

May 16, 2001

The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable William R. Ratliff
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the 77th Legislature
Commissioner James E. Nelson

Fellow Texans:

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

In March 1999, TSPR released the results of a review of the district's operations. This review, originally requested by the former superintendent and Senator Eliot Shapleigh, offered 142 recommendations that could save EPISD taxpayers more than \$27.9 million by 2003-04. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings less recommended investments) were projected to reach more than \$13.0 million by 2003-04. The review also noted a number of EPISD's exemplary programs and model services provided by district administrators, teachers and staff.

After nearly two years, we returned to check on how well the district's leadership put these proposals into practice. Since the review, the district has hired a new superintendent who embraced the report and is implementing these recommendations.

Over the last year, under the leadership of Superintendent Gilberto Anzaldúa, EPISD has implemented or is in the process of implementing 134 of the proposals, or 94 percent. The district has realized gross savings of more than \$1.4 million to date and expects to surpass the Comptroller's projected net savings by 2003-04. However, the final usefulness of this report will depend on EPISD's decisions regarding those recommendations that have yet to be fully implemented—several of which would improve district operations, and some of which promise significant savings.

I applaud the board and superintendent for taking these steps, but urge continued diligence to ensure that students, teachers, and taxpayers receive the maximum possible benefit from every dollar spent in EPISD.

This report is available on the Internet at
<http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/elpasopr/>.

Thanks for all that you do for Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole Keeton Rylander". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "r" at the end.

Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

Introduction

In September 1998, the Comptroller of Public Accounts' Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) began a performance review of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) at the request of the superintendent. After more than seven months of work, the Comptroller's office released a report identifying exemplary programs in EPISD and suggesting concrete ways to improve the district's operational efficiency. In January 2001, TSPR staff returned to assess the district's progress.

Since 1991, TSPR has recommended more than 4,550 ways to save taxpayers a net of more than \$504 million over a five-year period in 47 different public school districts throughout Texas. TSPR also conducts follow-up reviews of districts that have had at least one year to implement recommendations. These 30 subsequent reviews show that almost 90 percent of TSPR's combined proposals have been acted upon, saving taxpayers more than \$96 million, with the full savings estimated to grow in the future.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander, who took office in January 1999, consulted school district officials, parents and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports in an effort to make the TSPR more valuable, even vital, to the state's more than 1,000 school districts. With the perspective of having served as a teacher and later a school board president, the Comptroller has vowed to steer TSPR to increased accountability to local school districts and the communities they represent. The Comptroller intends for TSPR to become a tool for improvement in many more districts, particularly districts that seek help to improve academic performance.

Comptroller Rylander began her efforts by creating new criteria for selecting school districts for future reviews. Priority is now given to districts that are judged poor performing academically or financially, or to hands-on reviews that will benefit the greatest number of students. These are the school districts and children that need help the most.

Recognizing that only 52 cents of every state education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to direct more of every education dollar directly into the classroom, where it belongs. In addition, no longer will school reviews bury the districts' best practices and exemplary models deep inside individual TSPR reports. Instead, Comptroller Rylander has ordered best practices and exemplary programs

to be shared quickly and systematically among all the state's school districts and with anyone who requests such information. There is no reason for a district that has solved a problem to keep the solution to itself. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as an active clearing-house of the best and brightest ideas in Texas public education. Best practices identified in the original review of EPISD are included in the Comptroller's best practices database, A+ Ideas for Managing Schools (AIMS), which is accessible on the web at www.aimsdatabase.org. Under Comptroller Rylander's approach, the TSPR team and consultants will work with districts to:

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

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

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

TSPR in El Paso

TSPR began its review of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) in September 1998. As in previous reviews, TSPR went to El Paso in response to a local call for assistance. In August 1997, Dr. Stan Paz, then superintendent, requested a review, along with the superintendents of the Ysleta and Socorro ISDs and Senator Eliot Shapleigh of El Paso. At the request of the former superintendent, the

performance review was delayed to allow EPISD time to implement the findings of a manpower efficiency study begun in 1997.

With the help of McConnell, Jones, Lanier and Murphy, formerly known as Empirical Management Services, a Houston-based consulting firm, the TSPR team held community meetings in each of the district's four regions. Participants were invited to write their observations on major topics of concern or to be interviewed by a member of the review team. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted focus group sessions and interviewed district employees, school board members, students, parents, business leaders and representatives from community organizations. The team also collected comments from letters to the Comptroller and calls to the Comptroller's toll-free hotline.

Written surveys were sent to district personnel. TSPR received completed responses from 111 principals and assistant principals; 71 central and district administrators; and 294 teachers. About 870 EPISD students completed a written, self-administered questionnaire. A telephone survey of 600 El Paso citizens provided additional public input.

TSPR also consulted two databases of comparative educational information maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) – the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). For the review, EPISD selected peer districts for comparative purposes based on similarities in size, location, student enrollment and property values. The selected peers were the Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Socorro and Ysleta Independent School Districts (ISDs). TSPR also made comparisons with districts in the TEA's Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 19, to which EPISD belongs and the state as a whole.

El Paso ISD Background

EPISD is the seventh largest school district in Texas, serving more than 62,000 students during the 2000-01 school year. EPISD is the largest of the nine school districts in El Paso County. In recent years enrollment has held relatively stable. According to TEA, EPISD's 2000-01 enrollment is 78.5 percent Hispanic, 15.2 percent Anglo, 4.8 percent African American and 1.5 percent other.

EPISD's property value per student is below the state average, and 66.8 percent of its students are economically disadvantaged as compared to 49.2 percent statewide. For 1999-2000, 70.7 percent of EPISD students passed the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), which is slightly less than the statewide passing rate of 79.9 percent.

According to TEA, EPISD had approximately 7,709 full-time employees in 1999-2000, with teachers accounting for 3,785 employees or 49.1 percent of the total. The district's operating budget for 2000-01 is \$380 million, with 51.3 percent of those dollars going to instruction.

Significant Changes Since the Original Review

Shortly before the beginning of the performance review in 1998, Dr. Stan Paz resigned as superintendent and Ken George was named interim-superintendent. Mr. George served the district during the time of the review and in 1999, the EPISD Board of Trustees hired Dr. Gilberto Anzaldua as superintendent. Significant academic and organizational changes have occurred in the short two years of his tenure.

Dr. Anzaldua has significantly reorganized the district, including reducing the number of region superintendents from four to three, effective August 2000. The superintendent then began a subsequent restructuring of the district's elementary, middle and high schools and designated an associate superintendent to head this effort.

Capt. John L. Chapin High School, the district's newest high school, opened its doors during the fall of 2000. Located in northeast El Paso, Chapin High School is an applied science magnet school. The new Paul C. Moreno Elementary School opened in the fall of 2000 in central El Paso. This state-of-the-art structure also will include a therapeutic pool for the school's students with disabilities. EPISD has also begun building a new elementary school in northeast El Paso. The \$5.8-million facility will house 48 teaching stations. The 91,000 square foot school will relieve overcrowding at Bradley and Dr. Nixon elementary schools. The school is expected to open in the 2001-2002 school year.

Coronado High School joined an elite group of 800 high schools worldwide that offer an internationally recognized advanced curriculum for the university-bound student. The International Baccalaureate Diploma is a rigorous pre-university course of studies and tests based on six courses of study including English, a foreign language, experimental science, societies and individuals, mathematics and an elective. At the end of the curriculum, the student must take six standardized tests.

El Paso ISD Report Card

Chapter	Total	Complete	In Progress	Not Implemented	Rejected	Percent Complete/	Grades
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						In Progress	
District Organization and Management	17	13	4	0	0	76%/24%	Satisfactor
Educational Service Delivery and Student Performance	15	8	6	0	1	53%/40%	Satisfactor
Community Involvement	7	5	2	0	0	71%/29%	Satisfactor
Personnel Management	11	11	0	0	0	100%/0%	Excellent
Facilities Use and Management	16	13	3	0	0	81%/19%	Excellent
Asset and Risk Management	8	6	2	0	0	75%/25%	Satisfactor
Financial Management	11	6	5	0	0	45%/55%	Satisfactor
Purchasing and Contract Management	10	7	2	0	1	70%/20%	Satisfactor
Computers and Technology	18	9	8	0	1	50%/44%	Satisfactor
Transportation	13	7	4	0	2	54%/30%	Satisfactor
Food Services	8	5	2	0	1	63%/25%	Satisfactor
Safety and Security	8	5	1	0	2	63%/13%	Needs Work
Overall Grade	142	95	39	0	8	67%/27%	Satisfactor

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

Progress Report

At this time, EPISD has implemented 95 of the recommendations in the Comptroller's original report, and another 39 are in various stages of development. In some instances, the district obtained more savings than identified by TSPR in the original recommendations. TSPR found 15 specific recommendations where the district either achieved more savings or spent less money implementing Comptroller recommendations than what was originally estimated. The district expects to save more than \$15.9 million by the 2003-2004 school year by implementing the Comptroller's recommendations.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" in EPISD. The report highlights the district's model programs, operations and services. Other community colleges throughout Texas are encouraged to examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet their local needs. The TSPR commendations include:

- **Regional Day School for the Deaf.** EPISD operates a highly successful Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD). The RDSPD serves about 160 students from within EPISD and nine neighboring districts, including Ysleta, Anthony, Canutillo, San Elizario, Clint, Fabens, Socorro, Tornillo and Fort Hancock ISDs. About 97 percent of the RDSPD students use total communication, simultaneously employing speech, sign language, finger spelling and amplification. The school's students compare favorably with other students in the state on the Stanford Achievement Test, which sets norms for hearing-impaired students. RDSPD staff consistently earn teaching awards. The school has sought and received grants to improve the level of services to its children.

Since the release of the report, the district has upgraded hearing devices/auditory trainers for all students. The Regional Day School also has implemented a program that offers American Sign Language as a course.

- **School-to-Career Program.** EPISD offers an exemplary School-to-Career program, which offers students a wide range of career and technology education courses and an opportunity to make informed occupational choices. School-to-Career involves both classroom instruction and on-site training at a business or industry.

The goal is to allow students to develop marketable skills and learn job shadowing and work-based training.

The district has expanded its offerings to high school students in the area of technology. The board has approved adding courses and time to allow the Vocational Education Department to provide opportunities for students to work directly in technology businesses. A grant to the department also has allowed the district to provide middle school students opportunities to participate in job shadowing and to visit area businesses.

