

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

April 9, 2002

The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable William R. Ratliff
The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Members of the 77th Legislature
Commissioner Felipe T. Alanis, Ph.D.

Fellow Texans:

I am pleased to present my performance review of the Lyford Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD).

This review is intended to help LCISD hold the line on costs, streamline operations, and improve services to ensure that more of every education dollar goes directly into the classroom with the teacher and children, where it belongs. To aid in this task, I contracted with Academic Information Management, Inc., Gibson Consulting, Inc., and Public School Financial Consulting.

I have made a number of recommendations to improve LCISD's efficiency. I also have highlighted a number of "best practices" in district operations-model programs and services provided by the district's administrators, teachers, and staff. This report outlines 42 detailed recommendations that could save LCISD more than \$990,000 over the next five years, while reinvesting more than \$377,000 to improve educational services and other operations. Net savings are estimated to reach nearly \$614,000 that the district can redirect to the classroom.

I am grateful for the cooperation of LCISD's board, staff, parents, and community members. I commend them for their dedication to improving the educational opportunities for our most precious resource in LCISD-our children.

I also am pleased to announce that the report is available on my Window on State Government Web site at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/lyford/>.



Carole Keeton Rylander
Texas Comptroller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary Overview

In October 2001, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander began a review of the Lyford Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD) as part of a four-district project that also included reviews of the neighboring Lasara, San Perlita and Raymondville school districts, all located in Willacy County. Based upon nearly six months of work, this Texas School Performance Review (TSPR) report identifies LCISD's exemplary programs and suggests concrete ways to improve district operations. If fully implemented, the Comptroller's 42 recommendations could result in net savings of \$613,797 over the next five years.

Improving the Texas School Performance Review

Soon after taking office in January 1999, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Rylander consulted school district officials, parents and teachers from across Texas and carefully examined past reviews and progress reports to make the Texas School Performance Review more valuable to the state's school districts. With the perspective of a former teacher and school board president, the Comptroller has vowed to use TSPR to increase local school districts' accountability to the communities they serve.

Recognizing that only 52 cents of every education dollar is spent on instruction, Comptroller Rylander's goal is to drive more of every education dollar directly into the classroom. Comptroller Rylander also has ordered TSPR staff to share best practices and exemplary programs quickly and systematically with all the state's school districts and with anyone else who requests such information. Comptroller Rylander has directed TSPR to serve as a clearinghouse of the best ideas in Texas public education.

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

- Ensure students and teachers receive the support and resources necessary to succeed;
- Identify innovative ways to address the district's core management challenges;
- Ensure administrative duties are performed efficiently, without duplication, and in a way that fosters education;
- Develop strategies to ensure the district's processes and programs are continuously assessed and improved;

- Challenge any process, procedure, program or policy that impedes instruction and recommend ways to reduce or eliminate obstacles; and
- Put goods and services to the "Yellow Pages Test": government should do no job if a business in the Yellow Pages can do that job better and at a lower cost.

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

For more information, contact TSPR by calling toll-free 1-800-531-5441, extension 5-3676, or see the Comptroller's Website at <www.window.state.tx.us>.

TSPR in Lyford CISD

The Lyford Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD) is located in the Rio Grande Valley and occupies approximately 300 square miles in Willacy, Hidalgo and Cameron counties. The district encompasses the town of Lyford, the neighboring towns of Sebastian and Santa Monica, and several farming communities. The district is served by the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) in Edinburg, Texas.

The Comptroller contracted with Gibson Consulting Inc., Public School Financial Consulting and Academic Information Management Inc. to assist with this review. The review team interviewed district employees, school board members, parents, business leaders and community members and held a public forum on Tuesday, October 30, at the Lyford CISD auditorium. To obtain additional comments, the review team conducted small focus-group sessions with teachers and principals. The Comptroller's office also received letters and phone calls from parents, teachers and community members.

A total of 328 respondents answered written surveys distributed by the review team, including 50 district administrators and support staff, three principals or assistant principals, 41 teachers, 55 parents and 179 students. Details from the surveys and the public forum appear in **Appendices A through F**.

The review team also consulted two TEA databases of comparative educational information-the Academic Excellence Indicator System

(AEIS) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

LCISD selected five "peer districts" for comparative purposes, based on similarities in student enrollment, student performance and community and student demographics. The districts chosen were Progreso, Santa Rosa, Raymondville, La Feria and Rio Hondo ISDs.

In 2000-01, LCISD served 1,516 students. Of these, 3.9 percent were Anglo, 95.8 percent Hispanic and 0.3 percent other. Economically disadvantaged students made up 81.8 percent of the total student population. **Exhibit 1** compares LCISD's demographic characteristics with those of its peer districts, TEA's Region 1 and the state.

**Exhibit 1
Demographics of LCISD, Peer Districts,
Region 1 and the State
2000-01**

District	Student Enrollment	Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Other	Economically Disadvantaged
Santa Rosa	1,151	1.9%	97.8%	0.3%	0.0%	94.7%
Rio Hondo	2,008	5.0%	95.0%	0.0%	0.0%	77.4%
Progreso	2,056	0.3%	99.7%	0.0%	0.0%	92.2%
Raymondville	2,654	3.3%	96.2%	0.3%	0.2%	87.3%
La Feria	2,772	11.0%	88.7%	0.2%	0.1%	82.0%
Lyford	1,516	3.9%	95.8%	0.3%	0.1%	81.8%
Region 1	302,528	3.8%	95.6%	0.2%	0.4%	82.7%
State	4,071,423	42.1%	40.5%	14.4%	3.0%	49.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

During its nearly six-month review, TSPR developed 42 recommendations to improve LCISD's operations and save its taxpayers \$990,829. Cumulative net savings from all recommendations (savings minus recommended investments or expenditures) would reach \$613,797 over a five-year period.

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**. Many TSPR recommendations would not have a direct financial impact but would improve the district's overall operations.

Acknowledgments

The Comptroller's office wishes to express its appreciation to the LCISD Board of Trustees, Superintendent Lisandro Ramon, as well as district employees, students, parents and the community who helped during the review.

Lyford CISD

LCISD's enrollment has fallen since 1997-98, from 1,615 students to 1,516 students in 2000-01, a 6.1 percent decrease over four years (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2
LCISD Actual Student Enrollment History by Year

School Year	Actual Student Enrollment	Percent Change From the Prior Year*
1997-98	1,615	N/A
1998-99	1,582	(2.0%)
1999-2000	1,523	(3.7%)
2000-01	1,516	(0.5%)

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.

