

Transmittal Letter

December 19, 2002

The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor
The Honorable William R. "Bill" Ratliff, Lieutenant Governor
The Honorable David Dewhurst, Lieutenant Governor-Elect
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney, Speaker of the House
Commissioner Felipe T. Alanis, Ph.D.

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present this report on the progress of the La Pryor Independent School District (LPISD) in implementing my Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) recommendations.

In July 2001, I released the results of my review of the district's operations. This review offered 41 detailed recommendations that could save LPISD more than \$472,840 in gross savings by 2005-06. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings less recommended investments) were projected to reach more than \$270,000 by 2005-06. The review also noted a number of LPISD's exemplary programs and model services provided by district administrators, teachers, and staff.

After a little more than one year, we returned to check on how well the district's leadership put these proposals into practice. Over the last year, LPISD has implemented, or is in the process of implementing, 39 of the proposals, or 95 percent. The district has realized net savings of \$913,685 to date and expects those savings to reach nearly \$1.8 million over 5 years.

This report is available on my Web site at www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/lapryorpr/.

Thanks for all that you do for Texas.

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

c: Senate Committee on Education
House Committee on Public Education
The Honorable Judith Zaffirini, Ph.D., State Senator, District 21
The Honorable Tracy O. King, State Representative, District 43

The Honorable Timoteo Garza, State Representative-Elect, District 80
The Honorable Rene Nunez, District 1, State Board of Education

LA PRYOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRESS REPORT

Introduction

In November 2000, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander began a review of the La Pryor Independent School District (LPISD) as part of a three-district project that also included reviews of neighboring Eagle Pass and Crystal City school districts. These three districts are located near each other in Maverick and Zavala County. In July 2001, a final report was issued detailing 41 recommendations that could save the district more than \$270,000 by 2005-06. During August 2002, the Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) staff returned to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations.

Since 1991, TSPR has recommended more than 7,000 ways to save taxpayers more than \$700 million over five-year periods in more than 80 public school districts and higher education institutions throughout Texas. TSPR also conducts follow-up reviews of districts that have had at least one year to implement the recommendations. These 47 subsequent reviews showed that more than 90 percent of TSPR's proposals have been acted upon, saving taxpayers more than \$112 million, with the full savings estimated to grow in the future.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Comptroller Rylander, who took office in January 1999, consulted school district officials, parents and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports in an effort to make TSPR more valuable to the more than 1,000 school districts in Texas. With the perspective of a former teacher, and school board president, the Comptroller has vowed to make TSPR more accountable to local school districts and the communities they represent.

Rylander began by establishing new criteria for selecting school districts for future reviews. Priority is now given to districts that are performing poorly academically or financially, and to hands-on reviews that benefit the greatest number of students. To ensure this process also serves small districts as economically as possible, reviews of numerous small school districts in close proximity, regardless of academic or financial status are

also completed, as was the case with the districts in Maverick and Zavala Counties.

Recognizing that only about 51 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to drive more of every education dollar directly into the classroom. In addition, no longer are school districts' best practices and exemplary models left buried inside individual TSPR reports. Instead, Comptroller Rylander has ordered TSPR to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically among all the state's school districts and with anyone who requests such information. There is simply no reason for a district that has solved a problem well to keep the solution to itself. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as an active clearinghouse of the best and brightest ideas in Texas public education. Best practices identified in the original review will be included in the Comptroller's best practices database, *A+ Ideas for Managing Schools (AIMS)*, which is on the Web at www.aimsdatabase.org.

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

- ensure students and teachers receive the support and resources necessary to succeed;
- identify innovative options to address core management challenges;
- ensure administrative activities are performed efficiently, without duplication and in a manner that spurs education;
- develop strategies to ensure the districts' processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;
 - understand the links among the districts' functional areas and determine ways to provide a seamless system of services;
 - challenge any process, procedure, program or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and
 - put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages test": government should do no job if there is a business in the Yellow Pages that can do that job better and at a lower cost.

Finally, Comptroller Rylander has opened her door to Texans who share her optimism about TSPR's potential. Suggestions to improve school reviews are welcome at any time. The Comptroller is a staunch believer in public education and public accountability.