- **Community Involvement.** EPISD's efforts to involve parents, businesses and members of the community in improving educational services are a model that can be studied by every school district in the state. An example is Lee Elementary School's volunteer and parental involvement program, which garners an average of 2,500 volunteer hours each month. The district's Volunteers in Public Schools and Partnership in Education programs bring together key business and community leaders, local government, civic organizations and parents to improve public education in El Paso. The EPISD Foundation for School Community Enrichment, founded in 1995 by a group of community leaders, provides fundraising and supplemental assistance for education. To date the foundation has awarded grants to more than 140 district teachers totaling \$170,000—funds that have been channeled directly to district classrooms to enhance educational programs.

More than 14,000 volunteers contributed 1,378,335 hours to schools in the 1999-2000 school year, time valued at more than \$13.7 million. New strategies implemented since the initial TSPR report to improve community involvement include campus level budgeting to support the district's Goal 6, which focuses on a parental engagement plan for the 2001-02 school year; the creation of three new ombudsman positions to increase parental engagement; and establishing two parent liaisons to develop districtwide or campus-based parental engagement initiatives specifically for parents of Special Education students.

- **Energy Management.** Since 1989, the district has reduced utility bills by \$13.5 million through effective energy management. Although the district increased its total available space by 23 percent over the last decade, it has decreased energy consumption by 18 percent. All EPISD schools have computer-controlled energy management for heating and cooling. The district is active

in conservation, recycling, ensuring best energy rates and monitoring utility consumption.

Since 1989 (through August 2000), the district has reduced utility bills by \$21.5 million through effective energy management. The reduction approximates an additional \$8.0 million reduction since the Comptroller's report was issued.

- **Investment Returns.** The district uses a variety of investment instruments to achieve its investment goals of safety, liquidity and maturity sufficient to meet anticipated cash needs requirements. EPISD invests in the TexPool and Lone Star investment pools, U. S. Treasury Notes, flexible repurchase agreements, and U. S. Agency Obligations. In fiscal 1998, the district earned about \$9.9 million in investment income, an amount that exceeds the district's investment benchmarks.

The district's investment office frequently monitors the district's investments. Consequently, the district has outperformed its benchmarks for each of the last two years.

- **Cooperative Education.** For the past ten years, EPISD's Internal Audit Unit has successfully partnered with the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) to help the university's students make their career choices and to give them practical work experience before they graduate. The district hires UTEP interns who assist with school campus activity fund audits in the summer. Many of the students who worked in this cooperative program have gone on to professional careers in accounting, business, and finance in the El Paso area.

The Internal Audit Department continues to improve its relationship with UTEP's Department of Career Services. The district's intern program has been expanded and now provides interns the opportunity to work in districtwide audit programs. The interns who were hired during the two previous years are now working in local or international accounting firms.

- **Property Tax Collection.** EPISD has achieved a high overall rate of property tax collection through an interlocal agreement with the city of El Paso. The city wires funds directly into the district's investment pools at least once weekly and daily during the peak collection period. Tax collections as a percentage of the total levy have averaged 97 percent over the last five years.

Property tax collections as a percentage of the total levy, for the last two years since the report was printed, have averaged 98.5 percent. The higher average has resulted in additional funds for the district.

- **Warehouse Services.** EPISD's Gamble warehouse facility, built in 1997, allowed the district to consolidate its warehouse services and eliminate lease costs. The facility is climate-controlled, secure and state of the art. The district is implementing a barcode system to improve warehouse operations and save time in stocking and filling orders.

The barcode system has been successfully implemented. The system has significantly affected the warehouse's efficiency and effectiveness in receiving, stocking items, and spot-checking (including fiscal inventory counts). The Warehouse and Technology Departments are working to move the requisitioning process from a manual one to an electronic format. Implementation is expected during fiscal 2002.

- **Food Service.** For the third consecutive school year, the district's Food Service Unit in 1997-98 achieved a positive fund balance of \$2.6 million. Food service has made good use of this fund balance by investing in up-to-date equipment and ovens for each of its cafeterias, which should continue to improve profitability in the future. Food Service also uses an innovative array of educational and promotional campaigns to increase breakfast participation among the district's elementary students.

The district has undertaken a number of new programs to increase student participation including implementing the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child's Health) program at 27 elementary school cafeterias, kitchen fun tours and tasting parties at elementary schools, special parent breakfasts one to three times a year in all elementary schools, and breakfast in the classroom for kindergarten students at seven elementary schools. Elementary principals also are provided nutrition education materials to use in the classroom to promote healthy eating habits. The Food Service Department has developed and implemented a program for training food services substitutes at 16 selected sites. These innovative programs have enabled EPISD's Food Service Department to increase participation in the food service program.

- **Discipline Management.** Through its Raymond Telles Academy, EPISD operates an exemplary Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. In addition to a core curriculum, the Telles

Academy offers guidance counseling services and mandatory conferences with students' parents to review academic progress and establish a specific graduation plan. The Telles Academy is noted for its unique, self-paced instruction program. In two other innovative alternative education programs, EPISD offers academic and social services to meet the needs of pregnant teens, students in the juvenile probation system and students with psychological disorders.

The Raymond Telles Academy has implemented enhancements that include but are not limited to TAAS exit level testing in grades 9 through 12; TAAS and end-of-course training camps for grades 6-12; and the development and implementation of accountability standards. The School Age Parent Center has implemented a program called "Community for Learning" that is designed to bolster self-esteem and keep young women connected to the larger society. For its adjudicated youth, the district has formed a relationship with the El Paso Community College to provide continuing education courses and job placement assistance.

In addition to those exemplary programs noted by TSPR during the original review, a number of new initiatives are worthy of mention.

The Beall and Roosevelt Elementary Schools earned national recognition in the Help Our Students Succeed program in 1999-2000 for their outstanding efforts in mentoring at-risk students for the school year. Roosevelt had 175 mentors who contributed approximately 4,200 hours of time, which represents a value of \$53,928. In the 1998-99 school year, Beall had 93 mentors who contributed approximately 1,488 hours, which represents a value of \$19,106.

The EPISD Foundation for Educational Enrichment funded 55 Teacher Impact Grants for the 2000-2001 school year, which are worth about \$46,600. These grants paid for innovative instructional programs, resources or strategies aimed at improving student academic performance.

Hillside Elementary, the center for Deaf Education for elementary students in the district, is also a 2001 U. S. Department of Education Nominee for a Blue Ribbon Award. Blue Ribbon nominees are considered after a complete analysis of their curriculum, student performance, community involvement and teaching excellence.

TEA honored two EPISD elementary schools with cash awards as authorized by the Texas Successful School Achievements System (TSSAS). That recognition honored the schools for not only their TAAS

scores, but also for their low TAAS exemption rates for limited English Proficient students and special education students.

"Cats Paws in Motion," a nationally syndicated PBS program featured El Paso ISD schools for their health and physical fitness programs. Twenty-six EPISD elementary schools won \$105,000 in grant funds from the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation to implement the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH). The program teaches students how to make healthy food choices, physical activity fun and how to avoid tobacco products.

Comments on Exemplary Programs and Practices:

EPISD operates a two-way, dual language gifted and talented program called Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos. This innovative program at Mesita Elementary School and Wiggs Middle School integrates second language acquisition and G/T strategies. The program is in its fourth year and has been evaluated internally and externally so that improvements can be made to the curricula. The program has been recognized by TEA and the Texas Association of School Boards. The program has also been named a recipient of a Jacob K. Javitz Grant from the U. S. Department of Education.

TSPR Key Recommendations

Following are some of the key recommendations that administrators and staff thought had the greatest impact on district operations. The highlighted recommendations are arranged by chapter and area of operation as contained in the original TSPR report. The comments came from district administrators.

District Organization and Management

#1 Provide "Team of Eight" team building training to restore trust among board members and the superintendent, and increase training related to the roles and responsibilities of board members.

At the time of TSPR's review, EPISD's board members did not communicate well with each other, and the absence of dialogue was affecting their ability to work well together. Moreover, several board members did not understand their governance role and tended to micromanage to the point where administrators feared retaliation if board member wishes were not honored. Implementing this recommendation helped board members better understand their roles and responsibilities.

Board members now realize that the tone for the entire district is set from the top and that before anything of substance can be accomplished, the board and top administrators must be in accord. Some administrators say they will be more effective in their jobs because board members are no longer micromanaging the district.

#8 Create one Policy, Research, and Evaluation Unit and eliminate the position of associate superintendent for Policy and Planning.

#13 Actively engage the District Educational Improvement Committee in the district's policy and goal development process.

EPISD had a Policy and Planning Unit that coordinated districtwide planning efforts and assisted in developing and monitoring EPISD policy. The district also had a Research and Evaluation unit that was involved in many districtwide planning functions. At the time of TSPR's review, the work of these units was not well coordinated. In addition, the board and the District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC) were not working together effectively to develop district goals. Implementing these recommendations brought about widespread collaboration in the district. More information sharing takes place now that a single unit for planning exists, and DEICs have been brought further into the planning process. Key administrators say the district has begun to experience cooperation that has never existed before.

#9 Hire two attorneys to reduce the district's legal costs.

In each of the three years preceding TSPR's review, EPISD's legal expenses rose over the previous year. Although the district did not hire in-house attorneys, district administrators said that this recommendation was the inspiration for them to seek ways to lower legal costs. The district set out to make their legal representative more responsive. In the process, they were able to negotiate favorable terms with the law firm, which resulted in more than \$95,000 in savings to date. Savings are expected to reach more than \$475,000 by the end of the five years. In fact, the lawyers no longer charge for board meetings and training.

Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures

#19 Revise or develop functional curriculum guides to provide direction for all instruction.

Prior to TSPR's review, EPISD did not have a complete inventory of curriculum guides and many of those on hand were outdated. Administrators said that as a result of this recommendation the district

created a centralized location where curriculum guides are kept. Now, the library is the heartbeat of curriculum instruction. Teachers know they have a valuable, centralized resource to help them develop lesson plans and improve their effectiveness in the classroom. It represents a psychological boost to many teachers knowing that there is a central and easily accessible library of curriculum material available to support them.

#25 Develop a long-range plan to ensure the placement of special education students in least-restrictive environments consistently across regions.

While the district planned to establish a task force to gather data and develop long-range plans related to least-restrictive environments, it was unclear how these plans would be implemented, evaluated and enforced. Working with its District Education Improvement Committee, the district saw problems that were not apparent before and began to examine new ideas that had not been tried before. As a result, the district's efforts are increasing the placement of special education students in least-restrictive environments.

Community Involvement

#39 Operate Media Production and the Print Shop as internal service funds to recover the full cost of providing graphics design and printing services to schools and administrative units within the district.

Media Production had no system in place to recoup the cost of providing graphics design and support services to administrative units and campuses. The unit charged these costs to its own budget. Since implementing this recommendation, Media Production and the EPISD Print Shop now provide graphics design and printing support services on a partial reimbursement basis. As a result, the district has been able to hold the line on printing costs and is studying the feasibility of fully implementing this recommendation.