**Percentages are rounded.*

The district's 2000-01 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) passing rate for all tests taken in grades 3 through 10 was 73.7 percent, below Region 1's average of 77.9 percent and the state average of 82.1 percent. The district's 2000-01 passing rate is second lowest compared to its peers but has increased each of the last four years from a 60.6 percent passing rate in 1996-97 to the 73.7 percent passing rate in 2000-01 (**Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3
Percent of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken (Grades 3-8 & 10)
1996-97 through 2000-01

District	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99*	1999-2000**	2000-01**	Percent Change from	Percent of Students
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						1996-97 to 2000- 01***	Tested 2000-01
Santa Rosa	53.1%	60.8%	65.1%	67.4%	78.8%	48.4%	95.8%
Raymondville	60.4%	63.0%	75.4%	78.1%	81.0%	34.1%	96.8%
Rio Hondo	66.7%	68.4%	78.0%	83.7%	85.1%	27.6%	95.4%
Progreso	57.5%	53.0%	62.1%	66.1%	72.8%	26.6%	95.5%
Lyford	60.6%	62.1%	67.3%	66.2%	73.7%	21.6%	97.6%
La Feria	78.5%	78.8%	87.5%	85.9%	84.3%	7.4%	97.5%
Region 1	66.5%	66.5%	73.5%	74.6%	77.9%	27.6%	95.0%
State	73.2%	73.1%	78.1%	79.9%	82.1%	17.1%	96.2%

Source: TEA AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-2001.

*Recalculated from original posting to include special education and grade 3 and 4 Spanish TAAS.

**Recalculated from original posting to include special education and grade 3-6 Spanish TAAS.

***Percent Change is defined as 2001 minus 1997 divided by 1997.

TEA rated LCISD as "Academically Acceptable" in 2000-01. The district has been rated Academically Acceptable each of the last five years, though the high school improved to a Recognized rating for 2000-01 and the elementary and middle school were rated Acceptable.

LCISD's annual budget was nearly \$11.7 million for 2000-01. LCISD had the third highest property tax rate among its peer districts in 2000-01 (**Exhibit 4**).

Exhibit 4
Adopted Tax Rate and Taxable Property Value per Pupil
LCISD Vs. Peer Districts
1999-2000 Through 2000-01

District	1999-2000 Taxable Property Value Per Pupil	1999-2000 Adopted Tax Rate	2000-01 Adopted Tax Rate

Santa Rosa	\$32,278	\$1.460	\$1.540
Rio Hondo	\$49,696	\$1.405	\$1.479
Progreso	\$24,040	\$1.580	\$1.580
Raymondville	\$97,827	\$1.490	\$1.490
La Feria	\$52,571	\$1.447	\$1.486
Lyford	\$75,891	\$1.480	\$1.500

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1999-2000 through 2000-01.

The review team found LCISD's staff members to be dedicated, competent and focused on student achievement. The board, administration, staff and community all recognize that they must continue to make improvements wherever needed for their students. The district fully understands, however, that there are challenges to address, including:

- Planning for the future,
- Managing staffing levels based on a declining student enrollment,
- Continuing educational improvements, and
- Mending relationships with segments of the community.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Plan for the Future

- ***Develop a long-range strategic plan.*** LCISD relies on its District Improvement Plan (DIP), which establishes short-term goals and is focused on instruction as its primary planning document. The lack of a long-term strategic plan inhibits long-term planning efforts and leaves operational functions without focus and strategies for improvement. Long-term strategic planning would enable the district to define instructional and operational goals and objectives, establish priorities, determine specific implementation strategies and tie budget expenditures directly to the goals and priorities of the district.
- ***Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan.*** LCISD is planning to build a new elementary school, but the district has not planned to sell or demolish any of its existing facilities. The district has no future enrollment projections to help with its planning. With community input and guidance from a consultant, the district will be able to review the condition of existing facilities, develop enrollment projections and develop

facilities standards thereby ensuring that the district makes the best use of its limited facility dollars.

Manage Staffing Levels Based on a Declining Enrollment

- ***Develop staffing formulas to better control staffing levels.*** Staffing levels increased in recent years while student enrollment declined. Enrollment decreased from 1,615 students in 1997-98 to 1,516 in 2000-01, or a 6.1 percent decline. During the same period, total staff increased almost 6.5 percent from 270.5 to 288.5. The number of teachers declined while non-teaching positions increased. Consistent staffing guidelines for all categories of employees would enable the district to increase or reduce staff positions when the student population increases or declines.
- ***Contract with the Willacy County Tax Assessor/Collector.*** LCISD employs a full time tax collector and tax office secretary to collect the district's taxes for primarily three to four months of the year. For 1999-2000, LCISD's 92.5 percent collection rate was lowest among its peer districts. In addition, the district is owed nearly \$1.5 million in delinquent taxes. By eliminating the LCISD tax office and contracting with Willacy County and aggressively collecting all taxes due to the district, personnel expenses would be reduced and the tax collection rate could be increased to at least 94 percent, producing additional revenues of up to \$95,000 annually.
- ***Require custodians to clean an average of 17,000 square feet per custodian across all schools.*** LCISD provides custodial staffing for schools within the district at 11,408 square feet per custodian, which is significantly below industry standards of 20,000 square feet per custodian. Since the elementary school is housed in five buildings, applying a modified standard of 17,000 square feet per custodian results in a need for eight fewer custodians. By reducing custodial staff, LCISD could save approximately \$127,928 annually in salaries and benefits.

Continue Educational Improvements

- ***Strengthen LCISD's reading improvement-programs.*** While LCISD has implemented several programs to improve student-reading skills including Success For All, Even Start and Reading is Fundamental, it lacks the in-house staff to conduct in-depth evaluations. By partnering with neighboring districts for on-going evaluation services, LCISD could better identify program strengths and weaknesses and make modifications where necessary. The annual cost for sharing evaluation services would be \$10,000.

- ***Reorganize the Curriculum and Instruction division and hire a special programs coordinator.*** LCISD has numerous programs targeting special populations and "at risk" students, but lacks the administrative staff to effectively monitor these programs. The Curriculum and Instruction administrator is responsible for overseeing most of the programs in addition to other administrative duties. A coordinator to manage special programs could closely monitor these programs to improve their success rate. The annual cost for this position would be approximately \$50,505.
- ***Redirect state compensatory funds to the elementary level to target reading improvement.*** Middle and high school students are performing better on TAAS tests than are elementary students, especially in reading, yet the district has allocated three times as much state compensatory money per student to middle school students than elementary students. By better allocation of state compensatory education funds across the campuses, the district can target the areas of greatest need.

