

# TRANSMITTAL LETTER

December 19, 2001

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

Fellow Texans:

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

In August 2000, I released the results of my review of the district's operations. This review offered 31 recommendations that could save RISD taxpayers a net of nearly \$118,289 by 2004-05. The review also noted a number of RISD'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, RISD has implemented, or is in the process of implementing, 30 of the proposals, or 97 percent. The district has realized net savings of \$4,849 to date and expects those savings over five years to reach nearly \$52,086.

This report is available on my Web site at [www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/ricardopr/](http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/ricardopr/).

Thanks for all that you do for Texas.

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander  
Texas Comptroller

# PROGRESS REPORT

## Introduction

In August 2000, the Comptroller of Public Accounts' Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) staff and consultants completed a comprehensive school review of the Ricardo Independent School District (RISD). During October 2001, TSPR staff returned to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations.

Since 1991, TSPR has recommended more than 5,500 ways to save taxpayers more than \$600 million over a five-year period in 63 different public school districts throughout Texas. TSPR also conducts follow-up reviews of districts that have had at least one year to implement recommendations. These 37 subsequent reviews show that almost 90 percent of TSPR's combined proposals have been acted upon, saving taxpayers more than \$109 million, with the full savings estimated to grow in the future.

## Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Upon taking office in January 1999, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander consulted school district officials, parents, and teachers and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports in an effort to make the Texas School Performance Review more valuable, even vital, to the state's more than 1,000 school districts. Having served as a teacher and later as a school board president, Comptroller Rylander has vowed to make TSPR more accountable to local school districts and the communities they represent.

Comptroller Rylander began by establishing new criteria for selecting school districts for future reviews. Priority now is given to districts judged to be poor-performing, academically or financially, and to reviews that will benefit the greatest number of students. To ensure that this process also serves small districts, reviews of numerous school district in close proximity, regardless of academic or financial status are also done to achieve some economy of scale, as was the case with the smaller districts reviewed in Kleberg County.

Recognizing that only about 52 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to channel more of every education dollar into the classroom. In addition, the comptroller has acted to ensure that school districts' best practices and exemplary models will not be left buried inside individual TSPR reports. Instead, Comptroller Rylander has ordered best practices and exemplary programs to be shared 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 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 of KISD are included in the Comptroller's best practices database, "*A+ Ideas for Managing Schools*" (AIMS), which is accessible on the web at [www.aimsdatabase.org](http://www.aimsdatabase.org).

Under Comptroller Rylander's approach, the TSPR team and consultants works 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 continually 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.

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](http://www.window.state.tx.us).

# TSPR in the Ricardo Independent School District

In January, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander selected the four districts in Kleberg County-Kingsville, Ricardo, Riviera and Santa Gertrudis ISDs for a school performance review. After two failed attempts to secure consultants to assist with the reviews, work began in earnest in May 2000.

Based upon more than three months of work, this report identifies Ricardo ISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 31 recommendations could result in net savings of more than \$118,290 over the next five years.

The Comptroller's office selected SoCo Consulting, Inc., an Austin, Texas-based consulting firm, to assist the agency with this review. The TSPR team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held a public forum on May 16, 2000 from 5-8 p.m. in Ricardo's elementary school cafeteria. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted focus group sessions with teachers and business leaders. The Comptroller also received letters from a wide array of parents, teachers and community members, and staff received calls via the Comptroller's toll-free hotline.

Fourteen campus and central administrators and support staff, 12 teachers and 43 parents completed written surveys as part of the review. 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).

Ricardo ISD selected peer districts for comparisons based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The selected peer districts were Agua Dulce, Banquette, Driscoll, Freer, Premont, Riviera, and Skidmore-Tynann. TSPR also compared Ricardo ISD to other school district averages in TEA's Regional Educational Service Center (RESC 2), to which Ricardo ISD belongs and to the state as a whole.

## ***RISD in Profile***

Ricardo ISD is located in Kleberg County, about 50 miles south of the city of Corpus Christi. The county seat is located in Kingsville. The population of the county is largely Hispanic, making up 65.4 percent of a population of 31,549, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. There are two major, four-year universities located in close proximity: Texas A&M University - Kingsville and Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi.

Ricardo ISD has two schools located on one campus: an elementary school and a middle school that include students from pre-K through grade eight. Enrollment for 2001-02 reached 539 students, and 73.59 percent of the district's student body is categorized as economically disadvantaged. The district is served by the TEA RESC 2 in Corpus Christi.

