



Tahoka Independent School District

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM REVIEW

**Conducted by MGT of America, Inc.
for the Legislative Budget Board**

January 2011



LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Robert E. Johnson Bldg.
1501 N. Congress Ave. - 5th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

512/463-1200
Fax: 512/475-2902
<http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>

January 19, 2011

Mr. Steve Burleson
Tahoka Independent School District

Dear Mr. Burleson:

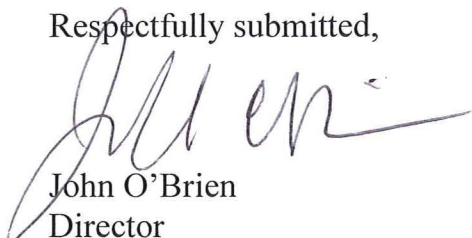
The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Tahoka Independent School District's (TISD) human resources and substitute teacher programs.

The report's recommendations will help Tahoka ISD improve its overall performance as it manages student behavioral related issues. The report also highlights model practices and programs being implemented in TISD to human resources and substitute teacher programs.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,



John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Frank McLelland
Mr. John Hawthorne
Ms. Cathy Box
Mr. Jimmie Bingham
Mr. Scott Dimak
Mr. Kent Kahl
Mr. Abraham Vega

TAHOKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM REVIEW

Founded in the early 1900s, Tahoka Independent School District (TISD) includes Lynn County and a portion of Terry County. In 1903, Tahoka School District No. 2 was created to serve the southern part of Lynn County. Since then, the district has expanded through a series of consolidations with smaller schools.

The population of Lynn County is approximately 6,500 in a total area of 893 square miles. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are about 2,400 households and 1,777 families residing in the county. The ethnic makeup of the county is 75.5 percent White, 3 percent African American, and 22 percent from other races; 44.6 percent of the population is Hispanic.

Approximately 39 percent of families have children under the age of 18 living with them, with 31 percent of the population under the age of 18. The median household income is \$27,000 and the median family income is \$33,000. Males have a median income of about \$28,000 versus \$20,000 for females. The per capita income for the county is about \$15,000. Approximately 19 percent of families and 23 percent of the population are below the poverty level, including those under age 18.

Tahoka ISD's 2009–10 budget was \$5.8 million. There is a budget gap of about \$240,000 and the district is using reserve funds to close the gap. There are six members of the Tahoka ISD School Board of Trustees, including the president, vice president, and secretary.

Fewer than half of the district's 618 students (2009–10 enrollment) in three schools are considered at-risk (46 percent). In 2007–08, about 61 percent came from economically disadvantaged families and about 3 percent were English language learners. Around 58 percent of the students are Hispanic, 35 percent are White, and 5 percent are African American. For the last three years, each of the district's three schools (one elementary, middle, and high school) was rated "Recognized" based on the state's accountability rating. In 2006–07, the per pupil expenditure was about \$10,000 compared to \$7,700 statewide. Approximately 44 percent of teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience (similar to the state average) and 8 percent are beginning teachers with less than one year of experience, about the same as the state average.

The Tahoka ISD website provides visitors with a large array of information, including job opportunities and employment application forms, school board meeting agendas and policies, parent access to student grades, and various other resources and links. Even though the district is small in terms of student population, the website offers a full menu of services and resources similar to larger districts.

Tahoka ISD is part of the Regional Education Service Center XVII (Region 17), which serves 57 public school districts meeting three state directives:

- To facilitate increasing student performance;
- To enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
- To implement state education initiatives.

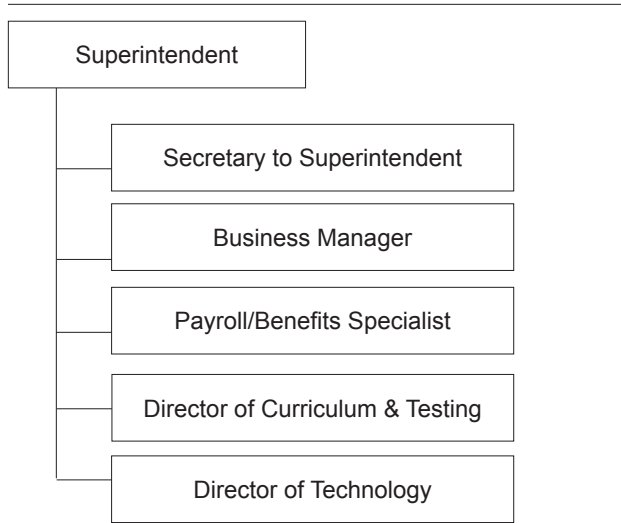
Additionally, Region 17's Strategic Plan includes Statements of Beliefs, Strategic Directives, and the Mission Statement: "We are passionately committed to developing and nurturing healthy, thriving learning communities across Region 17 by guiding and supporting schools in their quest for excellence."

Region 17 offers a wide range of services to support school administration and instruction, with professional development being a significant service. Cooperatives offered to districts and schools through Region 17 provide benefits associated with volume purchasing of materials, supplies and food; federal contract management; Internet service; instructional resources; business and student software support, among others. Additionally, parents, students, and other stakeholders can access board policies, state and federal grant information, adult education, and curriculum resources. Schools in Region 17 are located on the South Plains of West Texas, sometimes referred to as the Llano Estacado (Staked Plains).

Exhibit 1 shows the organization of Tahoka ISD's central office. Human resource services are handled primarily by the superintendent and the superintendent's secretary. Accepting and processing employee applications are functions of the secretary, with the payroll and benefits employee assisting once an employment appointment is approved.

Employment opportunities, contact information, job application forms, and related information are available on

**EXHIBIT 1
TAHOKA ISD HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATION**



SOURCE: Tahoka Independent School District (Tahoka ISD) website and staff interviews, April 2010.

the district’s website. Applications can be downloaded and completed for submission to the superintendent’s office. Application forms are appropriate and provide the necessary information for pre-employment screening.