Mend Relationships with Segments of the Community

- ***Rebuild the relationship between the Lyford and Sebastian communities.*** Although disagreement over where to build the new elementary school has damaged the district's relationship with the community, the district passed a bond issue on February 2, 2002 to build a new elementary school in Lyford. In order to mend a divided community, the board should take steps to rebuild relations by holding public meetings in Lyford and Sebastian, alternating the location of board meetings between Lyford and Sebastian and placing board meeting schedules and locations on the school's Web site to further inform the community.
- ***Disclose the extent of the superintendent's role as mayor in a formal, monthly report to the board.*** The superintendent is also the mayor of Lyford, creating concern among some community members. The dual role of mayor and superintendent does not appear to be negatively affecting district operations and may actually be benefiting the school district, but there are two areas of risk in this arrangement-potential conflicts of interest and time management. A formal reporting mechanism will help ensure that the board and the community are well informed and that any perceived or real conflicts are discussed openly.

Exemplary Programs and Practices

TSPR identified numerous "best practices" within LCISD. Through commendations in each chapter, this report highlights model programs, operations and services provided by LCISD administrators, teachers and staff. Other school districts throughout Texas are encouraged to examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they can be adapted to meet their own needs. TSPR's commendations include the following:

- ***LCISD effectively uses the consent agenda and Robert's Rule of Order to conduct efficient board meetings.*** Board meetings are well run and held to a two-hour timetable in most cases. Efforts that have contributed to shorter board meetings include the use of a consent agenda, where certain items are consolidated and voted on as a whole. The board president also said that Robert's Rules of Order is followed more strictly than in the past and board meetings start on time. Conducting efficient board meetings enables the district to get work accomplished in a reasonable length of time.
- ***The district's operating procedures manual is a comprehensive and effective tool for guiding district activities.*** The district maintains a comprehensive operating procedures manual developed by the superintendent. The manual contains operating procedures for 70 different areas of district operations, including budget development, fixed asset inventory, maintenance requests and UIL activities. This manual serves as an excellent training guide for new employees and as a reference tool for all employees. The manual is centrally maintained by the superintendent's office to ensure that all procedures are coordinated and current.
- ***LCISD involves the community in school activities.*** LCISD makes a great effort to involve parents and the community in school activities through various activities. On Parent's Day, parents have a chance to visit with teachers and booths are set up with orientation information for the students. Open House/Meet Your Teacher Night gives parents an opportunity to visit their children's classrooms. Freshman Orientation night is also held and 8th graders and their parents are given information about the upcoming year. At Health Fair/Safe Haven, health care providers are on hand to conduct free screenings and provide information on health improvement. Campus departments sponsor booths to provide activities for children. On Career Day, area business leaders provide information on a wide variety of career possibilities, and around Veterans Day a ceremony is held to recognize and honor veterans within the community.
- ***LCISD is preparing for the more rigorous TAKS by aligning and updating curriculum guides and ensuring that the guides address***

TAKS objectives at each grade. The district has created vertical alignment teams of "expert" teachers in each core content area to revise the K-12 curricula.

- ***Lyford participates in numerous academic-improvement programs, many of which target "at-risk" students, in its efforts to provide a high quality education program to the district's students.*** LCISD aggressively pursues and implements programs such as *Success for All* to improve reading success from pre-kindergarten through elementary grades. The *Ninth-Grade Success Initiative* targets ninth-grade students with a goal of decreasing drop-out rates. *Even Start* is designed to improve educational opportunities for low-income families and *Gear Up* prepares students to succeed in postsecondary education.
- ***LISD developed a useful, updated and comprehensive Crisis Management Plan Emergency Handbook.*** In 2000, the district developed a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan Emergency Handbook, which is distributed to the staff to enable them to respond should a crisis or emergency situation arise.
- ***LCISD has reduced its workers' compensation costs by implementing a strong safety/loss prevention program.*** The district received an \$8,215 early renewal credit because of the district's exemplary performance resulting from an aggressive safety program, that included the creation of a safety committee, loss control manual, safety kit and training for high-risk employees, office employees and professional staff. The safety committee does routine safety inspections of district facilities and playgrounds, documents findings and makes recommendations for correction of unsafe practices or situations. By implementing a strong safety program, the district has reduced its workers' compensation losses and associated costs.
- ***LCISD sought and obtained grants to support a strong technology infrastructure.*** Over the past four years, LCISD has effectively used available grant funds to build a solid technology infrastructure. According to the district's 2001-04 Technology Plan, technology in 1997 was almost non-existent, and few computers were available in the district. Today the district has more than 450 computers, 98 percent of which are networked. The district used grants and federal funds as the primary funding sources for developing the technology infrastructure.
- ***The district has a bus replacement plan.*** The district has developed a plan to retire older buses and replace them with newer

ones. The plan is designed to maintain the necessary fleet size and reduce bus hazards by replacing buses once they reach the end of their life cycle, and it enables the district to stagger replacement costs over a period of years.

- ***LCISD Food Services Department increased breakfast participation by serving breakfast in the elementary classrooms and serving breakfast during the zero hour period at the middle school and high school cafeteria.*** From 1998-99 to 2000-01, the LCISD Food Services Department increased student participation in the meal program at breakfast from 60 percent to 91 percent by providing breakfast in the classrooms and before school.

Savings and Investment Requirements

Many of TSPR's recommendations would result in savings and increased revenue that could be used to improve classroom instruction. The savings estimates in this report are conservative and should be considered minimums. Proposed investments of additional funds usually are related to increased efficiencies or savings or improved productivity and effectiveness.

TSPR recommended 42 ways to save LCISD \$990,829 in gross saving over a five-year period. Reinvestment opportunities would cost the district \$377,032 during the same period. Full implementation of all recommendations in this report could produce net savings of \$613,797 by 2006-07 (**Exhibit 5**).

Exhibit 5
Summary of Net Savings
TSPR Review of Lyford Consolidated Independent School District

Year	Total
2002-03 Initial Annual Net Savings	\$80,254
2003-04 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$179,574
2004-05 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$179,574
2005-06 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$117,701
2006-07 Additional Annual Net Savings	\$117,701
One Time Net (Costs)/Savings	(\$61,007)
TOTAL SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR 2001-2006	\$613,797

A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 6**. The page number for each recommendation is listed in the summary chart for reference purposes. Detailed implementation strategies, timelines and estimates of fiscal impacts follow each recommendation in this report.

The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Some items should be implemented immediately, some over the next year or two and some over several years.