Personnel Management

#40 Consolidate Employee Benefits and Risk Management into one functional area called Employee Benefits and Risk Management.

#41 Merge Employee Relations and the Office of Compliance into a single area called Employee Relations and Compliance.

#42 Merge Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, and Certification into one functional area called Elementary and Secondary Personnel.

Implementing these recommendations resulted in the complete reorganization of the Human Resources Department and savings to date of more than \$155,000. The department consolidated functions that previously had been performed by several areas. Many of the same people do the work, but their duties have been expanded and now, for example, one team handles recruiting, hiring, and retention. In addition to saving money and improving effectiveness, administrators believe the department is now more customer service oriented.

#44 Develop a Human Resources procedures manual for the 1999-2000 school year.

At the time of TSPR's review, the Human Resources Unit did not have a personnel procedures manual covering all of its activities indexed and organized in a comprehensive manual to guide and direct the unit. Everyone knew their own job, but no one knew what their coworkers were doing. After implementing this recommendation, this knowledge is codified in a single Human Resources procedures manual. Now everyone can see and appreciate each other's job functions and responsibilities. Moreover, everyone has become a fully-equipped customer service representative in the department.

Facilities Use and Management

#52 Complete a comprehensive and accurate assessment of deferred maintenance needs and use the master plan to set priorities.

EPISD did not have a comprehensive, accurate assessment of deferred maintenance needs for many years. The district knew it was a problem but really had no idea how big a problem it was until they contracted with an architectural firm to complete a comprehensive facility assessment. The firm's assessment report contains a detailed list of problems, recommendations and fiscal impacts that has enabled the district to fully comprehend the magnitude of its deferred maintenance needs. Software and training the district received in maintaining schools and facilities was an added benefit that will enable the district to effectively manage its deferred maintenance program.

#54 Reorganize the maintenance function into regional groups based on the district's existing regions.

Trades personnel worked in all areas of the district when TSPR arrived to conduct the review. TSPR recognized that this system was inefficient for a district of EPISD's size. This recommendation convinced the Facilities Maintenance and Construction Department that the district needed to take a different approach. After implementing this recommendation, the department saw a significant decrease in its work order backlog from about six months to two or three months. Man hour backlog decreased from 60,000 man hours to 39,000 man hours. The reorganization also helped to establish a communication bridge between principals and custodians and encouraged people to talk to one another. This resulted in fewer calls to the central office and gave principals additional time to do their jobs.

Asset and Risk Management

#71 Collaborate with Ysleta ISD on a joint RFP for health care coverage.

EPISD is committed to providing quality health care to its employees at an affordable cost. When the district found that a collaboration with YISD on a joint RFP for health care coverage was not feasible due to legal issues with the third-party administrator, EPISD sought other ways to bring value to its employees. The district reviewed its health plan design and found ways to balance benefits with cost without sacrificing value. Although a joint health care RFP was not issued, EPISD and the city of El Paso collaborated on voluntary plans that benefited employees of both organizations by offering them quality voluntary plans at reduced costs.

Financial Management

#75 Review instructional budget allocation formulas annually to determine if the resulting allocations are reasonable.

When TSPR began its review, the district had not reviewed its instructional allocations in several years. After implementing this recommendation, the district raised the elementary allocation by \$5 per student. As a result, more dollars were allocated to the classroom, and schools that needed more instructional supplies were given a boost.

#78 Enhance the internal audit plan document by incorporating the elements of a well-constructed audit plan.

The Internal Audit Unit did not have a well-developed audit plan that spelled out audit projects to be performed, justified budget appropriations and served as a tool to gain management's cooperation and support of the audit process. After adopting this recommendation, the Internal Audit Unit

raised the awareness of its role and opened the door to add two staff positions.

#80 Require full implementation of the automated substitute caller system and create an electronic attendance interface with the automated payroll system.

EPISD was not using the full capabilities of its TEAMS substitute caller system at the time of TSPR's review. Now the district plans to implement all of the system's available modules. The district will be able to properly identify certain substitute teacher costs that are being charged to the general fund instead of a special revenue fund. As a result of improved cost tracking, the district will be able to keep more grant funds in district coffers. No longer will grant funds be returned to grantors needlessly.

Purchasing and Distribution

#91 Require all schools and units to enter warehouse requisitions online.

District administrators said that implementing this recommendation eliminated the need for the Purchasing Department to enter requisitions. As a result, paperwork flow has become more streamlined and efficient. In addition, purchasing staff have been given more time to focus on other duties.

#95 Implement campus-level textbook systems that are integrated with the districtwide program and require all schools to use the textbook accounting system to track all textbooks and to facilitate efficient ordering and delivery of textbooks throughout the district.

EPISD was using an automated textbook inventory system at the time of TSPR's review, but it was only being used at the district level. After the campus-level textbook inventory system was integrated with the districtwide program and was implemented in middle schools and high schools, the district was able to reduce textbook losses by an estimated \$50,000 per year.

Computers and Technology

#99 Redesign and recreate the EPISD Technology Plan to make it a more useful document.

When TSPR first reviewed EPISD's Technology Plan, it found that some elements such as a budget were not included. Moreover, it had insufficient detail, and there was no true accountability assigned for carrying out the plan. Since implementing this recommendation, the Technology Plan is

now a collaborative part of the districtwide vision and will enable the district to reduce the ratio of students to computers.

#102 Develop a formal schedule to implement the WAN as called for in the Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education that includes milestones and target dates for the completion of the middle and elementary school connections.

At the time of TSPR's review, a multitude of problems had prevented the district from wiring two high schools. Moreover, the technology plan contained no specific plan or schedule for wiring the middle and elementary schools after the high schools were finished. The wide area network (WAN) was completed at all campuses around August 2000. As new instructional settings are created, TIS is providing the wiring to include them on the WAN. With the implementation of this recommendation, computers will be more widely used during classroom instruction.

Transportation

#114 Establish a comprehensive awards program that provides tangible recognition to Transportation employees with low absentee rates.

When TSPR visited the district, absenteeism in the Transportation Unit was running about 30 percent per day. Since implementing this recommendation there has been an appreciable boost in employee morale, although the projected savings from reduced absenteeism will likely not materialize. Employees typically take off days they feel they have earned. Raised morale is its own reward because it has long-term, far-reaching benefits. Programs such as Employee of the Month, Employee of the Year, AdCom articles, and recognition awards create a positive work environment in the Transportation Department.

#118 Upgrade the computer-based route scheduling software and train the foreman and assistant foreman in its use.

The district had experienced benefits from using DOS-based route scheduling software for special education routes. However, at the time of TSPR's review, the district was not using the routing software for regular bus routes. After implementing this recommendation and expanding the use of the software, six routes were eliminated for a saving of \$73,200. The results gained from training the foreman and assistant foreman were so successful the district is inviting the software contractor to conduct more training sessions. The district hopes to expand the software's use to obtain more benefits.

#125 Provide ASE certification training for all EPISD mechanics and reward those who become certified.

EPISD's mechanics previously did not receive comprehensive in-house training, and the district did not specify the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification as a condition of employment. Implementing TSPR's recommendation has increased the district's skilled mechanics and improved employee morale.

Food Service

#129 Introduce the "grab-and-go" breakfast concept to all EPISD secondary schools and continue testing programs already under way in elementary schools.

Breakfast participation remained low in the elementary schools in spite of district efforts to increase it through a variety of programs. When the district implemented this recommendation, it received \$8,500 in grant funds from Dairy Max for the Breakfast in the Classroom Program. This program was implemented in elementary schools in October 2000 and received positive feedback. The program involved not only students but also teachers and parents as well. When Universal Free Breakfast was piloted for three weeks in March 2000, average participation increased by 27 percent for the month. The initiative was so successful that students, parents and teachers have asked to continue the program permanently. Since the time of the review, revenues have increased by more than \$800,000 and the district expects additional revenues to reach \$2.3 million over the five years as a result of this recommendation.

#132 Develop methods to monitor, analyze, and increase lunch participation rates at district high schools.

Despite efforts to brighten up cafeterias and create a pleasant dining atmosphere for students, many were still choosing fast food when TSPR visited the district. Strategies developed as a result of this recommendation have prompted positive student feedback and savings are anticipated to reach \$573,000 over five years. Menus developed for food court appearance, mobile food carts in remote high school locations, expanded menu offerings and expanded customer service have increased high school lunch participation by 6.1 percent between 1997-98 and 1999-2000. The success of these strategies was due to a group effort involving food service personnel, teachers and students.

Safety and Security

#136 Delegate complete management authority, responsibility, and attendance accountability to the interim administrator of the Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy.

When TSPR visited EPISD, an interim administrator and a Region 3 facilitator were jointly managing the Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy. After assigning a full-time principal as the sole administrator of this facility, the district saw a positive difference in the services students were receiving. The individual assigned full-time responsibility for managing the facility is committed to the students. Moreover, the academic program has improved and is making a positive impact in students' lives.

#138 Allocate the number of random K-9 searches for alcohol, drugs and weapons to give special emphasis to campuses experiencing higher incidences of contraband found.

At the time of TSPR's review, a contractor provided K-9 units to search campuses for contraband such as alcohol, drugs and weapons. TSPR found that although EPISD's K-9 program was successful, the number of K-9 visits at high schools should be increased because of the high incidence of contraband found in high schools. Inspired by TSPR's recommendation, EPISD's Police Department established its own K-9 unit, which currently has four police officer/K-9 teams. The presence of these units has not only increased the number of discoveries but has also provided educational opportunities for the children. Moreover, EPISD's in-house program has reaped financial benefits for the district. Elimination of the K-9 contract will save the district an estimated \$107,000 per year. Finally, neighboring districts have inquired about establishing a K-9 program based upon EPISD's model.

#141 Share information about violence, drug use, and gang-related incidents with the El Paso Police Department.

When TSPR visited the district, EPISD had a limited, informal practice of sharing information with the El Paso Police Department (EPPD). TSPR staff believed that EPISD's Police Unit and the EPPD could benefit from a more formal arrangement. In June 1999, the district began to formally share information. Each unit now has a better understanding of what needs to be accomplished to curb crime in the El Paso area. The Safe School Committee is now established to share information formally, while informal sharing still occurs on a daily basis among officers. Sharing criminal case information has benefited both agencies.

What Still Needs to be Done

EPISD has made significant progress implementing TSPR's recommendations. Ninety-four percent of the recommendations have been either completed or are in progress. The district, however, rejected eight recommendations but has explained the reasons for rejecting each one. This section discusses what EPISD still should do to gain the most benefits from TSPR's review.

