

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

March 8, 1999

The Honorable George W. Bush
The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the 76th Legislature
Commissioner Mike A. Moses, Ed.D.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

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

In February 1997, TSPR released the results of a five-month study of the district's operations. This review, originally requested by hundreds of members of the Texarkana community, offered 110 specific recommendations for saving Texarkana taxpayers nearly \$4.2 million over the next five years and called for total reinvestments of \$1.4 million over the same period.

The review also noted a number of TISD's exemplary programs and model services provided by district administrators, teachers, and staff.

We have checked on how well the district's leadership has put these proposals into practice, and the results are very encouraging. In a little less than two years, school officials have implemented or are in the process of implementing 99 of these proposals, or 90 percent. Since the release of the report, TISD saved taxpayers more than \$233,000, and district officials project those savings to increase in the coming years.

Much remains to be done, but TISD is to be commended for taking these initial steps to ensure that students, teachers, and taxpayers receive the maximum possible benefit from every dollar spent in Texarkana public schools.

Sincerely,



Carole Keeton Rylander
Comptroller of Public Accounts

INTRODUCTION

Since 1990, more than 30 Texas school districts have benefited from detailed audits by the Texas School Performance Review. But Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander sees greater accomplishments ahead.

Starting with the Texarkana Independent School District's (TISD) progress report, the Comptroller intends for TSPR to become a tool for improvement in many more districts, particularly districts that seek help in improving academic performance by better managing classroom resources.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Consulting school district officials, parents, and teachers from across Texas, Comptroller Rylander carefully examined past reviews and progress reports like the one being delivered to TISD. In each case, the Comptroller welcomed suggestions to make TSPR increasingly valuable, even vital, to more of the state's more than 1,000 school districts. With the perspective of having been a public school teacher herself, and having served as a school board president in her own career, the Comptroller vowed to steer TSPR to being 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 will be given to school districts that are judged poorly performing academically or financially, and to hands-on reviews that will benefit the greatest number of students. The explanation is simple but powerful: *These are the school districts and children that need help the most.*

Recognizing that less than 52 cents of every state education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander emphasizes an approach that will give local school officials the ability to move every possible dollar to the classroom. In addition, no longer will school districts' best practices and exemplary models be left unnoticed in 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. In short, there is no advantage to a district that has smartly solved a problem keeping the solution to itself. TSPR can begin to serve as an active clearinghouse of the best and brightest ideas in Texas public education.

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

- ensure that students and teachers receive the support and resources needed to succeed;
- identify innovative options for addressing core management challenges facing the district;
- ensure that administrative activities are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a manner that spurs education;
- develop strategies for ensuring continual assessment and improvement of processes and programs;
- understand the link between functional areas of the district 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 such obstacles; and
- put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages test" determining if goods and services can be obtained from private sources better, and at a lower cost, that will benefit students and taxpayers alike.

Finally, Comptroller Rylander has opened her door to Texans who share her optimism about the potential for the TSPR. Suggestions to improve school reviews are welcome at any time. The Comptroller recognizes that public schools deserve all the attention, and assistance, they can possibly get.

Detailed information on a previous school performance review is available toll-free at: 1-800-531-5441 ext 3-4900, or visit the Comptroller's website at: <www.window.state.tx.us>.

TSPR IN TEXARKANA, TEXAS

In September 1996, in response to a local call for assistance from hundreds of Texarkana community members, a state legislator, and the Texarkana Independent School District (TISD) Board of Trustees, TSPR began a five-month review of TISD. As in previous reviews of Texas school districts, the Comptroller's team drew upon the expertise of outside management consultants, in this case Empirical Management Services, a Houston-based firm. During visits to the district, the TSPR team held a public forum at Kennedy Elementary School, conducted 14 focus group sessions, and interviewed scores of people who live and work in the community, including business leaders, district employees, school board members, and other community representatives. In addition, TSPR distributed written surveys to all central office administrators, principals, and assistant principals, one-fourth of all teachers, and junior and senior students who attended one of four lunch periods. From this effort, TSPR received written survey responses from 137 students, 102 teachers, 21 school administrators, and 12 central administrators. TSPR also conducted follow-up telephone interviews with 80 administrators and teachers to validate concerns raised in focus groups by community members and district employees.

The review team targeted 12 areas:

- District organization and management
- Educational service delivery and performance measures
- Community involvement
- Personnel management
- Asset and risk management
- Financial management
- Management information systems
- Purchasing and warehouse services
- Facilities use and management
- Transportation services
- Food service
- Safety and security

In short, we found a school district, the largest of thirteen public school districts and five private schools in Bowie County, serving more than 5,400 students on 11 campuses, with an annual operating budget of nearly \$26 million. The student population was primarily African-American-49 percent African-American-with 47 percent Anglo and 4 percent consisting of Hispanic and other races.

From the start, the review team recognized that TISD faces challenges in such important areas as board governance, community trust, compensation and benefits, and district management. Equally as prevalent, however, was a long list of exemplary programs that other school districts could take as examples. For example, TISD's TigerVision, the high school broadcast journalism program, was one of the first courses in the nation to directly parallel a commercial television station. It has consistently been a model for other programs around the country for the past ten years and is visited by schools every year seeking to start a similar course.

Given TISD's challenges, TSPR sought ways to help the district improve. It was in that spirit that TSPR identified 110 recommendations for improvement, while addressing three key challenges: (1) an overall atmosphere of distrust within the school board and among the board, the then-superintendent, and the administration; (2) a low degree of public trust and overall support emanating from a lack of open communication from the district; and (3) staffing inequities in the distribution of teachers in elementary and middle schools.

Dr. F. Larry Sullivan, the newly appointed superintendent, asked TSPR to give the district an additional six months before making the follow-up visit to give him enough time to settle into his position and fully digest the recommendations made during the review. At the end of 18 months, TSPR returned to find a much calmer and more focused district. Dr. Sullivan freely said that he made his own independent assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the district, as any new superintendent would be expected to do. When he turned to the report he was encouraged by the remarkable similarities between his own findings and those identified in TSPR's report.

For example, at the top of TSPR's list of recommendations had been governance issues: the need to build trust among board members, open the lines of communication between the board, superintendent, and administration, and improve the board's credibility in the community. The board and new superintendent have held a team-building session and created a "team of eight," built on a foundation of trust and respect between the board and administration. Further, the board president, Ms. Wanda Boyette, and superintendent limited items to be discussed in closed session, encouraging more public discussion of the district's business and restoring the board's credibility in the community. Indeed, district administrators report that there is little controversy at board meetings and the relationship between the superintendent, administration and board is greatly improved, an accomplishment that the board president feels occurred following the release of the TSPR report. Ms. Boyette also said the superintendent search process helped to unify and focus the board on their future goals for the district.

The board made significant strides in improving employee morale and community perceptions when it dissolved the Health Benefits Risk Pool in March 1998 and formed the Executive Health Plan Committee to oversee management of TISD's health plan, enabling employees to participate in decisions and recommendations related to employee benefits. Administrators report that forming the Executive Health Plan Committee was pivotal to reestablishing employee trust and has enhanced employees' acceptance of change.

Thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the State's Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF), the district will connect all schools to one another and the Internet via its wide area network. Administrators are working on a long-range technology plan to connect all locations within the district, including maintenance and central offices.

Finally, the board took TSPR's recommendation and directed the superintendent to look for ways to restore teacher pay increments without raising taxes. Through a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the district's budget, administrators report that they were able to provide all professional teachers and librarians with stipends totaling \$700 for bachelors degrees and \$1,000 for masters degrees. These stipends, when included with two years of state salary increases and enhancements to the TISD employee benefit package, place TISD in a very competitive compensation position compared to other area districts.

Since February 1997, TISD has completed 57 of TSPR's 110 recommendations, saving \$233,281 to date. Another 42 recommendations are in progress, leaving 9 recommendations not implemented, and two more rejected outright. These results show dramatic progress, signaling even greater future gains.