Detailed information can be obtained from TSPR by calling 1-800-531-5441 extension 5-3676, or by visiting the Comptroller's Web site at www.window.state.tx.us.

TSPR in the La Pryor Independent School District

As the review began in November 2000, LPISD was deeply embroiled in controversy. Following a period of uncertainty during which the former superintendent left the district, the board hired the current superintendent, Eddie Ramirez, in January 2001. Data that the review team had collected from the former superintendent and business manager had to be reverified. And, because the position of business manager was vacant, the review team had to return to the district to finish gathering data and to finalize the review.

The Comptroller contracted with WCL Enterprises, a Houston-based consulting firm, to assist with the review. The team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held a public forum on Thursday, November 9, at the La Pryor High School from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted small focus group sessions with teachers, principals, employees, students, parents and community members. The Comptroller's office also received letters and phone calls from a wide array of parents, teachers and community members.

Sixty-five respondents answered TSPR's surveys. Six campus and central administrators and support staff, 11 teachers and 48 students completed written surveys.

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

LPISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The districts chosen were Cotulla, Carrizo Springs, Devine, Pearsall and Charlotte.

During its more than seven-month review, TSPR developed recommendations for improving operations that could save taxpayers more than \$400,000 by 2005-06. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach more than \$270,000 by 2005-06.

LPISD in Profile

LPISD is located in Zavala County, about 20 miles southwest of the City of Uvalde. The county seat is in Crystal City. The county's population is largely Hispanic, making up more than 90 percent of the county's residents, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Southwest Texas Junior College and an extension of Sul Ross State University are located in nearby Uvalde. The public school enrollment of the county is about 2,600 students. The largest employers are the schools and the county government. Ranching, farming and oil and gas production are also key components of the county's economy.

La Pryor ISD's facilities are located within the same land area in separate buildings. These facilities include the elementary school, middle/high school, administrative offices and various academic and support facilities. Enrollment for 2001-02 was 420 students, of whom 94.3 percent were Hispanic, 5.2 percent were Anglo and 0.5 percent were African American. About 88 percent of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged.

In 2001, one of LPISD's three campuses received a *Low-Performing* rating and the district received an overall *Acceptable* rating from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) accountability system. For 2002, all three campuses were rated *Acceptable*, but more importantly, the percentage of all students passing the reading portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test rose to 81.6 percent compared with 66 percent in 2001; 85 percent of the district's students passed the math portion of the test in 2002, compared with 66 percent in 2001; and 65.1 percent of the students passed the writing portion of the test in 2002, compared with 64.7 percent in 2001. In 2002, the percentage of students passing all tests taken increased nearly 20 points from 49.7 percent in 2001 to 69.0 percent.

In 2001-02, the district employed a staff of 88 employees, with teachers accounting for 44, or 50 percent, of LPISD staffing. The district had expenditures of \$3.8 million in 2001-02. That same year, 11 percent of LPISD's budgeted revenues were generated through local taxes; 2 percent came from other local and intermediate sources; 81 percent came from the state, and 6 percent came from the federal government.

In 2001-02, LPISD budgeted 49 cents of every tax dollar on classroom instruction, compared with the state average of 51 cents.

In 2001, significant changes occurred in the district. Superintendent Eddie Ramirez joined the district in January 2001-the fourth superintendent for the district in as many years. Superintendent Ramirez has developed a

good working relationship with the board and is providing them with more and better financial and academic information with which they can make sound policy decisions for the district. Curriculum guides are now in place for all grades, Pre-K through grade 12, and those guides contain components that integrate technology into day-to-day instruction. Teachers' salaries were increased to make them more competitive with neighboring districts, so that La Pryor could attract and retain the brightest and best teachers possible. The district is expanding its Career and Technology Education programs and the board has approved a plan for serving gifted students. Financial stability has been restored to the district, and PEIMS reporting processes have been improved to ensure that the district receives all of the state aid to which it is entitled. In all, TSPR staff found the district is moving toward a promising future, with a dedicated staff and sound programs that can spell success for the future.