Financial Management

Three recommendations related to improving the effectiveness of internal auditing are still in progress. TSPR recommended EPISD establish an audit committee of the Board of Trustees to oversee internal auditing. TSPR also recommended the Internal Audit Unit immediately complete its audit of overtime in the district and implement plans to reduce overtime across the district. Finally, TSPR recommended improvements to the internal audit plan document.

The district is still evaluating whether the Internal Audit Unit should report to the Finance Committee or continue reporting to the superintendent. If the district decides to allow the internal auditor to report administratively to the superintendent and functionally to the board, the board's Finance Committee would oversee the auditors' activities. The new reporting relationship, as well as improvements to the audit plan document, will be included in the 2002 audit plan, which will be presented to the board for approval.

The overtime audit remains to be completed and will be included in the 2002 audit plan. However, the district has already taken steps to control overtime, such as centralizing control over overtime accounts and implementing a compensatory time system so employees are given time off instead of being paid for overtime.

Each of these recommendations is designed to ensure that the Internal Audit has the structure, organizational authority and overall strategy to successfully fulfill its role in EPISD. A strong internal audit function is a vital management tool that helps management and the board manage and govern the district. Consequently, TSPR encourages EPISD to move swiftly to implement these recommendations.

Computers and Technology

To increase EPISD's focus and commitment to technology, TSPR recommended the district improve its technology plan, establish a technology committee to monitor and direct technology activities and develop a computer replacement/repositioning plan. The district is revising its Strategic Action Plan for Technology, which will be presented to the board for approval in May 2001. One component of this plan will address the use of both internal and external committees to oversee all

district technology operations. In addition, the plan will provide a method to annually replace and reposition the district's computers.

Adequate planning is essential to ensure the success of any endeavor. Technology in any school district must be planned to achieve equity. The central office must be adequately supported, and every school adequately equipped so each child has access to technology. Technology also must be thoroughly planned because of rapid technological change, limited resources and community expectations. Taxpayers expect schools to adapt to the information age despite the difficulties. As a result, the district should complete the implementation of TSPR recommendations still in progress.

Transportation

All schools prepare and maintain their own bell schedule with no central coordination. TSPR's analysis showed the district would save almost \$800,000 over a five-year period by establishing uniform school starting and ending times to accommodate three bus runs in the morning and three in the afternoon. The district, however, is continuing to evaluate this recommendation to assess the effect on students, parents and the community. The district is concerned that implementing this recommendation could create difficulty with pick-up times. TSPR encourages the district to reconsider implementing this recommendation.

Facilities and Management

The district did not agree with TSPR's recommendation to adjust custodial staffing to the industry standard of 19,000 square feet per custodian. Although nine custodial positions have been eliminated through attrition since the review, district officials do not believe elementary school custodians can clean more than 15,000 square feet. They perform other duties such as kitchen duty. Middle school and high school custodians also perform other duties, and officials contend that these custodians can only clean 17,000 and 18,000 square feet, respectively rather than the 19,000 square foot standard.

By not fully implementing this recommendation, the district may not be achieving the maximum savings possible in this area. As a result, TSPR recommends the district re-evaluate its position on this recommendation. The district could achieve at least some of the projected savings by reorganizing how work is performed. For example, other duties outside a custodian core functions might be shifted to other personnel such as cafeteria staff. The ultimate goal should be to gain optimum savings through both attrition and work reconfiguration.

The downtown Education Center, commonly referred to as the "Blue Flame Building," was a donation from El Paso Natural Gas Company.

TSPR found the district was not effectively using the building's space and recommended using it more efficiently and leasing out its surplus space to raise funds to offset building operating costs. The district anticipates selling the downtown Education Center by the end of fiscal 2003. At its January 23, 2001, meeting, the board directed administration to formulate a plan to vacate the building within six months. The district should move forward swiftly with plans to sell the Blue Flame Building.

Asset and Risk Management

Recognizing EPISD's historical problems with reconciling the detailed fixed-asset listing and the fixed-asset group of accounts, TSPR recommended the district hire a property control officer to establish and maintain a districtwide fixed-asset control and accountability system. The district hired a property control accountant to perform these duties, but the person left soon after employment. The district, however, will advertise the position and plans to fill it over the next several months. TSPR encourages the district to rehire someone for this position as soon as possible to perform this critical function.

EPISD's Comments on the Report and the TSPR Process

The Texas School Performance Review team does not assume its process for performing school reviews works so well that it cannot be improved. Therefore, as part of the progress report preparation, TSPR asked EPISD staff members and administrators what went right and what went wrong and how the process could be improved.

The feedback TSPR received from other districts led to improvements in the review process. For example, early reports did not include implementation strategies, and districts told TSPR they needed help in getting started. As a result, the reports now include implementation strategies and timelines to complement the recommendations. Districts have told TSPR these blueprints are invaluable in achieving the desired results.

According to the EPISD superintendent, the review brought about a good self-examination and helped district administration focus on the future. The review stimulated new ideas and helped bridge the knowledge of staff who were with the district during the review and those who have joined the staff since.

In addition, the review helped staff have a broader understanding of how all of the district's operations tie together. According to the superintendent, the review provided some "painless" staff development. Finally, the

review helped many district staff realize EPISD is doing better than they believed earlier, and the review was conducted in a more targeted manner than reviews by other government agencies.

On the other hand, district officials pointed to some recommendations that they found to be unworkable because the action required was out of their control. In the Safety and Security chapter for example, a recommendation was made to develop a program in partnership with the City of El Paso and the El Paso Police Department to provide police officers and resource officers for the district.

Implementation of this recommendation was based upon the cooperation of external entities over which the district had no control. TSPR understands this concern and will attempt to craft future recommendations so that only the activities that are under the control of the district are discussed. For example, the recommendation in question might better be worded, "Approach the City and El Paso Police Department...", which is an action that the district could control.

Appendix A Status of Recommendations and Savings

Rec#	General Recommendation	Implementation Status	TSPR's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Actual Savings (Costs) to Date	EPISD's Projected Five-Year Savings (Costs)	Comments
Chapter 1: District Organization and Management						
1	Provide "Team of Eight" team-building training to restore trust among board members and the superintendent, and increase training related to the roles and responsibilities of board members.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has contracted with Region 19 to provide board members with Team of Eight training. Board retreats are also scheduled for later this fiscal year. The new superintendent created a "Friday Letter" to keep board members up to date on district developments. Board members are more effective in their roles. Finally, for fiscal 2001, the board allocated \$21,700 for travel and training (up from \$20,000 in 1998-99).
2	Create two additional standing committees and eliminate the school name committee as a standing committee.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The board created one additional committees technology committee. The school name committee is now an ad hoc committee, meeting only when there is a need to name a school. Creation of the Instruction committee has been delayed and will be discussed at the board retreat later this fiscal year. Currently, the areas of responsibility listed in

						the TSPR report are assigned to either the technology or finance committees. As the committees' responsibilities expand, the structure will be modified to meet the stated goals and objectives.
3	Reduce the number of regular board meetings to one each month.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district does not feel that for a district of its size, the number of regular board meetings could be reduced to one per month. However, the district has modified the recommendation and established a standard format for the board agenda that has shortened meeting times and relieved much of the burden on administrative staff.
4	Develop a timed agenda for board meetings	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has an organized agenda that ensures board meetings are over by 11 p.m. Other education-related program data, such as the superintendent's "Friday Letter," are presented to the Board of Trustees to keep them abreast of district matters.
5	Develop a summary-level, user-friendly executive reporting format to present financial,	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district modified its financial reports to provide the board with monthly financial statements prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted

	management, and program-related information to the board.					Accounting Principles and to provide summary level data. Budget control, financial management, and education program reports are provided to the Board of Trustees periodically and by request.
6	Develop a comprehensive strategic plan that reflects the shared vision of the board, superintendent, administration, and community, as well as the district's long-term goals and objectives.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	(\$150,000)	The Board of Trustees, superintendent and administration are in the final stages of obtaining professional services that will facilitate development of a comprehensive strategic plan. This long-range planning and implementation process will require effective and efficient use of district resources to move plans in a positive direction.
7	Implement a local board policy requiring board members who are business owners to file timely affidavits disclosing substantial interests in business entities.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district is developing a local policy to address this recommendation. The policy will be presented to the board on or before April 2001 for approval.
8	Create one Policy, Research, and Evaluation Unit and eliminate the position of associate superintendent for Policy and	Complete	\$524,925	\$15,590	\$501,097	For the first time in several years, the Research and Evaluation Department has assumed planning responsibilities. The associate superintendent for

	Planning.					Policy and Planning position was eliminated in May 2000. The district's Business Process Redesign Committee will review the Research and Evaluation Department's structure and role. Recommendations for improvement will be presented to the superintendent's cabinet for consideration.
9	Hire two attorneys to reduce the district's legal costs.	Complete	\$543,630	\$95,130	\$475,650	The district did not hire two attorneys but accomplished the spirit of this recommendation by lowering legal costs. The district reviewed its legal costs with counsel and renegotiated favorable terms. Now, the attorneys do not charge the district for board meeting and training, thus reducing legal costs.
10	Reclassify the position of associate superintendent for Support Services as deputy superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Support Services, and assign supervision of the regional associate superintendents to this position.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$1,780,020	The district's reorganization from four to three regions has centralized core curriculum functions under the direction of the associate superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The district downsized to three regions, from four, resulting in significant savings.

11	Align the administrative services of the district under one associate superintendent.	Complete	\$0	\$97,470	\$389,880	The recent reorganization has moved responsibility for financial operations to the associate superintendent for Finance and operational responsibilities to the associate superintendent for Operations. The assistant superintendent for Operations position was eliminated.
12	Establish policies and procedures whereby unions and the board and administration can work together.	In Progress	(\$4,500)	\$0	\$0	The district held elections for exclusive representation rights, but the board rejected the results because of problems with the ballot. The superintendent is meeting with "union" representatives and a second election is expected in May 2001.
13	Actively engage the district Educational Improvement Committee in the district's policy and goal development process.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district and DEIC are working together to achieve the goals set by the Board of Trustees. In July 2000, coordination between DEIC and the district was delegated to the associate superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. In November 2000, the superintendent began a series of visits to the committee's regular meetings to improve DEIC involvement in the process.