Texarkana ISD Report Card							
Chapter	Total	Complete	In Progress	Not Implemented	Rejected	Percent Complete/In Progress	Grades
District Organization and Management	13	7	5	1	0	54%/38%	Satisfactory
Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures	13	5	8	0	0	38%/62%	Satisfactory
Community Involvement	6	3	2	1	0	50%/33%	Satisfactory
Personnel Management	14	8	5	1	0	57%/36%	Satisfactory
Asset and Risk Management	6	5	0	1	0	83%/0%	Excellent
Financial Management	8	7	0	1	0	88%/0%	Excellent
Management Information Systems	14	5	9	0	0	36%/64%	Satisfactory
Purchasing and Warehouse Services	7	4	2	0	1	57%/29%	Satisfactory
Facilities Use and Management	12	6	3	2	1	50%/25%	Needs Work
Transportation	6	2	2	2	0	33%/33%	Needs Work
Food Service	5	3	2	0	0	60%/40%	Satisfactory
Safety and Security	6	2	4	0	0	33%/67%	Satisfactory
Overall Grade	110	57	42	9	2	52%/38%	Satisfactory
Excellent = More than 80% complete Satisfactory = 80% to 100% complete or in progress Needs Work = Less than 80% complete or in progress							

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

TSPR identified a number of exemplary programs and practices and highlighted them in the final report. These programs and services are presented below, with updates on how TISD has enhanced them even further. TSPR encourages other districts to study them and determine whether they can be adapted to meet their own local needs.

- Through TigerVision, possibly the only high school broadcast course with regular broadcasts on several local television stations, the district has established a special training ground for video journalists. The program raises as much as \$14,000 per year to pay for additional equipment.
---TigerVision continues to train high school video journalists and the district is expanding the reaches of the high school broadcast to cable television subscribers via Channel 23 public access television. TigerVision currently feeds a two-hour segment out of every eight on the 24-hour TEACH Education channel on CableOne and is a weekly contributor to the Shreveport ABC affiliate's weekend news shows. TigerVision is a major producer of training and information videos for non-profit entities. The program has raised more than \$20,000 in the past year to pay for additional supplies, equipment, and repairs.
- TISD's Science Department successfully sought an outside grant to integrate DNA technology into high school biology courses. Texas High School was the only high school in the nation to present a major integrated multimedia program at an international science and technology conference.
---The Science Department continues to pursue innovative ways to improve the science curriculum. An environmental systems course and a scientific research and design course have been added. Currently, the science department is developing a plan to integrate scientific career and professional pathways into the curriculum. The high school reports an increased interest in science among its students with some students graduating with six or seven science credits. The head of the science department reports cooperation with the community in that professional organizations often donate lab materials to the district.
- TISD has improved classroom instruction and improved student scores on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) using the district's Checkpoint Assessment, a system created in 1993-94 that tracks student performance throughout the year against TAAS objectives. Ideally, teachers can adjust their instruction to target areas of greatest academic need before the annual TAAS administration.

---District administrators continue to use the Checkpoint Assessment to improve students' scores on the TAAS test. As the district progresses through the implementation of the curriculum management plan, it is likely that the Checkpoint Assessment system will be streamlined to meet the needs of the district. The district is investigating the idea of creating a database of TAAS release test items to create checkpoint assessments in a variety of formats. This would allow campuses to individualize the assessments for each of the objectives and to gather more specific data to better meet the students' needs. It is our hope that the curriculum alignment process will provide a seamless instructional setting for classroom instruction and student assessment.

- Tigers, Inc., a Junior Achievement company owned and operated by severely disabled students, gives students an innovative way to achieve life skills and make a profit. Students who run the company learn about banking, the business world, and general day-to-day decision-making.

---During the 1997-98 school year, Tigers, Inc. involved nine students with disabilities in Junior Achievement companies that apply life skills learned in the classroom to real-world settings.

- The district's public information officer employs "campus communicators" to efficiently collect information about events at individual schools and to alert the district to newsworthy developments. The practice is endorsed by the Texas School Public Relations Association.

---Under the new organizational structure, campus communicators will continue to be a vital link in providing a wealth of information related to school activities to the community. The coordinator of Parent Involvement and director of Public Information and Governance will both continue to work with these individuals, both to retrieve information and to provide them with information about upcoming programs

- TISD has highly experienced teachers with an average of 13.3 years of teaching experience, compared to the state average of 11.7 years.

---TISD's board and administration have signaled their respect and appreciation for the dedicated and highly qualified teachers that serve the children of Texarkana by restoring the teacher increment. According to the new superintendent, keeping and recruiting the best teachers is a priority goal of his administration.

- TISD's automated purchasing and requisitioning system enables schools and departments to enter requisitions electronically, greatly reducing paperwork.

---Automation of administrative functions and upgrading instructional technology continues to be a major focus of the district. All campuses will be connected to the Wide Area Network

(WAN) in the near future. The recent approval of the TIFF grant will provide additional funding to speed the development of the WAN.

- TISD participates in the highly efficient Bowie County Transportation Cooperative, which provides regular education transportation services to school districts in Bowie County. The cost per mile for transportation services is far below state averages due to many innovative strategies that hold the line on costs while providing quality services to the county's districts.
---The shared services model used by TISD and Bowie County Transportation Cooperative continues to set the standard for cost-effective regular education transportation in the state. During reviews of other districts, TSPR has continually pointed to the Bowie County Cooperative as an example of how shared services can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of support functions in a district.
- By employing appropriately certified coaches and other staff as school bus drivers for extracurricular trips, the district has saved thousands of dollars otherwise spent paying overtime to bus drivers.
---TISD continues to encourage coaches, sponsors, and other district staff to obtain certification to operate school buses where appropriate. Each coach has the responsibility to work within his/her budget. Using coaches as bus drivers often allows athletic programs to stretch their dollars thereby providing additional opportunities for student athletes.
- Bowie County and the district purchase and refurbish used buses at a cost of \$4,000 to \$8,000 per bus-a more effective approach to purchasing new buses that normally cost \$40,000 each.
---Used buses continue to be purchased and refurbished by Bowie County and TISD to reduce the district's capital costs. In 1997-98, three buses were refurbished, saving the districts \$30,000.
- TISD's Food Service program maintains cooperative agreements to serve students in nearby Redwater and Red Lick ISDs, leading to increased profits for TISD and reduced administrative burdens for the served districts.
---TISD's Food Service program continues to serve students in surrounding school districts and has incrementally improved profits, thereby increasing its fund balance. TISD continues its cooperative agreements and currently serves students in three other school districts. One additional proposal has been made to a nearby district with no action taken to date.
- Since creation of a TISD police department in 1992-93, students, teachers, and administrators strongly agree that school buildings are safe. In an incentive move, the district police chief has students convicted of Class C misdemeanors perform community service at

the high school.

---Students, teachers, and administrators continue to believe TISD's schools are safe and report a decrease in incidents. From the original one officer in 1992-93 to the current six officers (two employed through COPS grants), TISD's Police Department has had a major impact on the health and safety of both students and staff.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

TSPR has found room for improvement in even the best-run public school districts. TISD was no exception. The district's leadership is committed to positive change, a fact that is underscored by the 90 percent of TSPR recommendations that have already been implemented or are in progress.

Following are some of the key recommendations identified by administrators and staff members as having the greatest effect on the district's operations. The highlighted recommendations are arranged by chapter and area of operation as contained in TSPR's report. The comments come from district administrators.

District Organization and Management

#1 Provide team-building and sensitivity training workshops or retreats to build trust among board members and the administration.

After many months of fractious behavior by some TISD board members, the board set a course to begin the healing process. Beginning in February 1998, the board and a newly restructured administrative team focused on building trust and progressive decision-making. The superintendent reports that he and the board began a relationship built on the concept of a "team of eight" (i.e., school board and superintendent) and established primary ground rules to "agree to disagree without being disagreeable" and "no management by ambush." Each of the primary ground rules is based on a trusting relationship between the board and administrative team. During 1998, one board retreat was held to focus on evaluating the district's mission and long-range goals with the superintendent acting as facilitator. A second retreat is planned for the beginning of the 1999 calendar year.

#2 Build trust with the community through open communication.

The board altered the format of its monthly meetings and restructured its agenda to virtually eliminate the need for extended closed sessions. The board president and superintendent report that more business is conducted in open session and agendas are provided freely to any individuals who want copies. The community has responded favorably as evidenced by less criticism of the board's communication practices. The superintendent scheduled multiple speaking engagements, all of which include a question and answer session for the public, and held periodic meetings with the local media and district's public information officer to discuss mutually beneficial communications practices, resulting in a consistent pattern of open communication.

Educational Service Delivery

#16 Revise curriculum guide contents based on the latest Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills revisions and develop a policy that establishes a regular five-year curriculum revision cycle.

According to administrators, TISD contracted for a comprehensive Curriculum Management Audit in May 1998 to reveal the extent to which district administrators and professional staff have developed and implemented a sound, valid, and operational system for curriculum management. The finalized Curriculum Management Audit was received by the district in October 1998, and the results of this audit are being used to establish an aligned prekindergarten-12 curriculum with appropriate policies to support a quality educational experience for every TISD student. District officials plan to establish a six-year curriculum revision cycle designed to align the development and renewal of curriculum.