Policies related to personnel are maintained through a subscription to the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) policy service and are current. The board of trustees has adopted appropriate LOCAL policies for personnel positions (DPB), compensation and benefits (DEC), and planning (BQ and BQB). Benefits policy provides for a range of benefits for all regular employees; however, no benefits other than wages for services rendered are paid to substitute teachers.

Exhibit 2 shows the number of 2008–09 employees by position category. As shown, Tahoka ISD employs 117.8 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) positions.

A directory of all staff is available on the district’s website at [http://tahoka.esc17.net/staff links.htm](http://tahoka.esc17.net/staff_links.htm). Additionally, the district-adopted budget is available on the website and includes a detailed listing of proposed expenditures for 2009–10 totaling \$242,886.

Teacher turnover percentages for the three-year period, 2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09, are 20.6, 14.4, and 14.4, respectively. This compares favorably with Region 17 rates of 14.8, 14.5, and 15.9 and state averages of 15.6, 15.2, and 14.7 for the same period. The 2006–07 increase to 20.4

**EXHIBIT 2
TAHOKA ISD EMPLOYEE POSITIONS
2008–09**

POSITION CATEGORY	EMPLOYEES
Teachers	60.4
Professional Support	3.8
Campus Administration (School Leadership)	2.7
Central Administration	3.0
Educational Aides	14.0
Auxiliary Staff	33.9
Total	117.8

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, 2010.

percent is accounted for by the changes in high school coaching staff for that year.

Exhibit 3 shows the average teacher salaries for Tahoka ISD; as shown, the average teacher salaries have been approximately 15 percent below the state average for each of the three years.

**EXHIBIT 3
TAHOKA ISD TEACHER SALARIES
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Tahoka ISD	\$38,571	\$38,509	\$40,042
State Average	\$44,897	\$46,179	\$47,159

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency; Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Snapshot Report, March 2010.

Exhibit 4 shows that Tahoka ISD’s student enrollment has remained relatively constant. While the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data examined did not show the 2009–10 data, the review team determined that enrollment was 618 from information supplied by Tahoka ISD administration.

**EXHIBIT 4
TAHOKA ISD STUDENT ENROLLMENT
2007–08 THROUGH 2009–2010**

DISTRICT	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
Tahoka ISD	621	623	618

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency; Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Staff Counts and Totals, Fall Collection and reported by Tahoka ISD administration, March 2010.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Tahoka ISD has a form and process for obtaining feedback from substitute teachers when they are assigned to cover a regular teacher's class.

FINDINGS

- The District Teacher and Substitute Teacher Handbooks do not provide each regular and substitute teacher with emergency procedures including media related or guidance on handling bullying or other emergency-related activities.
- Tahoka ISD does not have a human resources procedural manual or written procedures to guide related work and processes.
- Tahoka ISD does not routinely monitor and report classroom teacher absences by reason for absence.
- The district does not maintain a comprehensive districtwide calendar of events that allows for effective and efficient coordination and scheduling of activities.
- Tahoka ISD job descriptions do not provide staff and prospective employees complete information on the duties and responsibilities, and minimum physical requirements for the position.
- Tahoka ISD lacks an effective and efficient online job application and employment process.
- Tahoka ISD has not developed and adopted a staff development policy (LOCAL) for instructional and non-instructional personnel.
- Tahoka ISD does not conduct performance evaluations of their substitute teachers.
- Tahoka ISD's lack of cost containment strategies has resulted in a 66 percent increase in total substitute teacher expenditures over a two-year period (2007-08 to 2008-09).
- Tahoka ISD's number of qualified substitute teachers available on a daily basis is limited.
- Tahoka ISD lacks an effective and efficient substitute teacher assignment and payroll reporting process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Update the teacher and substitute teacher handbooks to include**

emergency procedures and guidance on handling bullying or other emergency-related activities such as bomb threats, fire, tornadoes, etc.

- **Recommendation 2: Develop a human resources procedural manual and written procedures to guide related work and processes.**
- **Recommendation 3: Develop data elements to be tracked on the district's information and budget management system to identify reasons for teacher absences and related substitute teacher costs.**
- **Recommendation 4: Create a districtwide events calendar.**
- **Recommendation 5: Amend existing job descriptions.**
- **Recommendation 6: Develop a web-based electronic application and employment system.**
- **Recommendation 7: Develop a LOCAL professional development policy for both instructional and non-instructional employees.**
- **Recommendation 8: Develop and implement a performance review evaluation instrument of substitute teachers.**
- **Recommendation 9: Identify and implement cost containment strategies to reduce total expenditures for substitute teaching.**
- **Recommendation 10: Identify and implement strategies to increase the number of qualified substitute teachers.**
- **Recommendation 11: Develop a plan to use existing e-mail technology or implement web-based technology to facilitate substitute teacher placement and related payroll processes.**

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENT

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING FEEDBACK

Tahoka ISD has a form and process for obtaining feedback from substitute teachers when they are assigned to cover a regular teacher's class.

Exhibit 5 shows the contents of the Substitute Teacher Feedback form.

**EXHIBIT 5
TAHOKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUBSTITUTE TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM**

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER FEEDBACK

Substitute's Name: _____

Class or Period: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Please take a moment to write your comments about your experiences in my classroom.

Questions:

Did any students seem to have difficulties understanding the material or completing the assignments? If yes, please name them and explain.

1. Were any students absent? If yes, please name them.
2. Were any students particularly helpful? If yes, please name them and explain.
3. Were there any students with behavior issues? If yes, please name them and explain.
4. It would be helpful next time if ...
5. Additional comments.

SOURCE: Tahoka ISD, superintendent's office, April 2010.