14	Assign principal representation to the educational leadership team and review all potential decisions for their impact on schools, instruction, and students.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The recommendation was initiated. This approach, however, provided limited representation, so it was discontinued. The district did modify its implementation to satisfy the spirit of the recommendation. In order to expand principal participation, the superintendent solicits input at principal meetings. This approach provides all district principals' access to the superintendent and cabinet members.
15	Move budget authority for campus-based staffing to the individual campuses and refine staffing allocation formulas to give principals the flexibility they need to adjust staffing patterns within their budgets.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The budget process has been revamped to allow full participation and accountability for all transactions. For the first time, campuses receive access to salary budgets. Also, for the first time, needs assessments and budget hearings happen simultaneously. In addition, to the extent possible, program and grant funds were moved out of regions and into campus budgets.
16	Ensure participation of principals and district Educational Improvement Committee	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Principals and department heads have always been directly involved in the budget process. However, the district is now holding needs assessment and

	members in the budget development process.					joint budget hearings with campus personnel to ensure their participation. Moreover, budget data has been presented to DEIC on a periodic basis for its evaluation and recommendations.
17	Provide opportunities for Campus Improvement Team members to participate in making any recommended changes to Campus Improvement Plans, and reduce central and regional office editing of CIPs.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	CITs are always in charge of their campus plans. However, now CITs have an opportunity to respond to suggested changes. The regions provide editorial services in order to ensure the cleanest possible reports are submitted to the board. Editorial changes suggested by the CIP Review Team are made as recommendations to the campus principal and CIT facilitator. This process maintains the integrity of site-based decision making, while maintaining standards for CIP development.

Chapter 2: Educational Service Delivery and Student Performance

18	Develop and adopt board policies to direct curriculum management and ensure quality control.	Complete	(\$6,900)	\$0	\$0	Updates have been made. An internal review of Section E, Board Policies, indicated that only three policies required updating.
19	Revise or develop functional curriculum guides to provide direction for all	Complete	(\$287,550)	\$0	\$0	Curriculum guides have been updated, inventoried, and they contain the expected elements.

	instruction.					
20	Develop and formally document strategies to assist students with improving SAT and ACT scores.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district continues to improve use of the Nova Net program for test preparation. In addition to existing programs, the district has begun researching new strategies to assist students with test preparation.
21	Develop independent study courses that fulfill the requirements for state graduation credit as outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.	Complete	(\$3,300)	\$0	\$0	While the district provides independent study opportunities for all high school students, the availability of these courses had not been widely advertised. Now, the district is engaged in a concerted effort to publicize these courses through guidance counselors and other means.
22	Develop and fund programs designed to reduce or eliminate advanced placement examination fees.	In Progress	(\$160,132)	\$0	(\$160,132)	Individual schools have their own strategies to help students pay these examination fees. However, the district has begun exploring an additional funding source and will soon sign an exclusive vending machine contract, the proceeds of which will be used to help defray the costs of these examinations.
23	Document the rationale for making program changes in bilingual and English as a	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Documentation describing the planning process, those involved, the needs assessment, the training materials, and the first- year

	Second Language instruction and communicate the rationale and the results of all program assessments to the public.					results is available.
24	Devise a plan for compliance with state law to report all referrals, assessments, and activities consistently and regularly monitor the operation of the plan and report results to the public.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$219,800	To improve compliance with state law, the district centralized special education services under the executive director of Special Services who reports to the associate superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Additional strategies under consideration to address special education compliance issues include: a student management system that will monitor all TEA required special education data, further unit reorganization for the 2001-2002 school year, and accountability standards for staff to ensure appropriate implementation.
25	Develop a long-range plan to ensure the placement of special education students in least-restrictive environments consistently	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Special Services has a program evaluator who assists in maintaining a database on campus Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) quotients. Special Services has proposed the review and

	across regions.					purchase of a student manager system that will monitor LRE data daily and will generate campus reports as needed. A district LRE plan was completed in January 2001 and provided to the Texas Education Agency in response to the September 2000 compliance visit. The LRE plan will be presented to the board for approval. The DEIC has established a task force in collaboration with Special Education to improve opportunities for inclusive education for students with disabilities and to establish supplementary aids and services that may be provided to support regular education teachers. Operating guidelines for Special Education have been amended and will apply districtwide. The amended operating guidelines for Special Education will be presented to the superintendent's cabinet for review and approval in June 2001.
26	Improve communications between the district and Special Education parents through	Complete	\$0	\$0	(\$259,840)	EPISD employed a parent liaison for Special Education in May 1999. Districtwide parent training meetings were

	use of an ombudsman.					scheduled in 1999-2000. Since then, regional parent training meetings have been developed. A parent newsletter entitled "Side by Side" is mailed to parents three times during the school year. "ARD Satisfaction" postcards permit anonymous parent responses to ARD committee meetings. A parent questionnaire is being designed. Each Region Assessment Office conducts parent advisory meetings bimonthly.
27	Provide programs of intense remediation for students with disabilities who have not performed well on the TAAS.	Rejected	(\$28,000)	\$0	\$0	The Commissioner's Rules for Special Education require access to TAAS remediation. A recent district effectiveness and compliance team determined that EPISD provides appropriate remediation for students with disabilities who are unsuccessful on TAAS. Students with disabilities taking the TAAS access the same TAAS remediation programs as their non-disabled peers. Special Education uses enrollment forms to validate student attendance in the TAAS remediation program. The program evaluator

						for Special Education will provide the data used to determine the success of the program.
28	Develop a plan to ensure that research, assessment, and evaluation are used for all technology spending decisions from any source, and that the EPISD technology plan is communicated to internal and external constituencies.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Technology Committee, working with the Technology Department will, by May 2001, conduct a comprehensive inventory of district technology; study program needs; and establish performance measures and agreed-upon outcomes at the outset of all projects.
29	Improve the district's communication with and oversight of the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf, and review and correct compensation, if appropriate.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	An upgraded administrator position for the RDSPD was approved in June 2000, and a new job description has been developed and approved. A program assistant has been assigned to assist the administrator of the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf. The Education Service Center provides oversight through monthly meetings of the directors of Special Education. The new administrator of the RDSPD attends directors' monthly meetings as a regular member of the group. This arrangement was

						approved by the Special Education director of Region XIX and began in August 2000.
30	Review the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf's budgeting and accounting procedures and establish procedures for allocating appropriate startup and activity funds.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Finance Department opened general supply accounts in July 2000. The warehouse physical inventory was moved from September to December. These strategies enabled district schools to order and receive start up supplies on a timely basis. In addition, the RDSPD administrator and clerk have access to the AS400, which enables them to view financial activity on-line.
31	Provide greater emphasis on student service in career counseling by improving accountability reporting, the connection between support center counselors and the Center for Career and Technology Education, and professional development for vocational counseling.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The associate superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, the director for Career and Technology and the CCTE principal are collaborating on plans to make the best use of the high school vocational counselors' time and expertise. In addition, more training is provided to counselors.
32	Institute an Early College Start program to provide benefits to	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has a long-standing agreement with the local community college to

	students and financial savings to parents.					provide articulated courses, which help accelerate students' progress and save money. In December 2000 and January 2001, the local community college began to provide more dual credit and articulated courses.
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Chapter 3: Community Involvement

33	Create an ombudsman position as a means of establishing better two-way communication between the district and the community.	Complete	(\$203,000)	\$0	\$0	The ombudsman's responsibilities as noted in the TSPR report were assigned to existing employees. It appears that communication between the district and community has improved.
34	Relocate Communications Unit staff members who regularly communicate with the public and the proposed ombudsman position to the first floor of the downtown education center to improve public access and strengthen community relations.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The EPISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution in January 2001 to develop a plan to vacate the Education Center-Downtown Building. The Communications Department will work to improve public access to the Department in a future new location. The intent is to make public access as convenient as possible.
35	Centralize the open records request functions within the office of the	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Responsibility for the district's open record function has been assigned to the Communications

	ombudsman.					Department. The responsibility was assigned to existing employees.
36	Further enhance relations with the media by providing increased communication with the superintendent, more direct access to school personnel, and earlier dissemination of detailed board agenda materials.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Relations with the media have been enhanced through enforcement of Bulletin #5 as well as through on going news releases, "Frontline" meetings with staff, frequent interviews, and dissemination of the board agenda and The Board Report to the media.
37	Contact the local cable television operator and radio stations and negotiate a contract to broadcast monthly district board meetings.	Complete	(\$120,000)	\$0	\$0	Board of Trustee meetings have been broadcast on Time Warner Channel 14 for the past two years. The district, on occasion, requests that important meetings be televised more than once. Local radio stations contacted were not willing to provide free radio broadcasts in Spanish or English radio due to the length of board meetings and the related costs.
38	Expand the outside use of district facilities as a means of promoting community involvement and positive community	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Currently all EPISD facilities are available for community use with custodial expenses charged to those community members requesting special accommodations.

	relationship.					
39	Operate Media Production and the Print Shop as internal service funds to recover the full cost of providing graphics design and printing services to schools and administrative units within the district.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Currently, Media Production and the EPISD Print Shop provide graphics design and printing support services on a partial reimbursement basis. The district will perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine the benefits of fully implementing this recommendation.

Chapter 4: Personnel Management

40	Consolidate Employee Benefits and Risk Management into one functional area called Employee Benefits and Risk Management.	Complete	\$196,800	\$90,123	\$315,252	Human Resources has restructured and has merged all employee benefits and risk management functions under one director.
41	Merge Employee Relations and the Office of Compliance into a single area called Employee Relations and Compliance.	Complete	\$0	\$19,628	\$333,680	The reorganization of Human Resources resulted in the Employee Relations and the Office of Compliance being merged into one area called Employee Relations and Compliance.
42	Merge Elementary Personnel, Secondary Personnel, and Certification into one functional area called Elementary and Secondary Personnel.	Complete	\$344,510	\$45,662	\$45,662	This recommendation was implemented with modification. As written, the district did not believe the recommendation was feasible for a large district. These employees provide services to a large

						number of employees and as such, it was not in the district's best interests to merge these functions into one position. However, under the reorganization, the Elementary director and the secondary director of Personnel staff all campus positions, except support staff.
43	Transfer the functions of hiring all support personnel from Certification and Personnel Administration to Support Personnel.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In June 2000, the responsibility for hiring all paraprofessionals was transferred to the director of Secondary Personnel and the director of Elementary Personnel. Under the reorganization, secretarial/clerical hiring responsibilities has been transferred to the director of Secondary Personnel and the director of Elementary Personnel.
44	Develop a Human Resources procedures manual for the 1999-2000 school year.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Human Resources Department completed a procedure manual based on the TASB model and modified it to meet the district's specific needs. The manual will be distributed in May 2001, and department staff will review and update it annually.
45	Revise the EPISD Employee Handbook and	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$14,601	The EPISD Employee Handbook has been revised and is

	require employees to sign for the book when distributed.					constantly evolving. The handbook is be provided to all employees. Employees are now required to sign acknowledging receipt of the handbook. The Human Resources Department will include the handbook in their Web site to enhance accessibility and save printing costs.
46	Complete the process of revising all job descriptions in the district and develop procedures to require them to be systematically updated every three years.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Human Resources Department has facilitated this process by rewriting existing job descriptions in the format recommended by the Texas Association of School Boards. The revised job descriptions were sent to each department for review and revision.
47	Review all position classifications and ensure that the job description for each position classification reflects the job's complexity and the experience it requires.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	This recommendation is closely related to Recommendation #46. The Human Resources Department reviews and compares position classification, job complexity, and job descriptions on an ongoing basis. In addition, the newly created Wage and Salary Administration Team will prepare a proposal for review of job classifications once all job descriptions are completed by May 2001.