Community Involvement

#30 Develop a communications plan that promotes open and honest, two-way communication between the district and the Texarkana community to restore public trust and confidence.

Although a formal communications plan has not been developed at this time, the director of Public Information and Governance is using a variety of tools to improve communications with the general public, including newsletters, public access television, and the TISD Headliner newspaper. Based on these communication initiatives, public trust appears to be much improved and public controversy has been minimal.

Personnel Management

#40 Develop comprehensive, up-to-date salary administration policies and procedures that explain how employee salaries are determined.

In August 1998, the board approved the TISD Compensation Plan. The district will update the plan annually and distribute copies to TISD employees and community members upon request. Administrators told TSPR the plan was a significant accomplishment for the district, they feel this plan will ensure that TISD remains competitive; recruits and retains exemplary personnel; promotes pay equity and employee trust; and complies with federal and state laws.

Asset and Risk Management

#47 Form a health plan committee that actively participates with district management to establish standards for the district's health plan features; participates in evaluating health plan service levels; regularly reviews and assists the district in preparing public reports on the financial status of the plan; and is involved in bidding the evaluation and vendor selection process.

The board approved a resolution dissolving the TISD Health Benefits Risk Pool and formed the Executive Health Plan Committee in March 1998 to oversee the management of TISD's health plan. The board also expanded the responsibilities of the Employee Health Plan Advisory Committee, which is made up of an elected employee from each school and department. TISD's Executive Health Plan Committee is a five-member committee comprised of one professional and one non-professional employee (both appointed by the Health Plan Advisory Committee), the director of Purchasing and Support Services, the director of Human Resources and Employee Benefits, and the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Operations. Administrators report that, through both committees, employees participate in decisions and recommendations related to employee benefits. More significantly, forming the Health Plan Committee has reestablished employee trust, enhanced the acceptance of change, and improved overall management of the district's health plan.

Financial Management

- #53 Require the superintendent to report regularly to the board's planning, budgeting, and finance committee on the district's financial condition and hold the superintendent accountable for the effective financial management of the district through the superintendent's annual performance appraisal.**

Administrators hold the opinion that no single recommendation in the financial management chapter can be considered most significant, but elements of each of the eight recommendations are significant. As a result, the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Operations developed a detailed monthly financial presentation to the board that provides, in summary form, a clear picture of the financial condition of the district. Primary elements of the financial presentation include cash flow, tax collections, average daily attendance, budget vs. actual comparisons for general fund expenditures, and an analysis of the over- or under-payment of state revenue.

Management Information Systems

- #64 Prepare proposals in response to Texas Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to secure funds to continue networking district locations.**

TISD responded to the TIF RFP and was awarded a \$100,000 TIF grant in October 1998. Administrators will use the grant to install network infrastructure at Pine Street Middle School and Lincoln Alternative School, enabling both schools to communicate with other sites, access the Internet, and use software available to other schools within the district.

- #65 Prepare a written job description for the grants writer position delineating duties, goals, responsibilities, and priorities.**

TISD administrators developed a job description and related performance goals and incentive compensation for its grants and discretionary funding specialist for the 1998-99 school year. Creating the position has already been a significant benefit to the district, producing \$266,000 in new grant awards in the first three months of the 1998-99 school year.

Purchasing and Warehouse Services

#76 Establish a system for monitoring competitive sealed bids to eliminate the appearance of bidding improprieties.

A purchasing and warehousing committee was formed to review and monitor all competitive sealed bids and proposals and the district's purchasing and warehousing practices. The committee includes a representative from each school and department and meets once each semester to review the overall purchasing process, problems with vendors, problems with quality goods and services, and warehouse operations. Although the committee's role and responsibilities reflect a modification to the initial recommendation, administrators report the district has benefited from its oversight and incrementally improved its competitive bidding process and overall quality of service to schools and departments.

Facilities Use and Management

#86 Update the district's five-year facilities management plan.

Following a period of limited progress, the board contracted with a school architecture firm to develop a five-year facilities master plan using materials developed by the original 1993 facilities study committee and other input from staff and the community. The goal of this study is to identify the short-and long-term facilities needs for TISD. Using this master plan as a foundation, the board anticipates recommending a facilities upgrade and addition bond to the community during spring 1999.

#92 Develop productivity standards for each craft department that include work order response times for work assignments.

TISD administrators expanded this recommendation to include employees in all support services areas, including maintenance, custodial, food service, transportation, and police and security. Each employee receives monthly productivity reports that are reviewed with the director of Purchasing and Support Services to evaluate their performance. All areas of support services report dramatic increases in productivity, quality of service and overall customer satisfaction.

Transportation Services

#97 Obtain the best price for fuel by either purchasing fuel from vendors based on discounts from gasoline and diesel prices published by OPIS, or entering into a cooperative fuel-purchasing agreement.

#98 Consider entering into a joint purchasing arrangement with Bowie County and neighboring entities to jointly purchase vehicle parts.

Recommendations #97 and #98 relate to cooperative purchasing for fuel and vehicle replacement parts. TISD administrators report that a cooperative agreement has been reached with Bowie County's Transportation Department to jointly purchase vehicle replacement parts, and an interlocal agreement for cooperatively purchasing fuel with the City of Texarkana is in the early stages of negotiation. Annual savings from both agreements are anticipated to be approximately \$10,000.

Food Service

#103 Renovate food service kitchens at Texas High School and Westlawn Intermediate School.

TISD's architects are developing and refining plans for remodeling food service kitchens at Texas High School and Westlawn Intermediate School. Recommended renovations will be included in the district's facilities master plan and paid from the accumulated food service fund balance. The renovations will enhance the food kitchens and increase lunch participation at both schools.

Safety and Security

#105 Develop a methodology to assess and continually improve the performance of alternative education programs.

The district reassessed the manner in which students were referred to its alternative program and is developing a comprehensive system of alternative educational programs based on progressive sanctions and a variety of educational opportunities. For example, schools now have a cost attached to the referral of students to the alternative school; \$15 a day is moved from the referring school's budget to the alternative school's budget for each student referred to the program. Attaching budget resources to each child referred to the alternative program has forced both home schools and the alternative schools to better evaluate the district's referral process and alternative education programs. In addition, the district has instituted the Student Intervention Team (SIT) model throughout the district. This "case management" model focuses on the needs of the student at the earliest stages of concern and is designed to intervene prior to discipline issues becoming severe enough to require alternative education.

#106 Revise the Discipline Management Plan to comply with the Texas Education Code.

TISD adopted a Student Code of Conduct that complies with the Texas Education Code. Administrators told TSPR that adopting the code was pivotal to developing a system of services to provide all students with due process and an equal opportunity to succeed. Although components of the

comprehensive system of services remain incomplete, such as developing a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, the legal foundation is now in place.

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Under the guidance of its superintendent, Dr. Larry Sullivan, and a capable executive leadership team, TISD has made significant progress implementing recommendations in the Comptroller's performance review. Throughout discussions with district administrators and board representatives, TSPR staff saw considerable evidence of TISD's efforts to carefully analyze and implement recommendations resulting in improvements to district operations and administration.

Although 90 percent of TSPR's recommendations were either implemented or in progress, district administrators did not implement nine of the recommendations in the report and rejected two others, providing their rationale for delay or non-action. TSPR believes there are recommendations among these that merit further consideration.

District Organization and Management

One of the recommendations not implemented would have created two standing committees of the board: a planning, budget, and finance committee and a curriculum and instruction committee (recommendation #3). In lieu of implementing the recommendation, the board appointed one of its members to review all financial information on a monthly basis. Further, the board and superintendent believe standing committees, if used improperly, disrupt the unity of the board and potentially lead to conflicts with open meeting laws. The superintendent also indicated that moving to a different meeting agenda format and an agenda which is being delivered to board members two days earlier, provides members with more than adequate time to contact and visit with district personnel identified with each agenda item.

While there may be instances in which a standing committee structure disrupts board unity, TSPR believes the benefits received from board members' interaction with district administrators, to discuss and clarify financial and education-related policy issues in a working committee environment, far outweigh potential disruptions in unity. Further, standing committee meetings will not violate provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act if properly posted. TSPR encourages the board to further study this recommendation and continue to work toward its full implementation.