TSPR recommends that the LCISD board ask district administrators to review these recommendations, develop an implementation plan and monitor its progress. As always, TSPR is available to help implement its proposals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation (Exhibit 6)

Exhibit 6 Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One Time (Costs) or Savings
Chapter 1: District Organization and Management							
1. Develop a long-range strategic plan. p. 22	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Include trend and benchmark efficiency statistics in the preliminary budget materials. p. 24	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Disclose time and other issues relating to the superintendent's role as mayor in a formal, monthly report to the board. p. 27	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Develop formulas to better control staffing levels. p. 31	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Update all employee job descriptions. p. 32	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Revise the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	special programs. p. 57							
12.	Integrate technology into curriculum and instruction. p. 59	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,000)
13.	Secure federal funds to enhance the delivery of bilingual/English as a Second Language programs. p. 61	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14.	Review the district's bilingual/English as a Second Language evaluation findings and develop a plan to address program weaknesses. p. 64	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15.	Fully implement the <i>Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students</i> . p. 70	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$6,000)	\$0
16.	Locally evaluate the programs funded through state compensatory and federal Title I education and redirect additional funds to the elementary level for reading improvement. p. 76	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
17.	Offer a school to	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	career program that mirrors the current job market needs. p. 81							
18.	Implement a comprehensive and academically rigorous disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP). p. 87	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
19.	Review law enforcement activities to determine if the district has sufficient liability insurance. p. 88	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals-Chapter 2	(\$61,705)	(\$61,705)	(\$61,705)	(\$61,705)	(\$61,705)	(\$308,525)	(\$3,000)

Chapter 3: Financial Management

20.	Rewrite business office job descriptions to adequately describe the duties and responsibilities of the various positions. p. 100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
21.	Develop a thorough, formal budget calendar. p. 102	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
22.	Eliminate the district's tax office and contract for the district's tax collection with	\$59,677	\$95,033	\$95,033	\$33,160	\$33,160	\$316,063	\$0

	the Willacy County tax assessor/collector. p. 105							
23.	Purchase equipment breakdown coverage. p. 111	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$7,500)	\$0
24.	Develop a transition plan for the statewide school health insurance coverage. p. 114	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
25.	Ensure compliance with IRS rules for cafeteria plans. p. 117	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26.	Develop cash management procedures to ensure compliance with board-approved policies and the Public Funds Investment Act. p. 120	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
27.	Diversify the investment portfolio by purchasing higher-yielding investments. p. 121	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$66,160	\$0
28.	Shift all activities related to managing the district's escrow bank account to the business office. p. 123	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

29.	Automate the bank account reconciliation process. p. 123	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
30.	Centralize contract management in the business office and develop a contract management plan, procedures and a training program. p. 133	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals-Chapter 3		\$71,409	\$106,765	\$106,765	\$44,892	\$44,892	\$374,723	\$0
Chapter 4: Operations								
31.	Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan. p. 142	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$15,000)
32.	Modify the technology work request system to serve as a maintenance work order system. p. 143	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
33.	Apply a modified industry standard of at least 17,000 square feet per custodian and provide custodians additional training. p. 145	\$63,964	\$127,928	\$127,928	\$127,928	\$127,928	\$575,676	\$0
34.	Contact SECO to develop an energy management	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	strategy. p. 147							
35.	Involve schools in energy conservation. p. 148	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36.	Develop and test a disaster recovery plan and create written back-up procedures. p. 153	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,595)
37.	Review the proportion of operations costs for regular and special program routes. p. 159	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$22,455	\$0
38.	Develop key indicators to measure and monitor performance of regular and special education transportation. p. 161	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
39.	Request state reimbursement for routes designated as hazardous. p. 162	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$10,475	\$0
40.	Implement a point of sale system to increase efficiency in the cafeterias. p. 168	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$7,200)
401	Develop a contingency plan for disruptions in service at the	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	central cafeteria due to power outages or other catastrophes. p. 169							
42.	Purchase new food warmers to maintain food quality and temperature. p. 170	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$34,212)
	Totals-Chapter 4	\$70,550	\$134,514	\$134,514	\$134,514	\$134,514	\$608,606	(\$58,007)
	Total Five Year Savings	\$143,459	\$242,779	\$242,779	\$180,906	\$180,906	\$990,829	\$0
	Total Five Year Costs	(\$63,205)	(\$63,205)	(\$63,205)	(\$63,205)	(\$63,205)	(\$316,025)	(\$61,007)
	Net Five Year Savings	\$80,254	\$179,574	\$179,574	\$117,701	\$117,701	\$674,804	(\$61,007)

Total Savings	\$990,829
Total Costs	(\$377,032)
Grand Total	\$613,797

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the organization and management of the Lyford Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD) in the following sections:

- A. Governance and Planning
- B. District Management
- C. Personnel Management
- D. Community Involvement

The organization and management of a school district requires cooperation between elected members of the board of trustees and staff of the district. The board's role is to set instructional and operational goals and objectives for the district, determine the policies that will govern the district, approve plans to implement those policies and provide the funding necessary to carry out the plans.

The superintendent, as the chief executive officer of the district, recommends the staffing levels and the amount of resources necessary to operate and accomplish the board's goals and objectives. The superintendent is also responsible for reporting management information to the board, making sure the district is accountable for its performance against established goals. District managers and staff are responsible for managing the day-to-day implementation of the policies and plans approved by the board and for recommending modifications to ensure the district operates efficiently and effectively.

Planning is essential to effective school district management. Proper planning establishes a district's mission and identifies goals and objectives, sets priorities, identifies ways to complete the mission and determines performance measures and benchmarks to achieve goals and objectives. Proper planning anticipates the effect of decisions, indicates possible financial consequences of alternatives, focuses on educational programs and methods of support and links student achievement to the cost of education.

BACKGROUND

LCISD was initially established as the Lyford-Willamar School District in 1911. In 1946, the Sebastian School District was formed next to Lyford, and the two districts became Lyford Consolidated Independent School District in 1956.

LCISD is located in the Rio Grande Valley and occupies approximately 300 square miles in Willacy, Hidalgo and Cameron counties. The district encompasses the town of Lyford, the neighboring towns of Sebastian and Santa Monica, and several farming communities.

The district's Fall 2001 enrollment was 1,516 students. Students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten attend school in Sebastian. All other students attend schools at the Lyford campus, which has a high school, a middle school and several elementary buildings on a single campus.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING

LCISD's board of trustees has seven members. Trustees serve three-year terms on a rotating basis. All members are elected at-large. **Exhibit 1-1** lists the board members, appropriate titles, their term expiration date, years of board member service and professional experience.

Exhibit 1-1
LCISD Board of Trustees
2000-01

Board Member	Title	Term Expires	Full Years of Service as of November 2001	Occupation
Harold D. Parker	President	2003	7 years	Self-employed Farmer
Leticia C. Salinas	Vice President	2002	5 years	Receptionist/Cashier
Janie G. Solis	Secretary	2002	5 years	Homemaker
Eduardo Gonzalez	Member	2004	6 months	Bridge Inspector
Delia B. Guerra	Member	2004	6 months	Secretary
Mike Hinojosa	Member	2003	4 years	State Worker
Cruz Salinas	Member	2003	2 years	Store Manager

Source: LCISD superintendent's office, November 2001.