48	Establish policies and procedures that will lead to the hiring of the most qualified applicants.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	A promotion guide has been developed for department heads and campus administrators. This guide includes policies and procedures explaining the required screening and interviewing process. In addition, the Human Resources Department is advertising in the local newspaper and using the Internet for announcing particular positions. The Human Resources Department has sought and will continue to seek the most qualified applicants.
49	Develop a formal recruitment plan and written procedures that includes expected performance measures and means to evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment efforts.	Complete	\$0	\$12,000	\$60,000	One of the first steps in developing a comprehensive plan was to formally train staff. This training included a review of major recruiting issues. The certification officer and director of Secondary Education and the director of Support Personnel attended training with Region XIX in the summer of 2000. The certification officer also attended training with the Gallup Corporation in the fall of 2000. Another of the first steps was to review and analyze current data on teacher recruitment. After data was analyzed and training completed,

						the next task was to assign responsibility for developing a comprehensive plan. The department's reorganization plan calls for a formal recruiting plan to be developed and monitored by the "Recruiting, Hiring, Retention Team" consisting of the directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, the director of Support Personnel, and the certification officer.
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50	Develop a policy and administrative procedures to ensure that appraisals are returned to Human Resources by a specified deadline.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The certification officer and director of Support Personnel track appraisals in accordance with district guidelines. A policy for the timely submission of appraisals to Human Resources is being developed and will be approved by the board in May 2001.
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Chapter 5: Facilities Use and Management

51	Ensure accountability in the long-range plan by requiring quarterly reporting on the status of key activities to the school board.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Department of Planning Engineering and Construction submits three reports on the status of ongoing projects to the associate superintendent for Operations. These reports are: the Critical Issues Report; the Construction Projects Status Report; and the Periodic Change Order
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						Report.
52	Complete a comprehensive and accurate assessment of deferred maintenance needs and use the master plan to set priorities.	Complete	\$0	(\$806,698)	(\$806,698)	The board awarded a professional service contract to a private architecture/engineering firm in January 2000 to perform a districtwide facilities assessment study, which served as the basis for the District's 2000 Bond Campaign. The study was completed August 2000 and is available for review on the district's Web site.
53	Develop five-year enrollment projections annually.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Two-year enrollment projects for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 have been completed. Software recently purchased and the acquisition of additional resources will be used to assist in the development of annual five-year enrollment projection plans.
54	Reorganize the maintenance function into regional groups based on the district's existing regions.	Complete	(\$999,800)	\$0	(\$501,120)	This program has been in place on an interim basis for the first year and a half with the duties assigned to existing staff. By using this approach, the district was able to avoid salary costs in the first two years. The Board of Trustees approved this program for permanent implementation in November 2000.

55	Reauthorize the Maintenance, Buildings, and Grounds Section to warehouse commonly used maintenance materials and equipment in shops and on trucks.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In the past, stocking trucks encouraged theft. Now buyers instead of employees control purchases. Maintenance crews are provided commonly used supplies and equipment to expedite their repair work.
56	Provide a comprehensive training program for the Maintenance staff to improve its effectiveness and productivity.	Complete	(\$222,000)	(\$11,500)	(\$57,500)	The district now uses the "train the trainer" concept. Maintenance technicians are sent to training seminars on a periodic basis, as funds are available. These technicians are then required to teach the personnel who did not attend the sessions.
57	Conduct annual cost-comparison studies of selected services to determine the most cost-effective delivery method.	Complete	\$0	\$21,430	\$107,150	Maintenance is conducting cost-comparison studies of selected services to determine the most cost-effective delivery method. In many cases, the district solicits multiple proposals for performing a given task and then calculates whether the district can save money using its own resources. Recently, for example, a cost-comparison was conducted on furnishing and replacing a TECHO-Chill engine along with starting the chiller and checking the overall operation at one of the

						high schools. The contractor's proposal was \$15,340, but maintenance is in the process of performing this job for an estimated cost of \$3,700.
58	Use the downtown Education Center more efficiently and lease out surplus space.	In Progress	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$6,331,000	The district anticipates selling the downtown Education Center by the end of fiscal 2003. At its January 23, 2001, board meeting, the board directed administration to formulate a plan to vacate the building within six months.
59	Institute quality control procedures for all school construction projects.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has developed new standards to address problems that had been occurring. Examples of these standards include, roofing data manuals, school building standards, construction documents quality control standards, construction administration quality control standards, and quality control standards for administrative personnel.
60	Examine all schools with a utilization rate of less than 85 percent and more than 105 percent to determine if attendance	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has redrawn boundaries twice in the last five years, with the last performed during spring 2000. Progress has been made in adjusting a number of

	boundary adjustments are needed.					schools, although some schools still exceed 105 percent utilization. Relieving these schools will require new construction, and the district will seek funds for this purpose in the next bond issue. In addition, the district has purchased software to aid in the accurate geocoding of students. More sophisticated software is being investigated and will greatly enhance the process.
61	Establish site-based decision management budgets for custodial services and supplies and clearly define the role of the director of Custodial Operations as a support role.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district implemented this recommendation during the 1999-2000 fiscal year, but during fiscal 2000-01, the responsibility for administering custodial supply funds was transferred back to the director of Custodial Operations because of various budget management problems. Custodial supply accounts were being depleted before the fiscal year ended.
62	Conduct a cost-comparison study for the privatized custodial services used at the downtown Education Center.	Complete	\$0	\$2,012	\$141,884	In January 1999, the Custodial Operations Department submitted a cost proposal showing that the district could realize savings by using in-house personnel to perform custodial services for the

						Education Center-Downtown Building. Services provided in house have resulted in savings because one-time equipment costs incurred during the first year did not recur in subsequent years. Also, as operations improved, personnel were reassigned.
63	Develop a custodial staffing formula based on appropriate factors to achieve an industry standard of at least 19,000 square feet per custodian.	In Progress	\$3,805,305	\$101,928	\$407,711	Custodial Operations is continuously looking for ways to improve each custodian's efficiency and effectiveness. However, the district does not believe elementary school custodians can clean more than 15,000 square feet because these custodians perform several extra duties, such as kitchen duty. Middle and High school custodians could possibly clean 17,000 and 18,000, respectively. However, additional duties would also limit the quality of service these custodians could provide.
64	Establish a reasonable level (about 5 cents per square foot) for the cost of cleaning supplies and allocate an amount to each school based on this yardstick.	Complete	\$500,000	\$0	\$218,360	Presently, the department is using the 5-cent formula and has developed a schedule showing school custodial supply allocations. The director of custodial operations and area supervisors monitor

						these supply budgets on a daily basis. To ensure supply budgets are not overspent, principals and head custodians are notified when they are in danger of exceeding their allotment.
65	Develop a comprehensive and mandatory training program for custodial staff.	Complete	(\$240,760)	\$0	\$0	A comprehensive mandatory training program has been developed and implemented. The department has been working with the Professional Development Center in setting up training for all custodians. One course taught head custodians how to respect, address, and treat custodians and how to prevent and address sexual harassment problems. The next training sessions will teach custodians how to avoid work-related injuries and how to treat injuries should they occur.
66	Reassess the salary level of the energy management positions in light of the money this program saves the district.	Complete	(\$87,000)	\$0	\$0	A reassessment of energy manager salaries was performed. Based upon the assessment, the district concluded that energy managers are adequately paid. They earn the highest salaries of the professional staff in the Facilities, Maintenance, and

						Construction unit.
Chapter 6: Asset and Risk Management						
67	Coordinate with the Internal Audit Unit to conduct comprehensive fraud reviews of workers' compensation claims at least annually.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The 2000 - 2001 Audit Plan includes provisions for this audit. The anticipated start date is June 2001.
68	Consult with outside legal counsel regarding the implications of the allegations against the TPA and examine the district's options pending the outcome of the investigation.	Complete	\$0	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	The district has consulted with legal counsel. Moreover, the district has cooperated in the ongoing criminal investigation. Further actions by the board may be forthcoming depending on the results of the criminal investigation.
69	Aggressively pursue the \$171,000 owed to the district under its risk-sharing arrangement with Advantage Care Network, Inc.	Complete	\$171,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	The Board of Trustees approved settlement for \$150,000, and the amount was paid in May 2000.
70	Develop a policy to maintain the health plan fund balance at safe levels and make the budget modifications and health plan contributions needed to maintain a safe fund balance, as projected by the actuaries.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	When TSPR conducted its review, the fund balance was below district thresholds of 1.5 to 3 months. The district's informal practice is to maintain a fund balance within this range. The district will formalize this policy pending the Texas Legislature's decision on a state-funded teacher health

						insurance.
71	Collaborate with YISD on a joint RFP for health care coverage.	Complete	\$9,618,180	\$868,000	\$4,292,000	This recommendation was implemented with modifications. EPISD and YISD initiated an Interlocal Agreement for health care coverage and other voluntary benefit plans. But the board did not approve it due to outstanding legal issues with the third party administrator (TPA.) However, a joint RFP with the City of El Paso was issued for voluntary benefit plans that has resulted in lower costs for EPISD employees. In addition, the Human Resources Department made changes to the health plan design that resulted in cost savings.
72	Transfer property and casualty insurance responsibilities and duties from the Operations Unit to the Risk Management Section.	Complete	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	The duties and responsibilities for property and casualty insurance were transferred to Risk Management, which is now part of the Human Resources Department. The district realized savings from a professional services contract that became unnecessary once the functions were transferred to Human Resources.
73	Hire a property control officer to establish and maintain a	In Progress	(\$174,000)	\$0	(\$161,627)	A property control accountant was hired to perform these duties but left the district soon

	districtwide fixed-asset control and accountability system.					after employment. However, the district will advertise the position and will fill it during the next several months.
74	Require the Internal Audit Unit to review fixed-asset procedures, controls, and inventory records.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The 2000-2001 Audit Plan includes provisions for this audit. The first time it will be used is June 2001. The Internal Audit Department will coordinate with the property control accountant to write fixed asset procedures once the property control officer position is filled.