Financial Management

TSPR recommended rotating external auditors every three to five years (recommendation #57). Because the district has contracted its external audit to the same firm for the past 20 years, TSPR strongly suggests the prudent practice of bringing in a "fresh set of eyes" on a periodic basis. District officials note that at this time there are few firms in the Texarkana area that have the capability to conduct its external audit, and they are not inclined to change auditors unless they can assure a similar level of expertise at a competitive price. Steps have been taken to issue a request for proposals (RFP) in spring 1999 for a five-year audit contract. The RFP should contain provisions that, in the event the firm currently conducting the audit submits the lower price, auditors below management level who worked on the previous engagements cannot be assigned to the district's audit for the duration of the five-year contract.

Because of the size of the Texarkana community, TSPR encourages the district to consider firms outside the Texarkana community. District administrators should, at a minimum, insist on a complete turnover of auditors below the manager level.

Food Service

Recognizing that TISD's food service program was cost-effective and profitable, TSPR analyzed breakfast and lunch participation and recommended that the district develop a strategy for increasing participation by 20 percent (recommendation #101). The foundation of this strategy is to identify more economically disadvantaged children eligible for participation in the free and reduced-price lunch program, thereby increasing the Compensatory Education money available to the district.

District administrators took exception to this recommendation because they believe the food service operation is cost-effective and they have an aggressive system in place to identify children who are economically disadvantaged, resulting in little opportunity for improvement in this area. Further, TISD also receives money from food service activity funds, which are unrestricted proprietary funds. Increasing the sales of Type A lunches will cause TISD to lose money within the activity funds, resulting in no net gain in revenue for TISD.

TISD takes seriously the identification of children eligible for subsidized meals and plans to continue an aggressive management system to identify those students. TISD also plans to consider facilities and schedules which will further enhance the opportunities children have to take part in both breakfast and lunch programs.

TSPR feels strongly that an opportunity is available for TISD to identify additional economically disadvantaged children and increase breakfast participation rates. TSPR encourages TISD to continue an aggressive program to identify additional children and receive the full benefit of Compensatory Education money available to the district for each identified child.

TISD's IDEAS FOR IMPROVING TEXAS SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

When the *Texas School Performance Review* (TSPR) comes to town to conduct a follow-up visit on a school performance review, the district isn't the only entity being evaluated. As part of the progress report preparation, we ask districts what went right and what went wrong-and how we might do better.

This feedback has led to significant changes in the review process. For example, earlier reports did not contain implementation strategies and districts told us that while the recommendations sounded good, they had no idea where to begin. Implementation strategies and timelines were added to give the districts an idea about who should be involved, suggested implementation steps, and a time frame to accomplish maximum results.

Most recently, the Spring Independent School District told TSPR during the follow-up visit that providing districts the format for the progress report at the time the original report was released would have made it possible for them to do a better job of capturing implementation information from the very beginning. TSPR responded by sending the format and sample progress reports to five districts reviewed in 1998. In future reviews, this information will be provided at the time the original report is released.

Many of TISD's administrators are new to the district, and were unable to comment on the review process itself, but were complimentary of the information contained in the report. According to the superintendent, he independently analyzed the district's strengths and weaknesses when he first arrived in the district-when he reviewed the findings of TSPR's report, he said he was encouraged that so many of the recommendations paralleled and supported his original assessment and commonly accepted business practices.

The board president, on the board during the review, said that she knew that the review was conducted during an especially contentious time, but she found TSPR's team professional and the final report a fair assessment of the condition of the district. The board president further said that recommendations for improvement came from both inside the system and from the TSPR team, allowing for a strong unified effort toward improvement.

Following is a list of concerns and suggested improvements that TISD shared with the Comptroller's team:

- TISD's former-superintendent contacted the review team soon after the release of the report. He expressed his concern over the summary line of the fiscal impact chart in the executive summary. He noted it did not contain a "Grand Total," or net of projected savings and costs that would easily be understood by members of the community.

Acknowledging his concern, all TSPR reviews issued since the Texarkana review contain a separate box that shows five-year gross savings, five-year gross costs, and a grand total or net savings number.

- Of particular concern to district administrators was the manner in which TISD's management and performance review was requested.

For many, the perception still prevails that the TSPR review was thrust upon the district as a political act. This perception often surrounds the advent of a TSPR review and did create an atmosphere of ill will and antagonism during the TISD review. Numerous staff changes have occurred since the review and changes on the TISD Board of Trustees have also mellowed what was a very painful period for TISD and the community as a whole.

TSPR agrees that the politics surrounding the request had an impact on the district's receptivity to the review and subsequent report. Yet, the turmoil in Texarkana had been brewing for nearly five years.

The TISD review may not have been welcomed by some, but taxpayers, parents, and students in troubled districts across Texas need to know that they can ask for help, and get it, even in the worst situations.

- A recommendation concerning increasing participation in the district's breakfast and lunch programs (Rec. # 101) was hotly contested. District administrators said the savings estimate of \$1.4 million over a period of five years was overstated and clarification requested from TSPR was not timely.

At the time of the progress report, TSPR was informed that the district uses a number of aggressive methods for identifying students for the program and felt there was little room for improvement. Administrators also said there could be little improvement in the number of meals served

without incurring offsetting costs. A letter was sent to the Comptroller's office requesting clarification within a few days after the release of the final report. Work papers were requested from the consultant, numbers were re-verified with the original sources, and a response was sent to the district about two weeks after the release of the report.

TSPR staff and the consulting team have reviewed the new information provided by the district, and administrators have once again reviewed TSPR's rationale for making the recommendation. Both TISD and TSPR agree that some information was missed, and perhaps key questions were not asked of the right people. In the future, TSPR will institute even more rigorous quality assurance checks on each recommendation and fiscal impact. In an attempt to provide more timely responses to school, TSPR's contracts with consultants require the delivery of all work papers to the Comptroller no later than the tenth working day after the release of each report.

Appendix A - Part 1

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SAVINGS

Appendix A is divided into the following three parts:

Part 1 - Recommendations 1-32 (Chapter 2-Chapter 4)

Part 2 - Recommendations 33-74 (Chapter 5-Chapter 8)

Part 3 - Recommendations 75-110 (Chapter 9-Chapter 13)

Rec. #	Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	Five-Year Savings (Costs) Estimates	Comments
Chapter 2: District Organization and Management						
1	Provide team building training for board and administration (p. 25).	Complete	(\$8,000)	(\$300)	(\$1,500)	The board received six hours of team-building training facilitated by Dr. Sullivan in June 1998. The board president said the greatest team-building effort came about as a result of the superintendent search. As they went through the process, they had to define their expectations, and had to draw from members of the community about their expectations. This was positive for everyone concerned. The board is now routinely functioning more effectively as a

						policy-making body without interfering in the administration of the district, but team-building will be an ongoing process for the board and the administration.
2	Build trust with community through open communication (p. 26).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A variety of approaches have been undertaken. There is more opportunity for the public to give comment to the board and the open forum format has been altered to allow the superintendent to respond to community members as directed by the president of the board. A newspaper is produced to tell the community about events occurring in the district.
3	Create at least two standing committees of the board (p. 28).	Not Implemented	\$0	\$0	\$0	One board member has been appointed by the board to review all financial information on a monthly basis. No additional committees have been appointed at this time. The board president and superintendent feel

						committees can, if used improperly, disrupt the unity of the board, potentially leading to conflicts with open-meetings laws. While this may be something the district will review in the future, TISD does not believe standing committees to be beneficial at this time.
4	Begin board agenda briefing sessions (p. 29).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Comprehensive board agendas are delivered no later than the Friday preceding the Tuesday meeting. During FY 99 the delivery date for agendas will be moved to the Wednesday preceding the Tuesday meeting. Individual board members or groups of less than four will be provided individual briefings upon request. The revised agenda format identifies the staff member to be contacted regarding each agenda item.
5	Develop user-friendly board financial and	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A revised agenda format provides a user friendly and

	educational reports (p. 30).					readable approach to meetings of the board. More detailed information is reviewed by one of the board members with particular financial expertise.
6	Develop an administrative procedures manual (p. 34).	In Progress	\$0	(\$900)	(\$900)	As of February 1, 1998 no written administrative procedures existed. Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB's) sample administrative procedures manual is currently being used to identify appropriate administrative procedures to support board policy. TASB has been contracted with to assist with the verification and revision of all board policy.
7	Eliminate director of Administrative Services position (p. 37).	Complete	\$267,555	\$23,118	\$221,933	The position of director of Administrative Services was eliminated through retirement effective June 30, 1998. This retirement became effective one year later than recommended.
8	Offer early retirement incentives (p. 39).	Complete	\$678,970	\$38,690	\$871,044	TISD offered a \$7,000 retirement incentive through

