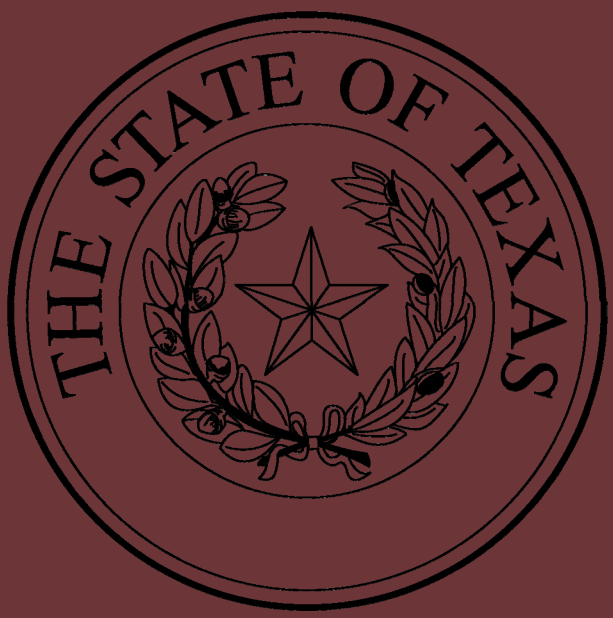

Diboll Independent School District

Review of the CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Conducted by Resources for Learning, LLC for the Legislative Budget Board

February 2009

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

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February 27,2009

Mr. Gary Martel
Superintendent
Diboll Independent School District

Dear Mr. Martel:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Diboll Independent School District's (DISD) curriculum management system.

The report's recommendations will help Diboll ISD improve its overall performance as it provides services to district students and staff. The report also highlights model practices and programs being provided by DISD's curriculum management system.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged Resources for Learning, LLC, to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

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

Respectfully submitted,

John O'Brien
Director
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Trey L. Wilkerson
Mr. Chuck Mann
Mrs. Andrea Swor
Mr. Ronnie Coleman
Mr. Ruben Esteves
Mr. Kent Havard
Mr. C. Lynn Pavlic

DIBOLL ISD

A. SITE HISTORY

This section provides contextual information about the district, including recent trends in student demographics and performance and a general comparison of property wealth with the state. This information is based on Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports and interview data. Historical information about curriculum use in the district and the impetus and processes for adopting the current curriculum was gathered through interviews, focus groups, and a review of relevant documents.

1. STARTING POINTS

The town of Diboll, located in rural east Texas, is located 100 miles north of Houston. The closest town is Lufkin, which is 10 miles to the north and has a population of fewer than 35,000. The population of Diboll is approximately 5,000. A division of Temple-Inland, a building products manufacturer, provides a major source of employment for the area.

Since 2003–04, Diboll Independent School District (DISD) has seen a decrease in enrollment and a demographic shift. Overall, enrollment has declined by about three percent from 1,915 in 2003–04 to 1,850 in 2007–08. Additionally, the district's demographics are changing. District leadership reported an increase in the number of students classified as economically disadvantaged, up from 65 percent in 2002 to approximately 72 percent in February 2008. Hispanic student enrollment has also increased while White student enrollment has seen a gradual decline. The district comprises four campuses, including one primary school, one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. All four campuses qualify as Title I schoolwide campuses.

Exhibit 1 provides DISD enrollment and demographic data for the period from 2003–04 through 2007–08 and reflects the trends of decreasing overall enrollment and increasing enrollment of students categorized as economically disadvantaged and Hispanic.

This report uses district performance indicators under the federal and state accountability systems. Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB),

EXHIBIT 1
DISD ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE
2003–04 THROUGH 2007–08

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL STUDENTS	STUDENT GROUPS†						
		AA	H	W	NA	A/PI	ED	LEP
2007–08	1,850	14.0%	49.0%	36.0%	0.3%	0.2%	72.4%	18.2%
2006–07	1,866	14.8%	48.0%	36.7%	0.3%	0.2%	70.5%	18.9%
2005–06	1,865	13.9%	47.1%	38.3%	0.3%	0.3%	70.1%	20.5%
2004–05	1,915	13.6%	46.5%	39.4%	0.2%	0.3%	69.6%	20.4%
2003–04	1,915	14.6%	43.9%	41.3%	0.1%	0.1%	68.3%	16.8%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) District Reports, 2003–04 through 2006–07; Texas Education Agency, Student Enrollment and Standard Reports and Core Products, 2007–08.

federal accountability provisions that formerly applied only to districts and campuses receiving Title I, Part A funds now apply to all districts and campuses. All public school districts, campuses, and the state are evaluated annually for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In terms of federal accountability standards, all four DISD campuses and the district *Met AYP* in 2007.

Under the Texas Accountability Rating System, DISD was rated *Academically Acceptable* in 2006–07, as well as in the previous three years; in 2006–07, one campus was rated *Recognized* and three campuses were rated *Academically Acceptable*.

The performance indicators of particular interest for this report are results on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). TAKS performance data are reported in AEIS by grade, by subject, and by all grades tested and are disaggregated by student groups: ethnicity, gender, special education, economically disadvantaged status, limited English proficient (LEP) status, and at-risk status.

Exhibits 2 through 5 provide data on state and DISD student performance on TAKS from 2004–05 through 2006–07.

Student performance in mathematics improved from 2004–05 through 2006–07 and was at or above the state average for the district during the three-year period. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, most student groups showed improved scores and performed consistently at or above their state peers for the three-year period. Groups which performed below their state peers during the three-year period include White students in 2004–05 and 2005–06, and LEP students in 2004–05. (See **Exhibit 2**)

While district performance in science improved from 2004–05 through 2006–07, the district average remained below the state average for each of the three years. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, only the African American and economically disadvantaged students performed above their state peers, and this occurred only in 2005–06. All other student groups performed below their state peers across the three-year period, with LEP students showing the largest gap between their passing rate and that of their state peers. (See **Exhibit 3**)

Exhibit 4 shows that student performance in English language arts and reading (ELA/reading)

EXHIBIT 2
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—MATHEMATICS
STATE AND DISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	77%	82%	64%	74%	71%	80%	87%	88%	79%	*	93%	*	69%	80%	62%	64%
2005–06	75%	77%	61%	73%	68%	75%	86%	81%	79%	*	92%	*	66%	73%	58%	58%
2004–05	72%	72%	57%	63%	64%	70%	84%	78%	76%	*	90%	*	62%	67%	54%	52%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 3
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SCIENCE
STATE AND DISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	71%	67%	56%	55%	61%	60%	85%	82%	77%	*	88%	*	60%	58%	39%	26%
2005–06	70%	66%	54%	64%	59%	56%	85%	76%	79%	*	86%	*	58%	59%	35%	29%
2004–05	66%	54%	49%	33%	53%	47%	81%	66%	73%	*	83%	*	51%	44%	28%	11%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 4
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/READING
STATE AND DISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	89%	88%	84%	83%	84%	85%	95%	94%	91%	*	95%	*	83%	86%	67%	64%
2005–06	87%	89%	82%	89%	82%	83%	94%	95%	90%	*	94%	*	81%	86%	63%	63%
2004–05	83%	85%	76%	75%	77%	83%	91%	91%	87%	*	92%	*	76%	83%	58%	64%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

varied from 2004–05 through 2006–07 but improved overall during the three-year period, and performance was above the state average in both 2004–05 and 2005–06. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups over the three-year period, the performance of Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students remained consistent or showed improvement, and these two groups outperformed their state peers all three years. African American, White, and LEP student scores were inconsistent over the three-year period, although in some years these groups outperformed their state peers.

Exhibit 5 shows performance trends in social studies from 2004–05 through 2006–07. Compared to the overall state average, the district's performance remained stable the first two years, and improved the third year. Additionally, the district performed at or above the state average for two of the three years. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, only Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students outperformed their state peers all three years. In 2006–07, all reportable student groups outperformed their state peers.