The district does not have a high school, so it buses its high school students, ninth through twelfth grades, to one of five campuses including: King High School; Academy High School; Riviera High

School; a special education high school located on the campus of King High School and a vocational high school located on the campus of Texas A&M-Kingsville.

In 2001-02, RISD's student enrollment is composed of 74.4 percent Hispanic, 25.05 percent Anglo and 5 percent other.

For the first time, in 2001, RISD received an Exemplary rating from the TEA. The elementary school received a Recognized rating, and the middle school was rated Exemplary.

In 2000-01, 92.9 of all students passed the Reading portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test, 96.5 percent passed the Math portion of the test and 94.8 percent passed the Writing portion of the test.

In 2000-01, the district employed a staff of 82 employees, with 42 teachers accounting for 50 percent of RISD staffing. The district had expenditures of \$5.5 million in 2000-01. In 2000-01, 19.3 percent of RISD's revenues were generated through local taxes, 3.0 percent came from other local and intermediate sources. The state provided 73.9 percent of its revenues, while 4.1 percent came from the federal government. The district's budget in 2001-02 is \$5.8 million.

In 2000-01, RISD spent 45.2 cents of every tax dollar on classroom instruction compared to the state average of 51 cents.

In August 2001, the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) named Ricardo ISD's Board of Trustees a Regional Honor Board for 2001. The board was recognized for its vision, commitment and leadership as policy-makers; its commitment to improved student performance; strong community support; cooperation among board members and between the board and superintendent and successful school-business partnerships.

The district was one of only 15 districts in the state to receive this award. TASA created the School Board Awards Program in 1971 to recognize those school boards that have demonstrated outstanding dedication and rendered ethical service to the children of Texas. TASA's Executive Director, Johnny Vasselka noted, "The goal of educational excellence is one that will never be accomplished without the dedication of every member of the district's leadership team. A key element is having a Board of Trustees that shares a vision of excellence and commits itself to doing what is best for every single child entrusted to its care."

While the district still has a lot of work to do, both RISD staff and TSPR team members have a sense of steady progress. Twenty-two recommendations have been implemented, eight are in various stages of progress, and RISD officials rejected only one recommendation because they believed implementation was not feasible at this time. (See Appendix A for details on the recommendations' status.)

## Ricardo ISD Report Card

<b>Chapter</b>	<b># of Recommendations</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>Not Implemented</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Percent Complete/ In Progress</b>	<b>Rating</b>
District Organization and Management	7	4	2	0	1	57%/29%	Satisfactory
Educational Service Delivery	6	5	1	0	0	83%/17%	Excellent
Financial Management	8	7	1	0	0	88%/13%	Excellent
Operations	10	6	4	0	0	60%/40%	Satisfactory
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>71%/26%</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<p>Excellent = More than 80% complete                      Satisfactory = 80% to 100% complete or in progress                      Needs Work = Less than 80% complete or in progress</p>							

# Exemplary Programs and Practices

RISD is a school district with some notable successes, and TSPR has identified numerous "best practices." Through commendations in each chapter, this report highlights model programs, operations and services provided by RISD 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 include the following:

- Ricardo ISD links most of its written plans to the budget. The district's facilities master plan, site-based decision-making plan, campus improvement plan and its technology plan are tied to the budget and are developed with an eye toward the funding and expenditures consequences of every action and plan.

*Ricardo continues to link its budget to its planning documents. By doing so, the district can realistically plan and achieve its goals and objectives in a systematic and timely manner.*

- Ricardo ISD takes effective action to keep student attendance high. When a student is absent for a period of time, the principal calls the student's home to tell the student's parents of the absences. If a student is still reluctant to attend school, the principal and a county deputy sheriff visit the student. This practice is a strong deterrent to truancy.

*Attendance rates in Ricardo continue to be high, and were a factor in the district's Exemplary rating from TEA for 2001. RISD's philosophy of giving personal attention to the needs of each student and their families is evident in the way it deals with educational, as well as truancy issues.*

- The superintendent involves all levels of the administration and the board when developing the budget. Faculty and staff also are involved in formulating the budget, and the superintendent gives department heads control over how their budgets are spent.

*The superintendent's collaborative approach for developing the budget, as well as the district's link among the major planning documents, ensure that every member of the management team knows and understands the district's mission and objectives and that each member of the team is working toward those goals.*

- By developing precise bid specifications and allowing bidders to compete for projects without specifying an exact bid amount, Ricardo ISD's projects usually come in under budget.