While work continues in the district, both LPISD staff and TSPR team members have a sense of steady progress. Thirty-two recommendations have been implemented, seven are in various stages of progress and two have been reviewed but not implemented. (See **Appendix A** for details on the recommendations' status.)

La Pryor ISD Report Card

Chapter	Total	Complete	In Progress	Not Implemented	Rejected	Percent Complete/ In Progress	Grades
District Organization and Management	4	4	0	0	0	100%	Excellent
Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures	9	8	1	0	0	89%/11%	Excellent
Financial Management	11	10	1	0	0	91%/9%	Excellent
Operations	17	10	5	2	0	59%/29%	Satisfactory
Overall Grade	41	32	7	2	0	78%/17%	95%

Excellent = More than 80 percent complete
Satisfactory = 80 percent to 100 percent complete or in progress
Needs Work = Less than 80 percent complete or in progress

Exemplary Programs and Practices

LPISD has had some notable successes, and TSPR has identified numerous "best practices" used by the district. Through commendations in each chapter, the original report highlighted model programs, operations and services provided by LPISD administrators, teachers and staff members. Other school districts throughout Texas are encouraged to examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet local needs. TSPR's commendations are listed below, followed by updated information on each topic printed in italics.

- ***Employee handbook provides useful information.*** LPISD has an employee handbook that summarizes key district policies and procedures, including the school calendar, reassignments and transfers, outside employment, performance evaluation, staff development, alcohol and drug testing, payroll deductions, travel expense reimbursement, employee benefits, leave and absences, complaints and grievances, purchasing procedures and emergency situations.

Since the review, LPISD has created an administrators handbook. The LPISD administrator handbook gives the administration concrete policies and procedures for purchasing, budgeting and other financial processes. Just as the employee handbook help employees understand the policies and procedures associated with their employment, administrative employees need guidance in day-to-day operations to ensure that all of their activities conform to board policy.

- ***LPISD actively engages parents.*** LPISD, through a federal grant, has initiated a variety of programs that promote parental involvement and provide needed services to families. The district holds monthly parent meetings to provide parent training, encourages parents to spend time reading with their children through the Milk and Cookies Program held each Wednesday evening, opens computer labs for individual parent use during school hours each day and implemented the Families and Schools Together program, which provides an early intervention and prevention program for elementary school children who are at risk for substance abuse, school failure and juvenile delinquency.

During 2001-02 and again in 2002-03, in response to one of TSPR's recommendations, the district provided extensive training on the Parent Learning Network through Region 20 to parents and teachers. The parent involvement program was also incorporated into the district and campus improvement plans and in 2002-03, participating parents will attending a parent conference in San Antonio.

- ***At-risk students receive special services.*** LPISD is addressing the needs of students at risk of dropping out through a wide variety of programs including tutorials, summer camp, CD-Rom programs in language arts and math, an optional extended year program and individualized instruction for students with dyslexia.

LPISD continues to give careful attention to students at risk of dropping out. Teachers in Pre-K through grade 3 have completed a 12-week staff development course in balance literacy, Developing Literacy. Teachers in grades 4 and 5 are participating in the next level of balanced literacy training, Supporting Literacy, in fall 2002. Further, the district formed attendance committees to closely monitor attendance, grades, benchmarks and child assistance; and an at-risk coordinator position was added at the middle and high school campuses. Lexia software was purchased and is used for individualized instruction for students with dyslexia. The district also loans students with dyslexia laptop computers and Alphasmart technology to allow them an opportunity to practice these skills at home and thereby enhance their ability to learn.

- ***Districtwide dual language program serves Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.*** In 1996, LPISD received \$2.2 million to be used over a five-year period to implement a comprehensive dual language program. The district converted an existing woodshop area into a computer lab and equipped the lab with 11 computers and each classroom in the district with two or three computers. The lab is used for both elementary and secondary instruction and is available for parent and community use one night per week and each day when students are not scheduled to use the lab.