Chapter 7: Financial Management

75	Review instructional budget allocation formulas annually to determine if the resulting allocations are reasonable.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	During the spring of 2000, the district reviewed instructional budget allocation formulas. As a result of this review, the elementary schools' allocation was increased \$5.00 per student. These funds are all under control of the Campus Improvement Teams to meet campus needs. The analysis also revealed that no adjustments were required for middle and high schools. Now allocations will be evaluated periodically to account for changes in the cost and usage of instructional supplies.
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76	Establish an audit committee of the Board of Trustees to serve as an oversight body for the internal auditing function.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district's Business Process Redesign Committee is evaluating this recommendation regarding the reporting relationship of the internal auditing function. If the decision is to allow the internal auditor to report administratively to the superintendent and functionally to the board, the board's Finance Committee would oversee the auditor's activities. The new reporting relationship will be included in the Audit Plan, which will be presented to the board for approval.
77	Authorize the Internal Audit Unit to immediately complete the overtime audit and implement plans to reduce overtime across the district.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The 2000 - 2001 Audit Plan includes provisions for a comprehensive review of the district's payroll process. Overtime is a component of the payroll process and will be included in the audit. In addition, the district has taken steps to control overtime such as centralizing control of overtime accounts and implementing a compensatory time system so eligible employees are given time off instead of being paid for overtime.

78	Enhance the internal audit plan document by incorporating the elements of a well-constructed audit plan.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The elements of a well-constructed audit plan were included in the 2000 -2001 Audit Plan. As a result of implementing this recommendation, awareness of accountability was raised in the department. Also, two new auditor positions were approved after this recommendation was implemented.
79	Aggressively seek to expand the field of qualified CPA firms responding to the district's quadrennial RFP for auditing services.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The last proposer's conference was in 1995. Other conferences will be held during the next RFP phase. The district does not limit the number of CPA firms that can submit a proposal. The district will follow the state guidelines in soliciting for these services.
80	Require full implementation of the automated substitute caller system and create an electronic attendance interface with the automated payroll system.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	Human Resources, Technology & Information Systems, and Payroll have been working to implement this recommendation. They are evaluating all of the capabilities of the TEAMS system, which will give the district the capability to more closely track certain salary costs. Full implementation of the TEAMS system is one of the top three programming priorities

						this fiscal year.
81	Develop a formal procedures manual that details district policies and processes related to payroll and require all employees to receive full training on these procedures.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Payroll policies that pertain to all employees are outlined in the employee handbook. Procedures for campus and department clerks who process payroll have been developed and were disseminated in March 2001. Payroll policies and guidelines have been accessible through the Finance Department's Web site since April 2001.
82	Eliminate the requirement that schools and units complete purchase order reports.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Finance Department reviewed this recommendation and determined that it was not feasible to implement it as written. However, the district met the spirit of the recommendation by including a notice to vendors on the purchase order. The notice informs the vendor that the invoice must be 100 percent accurate or payment will be withheld until the discrepancy is resolved. A separate letter was also sent to the vendors informing them of this rule.
83	Require written audit reports to be provided to the Board of Trustees and superintendent, and make	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Audit reports are available, in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act to interested parties through the Communications

	available free of charge to all interested individuals at the school level.					Department. In addition, the district will post on its Web site notices of the presence of reports and will use a communications vehicle called Ad Com to advertise the presence of these reports on the Internet.
84	Implement the automated activity fund accounting system at all schools and require all transactions to be recorded on the automated system.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The student and campus activity funds accounting system is currently being used at all the high schools. Middle and elementary schools should be online by fiscal year end.
85	Assess the impact on district's local and state revenues of returning \$59 million to the property tax rolls and develop a strategy to mitigate any negative effect of such action.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The addition of \$59 million to the tax rolls was made during fiscal 2000. The additional local revenue (approximately \$900,000) more than offset the lost state revenue (approximately \$770,000). In addition, the loss in state revenue does not occur until the 2000-01 year.
Chapter 8: Purchasing and Distribution						
86	Revise purchasing policies to require all competitive sealed bids to be tabulated and processed through Purchasing, and with those requiring board approval, to be reviewed by the	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Procedures requiring sealed bids to be tabulated and processed through the Purchasing Department have now been incorporated in the purchasing manual. In May 2000, this change will be presented to the board for approval. The

	appropriate standing committee of the board.					Purchasing Department now tabulates all bids except construction bids. The board's Finance or Technology Committee review bids, depending on complexity, on a case by case basis.
87	Implement catalog bid policies and related procedures and develop a vendor qualification system.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Catalog bids are now being used for 13 different categories of supplies. Additional catalog bids will be used as opportunities arise. All catalog bids implemented for the district are communicated through memorandums. A vendor qualification system is being used to track performance as it relates to bids & services.
88	Require all purchase requisition approvals to be made on-line.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	All purchase requisitions are now approved on-line. The only exception to this requirement is when budget accounts have not been established at that location. In these instances, a Request for Purchase Order is routed to the Purchasing Department for input and approval.
89	Implement a commodity code system to monitor all purchases and ensure compliance with purchasing regulations.	In Progress	(\$12,000)	\$0	\$0	The district uses an abbreviated version of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasers (NIGP) commodity code at the central warehouse. It

						has 40 general categories of supplies stocked in the warehouse that generates reports by category and monies spent. The Technology Information System Department is studying the feasibility of placing at least 100 NIGP commodity codes on the district's mainframe system. If it is feasible, these commodity codes will be made available to schools and departments to facilitate purchase orders.
90	Establish a pick-up counter at the Gamble facility for all Maintenance and Transportation materials.	Rejected	\$139,050	\$0	\$0	The district rejected this recommendation because it estimates the cost would be approximately \$231,134 to implement this program.
91	Require all schools and units to enter warehouse requisitions on-line.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Implementation of this recommendation began during fiscal 2000. Hardware, software and communication lines are now in place. Training on the system has started and will be completed by August 2001.
92	Develop a written procedures manual for Warehouse operations.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	When TSPR staff were in the district, a comprehensive manual had not been assembled. During July 2000, the district assembled a complete

						manual, which is evolving as conditions change. Warehouse employees can now obtain guidance from the Employee Handbook, EPISD Safety Manual, Warehouse Bulletins and the Warehouse Procedures Manual.
93	Provide textbooks for all students to take home at the beginning of each semester.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Since TSPR was in the district, board policy governing textbooks has been more strictly enforced. All campuses have sufficient textbooks for every student and students may take books home if they so desire.
94	Require schools to remit the full amount collected for lost textbooks and enforce board policy on collecting fines and replacing costs for lost or damaged textbooks.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Schools were required to pay all balances due for textbooks lost during the school year. All balances due for the 1999-2000 school year have now been paid.
95	Implement campus-level textbook systems that are integrated with the districtwide program and require all schools to use the textbook accounting system to track all textbooks and to	In Progress	\$39,900	\$0	\$0	The campus-level textbook inventory system has been integrated with the districtwide program and is being used at all middle and high schools. Implementation in the elementary schools is planned for fiscal 2002.

	facilitate efficient ordering and delivery of textbooks throughout the district.					
Chapter 9: Computers and Technology						
96	Revise the reporting structure so that the executive director of TIS reports directly to the associate superintendent for Support Services.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In March 2000, the Executive Director of TIS began reporting to the associate superintendent for Finance. This reporting relationship gives the Executive Director of TIS high visibility within the district.
97	Adopt work policies requiring that each technology project begin with a plan that shows how it will be sustained over time.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	All technology projects will be aligned with the EPISD Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education. This plan will be completed by May 2001. Each project will list both one-time costs as well as ongoing costs in order to achieve and sustain the intended objective.
98	Develop strategies to establish and maintain a close working relationship between the Training and Instructional Technology section and the Curriculum and Instruction Department.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	There has always been cooperation between the Training and Instructional Technology section and the Curriculum and Instruction Department. However, since the TSPR review, more emphasis has been placed on improving this cooperation. A reorganization within TIS is underway to achieve this objective.

99	Redesign and recreate the EPISD Technology Plan to make it a more useful document.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The EPISD Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education is being revamped and will be presented to the board for their approval by May 2001.
100	Establish an EPISD Technology Committee and authorize it to monitor and provide advice regarding all district technology operations.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A component of the EPISD Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education addresses the use of both internal and external committees to facilitate this need. The internal committee has 15 members who monitor and set standards for technology throughout the district. The external committee is a new feature of the plan. The external committee will be involved in budget development and will help open doors to partnerships, grants, and sources of external funding. Additionally, the board has approved the services of a strategic technology provider to recommend technology solutions for the district and to assist in obtaining funding through the USAC E-Rate initiative.
101	Establish a technology subcommittee of the board to study technology issues.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The board established this subcommittee in June 2000.

102	Develop a formal schedule to implement the WAN as called for in the Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education that includes milestones and target dates for the completion of the middle and elementary school connections.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The wide area network (WAN) was completed at all campuses around August 2000. As new instructional settings are created, TIS is providing the wiring to include them on the WAN. In support of the WAN, over the past three years, 3,964 personal computers were installed throughout the district to provide students and teachers access to the Internet.
103	Establish and publicize network standards for the district that provide clear guidance to schools installing local area networks.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education will establish these guidelines, and they will be publicized via a district Web site.
104	Establish technology acquisition standards to ensure that EPISD schools and administrative offices acquire appropriate and compatible equipment.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district has been working on hardware and software office standards since 1998. These efforts are continuing and have received more attention since TSPR's review.
105	Develop a plan to annually replace and reposition computers as specified in EPISD's Strategic Action Plan for Technology in	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education will provide strategies to accomplish this objective by May 2001.