EXHIBIT 5
TAKS PERFORMANCE HISTORY—SOCIAL STUDIES
STATE AND DISD AVERAGES
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGES		STUDENT GROUP† COMPARISONS STATE AND DISTRICT AVERAGES													
			AA		H		W		NA		A/PI		ED		LEP	
	STATE	DISTRICT	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
2006–07	89%	92%	84%	89%	84%	91%	95%	96%	93%	*	96%	*	83%	88%	53%	57%
2005–06	87%	87%	81%	74%	80%	84%	94%	93%	91%	*	95%	*	79%	83%	49%	40%
2004–05	88%	87%	82%	77%	82%	85%	94%	93%	92%	*	95%	*	80%	83%	52%	58%

†Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; NA = Native American; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

Across the four core subject areas, district performance remained consistent or increased from 2004–05 through 2006–07 and, with the exception of science, generally remained above the state average. In a comparison of state and district averages among student groups, DISD student group performance typically improved over time. Additionally, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students generally outperformed their state peers during the three-year period.

In order to provide one measure of school district property value, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (Comptroller) conducts a study each year that uniformly evaluates the property values within school district boundaries. Locally assessed values may vary from the Comptroller's study values. The values certified by the Comptroller's Property Tax Division are standardized in that they are deemed to be comparable across the state. Note that the values shown are final for tax year 2006. This is not the property value used for school funding calculations. Using the *Value per Student* measure from AEIS reports provides one definition of "wealth." This calculation refers to school district property value, or Standardized Local Tax Base, *divided* by the total number of students. At the state level, the per-pupil amount is created by dividing by the total number of students in districts with property value. Some districts do not have property value; their students are not included. For DISD, the standardized local tax base per-pupil value as of July 2007 was $141,259 compared to the state per-pupil value of $305,208.

2. CURRICULUM HISTORY

Traditionally, DISD has used internally developed scope and sequence documents to guide instruction. A district curriculum staff member supported teachers who worked with Regional Education Service Center VII (Region 7) to create and revise these documents each summer from 2000 through 2005. However, district and campus staff viewed these documents as inadequate and as providing only a surface alignment. This was particularly true in the area of K–5 science, where both the scope and sequence documents and classroom instruction were considered deficient. Staff said the documents also lacked common assessments.

District staff and campus administrators reported that during this time the responsibility

for curriculum mainly fell to the campus administrators and teachers. Consequently, the internally developed scope and sequence was not implemented on a daily basis to guide instruction. Rather, teachers created their own curriculum independent of one another. Thus, instruction lacked horizontal and vertical alignment across schools. Further, in ELA/reading, a philosophical rift existed between the primary campus, which used a whole-language approach, and the elementary campus, which used a phonics-based approach. This rift resulted in high retention rates in first grade as well as a good portion of time spent on remediation activities in second grade.

3. IMPETUS FOR CHANGE/DATA-DRIVEN ADOPTION

Staff reported that the driving factors that led to adoption of a new approach to curriculum in DISD were needs for consistency and rigor, addressing learning gaps, and eliminating inefficiency. The general lack of consistency of the prior scope and sequence documents led to shallow alignment and gaps in student knowledge. District staff and administrators implemented the INOVA software and process to help identify learning gaps and areas of need for incoming students. Inconsistency in curriculum, however, resulted in students' exposure to multiple unaligned curriculums associated with a variety of programs being implemented at DISD campuses. For example, one staff member stated that middle school students were exposed to five different mathematics curricula. Campus-level staff expressed fatigue with the numerous programs used in the district prior to the current curriculum system, CSCOPE. Staff also indicated that teachers taught in an isolated rather than team environment due to the lack of a standardized curriculum.

Additionally, the district identified the need to move beyond simply preparing students for the TAKS. This need was voiced by the board, district staff, and campus staff. The district viewed itself as "a TAKS factory," with very little emphasis on rigor, especially for nonwhite students. Students were taught how to perform on the TAKS test rather than being taught the learning standards measured by the TAKS, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Staff stated that students graduating from DISD were not prepared for post-secondary learning opportunities.

College Readiness Indicators are an important measure of how well districts are preparing students for postsecondary opportunities. College Readiness Indicators were created in response to legislative action and an executive order from the governor. The performance section of AEIS reports has been restructured to group certain indicators under this heading. These indicators help provide a picture of college preparedness and can be used by educators as they work to ensure that students are able to perform college-level course work at institutions of higher education. The first indicator presented in **Exhibit 6** is the Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion indicator. This includes completion of Dual Enrollment courses, defined as those for which a student is given both high school and college credit. DISD performance on the Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment Completion indicator suggests that district performance is below state performance for all student groups.

The second indicator of college readiness presented in **Exhibit 6** is composed of the percentage of graduates completing the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP). The RHSP is the

EXHIBIT 6
COLLEGE READINESS INDICATORS
ADVANCED COURSE/DUAL ENROLLMENT COMPLETION & RHSP/DAP GRADUATES
COMPARISON OF STATE AND DISD STUDENTS
2005–06

	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS		PERCENT OF STUDENT GROUPS†											
			AA		H		W		ED		LEP		AT-RISK	
*	S††	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D
1	21	10	14	*	17	12	26	12	15	8	9	*	12	*
2	76	82	68	88	76	88	76	74	72	80	58	67	63	68

*1 = Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion; 2 = RHSP/DAP Graduates
† Indicates AA = African American; H = Hispanic; W = White; ED = Economically Disadvantaged; LEP = Limited English Proficient
†† Indicates S = State; D = District
*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedures OP 10-03.
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS District and State Reports, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

required program for all freshmen entering high school in 2007 and beyond. The 26-credit plan incorporates additional required mathematics and science courses. Each student must gain credit in four mathematics and four science courses in order to graduate under this plan. This program requires participation in challenging academic courses and prepares students for success in a technical school, a two-year or four-year college, or a university program. The DAP requires students to complete the 26-credit RHSP with a third credit in a language other than English. Students may not use Integrated Physics and Chemistry or Principles of Technology as science credits if they are pursuing the DAP. In addition, students must also complete advanced measures that reflect college-level work.

These two indicators help provide a picture of college preparedness at a given high school and can be used by educators as they work to ensure that students are able to perform college-level course work at institutions of higher education. While DISD student performance is below the state overall and for all student groups on the first indicator, Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion, it is above the state overall and for most groups on the second indicator, the percentage of graduates completing the RHSP or the DAP.

Both TAKS performance data and interviews with DISD staff indicated that science performance is an area of concern for the district, as is the need to address performance gaps for students identified as LEP. Additional indicators suggest students are not being adequately prepared for postsecondary opportunities. As the percentage of LEP and economically disadvantaged students continues to increase in the district, providing adequate instruction for these students will be essential to district accountability and student success. Based on student performance concerns, the inconsistency and lack of vertical alignment of the district's curriculum, and the fact that most teachers were working in isolation rather than in team settings, the district determined a review of its curriculum was needed.

Additionally, district staff identified a need to break away from traditional direct instruction models to provide students with a more engaging curriculum. The district also wanted to provide more support to first-year teachers and to teachers who were

new to the district. Finally, district staff said the money spent each summer on curriculum guides which had been deemed ineffective could be better utilized in other areas, such as raising beginning teacher salaries to attract more qualified candidates to the Diboll area.

In recent years, the district has undergone multiple changes in leadership, which has affected its curricular efforts. **Exhibit 7** details this chronology.

EXHIBIT 7
DISD SUPERINTENDENTS AND TENURE 2001 THROUGH 2008

NAME	TENURE
Bobby Baker	January 2001–January 2006
Horace Williams	February 2006–January 2007
Brent Hawkins (Interim)	February 2007–May 2007
Brent Hawkins	May 2007–June 2008
Jacob Sherman (Interim)	May 2008–July 2008
Gary Martel	July 2008–present

SOURCE: Texas Association of School Administrators Curriculum Audit, February 2008; DISD, fall 2008.

Several changes were initiated under the tenure of Mr. Williams. He was charged with making the necessary changes to improve the education of district students; district staff also understood this to be his role. Staff reported one of the first areas Mr. Williams targeted was an aligned K–12 curriculum.

Mr. Williams, district curriculum staff, and campus principals looked at several curriculum products offered through regional education service centers (ESCs). One ESC product the district reviewed required that a customized curriculum be developed specifically for the district. A second product the district looked at, CSCOPE, was more appealing because the curriculum was already developed. Additionally, district staff members were familiar with its development process through the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC). Another positive aspect of CSCOPE, according to staff, was that it would be updated and maintained by the ESCs. District staff also liked that the curriculum promoted the student-centered 5E instructional model, all material was available online, and curriculum experts were involved in its development. Additionally, CSCOPE was considerably less expensive than competitors' products.

