I feel that every teacher here at RHS does not treat all students equally in regards to discipline. Teachers should treat all students the same way.
- Most of the teachers in Richards are unfit. Very few of them are concerned for their students. They choose a few favorite students and all others are on their own. Students and teachers are constantly getting into petty arguments where the students loses because the teacher disciplines the students they don't like and no

one else. They use their authority with juvenile spite to accomplish their own purposes. Trying to get any help here is such a trial that no one ever even tries.

- I wasn't here in elementary, so I'm not sure how good it is. I hear elementary has improved a lot and the teachers are good, however, in high school it's another story. Students in this school have a very high potential, which is not being met. I know much more learning should be going on in certain classes. Counseling staff is here one day a week which is a problem for seniors and the troubled kids. The science class, Ag, and art are very good in this school. Students are learning. Teachers shouldn't allow the students to walk all over them and some of them do. Students aren't all treated fairly and big plans are never set in stone. They always change big plans at the last minute. When I applied for scholarships, since the counselor wasn't here, I had to receive help from a teacher who gave me inaccurate information. The maintenance man is good. He takes care of stuff. Ag is good. The facilities need much improvement. I enjoy going here, but the school needs some help.
- I don't feel I've learned what I need to learn to be prepared for college. Most classes we sit in class doing nothing for thirty minutes to a whole period. It's just a waste of time.
- We do not have access (even when there may be staff in the library) to the library when we need it for research. The door is often locked making sure that students don't get in. We have a poor gym that looks like a barn. We could use another one and more equipment.
- There is no enforcement of learning, but if you do want to learn you have that option. Our classes could be better but we just don't have enough money for all the supplies we need. A lot of things are old.
- I feel that the gym should be a little cleaner and nicer. I think something really needs to be done to the gym and also the concession stand.