	Education.					
106	Establish a baseline standard of technology for each school to ensure that all students have adequate access to technology.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education, which is due to be approved by May 2001, establishes a one-to-one ratio of computers to students.
107	Establish districtwide software standards and inform schools and administrators that only those software packages will be supported by TIS.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	In the Strategic Action Plan for Technology in Education, both administrative and instructional software standards are published. As part of the ongoing process of review, these standards will be constantly reviewed and updated to meet the needs of the district.
108	Establish a three-level classification scale for network specialists.	In Progress	(\$110,000)	\$0	\$0	This recommendation is being implemented with modification. Upon reviewing this objective, TIS administration is recommending a two-level solution based on an individual's achievement of nationally accepted technology certifications (Microsoft; Novell, etc.). As the networking structure within the district is not that complex, the three-level recommendation by TSPR is not required.
109	Add a new network specialist position.	Rejected	(\$223,300)	\$0	\$0	A recent reorganization of personnel within TIS addressed this need.

						rendering this recommendation unnecessary.
110	Expand the district's use of the Internet as a means of providing useful information to schools, teachers, parents, and the community.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	With the completion of the WAN and the Computers for Classroom project, every classroom in the district has at least one multimedia, Internet-attached, computer available for student and teacher use. Some campuses are hosting a "parent involvement night" that provides training on the use of the Internet for to parents.
111	Provide technology-related training at campus sites if at all possible.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district expanded training facilities from a single lab to multiple labs and offers more training at all district campuses. Facilitators providing this staff development are either TIS training staff, campus technology coordinators, or other technically astute personnel.
112	Develop a comprehensive Internet-based staff development program.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	A basic online training module was introduced in fall 2000 to approximately 2,000 elementary teachers. From the success of this program, the Internet-based curriculum is being developed.
113	Increase the training budget for both hardware and	In Progress	(\$162,500)	\$0	(\$160,000)	Additional funds will be requested in fiscal 2001-2002 budget to

	network support technicians.					meet this objective.
Chapter 10: Transportation						
114	Establish a comprehensive awards program that provides tangible recognition to Transportation employees with low absentee rates.	Complete	\$1,077,100	(\$10,000)	(\$50,000)	The award program was implemented between August and November 1999 at no additional cost to the district. Its primary benefit is to raise morale. Features of the program include: Employee of the Month recognition, Employee of the Year recognition, Ad Com articles on transportation workers, and department recognition awards. While the district has not been able to quantify any savings from the program, EPISD believes the award program has improved productivity.
115	Designate 10 percent of the peak service drivers as lead drivers and use them as substitute drivers as needed.	In Progress	(\$1,930,680)	\$0	\$0	The district is performing a cost benefit analysis to determine whether implementing this recommendation is feasible. Meanwhile, the district has taken 24 part time bus drivers and given them 8 hours of work each day. The lead drivers' primary responsibility is driving their assigned route. The department assigns the drivers additional work to complete an eight-hour day.
116	Reclassifv	Rejected	\$83,250	\$0	\$0	The job duties assigned

	foremen and assistant foreman to exempt status and eliminate overtime pay.					to the foreman and assistant foreman are not compatible with the exempt status qualifications required by the Department of Labor.
117	Collect data on key performance indicators to measure and monitor the performance of the district's transportation operations.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Performance reports were developed in June 2000 and are available for review.
118	Upgrade the computer-based route scheduling software and train the foreman and assistant foreman in its use.	Complete	\$549,600	\$73,200	\$366,000	Upgrades were implemented and training provided in May 1999. The district experienced a one-time reduction of six routes after implementing this recommendation and has invited the contractor to conduct more training sessions to achieve further benefits.
119	Establish three uniform school starting and ending times to accommodate three runs per bus in the morning and three in the afternoon.	In Progress	\$799,500	\$0	\$0	The district's administration is evaluating this recommendation in order to assess the effect on students, parents, and the community. Its implementation could create difficulty with pick-up times.
120	Charge other districts for the cost of transportation to the health magnet	In Progress	\$1,009,255	\$0	\$0	The district is concerned that charging for transportation could negatively impact the school's enrollment and

	school.					is therefore evaluating this recommendation to determine feasibility. The evaluation should be completed by May 2001 and changes, if any, will be implemented for the 2001-2002 fiscal year.
121	Initiate a staffing policy mandating 25 vehicles per mechanic.	Complete	\$1,066,500	\$54,552	\$350,724	In response to this recommendation, the district has eliminated three positions. Two more may be eliminated through attrition. In addition, the department's informal staffing policy will become a part of the employee handbook.
122	Establish a bus procurement program to systematically replace buses every 15 years.	Complete	(\$4,882,500)	(\$465,000)	(\$2,465,000)	A five-year bus replacement plan has been developed. Five buses were purchased in fiscal 2001 at a cost of \$93,000 per bus. Other busses will be replaced according to the plan.
123	Establish an oil analysis program to determine appropriate oil change intervals.	Complete	(\$56,240)	(\$750)	(\$3,750)	The oil analysis program was implemented in June 2000.
124	Make full use of the Gateway systems' capabilities as vehicle maintenance information systems and install them in each maintenance	In Progress	(\$9,000)	(\$5,300)	(\$10,000)	Computer and Gateway training began in February 2001. Computers will be installed in mechanic shops by May 2001.

	shop.					
125	Provide ASE certification training for all EPISD mechanics and reward those who become certified.	Complete	(\$33,750)	(\$5,000)	(\$25,000)	ASE certification training began in 1999. Transportation employees continue to receive training at the local community college.
126	Adopt a policy of using recaps on bus drive tires.	Rejected	\$74,000	\$7,514	\$7,514	The district rejected this recommendation because of safety concerns. Potential accidents due to recapped tires are not worth the estimated savings.

Chapter 11: Food Services

127	Build freezer units at the James Gamble Service Facility to store groceries and commodities for district cafeterias.	Complete	(\$1,200,000)	\$0	\$0	The district was able to accomplish this recommendation without incurring the cost of building freezer units. Two major local vendors were contracted to provide adequate freezer trucks and timely deliveries.
128	Provide a policies and procedures manual for Food Service employees in English and Spanish.	In Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	The current training manual, which is written only in English, is scheduled for translation into Spanish in August 2001. However, during new employee orientation, the contents of the manual are communicated in both Spanish and English.
129	Introduce the "grab-and-go" breakfast concept to all EPISD secondary schools	Complete	\$279,018	\$822,148	\$2,320,399	Grab-and-Go breakfast was implemented in four high schools (El Paso, Bowie, Address and Jefferson). High

	and continue testing programs already under way in elementary schools.					<p>schools have experienced increases in breakfast participation due in part to a wider variety of menu items, expansion of meal service hours, extensive training, and emphasis on customer relations. Other initiatives include:</p> <p>Breakfast in the Classroom was implemented in October 2000 in five elementary schools.</p> <p>Universal Free Breakfast was instituted in all schools on a pilot basis for three weeks in March 2000. Average daily participation increased 27 percent for the month.</p> <p>Severe need reimbursement was obtained for the first time for the 1998-1999 school year. The first year amount of additional breakfast revenue received was \$337,225. For 1999-2000 school year, an additional \$441,441 was received.</p>
130	Establish a second lunch period at all EPISD high school campuses.	Rejected	\$0	\$0	\$0	A second lunch period at high schools would allow the district to serve more students with shorter queue times. However, principals do not

						support this recommendation.
131	Pre-certify families for free and reduced-price meals.	Complete	\$1,090,680	\$0	\$0	A software vendor has written a custom program for the district that matches student social security numbers to a food stamp database. More than 15,000 students were pre-certified for the 2000-2001 school year and placed on free meal benefits for the year. In addition, multi-child applications received for free and reduced meals are used so that families must complete only one application. All students in the family are processed and qualified accordingly. Pre-certification data from TDHS is received on a diskette.
132	Develop methods to monitor, analyze, and increase lunch participation rates at district high schools.	Complete	\$337,450	\$114,734	\$573,670	Methods developed to increase lunch participation at district high schools include: ongoing strategies discussed with supervisors and high school managers, customer surveys completed at Burgess and School Age Parent Center, input sought from high school principals for improving lunch service, and menus developed for food court appearance - "On

						a Bun", "Con Salsa", "Pizza/Pasta", and "Campus Favorites" lines. In addition, signage will be ordered this school year to identify the food court lines. Food carts will be used in remote locations in several high schools, menu offerings will be expanded, and customer service will be emphasized.
133	Review food service labor costs regularly to determine if individual campuses' MPLH figures are within industry standards.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Supervisors now review meals served per labor hour each month. Food Service supervisors and the Food Service director review labor costs monthly. During 1998-99, labor costs, as a percentage of revenue was 42.6 percent. Labor costs in 1999-2000, as a percentage of revenue was 43.4 percent.
134	Negotiate an exclusive vendor contract for vending machines.	In Progress	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$900,000	The board reviewed several exclusive vendor contract proposals, but found none of them that would meet the district's needs. The board is concerned with health issues given the high sugar content of soft drinks and the high incidence of diabetes in El Paso. For health reasons, the Board of Trustees decided to restrict the sale of soft

						drinks at elementary and middle schools but to allow sales of soft drinks through vending machines at high schools. However, to address the spirit of the Comptroller's recommendation to increase vending machine revenue, the Board also decided to negotiate a competitive two-year, non-exclusive contract through the RFP process with local vendors. The district believes that it can raise additional revenue of approximately \$300,000 per year or \$900,000 for the next three years through this method.
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Chapter 12: Safety and Security

135	Coordinate programs related to student violence, at-risk youth, and discipline management through the Pupil Services Section of the Special Services Unit.	Rejected	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district believes that these services are best provided through its Guidance Services Unit.
136	Delegate complete management authority, responsibility, and attendance accountability to the interim administrator of	Complete	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	The district implemented this recommendation with modifications. A full-time principal has been on duty since 1999-2000. No additional costs were incurred to

	the Juvenile Justice Center/Delta Academy.					implement this recommendation. The principal at the Academy has management authority as well as accountability for attendance.
137	Monitor, track, and report the progress of students from the School Age Parent Center when they return to their home schools.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	Tracking teen parents is accomplished through agreements between the district and the YWCA (Project Redirection).
138	Allocate the number of random K-9 searches for alcohol, drugs and weapons to give special emphasis to campuses experiencing higher incidences of contraband found.	Complete	\$0	\$106,667	\$533,333	EPISD established its own canine unit as a result of this recommendation. Consequently, the district has been able to allocate resources to schools, which have higher incidences of alcohol, drugs, weapons, and other contraband.
139	Realign the Police Services Unit reporting relationship so that the police chief reports to the associate superintendent for Support Services.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	The district modified and this recommendation. Effective March 2000, the police chief began reporting directly to the superintendent.
140	Develop a program for shared security services between the City of El Paso and EPISD for police officers and school	Rejected	(\$1,289,868)	\$0	\$0	This recommendation cannot be implemented because of staffing shortages in the El Paso Police Department. The department cannot meet its own staffing requirements. It is

	resource officers.					currently undermanned by 253 patrol officers. Last year, the department hired 60 officers but also lost 60 due to attrition.
141	Share information about violence, drug use, and gang-related incidents with the El Paso Police Department.	Complete	\$0	\$0	\$0	As of June 1999, the district began formally sharing information about violence, drug use, and gang-related incidents with the El Paso Police Department. In addition, the police chief participates in regular meetings held by local law enforcement agencies.
142	Hire a districtwide safety coordinator.	In Progress	(\$208,800)	\$0	(\$156,000)	The district has analyzed the benefits of hiring a districtwide safety coordinator and plans to budget the position during the 2001-2002 fiscal year.
Total Savings			\$13,019,073	\$1,428,540	\$15,903,720	