The form provides valuable feedback to the regular teacher concerning student department and attendance and an opportunity to make suggestions that could result in helping the substitute in future substituting teaching assignments.

DETAILED FINDINGS

TEACHER AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOKS (REC. 1)

The District Teacher and Substitute Teacher Handbooks do not include emergency procedures including guidance on handling bullying or other emergency-related activities such as bomb threats, fires, tornadoes, etc. The lack of such information for teachers or substitutes may pose a liability for students, staff, and the district.

Bullying has become an issue receiving widespread national attention as a result of recent student suicides and other related incidents. Consequently, knowing the impact bullying can have in schools, the prudent course of action is to prepare procedures that guide regular and substitute teaching employees in identifying and managing bullying.

The National School Safety Center, established by United States Presidential Directive in 1984, addresses bullying in schools on its web page at www.schoolsafety.us/Bullying-p-26.html. In addition, the Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education provides another important source for information on developing procedures and training personnel. Finally, Kid Source online at www.kidsource.com, provides a detailed and insightful discussion of bullying and a list of additional resources.

Emergency-related information can be easily adapted to employee and substitute teacher handbooks and can be obtained at no cost from districts like Northside Independent School District's Department of Human Resources, Office of Substitute Teaching. One of the most comprehensive classroom medical emergency procedures publications is available at <http://cmsweb1.loudoun.k12.va.us/50972510152846/site/default.asp> from Loudoun County Public Schools, Virginia. An additional example is available from St. Tammany Parish School District, Louisiana, at www.stpsb.org, which provides Safe Schools and First Aid Procedures for Substitute Teachers in a concise, one-page format.

The district should update its teacher and substitute teacher handbooks to include emergency procedures and guidance on handling bullying or other emergency-related activities such as bomb threats, fire, tornadoes, etc. The cost in updating the handbooks cannot be estimated until the district determines the contents of the new updates.

Since the review, the district has added information for substitute teacher's regarding guidance on handling bullying or other emergency-related activities in the Substitute Teacher Handbook, 2010–11.

DISTRICT HUMAN RESOURCE PROCEDURES NOTEBOOK (REC. 2)

Tahoka ISD does not have a human resources procedural manual or written procedures to guide related work and processes. Ensuring continuity in human resources functions

could be problematic for the district should the current administrative assistant (superintendent's secretary), who handles the majority of personnel matters become unavailable. Additionally, the current superintendent has only been a district employee since April 2010 and lacks the institutional knowledge held by the secretary.

The human resources functions for Tahoka ISD are handled by the superintendent and the administrative assistant (secretary) to the superintendent. Due to the small enrollment and employee population of the district, the superintendent and administrative assistant report there is no need for a human resources handbook or series of written procedures. However, effective business practices dictate that should the administrative assistant become unable to fulfill the job's responsibilities, potential problems could arise that create unnecessary work or issues. Included in these issues would be preparation of personnel and related recommendations for Board of Trustee action, employment procedures including background checks, follow-up on employee disciplinary matters, and other human resources functions.

The district should develop a human resources procedural manual to guide related work and processes. A handbook of procedures could be assembled from board policy provisions, previous personnel-related memoranda, copies of the employment application forms, various other handbooks, salary schedules, directory of employees, calendar of essential actions, and other available information. This information can be organized in a three-ring binder by topic. Following is a list of topical sections that could serve to organize existing information so that a new or replacement employee could perform essential functions in an orderly fashion:

- Recruitment (sample ads and actions taken in the past);
- Employment (sample employment application forms and related information);
- Induction (sample past orientation materials including Superintendent's letter);
- Staff Development (copies of Region 17, district, and schools' employee training plans);
- Evaluation (samples of employee performance evaluation forms);
- Reappointment of Personnel (step-by-step description of process)

- Termination (step-by-step description of process);
- Compensation and Salary Schedules (All current schedules approved by the Board);
- Legal Services (How and whom to contact);
- Employee Rosters (Current employee and substitute rosters by employment type and location);
- Calendar (District School Calendar and calendar of all personnel related activity and deadlines); and
- Miscellaneous (all other human resources related information).

A table of contents can be created and included and, as all documents are placed on a compact disk (CD), a word search for information can be accommodated, thus eliminating the need for a comprehensive index.

This recommendation should be implemented over the next twelve months as each major activity represented by a topical section is completed. This procedure should ensure that the procedures manual can be developed with a minimum of additional effort and for cost of the notebook and paper, estimated at no more than \$50. Once accomplished, the contents should be scanned on to a CD that can be updated as necessary.

Since the review, the district reports that initial steps have been taken to begin the process of developing a Human Resources Manual.

TRACK CAUSES FOR TEACHER ABSENCES AND EXPENDITURES FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS (REC. 3)

Tahoka ISD does not routinely monitor and report classroom teacher absences by reason for absence. As a result, district leaders are not able to determine the number of teacher absences which are initiated by the district as opposed to teacher absences initiated by the teacher. The ability to report and monitor this information is important because it identifies those absences that can be controlled by the district.

District absences routinely occur when teachers are expected to supervise school activities such as field trips, athletic and competition events, or to attend required professional development activities. The district advises that teacher absences, along with their substitute teacher replacement, are tracked through a statewide software program offered by the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC).

Tahoka ISD maintains a spreadsheet for employees generated from the RSCCC that shows the leave type and description, date of absence, and days absent. Leave type description only shows if the leave is local or state (with local days primarily used for sick leave), school activity, jury duty, or dock day, and therefore does not provide data that permits a thorough understanding of the detailed reasons for all absences or if it was caused by actions taken by the district that might be controlled.

The existing budget costs for substitute teachers do not reflect the reason for absence. When district officials were asked to develop reports on teacher attendance by reason for absence over the past three years, more than six hours of staff time was required to collect the data. The district is not able to adequately monitor absences and related costs to ensure timely decision-making about attendance issues. In addition, budget adjustments respond to expense trends may not be identified in time to make appropriate adjustments.