Regular board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at the administrative annex. The board also holds special meetings on occasion, but these meetings have been less frequent in recent years. The public has an opportunity to provide comments at each meeting; each person is given five minutes to address the board.

The superintendent and board president create the agenda for each meeting. A board member who wants to request an agenda item notifies the board president, and any staff person who wants to request an agenda

item contacts the superintendent who, after consulting with the board president, then decides whether or not to add the item. The meeting notice is posted in the superintendent's office 72 hours before the meeting as required by law. Notices are also posted in the Lyford and Sebastian post offices.

FINDING

The district contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to place their board policies online. The board reviews and updates local policies periodically, and TASB provides the district with required updates. The online policy manual is easy to use and is accessible to all employees and community members with Internet access.

The online policy manual has an automated search capability. By typing in a key word or words, users can get access to any policy related to that topic. This feature greatly enhances the ability of district management and staff to identify and comply with all district policies.

COMMENDATION

The district's policy manual is online and up to date.

FINDING

Board meetings are well run and kept to a two-hour timetable in most cases. The board president and superintendent said that board meetings lasted longer only a few years ago, often five hours or more. The use of a consent agenda to consolidate standard votes has helped shorten meetings. Previously, votes on routine matters such as bill payments were taken individually. Now these standard votes are combined on a consent agenda and are voted on simultaneously.

The board president said that *Robert's Rules of Order* is followed more strictly than in the past. Board minutes from the 2001-02 school year reflect formal motions, seconds and other actions required by *Robert's Rules of Order*. Board meetings also start on time.

The effectiveness of these initiatives is seen in the length of regular and special board meetings. **Exhibit 1-2** shows the length of regular board meeting between May and July 2001.

Exhibit 1-2
LCISD Regular Board Meeting Length
May through July 2001

Type	Date	Start	End	Hours/Minutes
Special	May 8	6:00	6:30	0:30
Regular	May 14	6:02	7:35	1:33
Special	May 22	6:00	7:02	1:02
Regular	June 11	6:00	9:04	3:04
Special	June 25	6:00	7:55	1:55
Regular	July 9	6:00	7:53	1:53
Special	July 30	6:03	8:01	1:58

Source: LCISD board meeting minutes, May-July 2001.

Board meetings are generally longer during the summer because the budget is reviewed at that time. As indicated in Exhibit 1-2, only one board meeting lasted longer than two hours during this three-month period.

COMMENDATION

LCISD effectively uses the consent agenda and *Robert's Rule of Order* to conduct efficient board meetings.

FINDING

The new board member orientation packet is thorough and easy to understand. This packet was developed by the superintendent with assistance from TASB. Items listed in the new board member packet include:

- key roles and responsibilities of a school board member;
- the district's vision and goals;
- the board meeting policy;
- the regular board meeting agenda;
- the education plan;
- the budget overview;
- the revenue plan;
- the board policy manual;
- the district visitation policy;
- the chain of command for complaints;
- the power and duties of school boards;
- employment of personnel;
- ethics standards;
- the five principals of teamwork;

- building trust: keys to cooperation; and
- state training requirements for board members.

The packet includes graphics to present financial information and process flow diagrams to show how board members should respond to a complaint. It also contains excerpts of major district policies.

New board members said they were pleased with the content and format of this packet.

COMMENDATION

The district's new board member packet helps new trustees get up to speed quickly.

FINDING

The district does not have a long-range strategic plan. The LCISD strategic planning documents consist of a vision statement and five district goals. The five goals are:

- develop a program to address school climate; to improve student discipline, behavior, attitude; and to increase student pride and commitment;
- develop a program to increase parental and community involvement, thereby increasing parental support;
- recruit and retain qualified personnel;
- obtain external sources of funding to increase students' educational opportunities and to enhance staff development; and
- continue to improve student achievement by including curriculum alignment and implementation.

Local board policy, dated April 28, 1997, contains a different vision statement.

The district relies on its district improvement plan (DIP) as its primary planning document. The District Education Improvement Council (DEIC) prepares this annual plan. The DEIC has 14 members: two representatives from each of the four schools, two parents recommended by principals and two community members selected by the superintendent based on staff and board recommendations. The superintendent and key district management also serve on this committee which meets once each month and submits the DIP to the board for approval in May. This timetable supports the consideration of DIP strategies by the board in its review of the budget in June. However, expenditure descriptions in the budget

packet provided to the board do not contain any reference to DIP strategies or investments.

The DIP establishes short-term goals, identifies several specific performance targets and addresses both instructional and non-instructional areas. The DIP also contains a longitudinal analysis of Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) passing rates from 1995 through 2001, but does not compare to previously established targets. No other areas contain any longitudinal or comparative analysis.

The lack of a long-term strategic plan inhibits the district in several ways. First, there are no long-term targets for the district to reach. Current goals are based on incremental gains, and many are not specific. The lack of a long-term strategic plan also inhibits other planning efforts, such as long-range financial, technology and facilities planning. These efforts rely on direction from the district's strategic plan to establish long-range targets.

Effective strategic planning includes:

- direction and focus from the school board and a steering committee to set priorities or major goals;
- broad-based and diverse committees set up to address the established priorities and develop activity plans addressing each priority;
- activity plans that contain measurable goals, dates and assignments of responsibility for implementation;
- two-way communication between the governing body and the committees during the plan development period;
- decisive governance that uses the recommendations of the committees to the greatest degree possible when approving the final plan;
- performance-based annual activity plan monitoring and adjustment; and
- budgets requiring expenditures tied directly to the overall goals and priorities of the district.

Strategic planning enables school districts to define goals and objectives, establish priorities and determine specific implementation strategies. The process begins as a school district assesses its strengths and weaknesses, both in instruction and support. From broad goals, specific strategies can be developed.

The Bastrop Independent School District (BISD) developed a strategic planning process that provides direction and focus and helped the district to achieve its mission of improving the academic performance of all students.

BISD adopted six long-range goals which form the basis for developing the district's strategic plan objectives and implementation strategies. The process began in 1995 when the strategic planning committee adopted the goals for district performance in conjunction with the district improvement plans.

Other goals of the district call for student mastery and progress through the curriculum in order to prepare students to enter the workforce or post-secondary education; recruitment, training, and retention of qualified and effective personnel; benefiting students through the effective and efficient use of resources; and providing opportunities to citizens for life-long learning.