All DISD administrators except the elementary principal agreed that CSCOPE was the best product for the district to purchase and implement. The elementary principal indicated that at the time of adoption, there were not enough elementary-level materials developed from which to judge the quality of CSCOPE. However, because of the wide base of support for the product, the decision was made to present a recommendation to the school board to purchase CSCOPE. The board enthusiastically accepted the recommendation. A board representative stated during interviews that CSCOPE provided consistency across the district and provided teachers with more specificity about how to teach the TEKS at each grade level. DISD was one of the first districts in the state to implement the CSCOPE curriculum.

In adopting CSCOPE, the district chose to purchase support services from Regional Education Service Center VI (Region 6) because of the immediate response and attention to customer service provided by Region 6 staff, the service center's close proximity to the district, and the familiarity that staff demonstrated with the product.

Curriculum alignment continued to be a top priority for DISD under Mr. Hawkins, who took over the helm of the district after the departure of Mr. Williams in January 2007. In spring 2007 the School Improvement Team initiated and conducted an internal program effectiveness review, surveying staff about curriculum and instructional support. The results of this review reflected a need for curriculum alignment, indicating staff lacked a comprehensive knowledge of curriculum within core subject areas and across grade levels. Additionally, results of the review indicated that staff across the district were confused about campus and district expectations, systems, and processes. This review also documented that TAKS, rather than TEKS, drove instructional decisions. This internal review served as a catalyst for consideration of an external curriculum audit. The audit was conducted by the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) during the 2007–08 school year, and evaluated curriculum alignment, systems, and processes within the district.

B. DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM

This section describes the curriculum and/or curriculum management systems implemented in the district, the implementation plan and process, and staff reactions to implementation. Costs, technical assistance, and additional resources used in the district are also described. Data was collected from district documents, a review of curriculum documents and product documentation available through web sites, interviews, and focus groups.

1. DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM AND/OR CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PRODUCT

The TESCCC, which represents service centers from all areas of the state, developed CSCOPE to provide a quality curriculum support system to Texas K–12 schools. CSCOPE is described on the collaborative's web site as "a comprehensive, customized, user-friendly curriculum support system." In addition to the curriculum, CSCOPE offers an accountability process to ensure quality implementation. Supporting documentation for CSCOPE states that the curriculum component is based on best practice models from researchers, such as Dr. Robert Marzano and Dr. Fenwick English, and that lessons are all aligned with the TEKS and the TAKS.

Exhibit 8 provides a summary of the key features and components of CSCOPE.

The content of CSCOPE is integrated with a specific research-based pedagogical model, the 5E Model, which was created in 1989 by Cornell University's Biological Science Curriculum Study Group. The 5E Instructional Model is based on interactive exploration. During the introduction of new material, students use their prior knowledge on the subject as a framework for further learning. The 5 E's of the model include: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate, as described in **Exhibit 9**.

2. DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION

As part of a larger effort to increase consistency across the district, the board adopted local policy in February 2007 requiring implementation of a specified curriculum. A board member stated that the board's goal in adopting the policy was to select a quality curriculum and improve upon it to stop the "revolving door" of different programs and products implemented across the district, thereby providing a common thread of instruction across all DISD campuses.

The board approved and required implementation of the scope and sequence documents, the

EXHIBIT 8
CSCOPE CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

KEY FEATURES OF THE CSCOPE CURRICULUM:

- K–12 systemic model in the four core content areas
- common language, structure, and process for curriculum delivery
- aligned written, taught, and tested curriculum
- clarified and specified TEKS/TAKS expectations assembled in a vertical alignment format
- customizable instructional plans that allow district resources to be integrated into the system
- lessons in both English and Spanish

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE CSCOPE CURRICULUM:

1. **Component Descriptions**—This document contains component descriptions and uses for educators in the CSCOPE curriculum system.
2. **Vertical Alignment Documents**—Vertical alignment documents present aligned standards among grade levels.
3. **Instructional Focus Documents**—Instructional focus documents are used to group the specified standards from the vertical alignment documents into a logical sequence for instruction.
4. **Sample Lessons**—The lessons provide a comprehensive resource of exemplar instructional activities. The lessons in CSCOPE are developed using the 5E Model for instruction. Each lesson is defined to provide opportunities for students to engage, explore, explain, evaluate, and elaborate their learning.
5. **Year at a Glance**—The Year at a Glance document is designed to present a quick snapshot of the entire year's instructional plan.

SOURCE: CSCOPE, http://www.cscope.us/curriculum.html, May 2008.

EXHIBIT 9
CSCOPE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

ENGAGE:

This stage is meant to engage the learner by the teacher asking questions or telling a story about an unusual event to pique the student's curiosity.

EXPLORE:

In this stage, the student has the opportunity to work through the problem with hands-on experience, to discuss the problem with other students, and to receive minimal guidance from the instructor. This will help the student to become more familiar with the problem and to generate additional interest in solving the problem.

EXPLAIN:

During this stage, the student will begin to learn the terminology (definitions, explanations, and relationships) surrounding the material.

ELABORATE:

This is the stage where the students use what they have learned in order to solve the initial problem. They should also be able to use the concepts learned in the Explain stage to solve additional problems. Once again, the instructor listens for their understanding of the concepts and terminology but does not provide direct answers or introduce new material.

EVALUATE:

During this stage, instructors can assess their students' learning. This may be accomplished through a variety of assessments, including the student's self-assessment.

SOURCE: CSCOPE, http://www.cscope.us/curriculum.html, May 2008.

Instructional Focus Documents, and the common assessments from CSCOPE in all four core areas. District staff reported implementation was scheduled to occur in phases with the first phase being a pilot across all grade levels and all core subject areas in 2006–07. This phase involved using the general sequencing of how concepts were introduced in CSCOPE and relied on the Year at a Glance documents and the scope and sequence documents. The next year, 2007–08, campus staff members were required to implement the pacing of CSCOPE, the Instructional Focus Documents, and some sections of the Exemplar Lessons, including Lesson Synopsis, Performance Indicators, Key Understandings and Guiding Questions, and Vocabulary of Instruction. As the instructional procedures of Exemplar Lessons become more refined and needed materials provided, staff will be asked to consider utilizing these components as well.

To support CSCOPE implementation, DISD hired two Instructional Specialists for the 2007–08 school year, one in elementary science, and the other in K–12 mathematics. Staff reported that the Mathematics Instructional Specialist brought together teachers in grades 3 through 7 to work with CSCOPE vertical alignment. The focus

of the training was "various forms of numbers," as students were having trouble with converting numbers from decimal to fraction. Teachers reported that this session was useful and they asked for more training time to work on similar issues.

In addition, as part of their contract, Region 6 comes to the district to provide CSCOPE training to staff approximately once every six weeks. District staff said the communication with Region 6 about the development of CSCOPE and research behind it has been an integral component of teacher training. Campus staff reported satisfaction with the level of support and judged it as adequate.

Initially, teachers were resistant to the idea of having one curriculum due to the amount of local control they had previously. District and campus staff reported needing time to learn the ordering of concepts in CSCOPE, and indicated it took about 18 months to become comfortable with using the new curriculum. However, overall, the level of resistance to CSCOPE has been low, partly due to the strong support for CSCOPE from the school board and central office. Most campus-level frustrations with CSCOPE appear to stem from the product being incomplete. While the district understood when they purchased it that some aspects of CSCOPE still were being refined and even created, this caused difficulties for teachers wanting to prepare in advance. For example, for the 2007–08 school year, some grade levels and subject areas were not online for teachers to review until late July and August 2007. Elementary lessons were not available until December 2007. At the high school level, Physics was still incomplete in April 2008, and Chemistry was being developed throughout the year even as teachers taught it to students.

Teachers also reported being overwhelmed with the learning curve associated with implementing CSCOPE. One tenured teacher noted that first-year teachers received less support from their colleagues during CSCOPE implementation because more experienced teachers were also struggling to learn the system and implement the curriculum. Campus staff also said that aspects of the system require starting over each year. For example, in 2007–08, the CSCOPE system did not archive the Exemplar Lessons used in 2006–07. Thus, teachers could not access specific lessons they had used in the previous year and had to find new lessons in 2007–08 and gather all new materials. Additionally, CSCOPE lessons require that teachers develop their own supplements for practice and homework.

The most positive response to CSCOPE has been from elementary science teachers because many of these teachers have had limited science training and previously had few curricular resources. Districtwide, staff viewed CSCOPE as the best option available and understood that the central office and administrators were trying to do what they thought was right and were under pressure to improve student performance. Staff agreed that vertical alignment was needed and that what had been used previously was insufficient.