Develop data elements to be tracked on the district's information and budget management system to identify reasons for teacher absences and related substitute teacher costs. Implementing this recommendation should include classifying absences by budget function and object, and identifying the reason for the absence (if the absence is the result of a district decision such as staff development or a teacher-initiated absence). This information should assist district decision-makers regarding alternatives to avoid teacher absences from the classrooms. In addition, district leaders could analyze teacher-initiated absences and consider incentives or rewards for improved or exceptional attendance. District leaders should be able to monitor teacher attendance, reasons for absences, and related budget costs on a daily or regular basis.

This recommendation can be implemented using existing technology and data at no additional cost to the district.

Since the review, the district reports that "staff development" has been added to the list of reasons accounting for a teacher's or other professional's absence, which will help distinguish between a personal-initiated or district-initiated absence.

CREATE A DISTRICTWIDE EVENTS CALENDAR (REC. 4)

The district does not maintain a comprehensive districtwide calendar of events that allows for effective and efficient coordination and scheduling of activities. This situation requires personnel to spend additional time ensuring that conflicting activities are not scheduled.

A district calendar is maintained on the Tahoka ISD website; however, it primarily shows athletic schedules for the high school. A review of the January through June 2010 calendar showed several junior high athletic events and a schedule for livestock shows, but no other activities that may require schedule coordination. Interviews revealed that staff members typically make more than one contact to ensure that a particular activity will not create a conflict for student, parent, or staff involvement. On occasion, more than one event has been scheduled, resulting in an inadequate number of available substitute teachers.

The creation of a districtwide events calendar will reduce the amount of time spent by personnel ensuring that conflicting activities are not scheduled. Besides athletic events and livestock shows, other activities scheduled on the districtwide calendar could include parent-teacher meetings, booster meetings for athletics and band programs, instruction-related field trips for students, and other activities.

This recommendation can be implemented using the existing website district calendar and requiring each school to post scheduled activities on it. Since the website calendar is already available, there should be no additional cost related to implementing this recommendation.

Since the review, the district reports that it is in the process of updating and maintaining a districtwide events calendar.

REVISE JOB DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 5)

Tahoka ISD job descriptions do not provide staff and prospective employees complete information on the duties and responsibilities, and minimum physical requirements for the position. Furthermore, there are some positions that do not have job descriptions.

Exhibit 6 shows the list of available job descriptions. As shown, there are no descriptions for substitute teachers or for regular maintenance positions other than the director of Maintenance.

Exhibit 7 shows an example of a typical Tahoka ISD job description. The statement related to physical demands does not fully address physical requirements for the position. Also, within the listings of responsibilities there is no designation of those essential job duties that must be performed with or without reasonable accommodation. As a result, a new employee may not fully understand which duties and responsibilities they must be able to perform upon assuming the position. This could result in the employee successfully contesting any adverse employment action that

**EXHIBIT 6
LIST OF TAHOKA ISD JOB DESCRIPTIONS
MARCH 2010**

JOB DESCRIPTIONS			
Aide	Counselor	Director of Transportation	Payroll clerk
Band Director	Curriculum Director	Food Service Worker	Police
Bus Driver	Custodian	Groundskeeper	Principal
Business Manager;	Daycare Provider	Librarian	Principal Secretary
Cafeteria Manager	Diagnostician	Library Aide	Special Ed Teacher
Computer Aide	Director of Maintenance	Migrant Aide	Sped Ed Aide
Counselor Secretary		Nurse	Teacher; and Title I Aide

SOURCE: Tahoka ISD superintendent's office, March 2010

**EXHIBIT 7
SAMPLE OF CURRENT TAHOKA ISD JOB DESCRIPTION**

Job Title:	Director of Maintenance	Wage/Hour Status: Exempt
Reports to:	Superintendent	Pay Grade:
Dept./School:	Maintenance	Date Revised: 6/5/2003

Primary Purpose:

Qualifications:

Education/Certification:

High School Diploma/General Educational Development (GED).

Special Knowledge/Skills:

- Knowledge of basic principles of construction, school plant maintenance, and custodial operations;
- Ability to manage budget and personnel; Ability to coordinate district function;
- Ability to implement policy and procedures;
- Ability to interpret data;
- Ability to read blueprints and schematics; and
- Strong organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Experience:

One year supervisory experience in maintenance operations.

Major Responsibilities and Duties:

Building Maintenance and Repair

1. Direct and manage custodial, maintenance and repair, security, and central warehouse operations of district.
2. Receive and process work orders for repair and maintenance of buildings.
3. Develop and maintain written departmental procedures for maintenance, repair, operations, and security of all district buildings and equipment.
4. Prepare plans and specifications for contracted repair work and site improvement for submission to purchasing department for bids.

Policy, Reports, and Law

5. Implement federal and state law, State Board of Education rule, and local board policy in maintenance area.
6. Compile, maintain, and file all physical and computerized reports, records, and other documents required in maintenance area.
7. Prepare data necessary to process maintenance payroll.

Budget and Inventory

8. Administer maintenance budget and ensure that programs are cost-effective and funds are managed prudently.
9. Compile budgets and cost estimates based on documented program needs.
10. Plan and direct inventory and stock control program for equipment and supplies.
11. Initiate purchase orders and bids in accordance with budgetary limitations and district policies.
12. Replace and maintain a current inventory of supplies and parts to avoid delay when reordering.
13. Approve and forward invoices and purchase orders for maintenance department to accounting department.
14. Recommend disposal of obsolete equipment and purchase replacement equipment when necessary.

Personnel Management

15. Assign work to maintenance personnel and oversee completion.
16. Prepare, review, and revise job descriptions in maintenance department.
17. Evaluate job performance of employees to ensure effectiveness.
18. Recruit, train, and supervise maintenance personnel and make sound recommendations about personnel placement, transfer, retention, and dismissal.