This grant came to an end in August 2002. A committee made up of the superintendent, principals and the TEA field agent studied efforts underway in the Ysleta ISD as well as other districts. The committee decided to provide a bilingual/ESL transition program in conjunction with opportunities for dual language for non-LEP students.

As a result of this grant, every elementary classroom has a minimum of five computers and there is a 30-unit Alphasmart portable computer lab at the elementary campus that can be moved from room to room. Students at the middle and high school levels have three computers in each classroom and five computers in each language arts classroom. They also have a 24-wireless laptop computer lab. Both campuses have access to scanners, LCD projectors, digital cameras and two Panaboards. LPISD's District Improvement Plan calls for an active partnership with students, parents, school and community members that will expand the district's Web site to enhance communication, provide access to homework assignments, and increase the community's access to training in parenting and technology skills, information and news and links to educational sites. A second community lab will be opened, and these labs will be open Monday through Thursday from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Community technology classes are planned for spring 2003.

- ***Students get college credit for high school courses.*** LPISD participates in a TechPrep partnership with Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) that leads students toward associate or baccalaureate degree programs and helps students prepare for high-skill, high-wage jobs in at least one field of engineering technology, applied science, health, or business. Students in the business and agriculture programs receive credit toward graduation, as well as college credit at SWTJC toward an associate's degree.

Since the review, LPISD has expanded its Career and Technology Education programs and enhanced its programs for gifted students as well. The district is exploring the use of distance education opportunities for expanding course offering for students at all levels.

TSPR Key Recommendations

LPISD administrators and staff said several key recommendations had the greatest impact on district operations. These highlighted recommendations are organized by chapter as shown in the original report. The comments came from district administrators during the TSPR team's follow-up visit to the district.

District Organization and Management

Recommendation 2 - Update the district's strategic plan to reflect the current board and administrative vision for the district and link the

plan to the District and Campus Improvement Plans as well as the budget.

Administrators said that this recommendation was the key to planning for LPISD. This process and the final document became a roadmap for the district and helped everyone focus their efforts on student improvement. Now, when someone makes recommendations for change or for budget adjustments, the board and administration go back to the original goals. And, if it doesn't focus on kids, they don't do it.

Recommendation 3 - Increase beginning teacher salaries to be competitive with neighboring districts and develop a program to reduce teacher turnover.

Considering that a third of the teachers in LPISD left the district each year, the salary increases approved by the board for 2002-03 will make the district more competitive with neighboring districts and will allow the district to recruit and retain more experienced teachers. According to the superintendent, this increase makes the district more competitive regionally.

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

Recommendation 5 - Develop formal curriculum guides for secondary courses and update the guides.

Recommendation 6 - Develop a comprehensive curriculum plan to direct curriculum management, evaluation and instructional delivery.

The district staff told the review team that having a sound, aligned and up-to-date curriculum helps improve student performance. Resources and staffing are used more effectively when everything is focused on student performance, and the guides help make this possible. Teachers are given the tools they need to succeed and every child in the district benefits from this improvement.

Financial Management

Recommendation 16 - Develop a process and system of internal controls to ensure the accuracy of PEIMS data submissions.

The PEIMS integrity recommendation helped the district more accurately project its state funding and has helped the district claim all of the funding for which it is eligible. The district will receive about \$50,000 in

additional state funding in 2002 as a result of better PEIMS reporting and monitoring.

Recommendation 21 - Develop a budget calendar and manual for LPISD administrators and board members to use in the annual budget process.

Budgeting can be a complex and frustrating process for administrators, staff and board members when they do not have the information they need to understand the process. Developing a budget calendar and a budget procedure has helped eliminate some of that confusion and, according to the superintendent, it helped the district align its budget with its instructional goals.

Operations

Recommendation 38 - Create a formal Technology Committee of teachers, principals and directors to support the technology plan.

Recommendation 39 - Update and revise the LPISD technology plan to include milestones and specific task responsibilities.

Recommendation 40 - Use the State Board for Educator Certification draft technology standards as a guideline for establishing LPISD's technology requirements for teachers.