*Integrating various components of the district's financial system have improved the district's overall budget development and financial management.*

- Ricardo ISD uses effective preventive maintenance schedules for its facilities and its buses.

*The use of work orders and the planned in-house development of an automated system to track work orders will further improve the district's ability to perform effective preventive maintenance.*

# TSPR Key Recommendations

The following key TSPR recommendations were highlighted by GISD administrators and staff as having the greatest impact on district operations. These recommendations are organized by chapter and area of operation, as in TSPR's original report. The comments came from district administrators during the TSPR team's follow-up visit to the district.

## District Organization and Management

**Recommendation 4: Develop and implement a set of standard operating procedures for key functional areas and train all staff in their application.** The superintendent said this recommendation was excellent, which has motivated the district to document procedures on topics, such as Purchasing Guidelines, the district's investment policy, emergency procedures and a Dyslexia Plan for how the district will provide services to children with dyslexia. According to the superintendent, the district has a lot of good people, but as personnel change, this recommendation will ensure continuity.

**Recommendation 5: Review the current PEIMS reporting process and identify any weaknesses that would allow incorrect reporting of data.** During 2000, the district was rated Acceptable while the campuses were rated Exemplary, because the data on students who had left the system was inaccurately reported. With training and intense concentration on the problem, the district was able to correct the data and achieve an Exemplary rating for 2001.

## Education Service Delivery

**Recommendation 8: Use Process Manager software to identify development improvement opportunities among the faculty at Ricardo ISD.**

**Recommendation 9: Analyze the performance of the academic teams to determine how the district might improve student performance.** The full implementation of the Process Manager software was particularly crucial to improving student scores in 2001. The district had aligned the math curriculum and had the teams in place to align the curriculum. These two recommendations provided consistency and continuity between the grade levels.

## Financial Management

**Recommendation 15: Resolve the computer interface problem to improve financial management activities.** The district corrected the problems and the staff has been trained to use the system.

**Recommendation 18: Establish procedures requiring senior management to review payroll reports before checks are released.** Internal controls are particularly important in any financial system, and this recommendation made it possible for district administrators to ensure the safety of district cash.

**Recommendation 21: Restructure all of the district bank accounts to achieve a market rate of return on excess cash.** The new business manager is working to ensure the district's money is earning the best possible rates. Although the interest earnings are not as high as TSPR estimated due to the recent decline in interest rates, the district is now earning money on excess cash, instead of allowing the cash to sit idle in the bank.

## Operations

**Recommendation 23: Participate in the State Power Program to receive a discount in the district's utility bills.** The district is exploring the feasibility of joining a cooperative and has signed up to attend a training seminar hosted by the Comptroller's State Energy Conservation Office. Unfortunately, the seminar was canceled in light of events on September 11 and it has been rescheduled for December 2001. At the next board meeting, the district is going to examine this issue. Region 4 is also investigating this issue.

**Recommendation 26: Enlist the support of students, staff and parents to develop strategies for increasing participation in breakfast and lunch on campus.** Members of the district administration believe that by soliciting support, they were able to rebuild the program and improve it. Under the superintendent's guidance, the Food Services manager polled parents, students and staff about the cafeterias and found there was some dissatisfaction. As a result, the district improved its menu. A snack bar has been added, and more cooking is done from scratch. Student participation has increased. The business manager believes that with increased federal funds and additional paid revenues, the deficit will be cut in half this year and eliminated in the next few years.

**Recommendation 30: Assess critical safety maintenance needs and plan to address these issues each summer before the start of school.** The district performed a complete safety inspection and put into place an incentive package in which they gave away a letter jacket, paid for by the Workers' Compensation claims administrator, to any group that was accident free for the year. All employees were accident free and got the jackets.

Moreover, during the review, the district was having difficulty getting a crossing arm installed on two railroad crossings in close proximity to the school. With the assistance of Comptroller Rylander and then-Governor Bush, the district now has crossing arms at both intersections.

## What Remains to be Done?

RISD has made steady progress in implementing TSPR recommendations. The district has implemented or is implementing at the present time 97 percent of TSPR's recommendations and has rejected only one recommendation. This section addresses the key areas requiring additional attention.

### **Distance Learning**

Ricardo ISD has the technology and Internet access needed to expand services for gifted and talented students through Internet-based courses and distance learning (Recommendation 11), but the district has found very few opportunities available at the K-8 levels. The majority of districts that are embracing the distance educational approach are using this technology at the high school level, which does not benefit RISD students. While TSPR agrees that these opportunities are currently limited, the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented has expressed its willingness to act as a resource for Ricardo as district officials pursue this recommendation. SB 975, enacted during the 2001 Legislative Session, gives districts the ability to offer electronic courses without losing any state funding based on average daily attendance.