**EXHIBIT 7 (CONTINUED)
SAMPLE OF CURRENT TAHOKA ISD JOB DESCRIPTION**

Safety

- 19. Maintain safety standards in conformance with federal, state, and insurance regulations and develop a program of preventive safety.
- 20. Ensure that equipment is maintained in operating and optimum condition.

Other

- 21. Perform disaster duty when needed.
- 22. Attend professional growth activities to keep abreast of innovative techniques in maintenance operations.
- 23. Respond to after hours emergencies as needed.

Supervisory Responsibilities:

Supervise and evaluate performance of skilled craftsmen, head custodians assigned to maintenance department.

Working Conditions:

Mental Demands/Physical Demands/Environmental Factors:

Frequent districtwide travel; occasional prolonged and irregular hours; work indoors and outdoors to conduct onsite inspections of all maintenance facilities and construction projects.

The foregoing statements describe the general purpose and responsibilities assigned to this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and duties that may be assigned or skills that may be required.

Approved by _____ Date _____

Reviewed by _____ Date _____

Source: Tahoka ISD data requested from Superintendent's office, March 2010.

might be taken by the district based on the employee's inability to perform essential duties.

Exhibit 8 shows a sample substitute teacher job description and format with the elements that should be added to the Tahoka ISD current descriptions.

The district can amend existing job descriptions to accomplish the recommended actions using the model provided by the review team and create job descriptions for substitute teachers and maintenance positions at no additional cost.

Since the review, the district reports that job descriptions are based upon the recommendations of TASB. While there is no particular law or regulation requiring employers to have job descriptions, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has indicated that they will consider them in determining essential functions for purposes of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Furthermore, job descriptions can help establish objective criteria for hiring, performance reviews, and making a determination about whether a job is exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The FLSA prescribes standards for the basic minimum wage and overtime pay affecting most private and public employment. As a result, the district has since

amended and updated the job description for substitute teachers.

ESTABLISH ONLINE SUBMISSION OF JOB APPLICATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORMS (REC. 6)

Tahoka ISD lacks an effective and efficient online job application and employment process. Application forms for employment are available on the Tahoka ISD website; however, they must be downloaded, properly completed, and submitted on paper to the superintendent's office for processing.

There are five pages to the online job application form, including the recommendations page. The four employment application form pages must be manually completed; the top portion of the recommendations form must be completed; and all completed forms must be delivered to the superintendent's secretary for processing.

The application process requires at least one applicant trip to the district office. The secretary sets up a paper file, and if the district offers the applicant a job, additional hardcopy forms are necessary. If forms were available for electronic completion and submission, the approved applicant information could be placed on a district intranet site for access by hiring staff to review when filling a vacancy.

EXHIBIT 8**SAMPLE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION****TITLE:** SUBSTITUTE TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:

1. A valid teacher's certificate or
2. A minimum of thirty college hours; and
3. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board of Trustees may find appropriate and acceptable.

REPORTS TO: Principal.

JOB GOAL: To enable each child to continue the learning process as smoothly and completely as possible in the absence of the regular teacher.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- *1. Reports to the Principal's office upon arrival fifteen minutes before the official school opening.
 - *2. Maintains as fully as possible the established routines and procedure of the school and classroom.
 - *3. Teaches the lessons as outlined and prepared by the absent teacher.
 - *4. Consults with the building principal before initiating any teaching or other procedures not specified by the regular teacher.
 - *5. Follows all policies, rules, and procedures to which regular teachers are subject and which good teaching practice dictates.
 - *6. Writes a note about work completed at the end of each teaching day, and leaves it for the regular classroom teacher.
 7. Reports to the building principal at the conclusion of the teaching day, and verifies whether or not the substitute will be needed on the next teaching day.
 8. Displays tolerance necessary for accepting supervision for and criticism of duty performance.
 - *9. Works in harmony with supervisory and peer personnel.
 - *10. Uses professional information discreetly and judiciously.
 - *11. Supports administrative and Board policy.
 12. Represents the school system to the community in a positive, professional way.
 - *13. Maintains a sincere, friendly attitude toward parents and pupils to ensure communication.
 14. Ensures that the classroom is orderly after completion of the instructional day.
 15. Performs such other duties as may be requested.
- * Essential job responsibilities which the employee must be capable of successfully completing upon initial employment.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB:

May be required to push, pull, climb or lift 20+ pounds.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: Per diem, at rates established by the Board of Trustees.

EVALUATION: Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with administrative policy.

SOURCE: Created by the review team using Kerrville ISD website, Substitute Teacher section, Substitute Handbook, page 4, 2010.

Many of the paper-dependent steps could be eliminated with the development of a web-based electronic application and employment system. This process would eliminate at least one trip to the district office by the applicant, permit the superintendent's secretary and the payroll/benefits clerk to exchange completed forms electronically rather than manually, and, ultimately, reduce the quantity of documents contained in employee files. Overall, streamlining the application and employment processes should lead to greater efficiency for the employees and support staff.

Regional Education Service Center VIII (Region 8), serving districts of similar size, offers an online application service to its member districts. Tahoka ISD should inquire if Region 17

might be able to provide a similar service at no additional cost to the district.

Implementing an online application and employment system could be accomplished at no additional cost to the district and should reduce the time and effort required for accepting and processing employment applications. A further benefit should be the streamlining of the entire pre-employment and employment processes.

DEVELOP A LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY (REC. 7)

Tahoka ISD has not developed and adopted a staff development policy (LOCAL) for instructional and non-

instructional personnel. However, the Board of Trustees has adopted Staff Development Policy (LEGAL) and the administration provides staff development guidelines for instructional staff.