These three recommendations were particularly significant, according to the superintendent and his staff. Creating the committee, updating the plan and identifying technology-related staff development goals made additional grants available (Recommendation 41) and helped the district integrate technology into the instructional programs of the district, as well as nearly every aspect of operations. The district is using wireless communication and has fiber optic drops throughout the district. Elementary classrooms now have five computers per class and secondary classrooms have a minimum of three computers. The district is exploring distance education opportunities and teachers are better trained to use technology to enhance instruction. Many of these improvements were made possible through these grants.

Recommendation 41 - Identify and recruit internal staff interested in supporting the technology coordinator with minor technical issues such as printer problems, software initialization and login problems.

Staffing was reorganized for technology support and LPISD officials attended the Texas Association of School Administrators Summer Technology Academy, which helped improve their ability to work with

technology. This reorganization allowed the staff to concentrate on technology grant applications and the district will receive a \$120,000 Telecommunication Infrastructure grant; \$220,000 in e-Rate discounts; a \$40,000 reimbursement from Southwestern Bell, and by joining a technology consortia with Allen ISD, the district was able to get another \$40,000 for technology upgrades.

What Remains to be Done?

LPISD has made steady progress implementing TSPR recommendations. The district has implemented 32 recommendations; seven are in various stages of progress; and two have been reviewed but not implemented. This section addresses a key area that requires additional attention.

Food Service

Recommendation 30 discusses the need for a point-of-sale (POS) system for school cafeterias. This recommendation was made because tracking student eligibility, daily cash, participation rates, daily financial records and free and reduced-price meal applications is a time-consuming process. The likelihood of error is greatly increased when this complex process is performed manually. Because the district already has much of the computer equipment needed to install the system, a software purchase might be all that is necessary to implement this recommendation. Once students and staff members become accustomed to using the system, TSPR believes that the accuracy of reporting will be improved and management oversight and monitoring will be easier.

LPISD's Ideas for Improving the Texas School Performance Review

The TSPR review team does not assume that its process for performing school reviews works so well that it cannot be improved. Therefore, as part of the progress report preparation, TSPR asked La Pryor ISD staff members and administrators to discuss what went right and what went wrong-and how the process could be improved.

The feedback TSPR has received from other districts has led to improvements in the review process. For example, early reports did not include implementation strategies, and districts told TSPR they needed help in getting started. As a result, the reports now include **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINEs** complementing the recommendations. Districts have told TSPR these blueprints are invaluable for achieving the desired results. It is important for TSPR to

continually be mindful of things that did not work as intended so that the review process can be improved.

La Pryor administrators and board members made the following observations:

The superintendent told the review team that he felt this review was one of the best things that could have happened to the district. He said he only wished the TEA monitor who had been assigned to the district could have been in La Pryor to see what they have been able to accomplish. The board has been supportive of the superintendent and of the recommendations. The superintendent credited the report recommendations and the board's diligence for restoring the fund balance and student test scores improvements across the district.

Although he came in to the district after the review was already nearly completed, the superintendent said that he felt the process was good. The issues targeted the challenges facing the district and the recommendations helped him and the board to make the needed changes.

Board members who returned their surveys provided generally positive feedback on the review process. One board member, however, was critical of the review, stating that he felt the review emphasized politics over student achievement. While no specifics were provided, TSPR is aware that the district was in turmoil at the time the report was released and that not everyone agreed with the assessment. It is clear, however, from the district's improved financial condition and the dramatic turnaround in student performance that the board and administration have taken the recommendations seriously, and even when they did not agree with some of TSPR's recommendations, they were able to implement the spirit of the recommendations and achieve significant results for LPISD students and taxpayers.