						<p>June 1998. Twelve people took advantage of the incentive package, 10 teachers and two administrators. Savings to date are for 1/4 of the 1998-99 school year. A retirement incentive for future years is not currently budgeted. A review of potential retirees is indicated and will be conducted in the immediate future.</p>
9	<p>Conduct an annual survey of district personnel (p. 43).</p>	In Progress	(\$15,120)	(\$0)	(\$6,000)	<p>Internal campus surveys were conducted in the Spring 1998. These will be used as baseline data with campus principals. Three additional groups will be surveyed during FY 99: parents, students, businesses.</p> <p>Beginning with the Fall 1998 the superintendent began scheduling bi-weekly meetings with all campus personnel. The superintendent invites various members of the board to join him for these campus</p>

						<p>meetings.</p> <p>The superintendent also has met with the Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) and Parent, Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) leadership.</p> <p>The superintendent's Council is also being initiated. This elected group of professional staff will set the monthly agenda for meeting with the superintendent. The initial meeting will take place in November 1998 and will continue each month thereafter.</p>
10	File claims with insurance for all legal bills (p. 45).	Complete	\$4,594	\$10,000	\$10,000	All insurance claims have been filed to date.
11	Develop a comprehensive strategic plan (p. 47).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	In June 1998, the superintendent and board met to begin developing a new mission and strategic goals. This initial meeting will be followed up with a similar retreat in the spring 1999 to finalize the goals and expectations of the board. In addition.

						a Master Facilities Plan is being developed and should be complete by February 1999. A comprehensive long-range strategic plan should follow and be reviewed annually in June-July of each year.
12	Restructure the make-up of SBDM Committees to comply with the law (p. 50).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The board approved revised policies BQA (LOCAL) and BQB (LOCAL) on October 20, 1998. Immediate implementation of the new policies will take place. Legally constituted SBDM Committee's should be in place by December 1998.
13	Provide SBDM training for board, central administration, principals, and teachers (p. 51).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	With the adoption of BQA (LOCAL) and BQB (LOCAL) training will begin immediately. Continued training will be necessary as the planning/budget process is developed.
Totals - Chapter 2			\$927,999	\$70,608	\$1,094,577	
Chapter 3: Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures						
14	Hire an assistant superintendent of	In Progress	(\$317,870)	\$0	(\$242,739)	The position of assistant

	Instructional and Student Services (p. 63).					<p>superintendent for School Improvement was created and posted in the Spring 1998. The cost for this position is included in the budget. An acceptable applicant was not located. The position remains open with the superintendent currently assuming those duties with assistance from the director of Curriculum and Instruction and the School Improvement Team, made up of a key group of district administrators responsible for delivery of the instructional programs. The district is hopeful that this position will be filled by the end of the school year.</p>
15	Establish Department of Student Services (p. 65).	Complete	(\$254,300)	\$0	\$0	<p>A director of Student Services was incorporated into the comprehensive administrative restructuring. In addition to those duties recommended by</p>

						the Comptroller's review, special projects and childcare have been added to this job description.
16	Revise curriculum guides on five-year cycle (p. 69).	In Progress	\$0	(\$30,000)	(\$219,600)	In May 1998, TISD contracted with the Texas Association of School Administrators to conduct a comprehensive Curriculum Management Audit. This audit was completed and delivered to TISD the week of October 12, 1998. The first phase (math alignment) was begun during the same week. A draft policy is developed that outlines the district's plan. A more detailed plan is also being developed that provides more detail for the implementation of the entire curriculum review process.
17	Establish a districtwide evaluation system for instructional programs (p. 70).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A program evaluation system will be developed during the curriculum alignment process. District administrators

						visited Waco ISD to explore their "What Works" program and plans are underway to use this model.
18	Restore teacher increments and establish staffing allocation model (p. 77).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>The board's stipulation was that the district should look for a way to restore teacher increments without raising taxes in the process. Through a comprehensive re-evaluation of the budget structure, including moving to a per-student allocation of funds, TISD was able to provide all professional teachers/librarians with a \$700 Bachelors and \$1,000 Masters degree stipend.</p> <p>A savings to the district of \$500,000 in the current year, (\$1,500,000 in the next three years) is anticipated due to raising student/teacher ratios, retirements, and other budget efficiencies. Over \$500,000 in salary increases (stipends and raises) was accomplished in FY 99 without an</p>

						increase in tax rates. These amounts were offsetting and had no fiscal impact.
19	Hold campus administrators accountable for improving student performance (p. 88).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>Effective with FY 99 TISD principals have two years to improve their campus student performance to the next higher Texas Education Agency (TEA) rating. As a result of aggressive administrative leadership at the campus level all TISD campuses are rated acceptable except Highland Park and Nash elementary schools, which are rated Recognized. The target goal is for TISD to be a Recognized District by October 2000.</p> <p>A principal evaluation format based on student and campus improvement is being development. Principals not reaching the appropriate goal of Recognized or Exemplary will not have their contract extended and will be placed on</p>

						<p>probation for one year with a growth plan. Failure to reach target goals during the probationary year will result in removal from the principalship. District administrators say that now, any time a funding issue or any changes are discussed, the principals ask, "How does this affect my ability to achieve recognized status?"</p>
20	Reduce ineligible Special Education referrals (p. 96).	In Progress	\$82,604	\$0	\$0	<p>Beginning with FY 99, TISD initiated the development of the Student Intervention Team process for controlled student referral to all special programs. Ineligible referrals decreased in five schools between 1996-97 and 1997-98. No data on the impact of the process is available. No reduction in cost has been experienced to date.</p>
21	Develop an allocation system to equitably distribute	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>A per-student allocation system for all funds including state</p>

	Compensatory Education and Title I funds (p. 103).					Compensatory Education and Federal Title I was initiated with FY 99. Steps are currently being taken to verify the proper coding of all expenditures of these funds. Phase II (FY 2000) of performance based budgeting will refine this process and further ensure the appropriate budgeting and expending of these funds.
22	Establish an evaluation process for compensatory programs (p. 104).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	TISD administrators are developing a new program procedures format for Compensatory Education expenditures. With the initiation of the Performance Based Budgeting System in FY 2000, each program funded through special revenues will be evaluated annually.
23	Establish a Career and Technology Advisory Committee (p. 107).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A Career and Technology advisory committee is in place and meets twice a year. TISD is working more directly with the Texas Workforce Commission and

						<p>has added businesses, which support the Gifted and Talented Program. Although a true Business/Education Coalition (B/EC) does not currently exist the district has taken steps to initiate one and anticipates a positive response from the business community. In addition to the development of the B/EC, TISD is also working with Texas A&M University - Texarkana to initiate an "Academy" format of career and higher education pathways and is currently supporting Texas A&M University - Texarkana in its pursuit of the "Regents Initiative". This will help TISD to partner with other school districts as they develop the "Academy" pathways concept.</p>
24	Establish an active Tech-Prep program (p. 109).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	TISD is currently in contact with Paris Junior College. Northeast

						<p>Texas Community College, Panola Junior College, Texas State Technical College - Marshall, and Texas A&M University - Texarkana to develop a variation of this program. In addition, the district is intervening with students much earlier in the process by working with middle school students and counselors. TISD is now making better use of the Consortia's resources and through the consortia is now involved in <i>Learning for Life</i>, and was able to get financing for Junior Achievement.</p>
25	<p>Develop a plan for increasing minority participation in the Gifted and Talented Program (p. 112).</p>	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>Positive gains have been made in minority participation in the gifted program. While a plan is in place, there are still things to be done. The plan will need to become a dynamic document that is continuously updated to capture</p>

						the most current innovations. This continues to be an area of concern and emphasis for the district.
26	Recruit more students for the Adult Education Program (p. 120).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A plan has been developed to increase participation. TISD administrators told TSPR that recruitment activities of the existing advisory council have been intensified. TISD is working much more closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Once every two weeks a teacher goes to TWC and talks to clients receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and tells them about the services available to them in the Adult Learning Program. Contact hours were increased from 102,000 hours in 1996-97 to 141,913 hours in 1997-98.
Totals - Chapter 3			(\$489,566)	(\$30,000)	(\$462,339)	
Chapter 4: Community Involvement						
27	Increase the	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Public

	Public Information Offices' focus on community relations (p. 125).					Information Officer job description has been rewritten to include additional responsibility and a stronger emphasis on community interaction. A new position, coordinator of Parent Involvement and Partners-In-Education (PIE) has been added through Title I funds. This position reports to the director of Public Information and Governance.
28	Develop a community outreach plan (p. 129).	Complete	\$0	\$0	(\$45,000)	A coordinator of Parent Involvement was hired. She is responsible for the PIE program which was established to develop a cooperative relationship among businesses, parents, community members, and TISD. Savings to the district resulting from increased community involvement are yet to be determined. TISD has received 890 applications from parent volunteers since July 1998.