Exhibit 9 shows the administrative guidelines for the instructional staff. The guidelines provide local policy direction and guidance for instructional staff, but do not address non-instructional personnel training. For example, paragraph two (**Exhibit 9**) establishes the required number of professional development days, while paragraphs five and six reflect conditions that are generally accepted as policy positions.

Creation of a LOCAL professional development and training policy can result in establishing the Board of Trustees' positions on these topics, including their policy regarding non-instructional employees. This results in providing the administration the locally legal framework within which to promulgate administrative regulations.

Exhibit 10 shows a sample LOCAL policy that can be modified to meet the needs of Tahoka ISD.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing personnel and at no additional cost to the district.

Since the review, the district reports that it has contacted and is awaiting a response from TASB regarding the development and adoption of DMA (LOCAL) policy concerning professional development and training.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CHECKLIST (REC. 8)

Tahoka ISD does not conduct performance evaluations of their substitute teachers. While Tahoka ISD provides for substitute teacher feedback and principals report they typically visit a substitute teacher's class one or more times each day, a more formal evaluation process might help ensure that the substitute is completing all expected tasks and that students are being properly managed.

Development of an instrument guide to review a substitute teacher's performance is shown in **Exhibit 11**. The exhibit, a result of work conducted by Northside ISD in conjunction with the Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University, shows the criteria for assessment, an overall rating, and provides for specific comments. The review process is conducted by the absent teacher and administrator or designee.

**EXHIBIT 9
TAHOKA ISD
STAFF DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES
FOR THE INSTRUCTION STAFF
OF TAHOKA ISD**

Under current state guidelines, students must attend class 180 instructional days during an academic year, and teachers, subject to the state salary schedule, are required to work 187 days (180 instructional days + 7 staff development days = 187 days worked). However, school districts are allowed to apply for a waiver for up to 3 days of additional staff development days in lieu of 3 instruction days. Currently, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has approved a waiver of 3 days; therefore, Tahoka ISD has 177 instructional days and 10 staff development days.

Ten (10) days of professional staff development will be required for the instruction staff of the Tahoka Independent School District.

Eight (8) staff development have been placed in the school calendar for all teachers. The other two (2) days will be used for compensatory exchange days (workshops attended on non-contract days). If a stipend is given for the workshop, it cannot count toward the ten (10) days of required staff development, because this would constitute "double-dipping" (receiving double pay for one day of work).

Administrative approval will be required prior to attending workshops. Approved workshops must be in the teacher's area of assignment. Every teacher must have 30 hours of initial Gifted/Talented (G/T) training and then 6 additional hours each year thereafter. It is recommended that 6 hours of G/T training include needs and assessment and 6 hours include nature and needs.

All teachers must complete all staff development requirements by the last day of the school calendar or be docked leave days or pay on a one-to-one basis.

For staff development activities approved by the administration during days of actual instruction (i.e. service center workshops, conferences, conventions, etc.), the District will provide release time and pay the substitute. Staff members cannot accept additional stipends from the sponsors of the workshop as this will constitute "double-dipping". Any substitute reimbursements from the workshop sponsors must be paid to the district.

SOURCE: Tahoka ISD Superintendent's office, March 2010.

**EXHIBIT 10
SAMPLE STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY (LOCAL)**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	DMA (LOCAL)
1. The superintendent is authorized to apply for waivers to permit flexibility in establishing professional development days for instructional personnel.	
2. The superintendent is authorized to develop such administrative guidelines as necessary to implement a staff development and training program for employees of the district.	
3. Employees may not receive stipends or compensation for staff development or training, other than reimbursement for expenses, when being paid by the school district. Any such remuneration, including substitute reimbursements, must be paid to the district.	
4. The superintendent may grant additional absences to employees for attendance at meetings, conferences, and workshops that are of special interest to the employee.	
5. Requests for release time with pay to attend employee organization meetings, other than any such meetings approved for required staff development purposes, shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. The responsibility for justifying the school-related purpose to be accomplished by attendance shall rest with the employee. Approval shall be given only if the employee is on the program, has some official function, or can obtain specific information related to his or her job description that will assist the district in improving the instructional program.	

SOURCE: Created by the review team using Tahoka ISD guidelines and review team data, June 2010.

**EXHIBIT 11
NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUBSTITUTE TEACHER EVALUATION**

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR	UNACCEPTABLE	N/A
Punctuality					
Followed Lesson Plans & Schedule					
Accuracy of Attendance and Other Forms					
Handling of Student Discipline					
Teaching Methods/Instructional Strategies					
Knowledge of Subject Matter Taught					
Professional Behavior With Students					
Overall Rating	Excellent	Good	Poor	Unacceptable	
Comments:					

SOURCE: Created from Northside Independent School District Substitute Teacher Evaluation Form, April 2010.

The full evaluation form provides directions for use of the instrument, dates that substitute duties are performed, subject(s)/grade level taught, and the name of the evaluator.

A substitute teacher that serves a school on a regular basis could be evaluated only once or twice each year or if some unusual performance issues arise, rather than on each occasion of employment.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing personnel and at a minimal cost for the printing of the evaluation forms, estimated at \$0.10 per form. Printing 300 forms would be adequate for up to five years and cost an estimated \$30.

Since the review, the district reports that evaluation forms, modeled after the suggested recommendation, for substitute teachers have been created and will be distributed to school principals with the request that at least one evaluation be conducted per semester.

REDUCE THE COST FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS (REC. 9)

Tahoka ISD’s lack of cost containment strategies has resulted in a 66 percent increase in total substitute teacher expenditures over a two-year period (2007–08 to 2008–09). In 2008–09, Tahoka ISD expended \$50,988 or approximately \$82 per student for substitute teachers. The cost for 2007–08 was \$30,700 or approximately \$49 per student. During interviews with staff and principals, the most reasonable

explanation offered for this increase was the outbreak of influenza (H1N1) that resulted in significantly more teacher absences than the previous year. The H1N1 influenza was more severe in some communities than others and was well documented by the national news media.