Appendix A

Status of Recommendations and Savings

Rec. #	Recommendations	Implementation Status	TSPR Projected Five - Year Savings (Costs)	LPISD Savings (Costs) to Date	LPISD Projected Five - Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
Chapter 1 - District Organization and Management						
1	Develop a set of board operating standards that will restore student achievement as the key priority of the district. p. 23	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Local policy on Board Ethics was put into place in June 2000. The board also does a yearly self-evaluation, with the assistance of Texas Education Agency (TEA) field agents, which helps the board work as a team and identify training needs of the board as a whole.
2	Update the district's strategic plan to reflect the current board and administrative vision for the district and link the plan to the District and Campus Improvement Plans as well as the budget. p. 26	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In February 2001, the board and administration updated the strategic plan and linked it to District (DIP) and Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs). The plan was sent to the board and employees within the district in 2000-01. LPISD has also placed the plan and its policy manual on its Web site to allow the public easy access to them.
3	Increase beginning	Complete	(\$138,000)	(\$165,000)	(\$825,000)	For 2002-03 the

	teacher salaries to be competitive with neighboring districts and develop a program to reduce teacher turnover. p. 31					board increased all teacher salaries, not just beginning teacher salaries, to be competitive with other districts in the region. This has allowed the district to recruit more experienced teachers and retain 16 quality teachers.
4	Develop a Parent/Volunteer Involvement Program. p. 35	Complete	\$0	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	During 2001-02 and again in 2002-03, the district provided extensive training on the Parent Learning Network through Region 20 to parents and teachers. The parent involvement program was also incorporated into the DIP and CIPs. Additionally, in December 2002, participating parents will attend a parent conference in San Antonio.
Chapter 1 Totals			(\$138,000)	(\$166,500)	(\$826,500)	
Chapter 2 - Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures						
5	Develop formal curriculum guides for secondary courses and update guides. p. 46	Complete	(\$30,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	LPISD developed curriculum guides for Pre-K through grade 8 and has finalized guides for grades 9 to 12. The curriculum

						coordinators' job was also expanded to be a curriculum director for 2002-03, and this individual will be responsible for continual revisions.
6	Develop a comprehensive curriculum plan to direct curriculum management, evaluation and instructional delivery. p. 47	Complete	(\$2,700)	(\$150)	(\$150)	On October 22, 2001, the board approved a curriculum policy, which is used as a guideline for systematic curriculum development, staffing, budgeting and training.
7	Examine current staffing levels and develop and implement allocation formulas for the coming school year. p. 50	Complete	\$282,210	\$160,000	\$800,000	The administration reviewed all district positions and aligned positions to enhance student performance and participatory decision making among the Administrative Cabinet and respective district and campus Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Committees. Savings came from the reduction of four teaching positions at the high school level.
8	Develop structured staff development that directly supports district	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The board and administration conducted a comprehensive

	goals and objectives. p. 52					needs assessment to ensure all budgets and plans meet district, campus and federal goals for student performance. All of LPISD's staff development is focused on meeting the goals set out in the 2002-03 DIP and CIPs.
9	Evaluate the continued need for the educational consultant on the Title VII project and discontinue the contract as soon as practical. p. 60	Complete	\$0	\$71,000	\$142,000	The board eliminated the education consultant's contract in February 2001. This allowed the district to funnel nearly \$142,000 of grant funds that would have otherwise been spent on the consultant into technology updates, meeting the terms of the grant and fulfilling certain goals in the district's technology plan.
10	Explore methods to expand career and technology education courses. p. 62	Complete	\$0	(\$45,000)	(\$225,000)	In spring 2002, a pre-registration was conducted to determine staffing needs for the coming year and a four-year plan was enacted with all students and parents. The district added two Career and Technology Education (CATE) teachers, by shifting assignments and

						other duties, which helped minimize costs.
11	Comply with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students and adopt a five-year plan for the Gifted and Talented Program. p. 65	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The board adopted a revised <i>Gifted and Talented Plan</i> at the September 16, 2002 regular meeting. A Region 20 specialist updated the plan's critical attributes at no cost.
12	Participate in the Medicaid Administrative Claiming program. p. 70	Complete	\$34,350	\$3,000	\$15,000	Beginning with the 2001-02 school year, the district began participating in the Medicaid Administrative Claiming program.
13	Investigate grant availability from all sources to improve the district's security operations. p. 74	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	LPISD investigated Safe and Drug Free School grant funding and found LPISD did not have matching funds. The district is, however, continuing to evaluate grants for this purpose.
Chapter 2 Totals			\$283,860	\$168,850	\$711,850	
Chapter 3 - Financial Management						
14	Develop and implement a system to ensure that the detailed financial corrective action plan is followed through. p. 85	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	During 2001-02, the district created an extensive administrative procedures manual and has met all financial corrective action strategies to meet