						and 30 business partners have been confirmed. The cost estimate is for \$15,000 in printing and other costs for each year; \$10,000 out of Title I funds and \$5,000 from local funds. Since July, there have been \$20,093 in hard dollar contributions by businesses, and \$18,350 in in-kind contributions for computers and other items. However, it is estimated that costs and additional revenues will offset each other.
29	Create a Business Advisory Committee (p. 132).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Initial development of a Business Education Coalition (B/EC) has taken place. A core development committee of three business leaders is currently planning for the birthing of the B/EC.
30	Develop a communication plan to restore public trust (p. 136).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The director of Public Information and Governance is using a variety of tools to improve communication with the general public. The superintendent has met with a variety

						<p>of public entities to discuss and market TISD. Public trust has improved and public controversy has been minimal. Re-establishment of trust with internal customers will require more work. Salary increases provided to teachers was largely perceived as a repayment of a debt owed. Establishing a standard instructional day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. was perceived by some to be negative, but considered by TISD administrators as necessary to better use personnel resources.</p>
31	Broadcast board meetings on radio (p. 138).	Not Implemented	(\$9,000)	\$0	\$0	<p>The board experimented with televised meetings and later rejected this process.</p> <p>Although TISD will soon have the capability to directly televise meetings of the Board of Trustees via Channel 23 public access TV, the board and superintendent are</p>

						concerned about creating a media event out of board meetings. In their opinion, this negative outweighs any gains in communication with the public. This communication vehicle will continue to be evaluated.
32	The superintendent should oversee open records requests (p. 140).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The superintendent and director of Public Information and Governance will oversee all open records requests as defined in board policy. No open records requests have been received since February 1998, as trust has been re-established within the community and staff.
Totals - Chapter 4			(\$9,000)	\$0	(\$45,000)	

Appendix A - Part 2

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SAVINGS

Rec. #	Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	Five-Year Savings (Costs) Estimates	Comments
Chapter 5: Personnel Management						
33	Create a Personnel Department and hire a director (p. 148).	Complete	(\$285,380)	(\$60,684)	(\$216,729)	The position of director of Personnel and Federal Programs was replaced with the position of director of Human Resources and Employee Benefits. An experienced human resources person was employed in October 1997. The reorganization resulted in overall savings rather than an additional salary expenditure. A Human Resources Department was created from scratch including revising employment applications, re-writing job descriptions, conducting a job worth study for every position, designing a compensation plan for every position, developing job posting procedures, updating personnel policies and procedures, and implementing a position control

						process. The success of this department in the reorganization is credited by the superintendent with greatly influencing the district's ability to reinstate a competitive teacher salary structure.
34	Develop a personnel policy and procedure manual (p. 150).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The TISD Employee Handbook was approved by the board in September 1998 and was distributed in October 1998. Each employee will sign for it so the Personnel Department has a record that each person has received their copy. This document will be updated annually and reissued.
35	Monitor and track employee turnover statistics (p. 151).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Exit questionnaires have been developed and adopted. Information will be entered into a database and tracked on a quarterly and annual basis. Employee turnover remains minimal.
36	Monitor personnel grievances and establish employee relations committee (p. 152).	Not Implemented	\$0	\$0	\$0	TISD administrators said current grievance policies are working effectively to resolve employee issues and complaints. Only two formal employee grievance have been received since February 1998.
37	Transfer	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Human Resources

	assignment of substitute teachers to personnel (p. 153).					Department now maintains all substitute files, interviews all substitutes, and assigns substitutes.
38	Establish goals for the Minority Recruitment Committee (p. 155)	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The TISD Minority Recruitment committee plans to meet in spring 1999 to establish goals and objectives. The committee will evaluate job fairs, etc. to determine the value they add. A future focus will target areas where TISD has the most chance for success. Another suggestion made by the TSPR staff is that TISD look at some smaller historically minority colleges as potential recruitment sites. These candidates from small town environments are more likely to accept a position in a smaller district than would those candidates from large urban colleges. TISD also has instituted an Administrative Intern program designed to develop future administrators with an emphasis on minority candidates (currently two of the three interns are minorities). Also, TISD has employed four additional minority administrators since February 1998.

39	Post and advertise all position vacancies (p. 158).	Complete	(\$70,000)	\$0	\$0	A Position Control System has been developed to ensure a consistent and equitable hiring process. All jobs are posted with the exception of transfers.
40	Develop a salary administration manual (p. 160).	Complete	(\$20,000)	(\$1,600)	(\$1,600)	The board approved the TISD Compensation Plan in August 1998.
41	Conduct annual peer district salary surveys (p. 161).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Market survey data was compiled to establish competitive benchmarks for positions in the district. This became a part of TISD's Compensation Plan and the plan will be updated annually.
42	Reduce average central administration salaries to state averages (p. 163).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Central administration salaries were evaluated during the preparation of the Compensation Plan and set in their specific pay grades and ranges. Several senior administrators have retired or left the district, and at this time central administration salaries are generally below state averages according to a salary comparison made to TASB figures for a district of this size.
43	Centralize all personnel records (p. 164).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	All TISD employee personnel records and verification functions have been transferred to the Human Resources Department effective January 1, 1998.

44	Update TISD job descriptions (p. 166).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Human Resources Department is in the process of updating job descriptions in the district. The project will be completed by April 1999.
45	Assign the high school registrar responsibility for microfilming student records (p. 167).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Student records are now backed up in hard copy to protect them from catastrophic loss, but instead of microfilming the files as recommended, TISD is considering using WAN and imaging technology instead.
46	Develop a teacher and administrator evaluation schedule (p. 168).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Human Resources Department will assume responsibility for developing teacher and administrator evaluation schedules in FY 2000. The current year will be a transition year with the director of Curriculum and Instruction assisting in the process. A schedule has been approved for teacher evaluations with a similar schedule for administrator evaluations currently under development. Base-line administrators' evaluations were completed in February 1999, and the first performance-based evaluations for administrators will take place in November 1999.

Totals - Chapter 5			(\$375,380)	(\$62,284)	(\$218,329)	
Chapter 6: Asset and Risk Management						
47	Form a health plan committee (p. 184).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The TISD Executive Health Plan committee was established in March 1998 and meets every other month and as needed. The board dissolved the risk pool and assigned all responsibilities to the committee.
48	Perform annual analysis of TISD's health plan compared to other districts and employers (p. 192).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Consultants conducted an official comparative analysis of TISD's health benefits in March 1997. The district continues to have better benefits and lower premiums than the comparative districts. While no savings are recognized here, the district was able to expand coverage for FY 99 at no additional cost. In addition to district paid personal health insurance, all full time TISD employees receive both short- and long-term disability coverage and life insurance as a paid district benefit.
49	Conduct an annual health plan satisfaction survey (p. 194).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A health plan satisfaction survey was completed in April 1997 and 1998. An annual survey is planned.
50	Establish a formal	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A formal policy for

	policy for capitalizing fixed assets (p. 199).					capitalizing fixed assets has been established as suggested at \$5,000. The only exception is for high-theft items such as computers. Time spent on fixed assets is expected to be greatly reduced.
51	Establish a \$500 threshold for affixing tags to fixed assets (p. 200).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Recommendation implemented as suggested. A time savings is expected.
52	Update the fixed asset inventory listing and implement bar-code technology (p. 201).	Not Implemented	(\$32,500)	\$0	(\$32,500)	TISD plans to update its fixed assets inventory and implement bar code technology during FY 2000 if budget funds are available.
Totals - Chapter 6			(\$32,500)	\$0.00	(\$32,500)	
Chapter 7: Financial Management						
53	Hold the superintendent accountable for effective financial management (p. 210).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Monthly financial reports are provided to the board. The superintendent is responsible for the financial well being of the district and is ultimately responsible for that well being as defined in the current superintendent's job description.
54	Deposit, track and report TEA cash payments in excess of earned revenue in a separate account (p. 212).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Monthly financial statements presented to the board include a section detailing TISD's current payment status with the state. Excess TEA payments are tracked and invested to