The strategic plan goals and strategies were adjusted to reflect progress. The plan was revised again in 1998 with an additional goal to make the BISD a recognized district in 2000 and an exemplary district by 2003.

In 2000, additional strategies were implemented to reflect accomplishments. A timeline for meeting the goals was included in the plan. The committee monitored and adjusted strategies as objectives were met.

Recommendation 1:

Develop a long -range strategic plan.

LCISD should apply principles similar to the BISD's methodology to develop a long-range strategic plan that provides sufficient guidance.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board assigns the development of the strategic plan to the DEIC and appoints key staff and interested community members to various areas of the study.	April 2002
2.	The board asks the strategic planning committee and the superintendent to draft specific goals for instructional and non-instructional areas and implementation steps for the strategic plan.	May 2002
3.	The strategic planning committee and the superintendent propose specific goals for instructional and non-instructional areas and implementation steps to the board.	December 2002
4.	The superintendent asks department heads to work with their staff to develop realistic goals and implementation steps.	February 2003
5.	The board adopts the goals and implementation steps and	June 2003

	incorporates them into the strategic plan.	and Annually
6.	The strategic plan is placed on the district Web site and is disseminated to all district staff, who determine how to implement the plan.	July 2003 and Annually

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

FINDING

Budget materials presented to the board do not contain enough trend or benchmark information to support a thorough analysis of the budget. The board reviews and adopts the LCISD budget against a calendar of events that starts in June and ends in August. Prior to June, individual departments develop requests for budgets that are reviewed by the superintendent.

The superintendent presents a preliminary budget and supporting materials to the board in June. This document contains descriptions of revenue and expenditure items that describe major differences from the prior year. Also included are salary schedules and a spreadsheet showing proposed revenue expenditures by fund and by major object category. An object code reflects the type of expenditure, such as salaries, supplies or travel. The packet also contains a comparison of the prior year's budget to the current proposed budget, on a dollar amount and percentage change basis.

The budget approved by the board in August is much more detailed, providing budgeted amounts by school and department and by more detailed object codes.

Board members did not complain about the information received during the budget review and approval process, but confirmed that certain items are not received. These items, such as cost per unit statistics, trend statistics and benchmark statistics, are useful in evaluating whether the district's budget reflects efficient expenditure levels. Without this information, the board focuses primarily on incremental changes from prior year, and not on overall expenditure levels.

Exhibit 1-3 presents a sample of key efficiency measures that school districts can track and analyze to support the development and refinement of the annual budget.

Exhibit 1-3
Sample Cost Efficiency Measures

Area	Measure
Instruction	Pupil-to-teacher ratio Pupil-to-aid ratio Number of secondary classes with more than 10 students Teacher turnover
Facilities	Gross square feet per student Maintenance cost per square foot Custodial cost per square foot Gross square feet per custodian Utilities cost per square foot
Human Resources	Ratio of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students to FTE employees Overtime pay
Transportation	Transportation cost per mile Transportation cost per student Linear density Bus capacity (percentage full) Maintenance cost per mile Average age of fleet
Food Services	Meals per labor hour Participation rates, by program Food cost as a percentage of total cost Food services cost per student Food services cost per meal Number of schools showing net loss in Food Services
Financial Management	Operating expenditures per student Total expenditures per student Percentage of operating expenditures spent on instruction Average investment return
Technology	Number of students per instructional computer Number of staff per administrative computer Number of computers per Technology staff Technology operating expenditures per student Technology operating expenditures per computer Technology capital expenditures per student

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., November 2001.

These efficiency measures are analyzed over a four or five year period, and current year measures are compared to peer districts or industry standards whenever possible.

Recommendation 2:

Include trend and benchmark efficiency statistics in the preliminary budget materials.

A set of efficiency measures will help the superintendent show the board that the proposed budget is efficient and can be used to identify savings in all areas of district operations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent identifies cost efficiency measures for each instructional and non-instructional area.	April 2002
2.	The administrator for Business Affairs collects historical and benchmark data to support the tracking and analysis of cost efficiency measures on an annual basis.	May 2002
3.	The administrator for Business Affairs develops charts and graphs to support the analysis of cost efficiency measures.	June 2002
4.	The superintendent and administrator for Business Affairs analyze cost efficiency trends and comparisons.	June 2002
5.	The superintendent, administrator for Business Affairs and the board use the cost efficiency analysis to develop the annual budget.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

B. DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

A superintendent serves as the district's chief executive officer for a period of time set by a contract. The superintendent is subject to contract renewal, non-renewal or dismissal. The superintendent recommends staffing and resources needed to operate the district and accomplish the board's goals and objectives. The superintendent also is responsible for reporting management information to the board and ensuring the district is accountable for its performance against established goals.

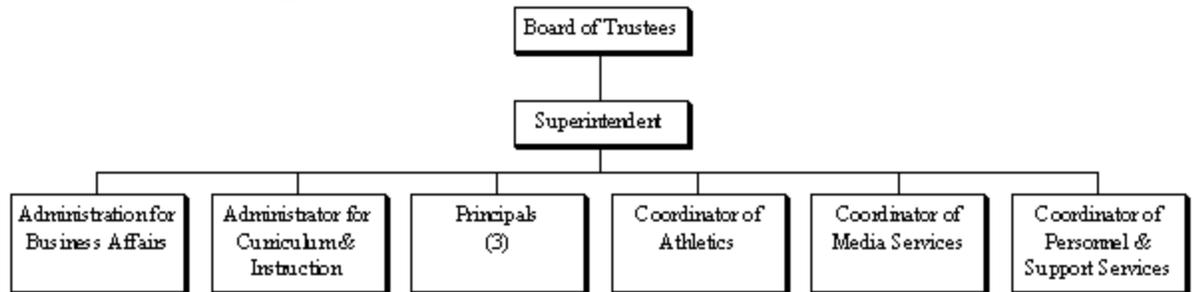
While the school board is responsible for creating policy, the superintendent is responsible for implementing and carrying it out. The superintendent must manage the district in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. Section 11.201 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) states that the superintendent holds:

- administrative responsibility for the planning, operation, supervision and evaluation of the educational programs, services and facilities of the district and for annual performance appraisals of the staff;
- administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all district personnel;
- responsibility for the termination or suspension of staff members or the non-renewal of staff members' term contracts;
- authority over day-to-day management of district operations;
- responsibility for the preparation of district budgets;
- responsibility for the preparation of policy recommendations for the board and implementation of adopted policies;
- responsibility for the development of appropriate administrative regulations to implement board policies;
- responsibility for leadership in attainment of student performance; and
- responsibility for the organization of the district's central administration.

Section 11.253(a) of the Texas Education Code requires "each school district to maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance."