						TEA's new Schools FIRST accountability system. To accomplish this, the superintendent worked extensively with the Region 20 Business Cooperative. The LPISD Administrator Handbook gives the administration concrete policies and procedures for conducting financial processes.
15	Prepare monthly financial statements on a routine basis for use in managing the district's finances. p. 86	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Beginning in November 2001, the superintendent began presenting an annual report to the board of trustees. The superintendent also reports the monthly financial status of the district including information on investment accounts, payments, construction costs and delinquent accounts.
16	Improve preparation for the annual audit to achieve cost savings. p. 88	Complete	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	The superintendent met with the auditor to identify the scope of the audit and to ensure that all documents were readily available

						<p>prior to the audit. During 2001, a great deal of work was required to reconstruct the books, but for 2002, the district will be able to meet additional state auditing requirements with the same amount of effort because this early planning ensures efficient use of the auditor's time.</p>
17	<p>Establish a procedure to ensure compliance with all state and local purchasing laws and policies. p. 89</p>	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>LPISD implemented Buy Board membership with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) and the various cooperatives within Region 20. While the superintendent said that he is confident the district has saved money as a result of implementing this recommendation, it is hard to determine an exact amount.</p>
18	<p>Develop a process and system of internal controls to ensure the accuracy of PEIMS data submissions. p. 90</p>	Complete	\$0	(\$800)	\$49,200	<p>The district restructured staffing and responsibilities to meet reporting requirements. All district and campus support staff and administrators were cross-trained on</p>

						PEIMS standards and submission dates. In addition, the Administrative Cabinet reviews these reports monthly for accuracy. As a result of more accurate data, the district increased the amount of state dollars for settle-up at the end of the year by \$50,000, for a net increase in revenues for the 2002-03 school year of \$49,200.
19	Create and distribute a districtwide purchasing procedures manual. p. 91	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent disseminated purchasing procedures in the Administrator Handbook, which now includes travel forms and sign-off procedures aligned to the budget process.
20	Use TEA provided spreadsheet software to track potential changes in state funding throughout the fiscal year. p. 94	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	LPISD's superintendent is trained to use TEA's spreadsheet software and calculates the Summary of Finance on a six-week basis to track earned revenue and make adjustments as needed. In addition, annual budget adoption and public hearing presentations

						include TEA summary of finance worksheets for public and board review to ensure financial accountability to taxpayers.
21	Develop a budget calendar and manual for LPISD administrators and board members to use in the annual budget process. p. 96	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent provides this information to the administrative cabinet in spring to support district and campus initiatives and federal applications. For 2002-03, the superintendent created a calendar and provides information to administrators and the SBDM committees.
22	Establish a committee of staff and administrators to assess the state employee health insurance plan and help determine the district's course of action. p. 101	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is required to participate in the State Health Insurance Program and employees have been made aware of the changes.
23	Invest excess cash in higher interest yielding instruments. p. 105	Complete	\$75,000	\$60,700	\$303,500	The district continues to invest in certificates of deposit at the local depository, but because the district is doing more cash flow forecasting, they have increased interest earnings on all funds. The

						fund balance is growing and the district is considering moving to overnight sweep accounts.
24	Develop an investment report in compliance with Public Funds Investment Act requirements. p. 106	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent reports this information to the board each month and at the annual November presentation.
Chapter 3 Totals			\$105,000	\$59,900	\$352,700	
Chapter 4 - Operations						
25	Develop a schedule of regular and preventive maintenance for each facility and all major equipment. p. 113	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	LPISD developed schedules and makes repairs in a timely manner. Regular maintenance is provided for air conditioning, buses, cafeteria and athletic and band equipment.
26	Participate in the State Power Program to reduce the district's utility bills. p. 114	Complete	\$18,400	\$0	\$0	In 2001-02, the district joined the Texas General Land Office State Power Program through Reliant Energy. Billings have been in error for much of this time, consequently it is difficult for the district to determine if it has saved money.
27	Develop written job descriptions and evaluations	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	LPISD developed an Employee