Exhibit 12 shows the 623 student enrollment in 2008–09 and **Exhibit 13** shows the expenditures for substitute teachers in the same year. Additionally, the latter exhibit shows an increase in expenditures over the two-year period.

Exhibit 14 shows the three-year costs per student for substitute teachers. Tahoka ISD did not provide these costs for 2006–07 and the 2007–08 expenditures were substantially lower than the expenditures in 2008–09, when the expenditure increased by \$20,288 (as shown in **Exhibit 15**).

**EXHIBIT 12
TAHOKA ISD
NUMBER OF TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENTS**

	2006–07	2006–08	2008–09
Teachers	63	62	60
Administrators	5	6	6
Students	647	621	623

SOURCE: PEIMS Staff Counts and Totals, Fall Collection, March 2010.

**EXHIBIT 13
TAHOKA ISD
REASON AND COST FOR TEACHER ABSENCES REQUIRING
SUBSTITUTES**

	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	INCREASE
Teacher*	Not Available	\$15,058	\$32,783	\$17,725
District**	Not Available	\$15,642	\$18,205	\$2,563
Total Cost	Not Available	\$30,700	\$50,988	\$20,288

* Teacher determined absence

** District or school determined absence

SOURCE: Tahoka ISD General Fund, Object 6112. Report by Function, March 2010.

**EXHIBIT 14
TAHOKA ISD
COST PER STUDENT FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	INCREASE
Tahoka ISD	Not Available	\$49.44	\$81.84	\$32.40

SOURCE: Tahoka ISD Budget/Expenditure reports for 2006–07 through 2008–09, March 2010.

This reflects an increase of \$32.40 per student for substitute teaching from one year to the next.

Although Tahoka ISD’s substitute teacher costs are within the state average of \$80–\$85 per student, costs for employing substitute teachers for absent teachers should be a consideration for developing cost containment strategies to minimize expenditures.

A variety of options could be considered to initiate a reduction in costs, including:

- Initiating steps to restructure the time that staff development and other training is required of teachers.
- Careful assessment of staff development to ensure that it is essential to the targeted teacher’s responsibilities.
- Full utilization of teacher work days on non-student school days.
- Scheduling training on student early-release days.
- Development of incentives for teachers to minimize the use of local and state leave days.

Additionally, Tahoka ISD could request assistance from Region 17 in developing alternatives for member districts to consider as options to reduce substitute teacher costs.

This recommendation could be implemented at no additional cost to the district and could result in long-term savings. If the district reduces the need for substitute teachers to 2007–08 levels that would be an immediate cost savings of over \$20,000. Even if a reduction of this nature proves unattainable, an annual reduction of only five percent would produce an estimated \$2,550 annually ($0.05 \times \$50,988 = \$2,550$) or \$12,750 over a five-year period ($\$2,550 \times 5 = \$12,750$). This would represent a savings of \$4.09 ($\$2,550/623 = \4.09) per student per year for the district.

Since the review, the district reports that the increased cost per student for substitute teachers was due to teacher absence involving both the H1N1 flu and curriculum training conducted during school hours. Nonetheless, the district advises adjustments will be made to monitor substitute teacher costs on an annual basis.

**ESTABLISH STRATEGIES TO INCREASE AVAILABLE
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS (REC. 10)**

Tahoka ISD’s number of qualified substitute teachers available on a daily basis is limited.

Principals reported during interviews that they use the same substitutes on a regular basis because the district is unable to attract additional eligible candidates. On days when several teachers are required to be absent from classroom duties to attend professional development, supervise school activities or athletic events, or attend required meetings, it is not uncommon for other teachers, educational aides, and administrators to “cover” classes.

The principals and district office personnel report that the primary reasons for this include the rural location and the agricultural nature of the community which is located approximately 30 miles south of the more densely populated area of Lubbock. The general consensus was that salary and working conditions were not factors related to the limited number of qualified substitutes. Also, it was stated that the reduction in state funding due to lower student enrollment further limits the district’s ability to consider compensation incentives that might help in the recruitment of substitute teachers residing in distant locations.

Exhibit 15 shows recruitment strategies that may be considered for increasing the number of applicants for substitute teacher positions.

While the district has programs that recognize regular teachers, substitute teachers are not provided with organized recognition, incentives, or fringe benefits. A recognition program could be used to attract additional substitute teachers.

EXHIBIT 15 RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

STRATEGY

Recognition Programs.

Create Permanent Substitute Teaching Positions.

Create Annual Job Fair.

Recruit College Students with Two Years of College Completed.

Recruit at Colleges and Universities.

Recruitment Targeting – Retired Military Personnel, Identified Unemployed Professional Personnel, etc.

Retrain Existing Staff – prepare educational aides to serve as substitute teachers.

SOURCE: Created from North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Educational Policy Issue, June 2001.

The Substitute Teaching Division (STEDI) of the Utah State University conducted a poll on what a school district can do to help substitute teachers feel more appreciated. **Exhibit 16** shows a summary of the results.

A National Substitute Teacher Appreciation Week has been held annually since 2003; the ninth annual events are scheduled for May 2–6, 2011. The STEDI of the Utah State University reports details of events and provides a menu of ideas, activities, and resources to assist schools and districts in planning effective substitute teacher recognition. A website at <http://stedi.org/subm/events/subweek/> provides downloads of documents including:

- SubWeek planning schedule;

EXHIBIT 16 SUBSTITUTE TEACHING DIVISION (STEDI) POLL OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

RESPONSES

3 percent of substitute teachers said they would appreciate contact from the school principal.

7 percent of substitute teachers requested higher pay.

8 percent of substitute teachers requested a breakfast or luncheon periodically or once a year.

10 percent of substitute teachers said a small gift would be greatly appreciated.