LCISD's organization is led by Superintendent Lisandro Ramon, who has held the position for three years. **Exhibit 1-4** presents the district's organization structure.

Exhibit 1-4
LCISD Organization Chart as of January 10, 2000



Source: LCISD superintendent's office, November 2001.

The superintendent also oversees external relationships with an outside attorney, the external auditor, engineers and architects.

FINDING

The district maintains a comprehensive operating procedures manual. The superintendent developed this manual in August 2000 with assistance from TASB. This manual contains operating procedures for 70 different areas of district operations, from budget development to fixed asset inventory to maintenance requests to UIL activities. Exhibits contain key forms that are referenced in each applicable procedure. Excluding exhibits, the manual is not overly lengthy at 46 pages.

This manual serves as an excellent training guide for new employees and as a reference tool for all employees. The manual is centrally maintained by the superintendent's office to ensure that all procedures are coordinated and current.

COMMENDATION

The district's operating procedures manual is a comprehensive and effective tool for guiding district activities.

FINDING

The superintendent is also the mayor of Lyford, creating concern among some community members. The superintendent became mayor of Lyford in May 2001, and notified the board in advance of his decision to run. The amount of time required to be the mayor is much less than the time

required to fulfill superintendent duties, and most of the work as mayor is performed after normal business hours.

The dual role has improved the relationship between the city and the district. The city agreed to hold the bond election and other elections at the city hall, which is a more convenient location for citizens than the high school. Additionally, the district and city are discussing an inter-local agreement to share some equipment, which would benefit both of the entities.

In the public forum, several community members expressed concern regarding the dual role of mayor and superintendent. Based on community input and the review team's analysis of this arrangement, there are two areas of risk in this situation-potential conflicts of interest and time management. The superintendent said that neither area presented risks in 2001.

A conflict of interest could occur if a decision that is best for the city would not be best for the school district. Also, unexpected demands for the mayor's time could affect the time devoted to district management. While neither of these areas presented risks in 2001, the potential still exists.

Recommendation 3:

Disclose time and other issues relating to the superintendent's role as mayor in a formal, monthly report to the board.

The dual role of mayor and superintendent does not appear to be negatively affecting district operations, and may actually be benefiting the school district. However, a formal reporting mechanism will help ensure that any issues are reported to the board and shared with the community to avoid any perceived or real conflicts from occurring.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent prepares a monthly one-page report to the board outlining his time commitments to each of his roles and any issues relating to both the school district and the city of Lyford.	April 2002 and Ongoing
2.	The board reviews the report and monitors the superintendent's time and potential conflicts of interest.	April 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

C. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

School districts are often the largest employers in their communities, and related human resources costs are typically the single largest expenditure of any school district. On average, these expenditures account for 80 percent of a district's total expenditures. As a result, efficient and effective management of human resources is critical to the overall effectiveness of a district.

Human resources is generally responsible for:

- recruiting employees;
- overseeing the interviewing, selection and processing of new employees;
- retaining employees;
- processing promotions, transfers and resignations;
- determining and maintaining compensation schedules;
- maintaining complete employee records;
- developing and maintaining job descriptions;
- managing the employee evaluation process;
- handling employee complaints and grievances;
- developing human resource policies; and
- ensuring that related laws and regulations are followed.

LCISD's Human Resources Department manages most of the functions typically found in a human resources function. The department is comprised of a coordinator of Personnel and Support Services and a secretary.

LCISD spends \$8.8 million on personnel-related costs annually. **Exhibit 1-5** presents payroll expenditures as part of the total budget.

Exhibit 1-5
LCISD Budgeted Expenditures by Object Group
2000-01

Expenditure Category	Budgeted Amount	Percent of Total
Payroll Costs	\$8,835,119	76.0%
Contracted Services	\$728,169	6.3%
Supplies and Materials	\$799,152	6.9%

Other Operating Expenses	\$357,342	3.1%
Capital Expenses	\$234,239	2.0%
Debt Service	\$664,205	5.7%
Total	\$11,618,226	100%

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2000-01.

In 2000-01, the Human Resources Department supported 288 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees with a ratio of 144 FTE district employees per Human Resources employee.

Exhibit 1-6 presents the number of staff by category from 1997-98 through 2000-01. During that time, auxiliary staff increased 16 percent. The number of educational aides increased from 41.7 FTEs in 1997-98 to 47 FTEs in 2000-01. As a percentage of total staff, the percentage of teachers decreased while the percentage of professional support, central administrators, educational aides and auxiliary staff have increased.

Exhibit 1-6
LCISD Number of FTE Employees
1997-98 through 2000-01

Classification of Staff	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Teachers	118.6	43.9%	110.0	40.8%	116.0	41.3%	113.2	39.3%
Professional Support	13.0	4.8%	14.3	5.3%	12.9	4.6%	16.0	5.5%
School Administrators	7.6	2.8%	7.0	2.6%	5.8	2.1%	7.0	2.4%
Central Administrators	2.0	0.7%	2.5	0.9%	4.0	1.4%	3.5	1.2%
Educational Aides	41.7	15.4%	44.6	16.6%	43.9	15.6%	47.0	16.3%
Auxiliary Staff	87.4	32.3%	91.2	33.8%	98.1	35.0%	101.7	35.3%

Total Staff	270.5	100%	269.6	100%	280.6	100%	288.5	100%
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*Source: TEA, AEIS for 1997-98 through 2000-01.
Totals may not reflect 100 percent due to rounding.*

Exhibit 1-7 presents the district's average salaries for professional employees by category. On average, LCISD pays its teachers and its administrators similarly to its peers, and pays its professional support staff less than all but one of its peers.

**Exhibit 1-7
Average Actual Salaries
LCISD versus Peer Districts
2000-01**

District	Teachers	Professional Support	School Administration	Central Administration
Lyford CISD	\$37,794	\$43,414	\$53,240	\$67,439
La Feria ISD	\$40,707	\$46,169	\$54,076	\$66,836
Raymondville ISD	\$37,711	\$47,065	\$54,680	\$72,263
Santa Rosa ISD	\$38,868	\$43,797	\$48,202	\$66,240
Progreso ISD	\$36,288	\$42,592	\$54,992	\$61,135

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Teacher turnover statistics are also consistent with peer district and state averages. LCISD's teacher turnover rate, reported on the 2001 AEIS report, was 17.7 percent, compared to the state average of 16 percent. Peer district teacher turnover rates ranged from 15.6 percent at Raymondville ISD to 21.8 percent at Progreso ISD.

FINDING

The district uses an online service to conduct criminal history checks on new employees. This new service reduced the wait time on responses from two weeks to 30 seconds and allows the district to hire new employees more quickly, helping it stay competitive with neighboring school districts.