	that measure quality of work, productivity. p. 118					Handbook and is using TASB personnel services, which includes job descriptions.
28	Increase participation in lunch and breakfast programs by eliminating barriers and implementing new programs. p. 119	Complete	\$0	\$3,035	\$15,175	The board voted to close the campus, which means students are not allowed to leave campus during lunch, and the department has improved food service delivery and selection. This has resulted in increased revenues and the availability of healthy food.
29	Apply for Provision 2 Special Assistance Program of the Federal School Lunch Program to increase federal reimbursements and decrease application burdens. p. 120	Not Implemented	\$32,880	\$0	\$0	The district has decided that this would not be advantageous at this time.
30	Purchase a Point of Sale system to maintain financial accountability. p. 121	Not Implemented	(\$5,500)	\$0	\$0	The cashier continues to conduct manual counts, however, the district has much of the equipment it might need, and is continuing to explore the possibilities.
31	Prepare a plan to systematically repair the cafeteria and replace kitchen equipment. p. 123	Complete	(\$25,000)	(\$8,000)	(\$15,000)	LPISD completed full restoration or replacement of broken equipment and needed

						renovations in 2001.
32	Consider purchasing prepared meals from a neighboring school district to improve quality, reduce renovation costs and decrease labor costs. p. 124	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district wanted to improve management of the program and explored outsourcing opportunities. The administration contacted Uvalde and some other districts, but did not find this recommendation feasible for the district at this time.
33	Comply with all state and federal laws and LPISD board policy on drug and alcohol testing of bus drivers. p. 133	Complete	(\$1,540)	(\$600)	(\$3,000)	In 2000-01, LPISD began contracting with Region 20 for random drug and alcohol testing.
34	Perform behind-the-wheel evaluations of all bus drivers at least once a year. p. 134	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district developed a schedule for behind-the-wheel evaluations during the 2002-03 school year. The first evaluations were made in October 2002 after October 31st.
35	Develop a checklist of documents that should be in each bus driver's personnel folder and audit each driver's file for compliance at least once per semester. p. 135	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In April 2001, the district completed its review and prepared a checklist for all personnel files, with variances for the type of employee. These files are reviewed every year or when

						new employees are hired.
36	Comply with Federal laws covering overtime compensation. p. 135	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent carefully monitors the workweek and overtime pay. The superintendent organizes personnel and has documented procedures for hours and overtime.
37	Replace gasoline buses with diesel buses during the normal purchasing cycle. p. 137	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	While the district does not have a formal policy, it is replacing gasoline buses with diesel buses, as funds are available.
38	Create a formal Technology Committee of teachers, principals and directors to support the technology plan. p. 139	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent received training through the Texas Association of School Administrators and TASB to provide the leadership for the development of a formal technology committee and a new five-year technology plan using the School Technology and Readiness (STAR) checklist.
39	Update and revise the LPISD technology plan to include milestones and specific task responsibilities	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	See Recommendation #38

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40	Use the State Board for Educator Certification draft technology standards as a guideline for establishing LPISD's technology requirements for teachers. p. 144	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	See Recommendation #38
41	Identify and recruit internal staff interested in supporting the technology coordinator with minor technical issues such as printer problems, software initialization and login problems. p. 147	Complete	\$0	\$857,000	\$1,522,000	The superintendent revised staffing and technology support and delegated first-line support to the coordinator and campus technicians. These individuals received training and are given a stipend. LPISD staff participated in the Summer Technology Academy and the district is participating with Allen ISD in a U.S. Department of Education technology grant, TIF and E-rate continuation. LPISD pays a \$1,500 stipend to an elementary teacher and secondary teacher. As a result, the district has secured an E-rate of \$660,000, \$120,000 from TIF and a reimbursement of \$40,000 from Southwestern

						Bell.
	Chapter 4 Totals		\$19,240	\$851,435	\$1,519,175	
	Total Savings (Costs)		\$270,100	\$913,685	\$1,757,225	