Exhibit 10 summarizes the status of CSCOPE curriculum components in DISD. For the purpose of this review, only specific elements of curriculum support in the four core subject areas for grades 2, 4, 7, and 11 were analyzed. Analyses indicated that all three curriculum support components (curriculum system, scope and sequence, and lesson plans) are available through CSCOPE, although lessons plans for Chemistry were incomplete at the time of onsite data collection. These components,

EXHIBIT 10
STATUS OF DISD CSCOPE CURRICULUM COMPONENTS
MARCH 2008

CURRICULUM SUPPORTS	IN PLACE	TEKS ALIGNED	TAKS ALIGNED	GRADE LEVELS	SUBJECT AREA*	UPDATE
Curriculum System	✓Yes	✓Yes	✓Yes	✓2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓Yes
	No	No	No	✓4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	No
				✓7	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
	{CSCOPE}			✓HS	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	{ongoing}
Scope and Sequence	✓Yes	✓Yes	✓Yes	✓2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓Yes
	No	No	No	✓4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	No
				✓7	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
	{CSCOPE}			✓HS	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	{ongoing}
Lesson Plans	✓Yes	✓Yes	✓Yes	✓2	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	✓Yes
	No	No	No	✓4	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	No
				✓7	✓M ✓R ✓S ✓SS	
	{CSCOPE}			✓HS	✓M ✓E S ✓SS	{ongoing}

*M = Mathematics, R = Reading, E = English Language Arts, S = Science, SS = Social Studies
SOURCE: DISD district curriculum documents, March 2008.

which address all grade levels and subject areas reviewed for this report, are aligned with the TEKS and TAKS and will be regularly updated by CSCOPE.

3. CONTRACTED SERVICES FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/DELIVERY

Prior to adopting CSCOPE, the district contracted with Region 7 for various professional development sessions. Topics varied depending on district needs. The district stated that expenditures associated with these trainings were not available but generally came from Title funds.

DISD contracts with Region 6 for CSCOPE services and support; service center staff have been responsive to the district's feedback about the need to improve some CSCOPE materials. During the 2007–08 school year, Region 6 staff members traveled to the district on average once every six weeks to provide CSCOPE training and support. This training occurred during early release days and team planning time in order to be embedded and ongoing.

In addition, the TESCCC hosted a statewide meeting to collect feedback on CSCOPE. DISD staff said the TESCCC used the information to prioritize concerns for the next phase of CSCOPE product development.

In addition to CSCOPE, the district determined that the SRA curriculum would be used to provide early intervention and curriculum alignment for reading. SRA Corrective Reading had been used successfully in 2005–06 to address the most significant reading delays in grades 3–5. Planning for K–8 implementation of this curriculum began in 2007–08 and included expenditures of $6,600 in consulting fees to SRA for assistance in refining the program and $32,283 on SRA Reading Mastery materials to be used for the 2007–08 school year. Additional costs for SRA curriculum for the 2008–09 school year include $4,800 in projected consulting fees and $1,268 on SRA Reading Mastery materials. In order to eliminate the need for SRA consulting services in the future, DISD is training a district employee to become a "coach" for SRA Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading.

The district also contracted with the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) for an external curriculum audit, the results of which were published in February 2008. The cost of the audit was $16,876.

4. COSTS INCURRED IN OBTAINING CURRICULUM GUIDES/SERVICES

Prior to the purchase of CSCOPE, the district spent about $60,000 each summer for teacher volunteers to update scope and sequence documents. Because this process of curriculum development and revision was viewed as TAKS-based and campus-driven, the board felt that this was not an efficient use of district resources and supported the acquisition of a commercial program for districtwide curriculum management.

During the 2006–07 school year, DISD spent approximately $13,000 on its initial investment in CSCOPE, with a per-pupil cost of $6.97. During the second contract year, 2007–08, the district spent $15,745 for the CSCOPE contract, or a per-pupil cost of $8.51. An additional cost of $2,706 was incurred in 2007–08 for access to WebCCAT assessment software which is used in conjunction with CSCOPE.

A total of $11,488 was expended for training related to CSCOPE including administrator training during the 2006–07 school year. An additional $4,135 was expended for staff development over the 2007–08 school year. The initial trainings included emphasis on the 5E model. **Exhibit 11** summarizes major CSCOPE staff development activities for 2007–08.

To support the CSCOPE curriculum system, the district also created two new Instructional Specialist positions to provide training and daily support for curriculum implementation. After data collection for this review was complete, the district also created a Chief Curriculum Officer position to begin work in the district on July 1, 2008.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) does not require districts to report expenditures on curriculum separately from other instructional expenditures. Therefore, curriculum expenditures are generally coded as instruction or instruction-related. All

EXHIBIT 11
CSCOPE-RELATED STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
AUGUST 2007 THROUGH MAY 2008

TIMEFRAME	EVENT	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	HOURS
August 2007	Initial system training for lead teachers by Region 6 facilitator	12	3
August 2007	Lesson plan training for lead teachers by Region 6 facilitator	12	3
August 2007	Content training for all core teachers at Region 6	80	7
September 2007	Training in system access for all core teachers by district staff	80	1
October 2007 (early release)	Lesson plan training for all core teachers by district staff	80	1
October 2007 (early release)	Core teacher training by Region 6 facilitator	80	2
November 2007 (early release)	Core teacher training by Region 6 facilitator	80	3
May 2008	Lead teacher training at Region 6	10	7

SOURCES: DISD training schedule, 2007–08; interviews with district staff, spring 2008.

of the costs for CSCOPE are included in DISD's instructional budget.

For the 2006–07 school year, DISD spent an average of $3,706 per pupil, which represents 57.1 percent of all operating expenditures per pupil, on curriculum- and instructional-related services. These expenditures include salaries, training, materials, and activities related to curriculum and direct instruction of students in the classroom.

While the district did not conduct a formal cost-benefit analysis, staff indicated that CSCOPE not only represents a more responsible use of financial resources on curricular needs, but also represents a savings to the district.

5. OTHER CURRICULAR RESOURCES USED IN THE DISTRICT

In addition to CSCOPE and the SRA curriculum mentioned above, the district also retained its Accelerated Reading and Mathematics programs as supplements to CSCOPE, and continues to use Agile Mind as well. Additionally, teachers discussed using numerous other resources they already had to fill in gaps in CSCOPE, especially in terms of practice and homework. In August 2007, DISD created a Supplemental Resources Manual to assist both district and campus administrators and staff in easily determining what resources were available as curriculum support. This manual also provides staff with an overview of current research regarding available programs, and is updated annually to reflect changes in district resources.

C. STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes the structures to support implementation based on a review of board policy documents, district organizational charts and job descriptions, and interview and focus group data.

1. SUPPORTING BOARD POLICIES

The district contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for its policy development and updates. TASB categorizes all policies according to seven major areas of school operations: basic district operations, local governance, business and support services, personnel, instruction, students, and community government relations. TASB developed all policies designated as (LEGAL) or (EXHIBIT) to comply with legal entities that define district governance. In addition, local policies can be created to reflect local school board decisions. TASB designates such policies as (LOCAL) or (REGULATION).

The DISD Board of Trustees has adopted nine policies that reference curriculum for the grade levels and core areas considered in this review. Of these, five are legal, three are local, and one is a regulation.

AE (EXHIBIT) Educational Philosophy
Objective 4 of this policy defines curriculum as "well balanced and appropriate" and states such a "curriculum will be provided to all students."

BQ (LEGAL) Planning and Decision-Making Process
This policy states that the board will clearly define the roles and duties of district and campus staff in the area of curriculum.

BQ (LOCAL) Planning and Decision-Making Process
This policy states that the board shall ensure that administrative procedures meet legal requirements in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization; adequately reflect the district's planning process; and include implementation guidelines, time frames, and necessary resources. The superintendent shall report periodically to the board on the status of the planning process,

including a review of the related administrative procedures, any revisions to improve the process, and progress on implementation of identified strategies.

EHAA (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (All Levels)
This policy states the district shall provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills at appropriate grade levels in the foundation (four core areas) and enrichment curriculum, according to *Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.002(c)*. It also states that all children in the district participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs, through *TEC §28.002(g)*.

EHAB (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Elementary) and *EHAC (LEGAL) Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (Secondary)* provide similar provisions to *EHAA (LEGAL)*.

EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development
This policy was adopted in February 2007 and provides specific support for CSCOPE implementation by clearly expressing the board's expectations. This policy states the need for systematic, ongoing evaluation of the curriculum. It defines the district's curriculum philosophy in greater detail than *AE (LEGAL)*. It specifies the planned, written, and taught curriculum, including requiring that all curricula be written and correlated to state standards. It states that teachers shall have access to guides and use the objectives in the guides to develop daily lesson plans; and administrators shall work with teachers to maintain consistency between the written curriculum and the curriculum objectives actually taught. It states that teachers *are required* to use the district curriculum and instruction guides as their primary source of instructional direction. It further clarifies that the curriculum and instruction guides shall serve as the framework from which a teacher shall develop units of study, individual lesson plans, and approaches to instruction that shall serve the students' particular needs at a particular time. The guides shall be used to map a logical sequence of instruction for each student. In addition to consistent delivery of the objectives in the curriculum, teachers shall base their instructional delivery on sound teaching principles grounded in educational research.

This policy also provides specific direction for monitoring curriculum implementation through the following strategies:

- PDAS observations and conferences,
- frequent walk-through observations and follow-up conversations,
- curriculum planning meetings and review of minutes of the meetings, and
- periodic review of curriculum documents.

Finally, this policy defines planned, written, and tested curriculum; specifies the roles and responsibilities of the board, superintendent, campus administrators, and teachers in the process of curriculum development and implementation; and states that budget shall be aligned with these goals.

EFA (LOCAL) Instructional Resources: Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption
This policy states that although trained professional staff members are afforded the freedom to select instructional resources for their use in accordance with this policy and the state-mandated curriculum, the ultimate authority for determining and approving the curriculum and instructional program of the district lies with the board.

DND (REGULATION) Performance Appraisal Administrative Walk-through
Expands *EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development* by defining and specifying the background, procedures, guidelines, rating system, instruction audit team, consequences, and expectations of the walk-through process.

Other policies may reference curriculum but are not related to the grade levels or four cores areas of interest in this report. Of the nine relevant policies, together *EG (LOCAL) Curriculum Development* and *DND (REGULATION) Performance Appraisal Administrative Walk-through* specify a process for curriculum adoption, implementation, and review. These policies provide common standards for what is to be taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated.

The DISD Board of Trustees has a unifying goal of creating consistency across campuses through a shared curriculum. The hiring of both Mr. Williams and Mr. Hawkins as superintendent was intended to move the district closer to this goal. After CSCOPE was recommended by campus and district administrators to the board as a consistent curriculum, the board voted to adopt CSCOPE. Following adoption of CSCOPE in April 2006, the board developed and passed policy that required CSCOPE implementation districtwide. This was the first time board policy was adopted to implement a specific curriculum.

The impetus for establishing board policy requiring the CSCOPE curriculum was to send a strong and clear message to all staff. For many years, campuses in the district had adopted so many different programs that staff members were leery to invest in anything new. The board wanted to send a clear message that the CSCOPE curriculum was a solid starting point and that staff should work to improve it. While campus staff members are still adjusting to CSCOPE, they do understand the message from the board and district and know that they have full support for making CSCOPE work. Staff reported that they view CSCOPE and the board's decision to implement it as a foundation from which they can build.

Additionally, the district developed an administrative regulation to provide DISD curriculum staff with a manual to direct their work. The manual details the district's curriculum management plan, which was developed to ensure a high quality, systematic, ongoing cycle of curriculum development and review in DISD. The *Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Design and Delivery Manual* was approved by the DISD superintendent on April 22, 2008, and includes the following recommended components:

- statement of the district's curriculum philosophy and curriculum mission statement;
- profile of a graduate indicating board and community members' expectations of proficiencies;
- definition of curriculum, including the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- curriculum development/review cycle, including formal vertical alignment;
- roles and responsibilities of individuals charged with development, review, delivery, and monitoring phases of curriculum;
- identification of a staff development plan aligned with curriculum goals;
- process for monitoring curriculum implementation and success, including benchmarking;

- glossary of terms so all stakeholders have the same understanding of terms; and
- board policies and/or administrative regulations to develop and implement a curriculum management plan.

The manual does not identify financial resources to support the above-noted efforts.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EFFECTIVENESS AS RELATED TO CURRICULUM

DISD implemented several changes in its organizational structure to assist with making the district's curriculum more consistent and effective. During the past several years, the district has also undergone several superintendent changes. **Exhibit 7** on page 7 provides this timeline and context.

With the retirement of Superintendent Bobby Baker in January 2006, the board focused on hiring a superintendent oriented and open to change. At the time of the hiring of Horace Williams in February 2006, the district had one Curriculum Director. Mr. Williams began implementing changes in the area of curriculum, including creating a second Curriculum Director position for the 2006–07 school year. He moved Brent Hawkins, one of the high school principals, to the newly created Director of Secondary Curriculum position, while the previous Curriculum Director held the Director of Elementary Curriculum position. In December 2006, the Director of Elementary Curriculum resigned. Rather than hiring a replacement for the newly vacant position, Mr. Williams combined the two director positions, similar to the initial 2006 curriculum structure, leaving Mr. Hawkins as the Director of Curriculum for grades PreK–12. During his tenure in this position, Mr. Hawkins led the review and adoption of CSCOPE.

Upon the resignation of Mr. Williams in February 2007, DISD moved the Director of Curriculum, Brent Hawkins, into the Interim Superintendent position and then named him the permanent Superintendent at the beginning of the 2007–08 school year. During Mr. Hawkins' tenure, the school board approved two new Instructional Specialist positions to support CSCOPE implementation, a K–12 Mathematics Instructional Specialist and an elementary Science Instructional Specialist. These positions were created with the expectation that they would help to develop and manage aligned assessments, but instead have spent much of their time facilitating the implementation of CSCOPE and helping teachers fill gaps and gather the required materials to implement CSCOPE lessons. Implementing aligned assessments district-wide remains a challenge.

Mr. Hawkins reorganized the administrative structure of the primary and elementary school campuses effective with the 2007–08 school year. Traditionally, each campus had its own principal. For 2007–08, the superintendent created one principal over both campuses with an assistant principal housed on each campus. Along with this change, the superintendent brought in new high school and middle school principals. These new hires were to support full implementation of the CSCOPE curriculum and unify the district.

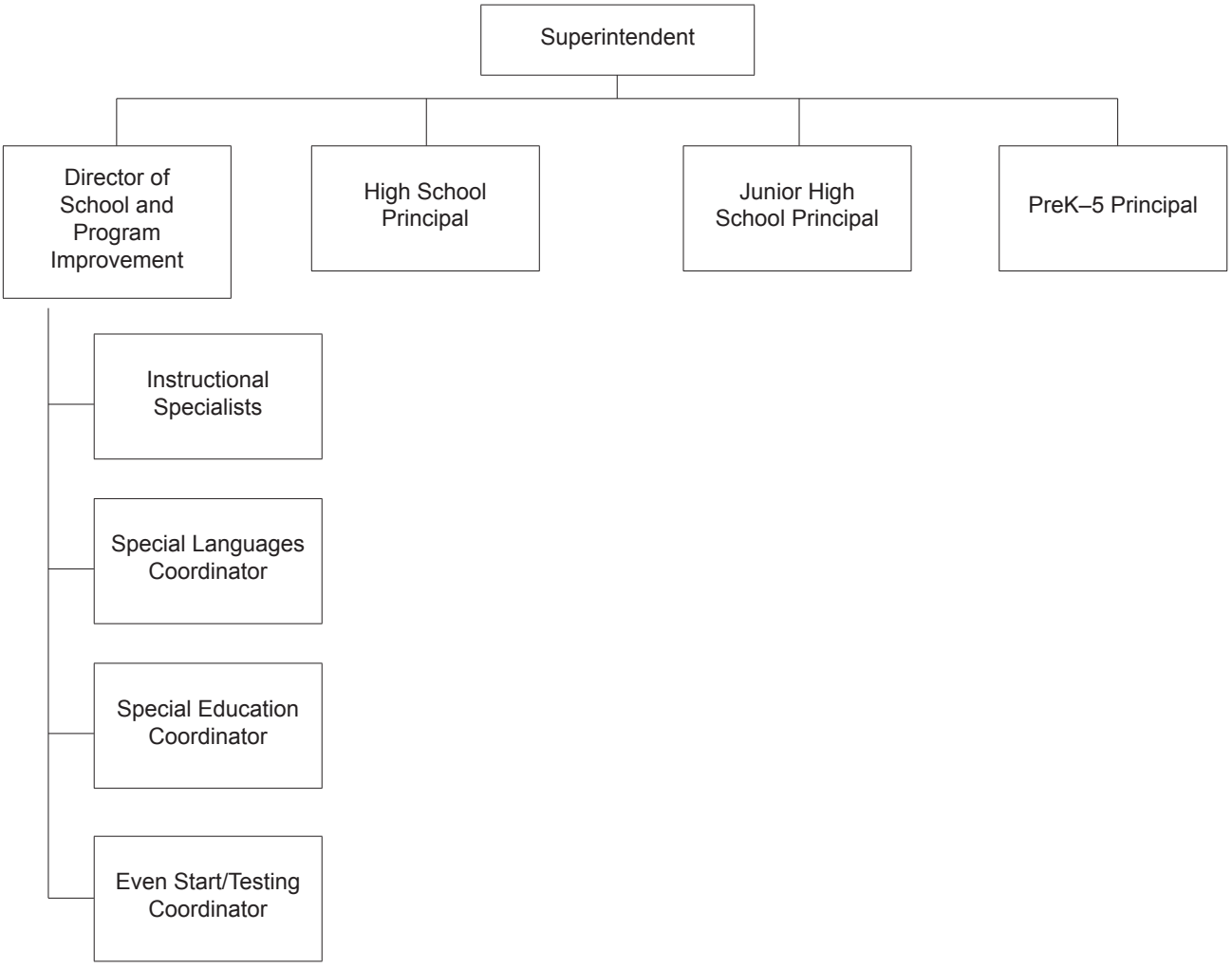
At the time of onsite data collection for this review, the overall formal organizational structure of the district indicated a flat structure with no one position specifically responsible for districtwide oversight of curriculum and instruction.