17 percent of substitute teachers said something that makes them feel appreciated is when teachers and staff are welcoming and inviting.

23 percent of substitute teachers requested increased communication.

27 percent responded with other suggestions, including:

- *I feel most appreciated when I am allowed to teach instead of just babysit!*
- *... the district should be a little more discriminate in their hiring process...so teachers might have more faith in substitutes.*
- *At least hearing that you did a good job would really help.*
- *I would feel much more comfortable and valued if I received at least some training. It would demonstrate the district's commitment to providing quality substitutes.*
- *It would be nice to receive a certificate following a long-term assignment.*
- *I would like to know if my efforts were well received and if not, what I could do to improve as a substitute.*

SOURCE: Substitute Teaching Division (STEDI), Substitute Teaching Institute, Utah State University, website, May 2010.

- Activities for local schools, administrators, and faculty;
- Activities for local parents, students, and the community;
- Activities for school districts and personnel offices;
- Featured daily activities for SubWeek;
- Helping substitute teachers feel more appreciated;
- National Substitute Teacher Week Proclamation;
- Public service announcement – 30 seconds;
- Public service announcement – 60 seconds;
- Sample: "Letter to the Editor;" and
- Sample press release.

Some school districts, such as Broward County Public Schools, Florida, have adopted a substitute teacher incentive program that provides a one-time bonus of \$500 for "Super Sub" status. "Super Sub" status is defined as having worked a minimum of 90-full days or more within the current school year.

St. Tammany Parish Public Schools, Louisiana, conducts a Substitute Appreciation Day throughout the school system and recognizes a substitute employee of the year for each school. A select committee designates one substitute to represent the district; a special reception is held and an award is presented at a school board meeting. Recognition of the importance of substitute teaching is included on the district's web page at http://www.stpsb.org/employment_intro.php.

Identifying additional strategies to increase the number of substitute teachers could also be included in the request to Region 17 (see **Recommendation 9**) as actions identified to reduce teacher absences.

The cost to develop additional strategies cannot be estimated until the district determines if Region 17 is involved. If Region 17 is involved, then there may be minimal costs for travel to the Region 17 (Lubbock) office to develop additional optional recruitment strategies.

Furthermore, a review of the suggestions shows that many recognition activities can be accomplished at no cost to the district, while certificates of recognition can be prepared with existing software and printed for a minimal cost. A reasonable budget for this recognition could be less than \$100 per year for each school for certificates and other selected items. The

annual cost for Tahoka ISD's three schools could be \$300 ($\$100 \times 3 = \300) or \$1,500 for five years ($\$300 \times 5 = \$1,500$). The cost for substitute recognition could be paid for with cost savings gained by reducing teacher absences.

Since the review, the district reports that it has hired college students and has advertised in the local newspaper in order to increase the availability of substitute teachers.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER ASSIGNMENT (REC. 11)

Tahoka ISD lacks an effective and efficient substitute teacher assignment and payroll reporting process. Documentation of teacher absences, assignment and payment of substitute teachers, and payroll reconciliation is accomplished through the manipulation and processing of paper documents, an inefficient process.

As discussed in the detailed finding in **Recommendation 6**, Tahoka ISD provides an online web-based option for prospective candidates to apply for vacant positions, including those for substitute teaching. This application, however, must be printed and a paper file created for each new applicant. The development of this file is the initial step of an inefficient paper-dependent substitute teacher employment, job assignment, and payroll processing procedure.

Upon approval of substitute teachers, a list with contact information is copied and sent to principals, who must contact substitutes for job availability by phone for each teacher absence. This results in inefficient processing of teacher absence forms and substitute teacher payroll reporting. The same substitute might receive a job request from all three schools because the staff at one school has not been made aware when substitutes have already accepted a job at another school.

Due to the small number of substitutes on the approved list (approximately 20-25 annually), a paper-based manual process has been an acceptable established practice. A web-based technology solution, however, could improve user satisfaction, process performance, and staff efficiency.

The district's small volume could be accommodated with simple shared e-mail address listings. This type of arrangement would require that substitute teachers be provided district e-mail access. E-mailing lists of approved substitute teachers could be established for each school and other schools could be copied when substitute jobs are offered and accepted. All schools would simultaneously know which substitutes have already accepted jobs. This process would eliminate the

repetitive calling of the same substitutes by different schools for the same absence date.

This recommendation could be accomplished at no additional cost to the district through the utilization of the existing e-mail technology module. If a more sophisticated approach is preferred, the district could consider contracting with a

service provider for a web-based technology substitute teacher job announcement and job acceptance process. Services of this nature are increasingly cost-effective with the advent of cost options now available to districts based on the number of users. Thus, due to the small volume and number of users in Tahoka ISD, the fiscal impact could be accomplished at no additional cost to the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL 5-YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
1. Update the teacher and substitute teacher handbooks to include emergency procedures and guidance on handling bullying or other emergency-related activities such as bomb threats, fire, tornadoes, etc.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Develop a human resources procedural manual and written procedures to guide related work and processes.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$50)
3. Develop data elements to be tracked on the district's information and budget management system to identify reasons for teacher absences and related substitute teacher costs.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Create a districtwide events calendar.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Amend existing job descriptions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Develop a web-based electronic application and employment system.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Develop a LOCAL professional development policy for both instructional and non-instructional employees.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8. Develop and implement a performance review evaluation instrument of substitute teachers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$30)
9. Identify and implement cost containment strategies to reduce total expenditures for substitute teaching.	\$2,550	\$2,550	\$2,550	\$2,550	\$2,550	\$12,750	\$0
10. Identify and implement strategies to increase the number of qualified substitute teachers.	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$1,500)	\$0
11. Develop a plan to use existing e-mail technology or implement web-based technology to facilitate substitute teacher placement and related payroll processes.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$11,250	(\$80)