### **Energy Conservation**

In Recommendation 23, TSPR alerted the district to an opportunity to reduce its utility bills by participating in the State Power Program. District administrators signed up for a conference hosted by the Comptroller's State Energy Conservation Office. The seminar, originally scheduled just days after the world events in September 11, was canceled and rescheduled for December 2001. Despite these delays, energy conservation and the reduction of utility bills must remain a high priority for the district in light of rising costs. The Comptroller's staff is committed to working with the district to achieve increased energy efficiency.

### **Food Service Operations**

Significant improvements have been made in the food service area of the district's operations, and efforts are underway to increase participation rates (Recommendation 26). TSPR encourages the district to continue to work with parents, students and staff to ensure the highest quality foods are served to the greatest numbers of students. As participation rates are increasing, the district's deficit in the food service fund is dropping, and district administrators believe the deficit will be eliminated entirely in the coming years. But, more importantly, studies show that children who are well-nourished perform better academically and have fewer discipline and attendance problems.

# RISD's Ideas for Improving the Texas School Performance Review

As part of the progress report preparation, TSPR asked Ricardo ISD staff members and administrators 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 to complement the recommendations. Districts have told TSPR these blueprints are invaluable to achieving the desired results, but that it is important for TSPR to know what did not work as intended so the review process can be continually improved.

Ricardo administrators and board members made the following observations:

Superintendent Jones said that, as a first-year superintendent, the review was helpful. The new business manager, who arrived in the district after the report was released, also said the report gave her a good guide to what needed to be done. The district also had suggestions for improvement. The superintendent said that the consultants and TSPR team should pull and organize the data submitted by the district based upon the preliminary data request and data from TEA before the visit begins so the initial on-site visit will be less stressful for everyone involved.

The superintendent said there were a few items of information in the report that were incorrect or misstated. He speculated that asking the right people was critical to getting the right information. In some cases, the TSPR team asked the wrong people for information, and because the superintendent was new, it was difficult for him to direct the team to the correct people. He suggested that the team spend more time up front with the management team as a whole to determine who has what information, even before the interviewing process begins.

Finally, the superintendent said it was refreshing to have the opportunity to accept or reject the recommendations. He mentioned that so often recommendations are made with the expectation that every recommendation will work for every district. He encouraged TSPR to continue to be open and collaborative about the review process, because there are certain recommendations that work and others that are diametrically opposed to the district's and superintendent's philosophy. In those cases, they need the latitude to modify the recommendation to meet the needs of the district, or reject them outright. TSPR wholeheartedly agrees.

## Appendix A: Status of Recommendations and Savings

### Chapter 1: District Organization and Management

Rec#	General Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	RISD's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
1	Prepare more detailed board minutes. p. 21	Rejected	\$0	\$0	\$0	District officials believe the minutes they are keeping reflect the facts. Expanding them would require the person taking the minutes to inject opinion, and they did not think that was appropriate.
2	Evaluate options for conducting an inexpensive demographic study of the district. p. 25	In Progress	(\$10,000)	\$0	\$0	The superintendent has met with neighboring school districts and has attended Rotary meetings where presentations were made on community growth and a private effort to build a space launch facility called Spaceport. If this area were selected for the construction of

						Spaceport, the community's economy would be significantly affected. The district has decided, therefore, to postpone contracting for a demographic study until the decision on a Spaceport is made.
3	Assess the feasibility of adding a high school and other high school options based on information from a demographic study. p. 28	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The administration and site-based committees have examined the feasibility of opening a high school as recommended, and found that the state funding formulas for tuition do not justify this action. It would only be marginally feasible if the state forced districts to pay tuition. Further, after careful examination, the administration believes that students have various options available to them for high school: they can

						attend a larger school in Kingsville, or a smaller rural setting in Riviera.
4	Develop and implement a set of standard operating procedures for key functional areas and train all staff in their application. p. 32	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent said this recommendation was excellent, and it has motivated the district to document procedures. Examples of documented procedures completed to date include: Purchasing Guidelines, Investment Policy, Emergency Procedures and a Dyslexia Plan.
5	Review the current PEIMS reporting process and identify any weaknesses that would allow incorrect reporting of data. p. 34	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	This recommendation has been a priority of the district. Because of a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting problem, the district was rated Acceptable in 2000. while the