Exhibit 12 provides an illustration of DISD's organizational structure as related to curriculum in 2007–08.

Under this structure, the Mathematics and Science Instructional Specialist positions report to the Director of School and Program Improvement. Other positions reporting to the director include those that provide programmatic support for special populations. The district's job description for the director position, updated in June 2008, includes the following curriculum-related job responsibilities related to strategic and intensive interventions for special population students:

- ensure that student progress is evaluated on a systematic basis, and that the findings are used to make instruction and support services more effective; and
- encourage and support the development of innovative instructional programs, helping teachers to pilot such efforts when appropriate.

EXHIBIT 12
DISD CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION
2007–08



SOURCE: DISD Curriculum Organizational Chart, 2007–08.

District staff indicated that while the formal structure indicates Instructional Specialists reported to the Director of School and Program Improvement, the superintendent at the time, Mr. Hawkins, was very involved, albeit informally, in the curriculum design and delivery and worked closely with the Instructional Specialists. This was primarily due to the fact that the district did not staff a Curriculum Director position.

The Instructional Specialists are responsible for the majority of CSCOPE implementation and monitoring. Major curriculum-related responsibilities for the Mathematics and Science Instructional Specialist positions include the following:

- coordinate meetings with content/grade levels for TEKS-TAKS/TAKS-M curriculum alignment and development, including:
  - scope and sequence;
  - instructional activities;
  - six-week TEKS benchmarks; and
  - horizontal and vertical alignment
- coordinate curriculum development sessions during the school year and summer;
- observe classroom instruction on a regular basis;
- make budget recommendations concerning curriculum needs; and
- assist with the development of a curriculum handbook.

DISD campus principals, teachers, and Instructional Specialists share responsibility for implementing an aligned curriculum. However, these positions do not share a common reporting structure. Teachers report to principals and principals report directly to the superintendent, while the Instructional Specialists reports to a position with few curriculum-related responsibilities.

After onsite data collection for this review, the district created a new Chief Curriculum Officer position to begin work on July 1, 2008. Responsibilities of this position relating to curriculum include the following:

- direct instructional and curriculum services to meet students' needs;
- plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs with teachers and principals, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques;
- apply research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process;
- work with appropriate staff to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum documents in the core curriculum areas based on systematic review and analysis;
- involve instructional staff in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs;
- ensure the use of technology in the teaching-learning process;
- plan the necessary time, resources, and materials to support accomplishment of educational goals;
- ensure that district goals and objectives are developed using collaborative processes and problem-solving techniques when appropriate;
- participate in the district-level decision-making process to establish and review the

district's goals and objectives and major classroom instructional programs of the district;

- actively support the efforts of others to achieve district goals and objectives and campus performance objectives (academic excellence indicators);
- obtain and use evaluative findings (including student achievement data) to examine curriculum and instruction program effectiveness;
- prepare, review, and revise job descriptions in curriculum and instruction department; and
- supervise and evaluate the performance of instructional supervisors and support staff in the Curriculum Department.

It is also important to note that after onsite data collection, Mr. Hawkins resigned as the DISD superintendent and took a position at another district. The Mathematics Instructional Specialist, along with other DISD personnel, moved with Mr. Hawkins to the new district. The current superintendent, Gary Martel, began his tenure with DISD in July 2008. Following the change in district leadership, DISD hired three new Instructional Specialists; all of whom report to the Chief Curriculum Officer. However, only the Math Instructional Specialist has responsibilities related specifically to a core area of instruction.

3. SCHOOL AND DISTRICTWIDE MONITORING TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION

One of the most significant changes that occurred with the implementation of the CSCOPE curriculum was increased monitoring of classroom instruction. In fall 2007, the district implemented an administrative regulation requiring systematic monitoring by the DISD Instructional Audit Team, comprised of district administrators, the Instructional Specialists, and other staff, such as the Athletic Director. All monitors are certified Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) appraisers and have participated in the Dr. Carolyn Downey three-minute classroom walk-through training. Principals are directed by the regulation to spend at least 65 percent of each day observing classroom instruction, and must complete 10 three-minute walk-throughs each week. Other members of the Instructional Audit Team are required to complete 10 walkthroughs in the fall and 20 in the spring. The purpose of the walk-throughs is to monitor the implementation of the 5E Model promoted through the CSCOPE curriculum, as well as the pacing and sequencing of CSCOPE. After a walk-through, the observer submits data to the central office and the teacher is scored on a three-point rubric. Results are reviewed over a nine-week period. Teachers consistently performing below expectations are placed on a growth plan. District staff indicated that while the number is low, more teachers have been placed on growth plans than ever before.

Since their initial implementation, the walk-throughs have been met with teacher resistance. Campus staff members question the instructional and curriculum expertise of some members of the Instructional Audit Team. Additionally, some staff suggested that the monitoring could be used formatively to provide more systematic mentoring and feedback than what currently occurs. In fall 2008, DISD reported that the Chief Curriculum Officer is revising the walk-through process to include more formative components and provide beneficial feedback to teachers and principals in a non-threatening way.

Student performance is another way the district monitors CSCOPE implementation, but, because common assessments are not available and implementation is relatively new, this is less of a focus than the more immediate focus of making sure campus staff are consistent in curriculum delivery. Teachers reported that grade-level meetings with principals to informally review student progress were the most helpful monitoring activities. These efforts provided constructive solutions in a collaborative atmosphere.

Additionally, the district has been proactive in seeking external feedback. For example, the district contracted with the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) for a thorough curriculum audit. District staff views the February 2008 audit as a roadmap for how the district can progress with regards to its curricular efforts. It highlighted several steps the district has taken to improve instruction, such as purchasing CSCOPE, implementing board policy, and reviewing its approach to district and campus improvement plans. The audit also cited additional areas for improvement, such as facilitating a systematic data review process that drives instructional decision-making and professional development. Additionally, the audit highlighted the need for aligned assessments to test the written and taught curriculum as a critical missing link that could not be implemented within the current structure of resources.

D. DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a summary and description of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations based on document review, site visit data, and cost analysis. District practices are compared to professional standards.