						the district's advantage.
55	Compare actual revenues to estimated revenues and make budget adjustments accordingly (p. 213).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Monthly statements presented to the board disclose monthly local and other revenue, as well as budget vs. actual comparisons for the general fund, tax receipts, and local funds.
56	Record excess cash payments from TEA as deferred revenue (p. 213).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In the past excess cash payments from TEA were recorded on an annual basis. Currently, they are recorded in the monthly financial reports as deferred revenues or expenditures and invested as appropriate.
57	Rotate external auditors every three to five years (p. 216).	Not Implemented	\$0	\$0	\$0	The external audit process for TISD is on a five-year proposal cycle. The next request for proposals (RFP) will be in the Spring 1999 for FYE August 31, 1999 through August 31, 2004. If the same company is extended the contract in the future, a stipulation is contained in the RFP that the same auditors cannot be assigned to the district's work in the future. This stipulation has always been in effect and the district is not inclined to change auditors unless a competitive/comparable firm can be located.
58	Contract for	Complete	(\$50,000)	(\$7,706)	(\$146,414)	The internal audit

	internal audit assistance (p. 216).					function of TISD is being handled through the newly created position, coordinator of Quality Assurance, which was filled in October 1998. The position reports directly to the superintendent and will be preparing an audit plan that will include looking at all campus-based funds such as activity funds and federal funds.
59	Eliminate two positions, create new assistant superintendent position (p. 221).	Complete	\$303,425	\$68,873	\$216,249	The two positions have been eliminated and the position of assistant superintendent for Business and Support Services was created.
60	Create a position to oversee federal program funds (p. 223).	Complete	(\$46,235)	\$0	\$0	The position of director of Student Services includes the responsibility of federal programs. The total management of federal programs includes the comptroller and coordinator of Quality Assurance (Internal Auditor). One clerk position manages the actual entry of financial data. The position of director of Student Services replaces a coordinator position at an additional cost of \$8,000 per year but does not negatively impact the overall cost of administration
Totals - Chapter 7			\$207,190	\$61,167	\$69,835	

Chapter 8: Management Information Systems

<p>61</p>	<p>Update the long-range technology plan (p. 229).</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>An Interim Technology Plan was developed in the Spring of 1998 to address the E-Rate. A comprehensive technology needs assessment is planned for the Spring of 1999 and additional revisions will be made at that time.</p>
<p>62</p>	<p>Analyze WAN and Internet options (p. 230).</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>The district developed a plan for connecting all campuses to a wide area network (WAN). The district received a Technology Integration and Education (TIE) grant for routers which will connect all locations except maintenance and central offices. TISD's WAN is in the process of being connected by a General Telephone Frame Relay phone line system.</p>
<p>63</p>	<p>Implement the TISD Foundation (p. 232).</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>TISD does intend to develop a TISD Foundation. Fred Norton, TISD board Member, is working with the director of Public Information and Governance and the assistant superintendent for Business and Support Operations to finalize the technical aspects for initiating the TISD Foundation.</p>
<p>64</p>	<p>Write a TIF</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>\$75,000</p>	<p>\$0</p>	<p>\$100,000</p>	<p>The</p>

	proposal (p. 234).					Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant was approved in October 1998, and the check will be sent in January 1999. The proceeds will be used to network Lincoln Street Alternative School and Pine Street Middle School.
65	Set performance goals for grant writer (p. 237).	Complete	\$250,000	\$162,000	\$428,000	Originally the district had no coordination of grant writing and in many cases the grants obtained by a campus were actually a liability to the district because they sometimes required matching funds on the part of the district which no one knew about until the grant was awarded. Now all grants submissions are funneled through a quality control system. Money is being used to make sure grants supplement and add to the programs of the district. No action was taken during year one. For FY 99 the 5/8-time position of Grants and Discretionary Funding Specialist has been implemented. To date this position has generated in excess of \$250,000 of external funding. Performance goals. with an

						appropriate incentive package, have been implemented for the grant writer.
66	Implement a fiber optic line between the high school and central office (p. 239).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$13,566	This project has been completed and expanded to include a link to Kennedy Elementary School and remote campus locations at Texas High. Some savings will result from the elimination of the phone line and the lease of a multiplexer for about \$3,876 per year beginning in December 1998.
67	Undertake a districtwide integrated assessment of the LAN and work station platforms (p. 241).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	This recommendation will be included in the needs assessment survey which will be conducted in the Spring of 1999 as part of the long-range technology plan.
68	Analyze network/Internet PCs and Web TV when standardizing work station platforms (p. 242).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district conducted the analysis and found that this does not look like a cost saving measure at this time. TISD has instead opted to use TIE grant connectivity to provide Internet access at no additional cost. The district took advantage of a change in the state's Career and Technology funding formulas that provided additional funding for

						keyboarding. Because the programs offered by TISD qualified for an additional \$210,000, the district invested this money in 102 new computers in three labs at Texas High School, furniture, and instructional projection overhead technology.
69	Scan in attendance data using bubble sheets (p. 243).	In Progress	\$99,030	\$0	\$20,806	The district has opted not to pursue the bubblesheet approach because of the open architecture of the building, which may cause scanning sheets to become limp in the humidity. An on-line attendance system is instead being tested at Westlawn. Building design at Texas High suggests it will be more cost effective to wait until electronic attendance can be added there in FY 2001. At that time the district feels one data entry position can be eliminated.
70	Provide administrative-level technology training to principals and campus administrators (p. 244).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Currently, principals and campus administrators are receiving new networked PCs. Training of the principals and campus administrators is now in progress. Training is required in order for a staff member to receive an ungraded network

						workstation.
71	Explore alternative purchasing arrangements for technology purchases (p. 245).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Discussions with Texarkana, Arkansas have not resulted in any agreements since they are not currently interested in dealing across state lines. TISD is currently exploring a joint purchasing venture with the City of Texarkana, Texas.
72	Provide teachers more training in instructional technology by using teachers to train other teachers (p. 251).	In Progress	(\$64,500)	\$0	\$0	Instructional Technology will focus on a team approach for training, mentoring, and integrating technology into instruction. This "cascade" approach to training is viewed as the most cost-effective way to infuse new technology at the grass roots level.
73	Require campus principals and assistant principals to attend training on instructional technologies (p. 253).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A districtwide staff development plan is being designed which will include training of administrators in technology.
74	Broaden the focus of the Technology Committee (p. 254).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A technology task force has been formed with members from the community, higher education, several principals and teachers, a parent, and the public librarian. The focus of the group has been expanded which includes assisting with preparing the Interim

						Technology Plan. The task force will be heavily involved in preparing the revised plan during the Spring 1999.
Totals - Chapter 8			\$359,530	\$162,000	\$562,372	

Appendix A - Part 3

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SAVINGS

Rec. #	Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	Five-Year Savings (Costs) Estimates	Comments
Chapter 9: Purchasing and Warehouse Services						
75	Discontinue solicitation of competitive bids for items valued under \$25,000 (p. 262).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is, by policy, not soliciting bids for purchases of personal property under \$25,000 unless the cumulative purchases over the year will accumulate to an amount over \$25,000.
76	Establish a system for monitoring competitive sealed bids (p. 264).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A purchasing and warehousing committee has been established to review proposals, as well as purchasing and warehousing practices.
77	Require staff to document vendor problems in writing (p. 265).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has a master database of all of the vendors. If complaints are received about goods or services, comments are recorded in the database. This information is then used when evaluating future bids. Delays in the implementation of

						the district WAN has resulted in this process remaining manual, requiring data to be entered at the central office. With the completion of the district WAN it is anticipated this process can be totally technology driven.
78	Develop a picking system for filling warehouse orders (p. 268).	Rejected	(\$200)	\$0	\$0	The district believes that no additional efficiencies would be achieved by a picking system because of the small size of the warehouse.
79	Regularly auction obsolete furniture, equipment and inventory (p. 269).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A surplus sale was held in October 1998 and will be held annually. The purchasing guide will be updated the next time a new version is issued.
80	Make director of Purchasing responsible for textbook ordering (p. 270).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The director of Purchasing was overloaded, so responsibility for textbook inventory was assigned to the assistant superintendent of Business and Support. The director for Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for ordering the textbooks. selecting

						textbooks, and taking textbook recommendations to the board. In this way, the district feels the strengths of both departments are used most effectively.
81	Develop policies for textbook handling (p. 272).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A review of all district policies is in progress. The district has purchased a software package and will write a procedures manual detailing textbook ordering, receiving, and inventorying. This revised process will be complete and in place by June 1999.
Totals - Chapter 9			(\$200)	\$0	\$0	
Chapter 10: Facilities Use and Management						
82	Eliminate the assistant director of Maintenance and Transportation position (p. 281).	Complete	\$184,945	\$46,236	\$184,945	The assistant director of Maintenance and Transportation position was eliminated. The department was restructured and broken into smaller more manageable units with a much higher degree of accountability. The cleanliness and state of repair of school facilities has improved significantly according to comments received by district