						campuses were rated Exemplary. The problem was the PEIMS leave-reporting data used to calculate dropout rates. The district trained PEIMS personnel during 1999-2000, and the 2000-01 PEIMS report was excellent.
6	Develop performance measures for managers of support services, and incorporate them into the annual evaluation process. p. 35	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is implementing this recommendation for all of the departments, but it has not yet begun to use the new system.
7	Contact the Dean of Education and the Dean of Business Administration of both area Texas A&M campuses to establish intern programs in education and finance. p. 37	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent contacted Texas A&M and set up the program in theory. The university did not follow through and has not placed an intern, but the district continues to encourage the university to place an intern in the district.
	<b>Totals: Chapter 1</b>		<b>(\$10,000)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	



## Appendix A: Status of Recommendations and Savings

### Chapter 2: Educational Service Delivery

Rec#	General Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	RISD's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
8	Use Process Manager software to identify development improvement opportunities among the faculty at Ricardo ISD. p. 53	Completed	\$0	\$0	\$0	This program was in the process of being implemented at the time of the review. The district has fully implemented the system and credits the program with the creation of a written staff development program and the district's Exemplary rating. The district continues to use the program.
9	Analyze the performance of the academic teams to determine how the district might improve student performance. p. 56	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Vertical Alignment project began in 2001-02. Curriculum writing teams began with the Language arts and aligned K-8.

						In 2002-03, the district plans to concentrate on Science and social studies. (Math is already aligned.) There is a staff development plan that specifies the cyclical process that will ensure that all subjects are reviewed and aligned periodically.
10	Document the percentage of time that an aide instead of a specialist provides campus support, and use the findings to improve the level of professional support from the special education cooperative. p. 65	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Procedures have been put into place and sign-in sheets are in use. Analysis is on-going.
11	Explore opportunities for Internet or distance learning instruction to expand services for gifted and talented students. p. 67	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Internet access is already in place. Four computers are online in every classroom. REESC 2 has

						started a cooperative for distance learning, but the focus is on high school courses. Distance learning opportunities are limited.
12	Develop structured staff development offerings that directly support district goals and objectives. p. 72	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A District Staff Development Plan has been implemented.
13	Establish a part-time position for a technology intern to assist the director of Technology. p. 78	Complete	(\$47,200)	(\$2,400)	(\$44,560)	Ricardo ISD hired a person, and that person left the district after only a few months. During October 2001, the district hired a new person to fill the position. The district is paying this individual \$10 per hour, 20 hours per week, for 226 days a year, or \$9,040 annually.

	<b>Totals: Chapter 2</b>		<b>(\$47,200)</b>	<b>(\$2,400)</b>	<b>(\$44,560)</b>	
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## Appendix A: Status of Recommendations and Savings

### Chapter 3: Financial Management

Rec#	General Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	RISD's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
14	Use sub-accounts to track performance by key areas. p. 89	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The new business manager began using subject codes when she came on board and is providing additional detail to the district's managers.
15	Resolve the computer interface problem to improve finance management activities. p. 90	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	During 2000-01, the technology coordinator and vendors resolved the interface problems that were hampering financial management. Staff was provided training on the improved system, and staff training is ongoing.
16	Eliminate the manual purchasing request form by automating the purchase order process. p. 90	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The computer interface problem was corrected, which has allowed the district to automate more of the purchasing and requisitioning

						process, but the district still uses the paper document as a check and balance to ensure accuracy.
17	Implement procurement cards for purchases from selected local vendors. p. 92	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has implemented procurement cards for Walmart and Citco and is using a districtwide American Express card. Cards are not issued to employees, but are loaned to employees when they are purchasing from those vendors.
18	Establish procedures requiring senior management to review payroll reports before checks are released. p. 93	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In 2000-01, when the new business manager was hired, the district implemented this recommendation.
19	Develop tabulation sheets for all sources of cash on each campus and use two people to retrieve and count cash. p. 94	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Written procedures have been implemented. A sponsor receives money and turns it into the principal who verifies the amount. The campus-level

						clerk then recounts and reverifies receipts and prepares the deposit slip, which is sent to the accounting office where it is deposited and recorded.
20	Poll employees to determine if they are willing to share the cost of higher premiums if the district chose to select a health insurance carrier that provides a plan with better coverage. p. 98	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A districtwide Employee Health Insurance Committee was appointed in 2000-01. The superintendent met with the committee members during the summer of 2001, and the committee evaluated three bids, polling employees during this process. The committee ultimately made a recommendation that was sent to the board.
21	Restructure all of the district bank accounts to achieve a market rate of return on excess cash. p. 100	In Progress	\$123,180	\$7,249	\$36,246	Kleberg Bank is now paying interest on all accounts. The business manager is investing the money to ensure the district is earning the

						highest possible rates. Although the interest earnings are not as high as TSPR estimated due to the recent decline in interest rates, the district is now earning money on excess cash, instead of allowing it to sit idle in the bank.
	<b>Totals: Chapter 3</b>		<b>\$123,180</b>	<b>\$7,249</b>	<b>\$36,246</b>	