The standards guiding the identification of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations provided in this review come from the combined efforts of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). These standards, the AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems, are tightly aligned with the research on factors that impact student performance and were developed with broad input from practitioners and education experts. (See **Exhibit 13**)

EXHIBIT 13
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Standard 1: Vision and Purpose	Vision and Purpose	
The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.	1.1	Establishes a vision for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders
	1.2	Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support
	1.3	Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision
	1.4	Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community
	1.5	Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services
	1.6	Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate

EXHIBIT 13 (CONTINUED)
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.	**Governance**	
	2.1	Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system
	2.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system
	2.3	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations
	2.4	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board
	2.5	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources
	2.6	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations
	2.7	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations
	Leadership	
	2.8	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness
	2.9	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs
	2.10	Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals
	2.11	Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership
	2.12	Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction
	2.13	Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel
Standard 3: Teaching and Learning The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.	**Teaching and Learning**	
	3.1	Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills
	3.2	Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills to investigate new approaches to applying their learning
	3.3	Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels
	3.4	Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice
	3.5	Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity
	3.6	Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning
	3.7	Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment
	3.8	Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning
	3.9	Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning
	3.10	Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals
	3.11	Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction

EXHIBIT 13 (CONTINUED)
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.	**Documenting and Using Results**	
	4.1	Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and free of bias
	4.2	Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning
	4.3	Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance
	4.4	Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders
	4.5	Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness
	4.6	Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence
	4.7	Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations
Standard 5: Resources and Support Systems The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose, and to ensure achievement for all students.	**Human Resources**	
	5.1	Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities
	5.2	Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)
	5.3	Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff
	5.4	Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable
	Financial Resources	
	5.5	Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement
	5.6	Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures
Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.	**Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**	
	6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning
	6.2	Uses system-wide strategies to listen and communicate with stakeholders
	6.3	Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system
	6.4	Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders
	6.5	Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders

EXHIBIT 13 (CONTINUED)
AdvancED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.	**Commitment to Continuous Improvement**	
	7.1	Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)
	7.2	Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement
	7.3	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning
	7.4	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels
	7.5	Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals
	7.6	Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders
	7.7	Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement
	7.8	Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide
	7.9	Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts

SOURCE: AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems, March 2008.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DISD district leadership assessed multiple data points in identifying the need for a change in curriculum.

In recent years, DISD staff became concerned with the lack of instructional consistency across campuses and vertical alignment between grade levels, which have resulted in gaps in student knowledge. The district also demonstrated awareness and attention to indicators beyond the current TAKS accountability standards. Specifically, district leaders looked at College Readiness Indicators and found that district students were performing below the state average and were not ready for postsecondary opportunities. The district also wanted to increase the rigor of curriculum content offered to all students and implement more engaging instructional approaches. This review of performance indicators and instructional goals resulted in the decision to adopt a vertically aligned curriculum system aligned with the TEKS and TAKS.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (3.3) ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels; (3.7) maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and insure readiness for future schooling or employment; and (7.4) ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing the gaps between current and expected student performance levels.

DISD adopted a curriculum system that is based on the TEKS and the TAKS, is vertically aligned, and provides the necessary support for successful implementation.

After researching several curriculum options, DISD purchased a commercial curriculum/curriculum management system that would adequately address the district's identified curriculum needs. The system ensures consistency and alignment across grades and topic areas. Written documents to guide curricular choices include specific objectives that align to state standards and assessments. Additionally, the system includes scope and sequence documents that specify what is taught and in what order, as well as vertical alignment documents that articulate what objectives and what level of proficiency students are expected to know at each grade level. The district also provided adequate training in use of the curriculum system. This approach addressed the fragmentation and misalignment of instruction that had previously been prevalent in the district.

This practice reflects the following professional standard: (3.1) develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills.

DISD implemented several organizational and structural changes to unify the district and increase support of curriculum and instruction goals.

In 2006, the DISD school board hired a superintendent charged with initiating change to improve the education of district students. Additionally, the board has supported central office decisions in recent years related to curriculum and instruction goals, such as reorganizing the administrative structure of campuses to increase vertical alignment between grade levels. In 2007–08, the district's previous structure of having one principal overseeing the elementary campus and another overseeing the primary campus changed to one leader overseeing both campuses with assistant principals assigned to each campus. District leadership also created Instructional Specialist positions to assist with curriculum implementation. These positions are responsible for assisting campus-level staff with curriculum implementation and training.

This practice reflects the following professional standard: (5.2) establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations.

The DISD school board has adopted local board policies and administrative regulations articulating processes for curriculum adoption, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

In February 2007, the DISD school board adopted local board policies and administrative regulations that provide specific direction related to curriculum adoption, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The policies define the curriculum, outline the curriculum development and adoption process, require districtwide use of curriculum documents, and promote the coordination of curriculum and assessment procedures. Together, these board policies establish standards for the development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum. The policies communicate the expectations of the board and the community and provide guidance for district and campus

staff in meeting those expectations. Local policy has established common standards for what is to be taught, how it is to be presented in written form, and how it should be evaluated. Further, the administrative regulation clearly articulates a systematic process for conducting classroom walk-throughs to monitor the level of curriculum implementation occurring across the district. This has resulted in a clear mandate of the district's curriculum-related expectations and articulation of the district's long-term commitment to achieving its goals of unity and consistency in curriculum and instruction.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (2.1) establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system; (2.10) provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals; and (7.9) provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts.

The district created and implemented a curriculum management plan to ensure a high-quality, systematic, ongoing cycle of curriculum development and review.

In April 2008, the district created and implemented a comprehensive curriculum management plan to direct and provide quality assurance for curriculum development, delivery, and management. The curriculum management plan, contained in the *Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Design and Delivery Manual,* provides district and campus staff with the authority and clear direction to implement an aligned curriculum across all grades. The plan is a document for the district to use in aligning professional development activities, personnel responsibilities, and resources with district curriculum goals. The curriculum management plan includes a statement of curriculum philosophy and mission; a graduate profile; definitions of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum; review cycles; roles and responsibilities of individuals implementing the curriculum; monitoring plans; a glossary of terms; and supporting board policies.

This practice reflects the following professional standards: (7.1) engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results); and (7.9) provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DISD curriculum monitoring through classroom walk-throughs lacks a formative focus.

In fall 2007, DISD developed a formal walk-through process supported by an administrative regulation to provide monitoring of curriculum implementation in addition to district review of student performance. However, the walk-through process lacks a formative focus. DISD created an Instructional Audit Team and trained district staff, including administrators and noninstructional staff, to conduct three-minute walk-throughs based on the Downey model. The intent of the walk-through process was to increase the amount of time staff spent monitoring classroom instruction

and curriculum implementation, but teachers indicated that not all monitors had legitimacy as instructional leaders. Additionally, teachers rarely received feedback or had an opportunity to use the observation as a learning experience, so the process was frustrating and, in some cases, was perceived as punitive. The result was increased tension between district and teacher staff, causing teachers to feel a lack of support related to their instructional responsibilities.

DISD should revise the walk-through process to include more formative components. In fall 2008, DISD reported that the Chief Curriculum Officer has begun working to revise the walk-through process to include more formative components and provide beneficial feedback to teachers and principals in a non-threatening way. The district should continue with these efforts, including educating teachers about the process involved in the three-minute walk-through, the research and validity behind the approach, and the training that monitors have received. This will increase staff confidence in the walk-through process. Additionally, the district should implement a feedback process between the monitors and teachers and establish guidelines for formative exchanges and interactions related to the walk-throughs on a routine basis.

Modification of the walk-through process as recommended will better fulfill its original intent to "provide collegial coaching support to maintain a culture of continually growing teaching practices with a clear focus on student achievement." The district will then benefit from a systematic monitoring process that provides enhanced professional growth opportunities for teachers.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standards: (6.2) uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders; (6.5) provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders; and (7.6) monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders.

DISD's organizational structure for curriculum lacks efficiency, alignment, and coordination within functional areas.