						administrators from the public and from teachers.
83	Eliminate the secretarial assistant position (p. 282).	Complete	\$60,340	\$0	\$0	Although this position was eliminated, but a new position was created in the custodial area and the person was assigned to report to the Custodial Coordinator. The new position is responsible for maintaining all of the required records for pest control.
84	Eliminate the vacant supervisor of Custodians position (p. 283).	Rejected	\$210,950	\$0	\$22,000	This position was deemed necessary by the district to maintain facilities properly. It was filled at a lower salary, saving \$5,500 a year.
85	Establish the Campus Facilities Committee (p. 287).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Recommendations from the district Facilities Committee (originally organized in 1993) led to TISD's board contracting with an architectural firm to develop a Master Facilities Plan. Recommendations from the Facilities Committee, the board, and staff have been provided for consideration in the development of the Master Plan. This

						process is anticipated to be complete in spring 1999.
86	Update the 5-Year facility management plan (p. 289).	In Progress	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	Following the completion of the Master Facilities Plan, the board will decide if additional revenues are needed to institute a five-plus year facilities management plan. Should the board decide that additional revenues are desired, district officials anticipate that the district could fund up to \$20 million in capital improvements without an increase in the current tax rate.
87	Assess TISD's facility space needs (p. 291).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	As noted above the Master Facilities Plan is nearing completion. District administrators noted that TISD currently uses all existing usable facilities and is experiencing significant overcrowding in some facilities. Growth projections for Texarkana and TISD are currently under study as they relate to the future facilities needs for TISD.
88	Ensure equitable	Not	\$0	\$0	\$0	Facility use is

	facilities use (p. 296).	Implemented				currently under study; however, serious consideration is being given to future "shared use" facilities with the City of Texarkana, City of Wake Village, City of Nash, and Bowie County Juvenile Services.
89	Sell the Oaklawn property (p. 297).	Not Implemented	\$170,692	\$0	\$100,000	Future plans are to sell or barter the Oaklawn property. The district has received at least one soft offer of an amount less than they had hoped to get. An appraisal is pending, but the district intends to pursue disposal of the property within the next two years.
90	Implement a grounds maintenance schedule (p. 298).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A drastic improvement has been seen in the appearance of grounds since implementing a grounds maintenance schedule requiring all grounds to be mowed once a week.
91	Implement a staggered custodial work schedule (p. 300).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	TISD has moved as many of its custodial resources as possible to after hours cleaning shifts.
92	Develop productivity standards for each	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A productivity report is given to each employee on a

	craft (p. 302).					monthly basis. A conference with the director is held to evaluate each employee's performance.
93	Develop a prioritized maintenance schedule (p. 305).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A detailed schedule, including time and cost estimates, is prepared on an annual basis and evaluated monthly. Significant improvements in the response time and quality of maintenance has been noted.
Totals - Chapter 10			\$596,927	\$16,236	\$276,945	
Chapter 11: Transportation						
94	Upgrade administrative secretary position (p. 315).	Not Implemented	(\$36,635)	\$0	\$0	TISD eliminated the assistant director of Maintenance and created a coordinator of Transportation and Special Projects. The administrative secretary serves the director of Transportation.
95	Recommend Bowie County Transportation management board to set formal fund balance policy (p. 327).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The recommendation was made to the Bowie County Transportation management board as recommended. The new policy on recovering deficits is a prorated allocation based on total number of miles driven by each district.

96	Request that Bowie County Transportation director make annual presentations to the TISD board (p. 328).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Bowie County Transportation Director was asked to make presentations to the board and he is willing to do this. This item will be placed on future board agenda and made an annual event.
97	Purchase fuel based on discounts from quoted OPIS prices or cooperative agreement (p. 329).	In Progress	\$20,450	\$0	\$16,000	The City of Texarkana was contacted and an inter-local agreement for cooperative fuel purchasing will be in place in the immediate future.
98	Purchase vehicle parts jointly (p. 331).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	An agreement currently exists with Bowie County Transportation Department. An agreement with the City of Texarkana will be in place in the immediate future.
99	Develop policies and procedures for maintenance and work order functions (p. 331).	Not Implemented	\$0	\$0	\$0	This policy will be in place by the Spring 1999.
Totals - Chapter 11			(\$16,185)	\$0	\$26,000	
Chapter 12: Food Service						
100	Lower the food service labor costs at certain campuses (p. 3464).	Complete	\$287,060	\$28,577	\$142,885	A 2 percent reduction of costs has been achieved. Safety classes have been held, and safety incentives have been

						put in place.
101	Increase breakfast and lunch participation rates (p. 348).	In Progress	\$1,483,470	\$0	\$237,356	<p>The district takes exception to this recommendation, because the Food Service operation is a very cost effective operation and they believe there is little opportunity to achieve the level of savings noted in this report. A more realistic savings number in their opinion would be \$237,356.</p> <p>The district has an aggressive system in place to identify children that are economically disadvantaged. This year the district's allocation of Compensatory Education money follows the children that are identified for the free and reduced priced lunch program. This gives principals a vested interest in identifying these children for the program. The district also receives money from the food service activity funds, which are unrestricted proprietary funds. Increasing the sale of</p>

						Type A lunches would mean that the district would lose money within the activity funds, therefore not netting an actual increase in total available revenues.
102	Develop a policy to hold student meal prices at current levels (p. 350).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Lunch and breakfast prices have remained constant since TSPR's report was issued.
103	Remodel the kitchens at Westlawn and Texas High (p. 355).	In Progress	(\$210,000)	\$0	(\$210,000)	A districtwide master plan being developed will include the renovations recommended. The plan is to use food service fund balance for the renovations, but the district does not want to make some renovations that will later be in conflict with general facility renovations.
104	Relocate some central admin. offices to food service building (p. 356).	Complete	(\$2,500)	(\$13,023)	(\$13,023)	An alternative strategy for relocating the board meetings to the Services Building and using the boardroom in the Administration Building for office space was used. Long-range plans call for the possible use of the Pine Street campus for central administration and

						board functions, with the current Administration Building available for lease (generating a new revenue source potentially offsetting some of the expenses associated with the operation of Pine Street as an Administrative/board complex.) Cost is associated with moving boardroom to Food Service Building, including wiring, loud speakers, etc.
Totals - Chapter 12			\$1,558,030	\$15,554	\$157,218	
Chapter 13: Safety and Security						
105	Assess the performance of alternative education programs (p. 366).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is in the process of reassessing the manner in which students are referred to the alternative program. However, one thing that has changed is the fact that campuses now have a cost attached to the referral of a student to the alternative campus; \$15 a day is moved from the campus to the alternative campus for each student referred to the program. The alternative campus is funded at a basic

						<p>level, and then the additional money from each campus flows to the alternative school campus. The money is attached to the child. All of the alternative programs are now handled at Lincoln Street, but they are still trying to develop a program for students who are not successful in the alternative school. TSPR referred TISD administrators to its publication: <i>Keeping Texas Children Safe in School</i>.</p>
106	Revise the discipline Management Plan (p. 367).	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	<p>The TISD Code of Conduct was adopted following Texas Education Agency and Penal Code guidelines. Improvements in disciplinary programs remain under study at this time. Future collaboration with the City, County, and Arkansas Public Schools is anticipated. Currently, TISD is looking into developing a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), which would serve the</p>

						greater Texarkana area and eliminate the need to expel students to the street. Cooperation with Bowie County and the Juvenile board is essential for this goal to be accomplished.
107	Develop a long-term safety and security strategy (p. 368).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Planning is underway and a safety/security strategy should be completed by the start of FY 2000.
108	Negotiate a cooperative agreement with the Texarkana Police Department for responding to alarm and incident calls (p. 372).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	An interlocal agreement in the form of a memorandum of understanding is currently being developed with the City of Texarkana. It will define who answers calls and alarms. It is currently being reviewed by TISD's legal counsel.
109	Recover some of crosswalk guard program costs (p. 373).	Complete	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	TISD has billed and collected crosswalk guard fees for the past 10 years. Because of a miscommunication during the review, savings were erroneously projected. The district continues to bill for these services and receives approximately \$20,000 annually for the services from the

						City of Texarkana. Future negotiations with the City of Wake Village are anticipated.
110	Assign safety programs to the director of Maintenance (p. 375).	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Risk management has been assigned to the director of Human Resources. The development of a comprehensive occupational safety program is in progress with the assistance of the safety consultant provided at no charge by the third party administrator for the district's self-funded workers' compensation program. First level training was conducted for administrators, and additional safety training is in the plan.
Totals - Chapter 13			\$100,000	\$0	\$0	
	Total		\$2,826,845	\$233,281	\$1,428,779	