## Appendix A: Status of Recommendations and Savings

### Chapter 4: Operations

Rec#	General Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	RISD's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
22	Purchase cleaning chemicals that will not kill the septic system enzymes and/or determine if there is a leak in the pipes. p. 106	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Chemicals have been purchased and are now being used. One old septic system has been covered up and is no longer used.
23	Participate in the State Power Program to receive a discount in the district's utility bills. p. 109	In Progress	\$18,400	\$0	\$18,400	The district is exploring the feasibility of joining a cooperative and signed up to attend a training seminar hosted by the Comptroller's State Energy Conservation Office. Unfortunately, the seminar was canceled in light of events on September 11 and rescheduled for December. At the next board meeting, the district is planning to examine this issue. Region 4 also is looking

						at the issue.
24	Revise the work order completion procedures to include recording time taken and parts used for all work orders including emergencies. p. 113	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district now has a formal work order that captures the type of work, time taken, etc. The Maintenance director is revising work order procedures. There are three parts to the form. The principal completes and approves the order and keeps one copy. The person completing the work keeps a copy, and the last copy showing what work has been performed is sent back to the principal to show the work has been completed.
25	Establish meals per labor hour standard and staff accordingly. p. 116	In Progress	\$33,909	\$0	\$0	The district has not yet set official standards. The superintendent and the Food Service manager, however, have examined the situation in the

						<p>food service area, and they have made some significant changes. Rather than reduce staff, the district examined the current participation rates and decided that the way to increase participation was to prepare more food from scratch. As a result of this strategy the district hired a baker. The participation rates are rising significantly, bringing the labor hours more in line with industry standards.</p>
26	<p>Enlist the support of students, staff and parents to develop strategies for increasing participation in breakfast and lunch on campus. p. 118</p>	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$42,000	<p>Under the guidance of the superintendent, the Food Services manager polled parents, students and staff about the cafeterias and found that there was some dissatisfaction. As a result, the menu has been improved, a snack bar was</p>

						added and more cooking from scratch is performed. Student participation has increased as a result. The business manager believes that with increased federal funds and additional revenues, the deficit will be cut in half during 2001-02 and eliminated in the next few years.
27	Develop daily procedures to address food temperatures and inventory of perishable foods. p. 119	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The cafeterias are now using thermometers to ensure that foods are kept at appropriate temperatures, and are ensuring that perishable foods are refrigerated.
28	Establish a district policy to control the sale of foods in competition with meals served under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. p. 120	Completed	\$0	\$0	\$0	This recommendation was made based upon erroneous data. The vending machines are in a separate room from the cafeteria, and a TEA review conducted a few months after

						TSPR's review concluded that the district is meeting federal guidelines.
29	Modify the work order system used by the transportation department and track repairs by bus. p. 127	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The work order system has been modified and the district is in the process of trying to find an automated system to document the repair process. The technology people have looked at the available software and are now trying to write their own system; therefore the system will not cost the district any additional money. Procedures have been implemented.
30	Assess critical safety maintenance needs and plan to address these issues each summer before the start of school. p. 130	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district performed a complete safety inspection and put into place an incentive package whereby they gave away a letter jacket, paid for by the Workers' Compensation claims

						<p>administrator, to any group that was accident free for the year. Everyone was accident free and got the jackets. Further, during the review, the district was having difficulty getting a crossing arm installed on two railroad crossings in close proximity to the school. With the assistance of Comptroller Rylander and then-Governor Bush, the district now has crossing arms at both intersections.</p>
31	<p>Explore strategies to physically separate elementary and middle school in school suspension programs. p. 132</p>	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>The classes are still meeting in one room, but the age groups are physically separated within the classroom by a half wall. The school suspension program functions well, and district administrators said this is the most practical</p>

						arrangement for a district of their size.
	<b>Totals: Chapter 4</b>		<b>\$52,310</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$60,400</b>	
	<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$118,290</b>	<b>\$4,849</b>	<b>\$52,086</b>	