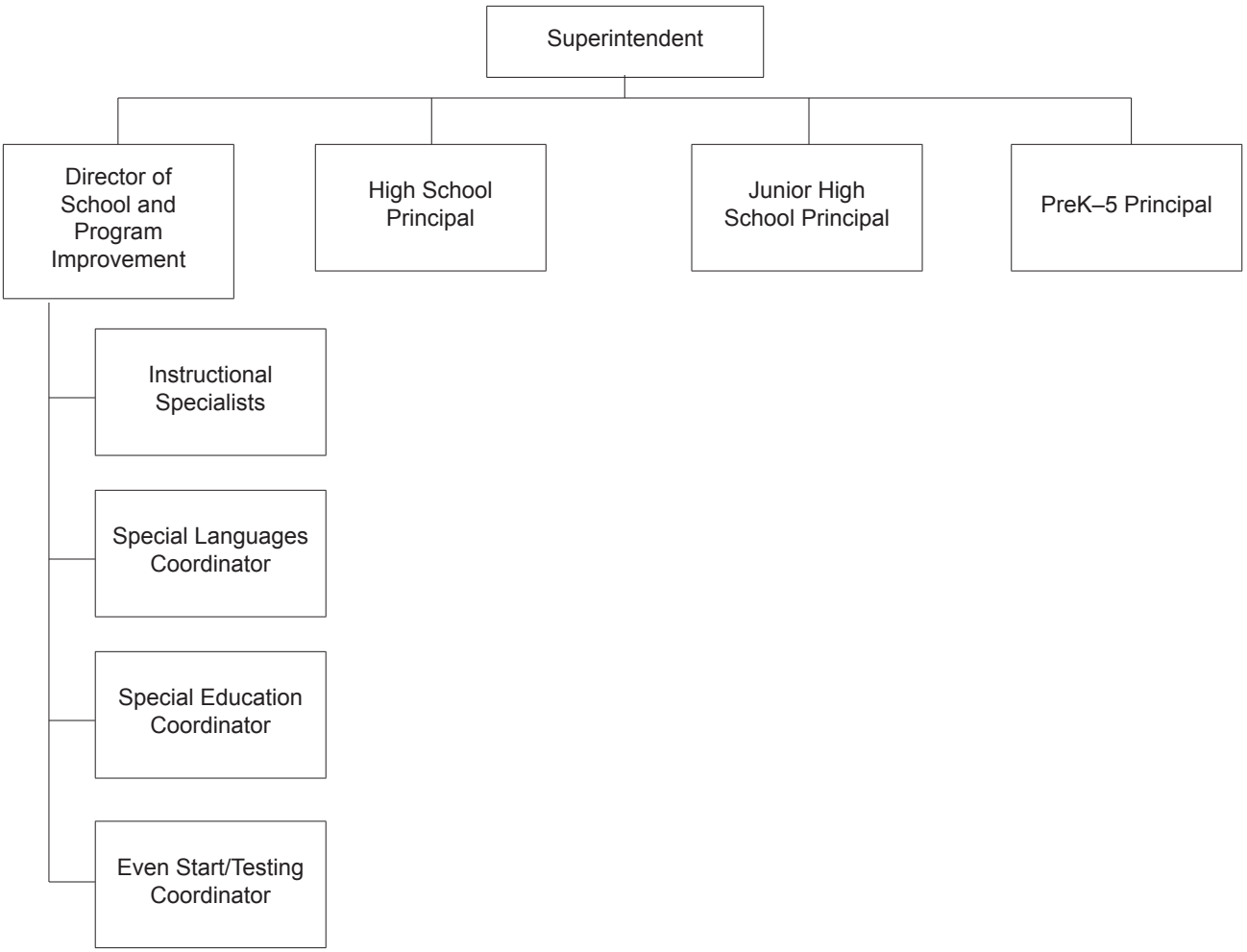
DISD superintendents have been charged in recent years with unifying the district and promoting its curriculum and instruction goals. This has occurred through the adoption of an aligned curriculum, creation of positions to support curriculum implementation, and reorganization of the administrative structure of the primary and elementary campuses to facilitate vertical alignment between the grade levels on these campuses. However, the district's organizational structure for curriculum lacks efficiency, alignment, and coordination within functional areas. The principals, teachers, and Instructional Specialists have primary responsibility for implementing the curriculum, but these positions do not share a common reporting structure. In 2007–08, teachers reported to principals and principals reported directly to the superintendent, while the Instructional Specialists reported to the Director of School and Program Improvement, a position with a few curriculum-related responsibilities or curriculum staff supervised. Having a reporting stream with personnel who have unrelated responsibilities makes coordination of services and resources difficult. DISD's 2007–08 curriculum organization is illustrated in **Exhibit 14**.

In July 2008, DISD hired a Chief Curriculum Officer. Responsibilities for this newly created

position include directing instructional and curriculum services in the district. According to the revised 2008–09 DISD organization chart, Instructional Specialists now report to the Chief Curriculum Officer instead of the Director of School and Program Improvement as in 2007–08. However, in the 2008–09 organization chart, principals still report directly to the superintendent.

DISD should revise the organizational structure to consolidate all functions associated with curriculum and instruction under the Chief Curriculum Officer. Under the revised structure, Instructional Specialists and principals will report primarily to the Chief Curriculum Officer, thus coordinating curriculum-related efforts through one reporting stream. Job descriptions for all affected positions should be revised as appropriate to reflect the new structure.

EXHIBIT 14
DISD CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION
2007–08

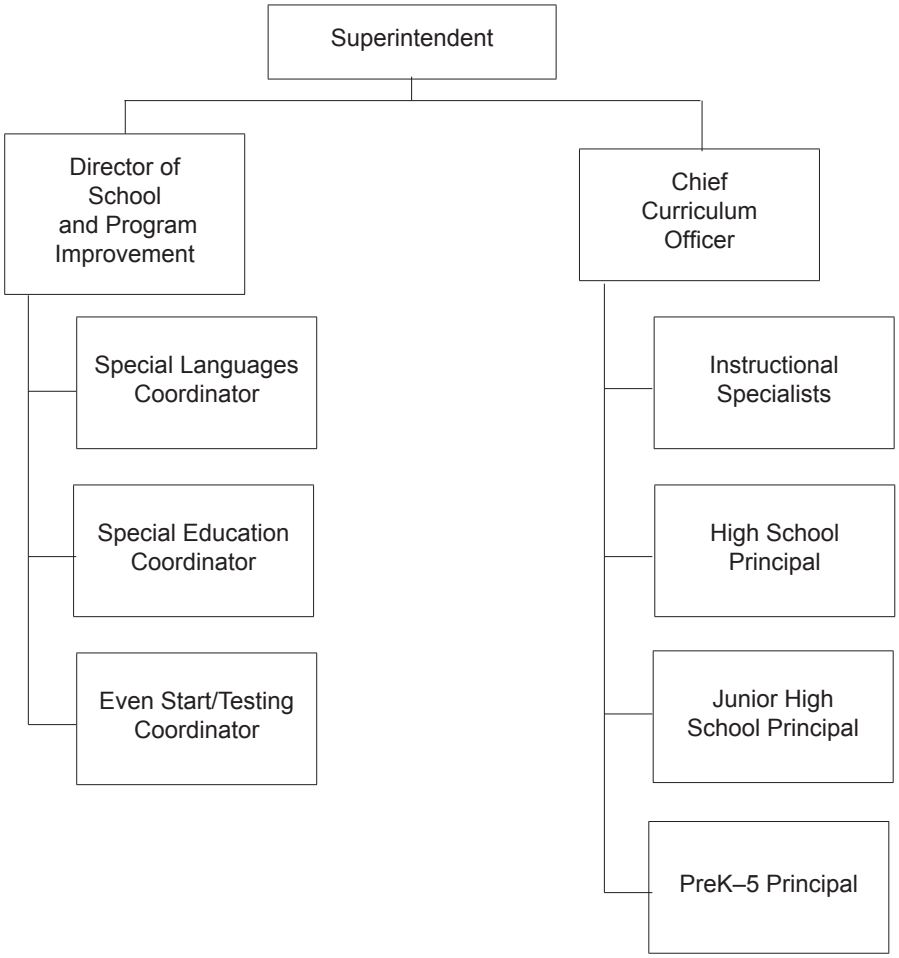


SOURCE: DISD Curriculum Organizational Chart, 2007–08.

Exhibit 15 provides the proposed revised organizational structure, which will facilitate efficiency, alignment, and coordination of curriculum and instruction services. This restructuring will also improve communication, planning, and resource allocation related to curriculum and instruction.

This recommendation reflects the following professional standards: (2.1) establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system; and (5.2) establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations.

EXHIBIT 15
DISD PROPOSED CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION
2009–10 THROUGH 2013–14



SOURCE: DISD Curriculum Organizational Chart, 2007–08.

FISCAL IMPACT

RECOMMENDATION	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS	ONE-TIME (COSTS) SAVINGS
Revise the walk-through process to include more formative components.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Revise the organizational structure to consolidate all functions associated with curriculum and instruction under the Chief Curriculum Officer.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
TOTAL	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**