Under the previous process, computer diskettes containing the names and identification numbers of employee candidates were sent to the

Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS returned responses in writing, usually within 14 days. Under the new approach the district uses a password-protected DPS Web site and submits the names electronically. The DPS database automatically searches its database and provides an immediate response.

COMMENDATION

The district's use of online criminal history checks has made the hiring of new employees more efficient.

FINDING

Staffing levels have increased since 1997-98 while student enrollment has declined. Enrollment declined from 1,615 students in 1997-98 to 1,516 in 2000-01, or by 6.1 percent. **Exhibit 1-8** presents changes in staffing levels for each category of staff during the same time period.

**Exhibit 1-8
Changes in Staffing Levels
1997-98 through 2000-01**

Category	1997-98	2000-01	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)
Teachers	118.6	113.2	(5.4)	(4.6)
Professional Support	13.0	16.0	3.0	23.0
School Leadership	7.6	7.0	(0.6)	(7.9)
Central Administration	2.0	3.5	1.5	75.0
Educational Aides	41.7	47.0	5.3	12.7
Auxiliary Staff	87.4	101.7	14.3	16.4
Total Staff	270.5	288.5	18.0	6.7
Total Enrollment	1,615	1,516	(99)	(6.1)
Enrollment / Staff Ratio	5.97	5.25	(0.72)	N/A

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 and 2000-01. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

The superintendent said that he has consolidated administrative positions in recent years. The coordinators of transportation and facilities were

combined into a single position. Additionally, some positions are funded through grants.

The lack of staffing cuts in the district during declining enrollment makes the district less efficient than it was four years ago. Further, the number of teachers declined while the number of non-teaching positions increased. Effective and efficient school systems manage staffing levels to enrollment and reduce the number of teachers as a last resort.

Grape Creek ISD (GCISD) in Tom Green County controls its overall staffing levels. From 1997-98 to 2000-01, student enrollment increased 23.9 percent, from 929 to 1,151. During this same period, total staff increased only 4.5 percent, from 146.8 to 153.4 positions.

In 1997-98, GCISD initiated periodic reviews of all staffing levels and began assessing each campus' and the district's teaching and administrative requirements. As a result, the district eliminated several administrative positions and filled several vacant positions at a lower salary level. Additionally, GCISD also reduced auxiliary staffing by contracting for maintenance services. These changes saved the district funds that could be reallocated to teachers or other needed positions.

Workforce planning is critical to the success of a district and its students. Consistent staffing guidelines for all categories of employees enable districts to increase or reduce staff positions when student population increases or declines.

Recommendation 4:

Develop formulas to better control staffing levels.

Since auxiliary staffing is addressed later in the report, this recommendation will concentrate on developing staffing formulas that have some flexibility for special needs to ensure that all areas of district operation are treated equally. In addition, the superintendent should implement a hiring freeze on non-instructional positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and the coordinator of Personnel and Support Services review existing staffing formulas for all non-teaching categories and determine baseline needs for the district.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent, the administrator of Curriculum and Instruction and the principals review existing instructional staffing levels and determine baseline needs for the district.	April 2002

3.	The superintendent approves staffing allocation guidelines and makes any appropriate transfers of personnel or reductions in force to meet these requirements.	May 2002
4.	The superintendent implements the staffing guidelines and hiring freeze.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The duties and responsibilities listed in the district's job descriptions are not consistent with performance evaluations. The district maintains job descriptions for each position. Suggested job descriptions are obtained from TASB, and management then updates them based on unique requirements for LCISD. Two additional positions were created by the district that were not included in the TASB list.

The district's performance evaluations have been updated recently to more clearly identify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of each position. The information on the job description does not need to perfectly match the performance evaluation, but they should be consistent. Based on a review of several positions, there are inconsistencies that need to be corrected. The coordinator of Personnel and Support Services said that performance evaluations reflect a more accurate description of job responsibilities than the job description. However, job descriptions are used as the basis for recruiting.

Employees can perform more effectively and efficiently if they are fully aware of their job responsibilities. The district is also at increased risk for employee grievances and lawsuits by not providing clear expectations of duties to staff. The internal customers served by those employees cannot use the resources available to them if they are not aware the resources exist. Teachers cannot ask for help in lesson planning, obtaining grants or addressing unique student needs if they are not aware help is available. The ambiguity in job descriptions could lead to duplication of efforts, a lack of effort or haphazard efforts.

A good example is United ISD (UISD). UISD maintains all job descriptions in consistent format and regularly reviews job descriptions to ensure that they are up to date and are consistent with performance evaluations.

Recommendation 5:

Update all employee job descriptions.

Updated job descriptions would allow the district to maximize its use of human resources and more efficiently handle the administration of the district. Clearly communicating to all employees their roles through updated job descriptions would eliminate any inconsistency or confusion regarding the responsibilities of specific employees.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The coordinator of Personnel and Support Services reviews existing job descriptions and compares them to responsibilities listed on performance evaluations.	May 2002
2.	The coordinator of Personnel and Support Services, with input from the superintendent and other department heads, modifies the job descriptions to make them consistent with district requirements.	June 2002
3.	Supervisors meet with employees to review job descriptions and expectations.	July 2002
4.	The coordinator of Personnel and Support Services develops a schedule for updating job descriptions.	July 2002
5.	The coordinator of Personnel and Support Services updates job descriptions according to the schedule.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources since the district subscribes to TASB's Human Resources Services, which provides sample job descriptions at no cost.

FINDING

LCISD issues employment contracts for positions that are not required by the Texas Education Code (TEC). According to the TEC, a probationary, continuing or term contract must be used to employ classroom teachers, principals, librarians, nurses and counselors. The TEC does not require any other categories of school district employees to be employed by contract, although most districts contract with superintendents. Even though they are not required to, LCISD employs all professionally certified personnel and some support personnel by contract, sometimes as an incentive for employment.

The LCISD board contract policy states, "The board may employ by a written contract administrators and other professionals whose positions do not require certification." The board at-will employment policy states "the

board delegates to the superintendent authority to hire and dismiss the following categories of employees, who shall serve on an at-will basis: paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel."

The existence of contracts beyond the legal requirements limits the district's ability to reassign and adjust staffing levels based on declining student enrollment and/or revenues, or for poor employee performance. The contracts also increase the district's liability for employment-related litigation and increase the administrative duties of the Human Resources Department and the superintendent of preparing for and participating in grievance proceedings and employment lawsuits. The superintendent did attempt to reassign some employees and has received at least six employee grievances, all represented by counsel, since August 2001.

Many school districts limit contract employees to those required by Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code and certain key personnel.

Recommendation 6:

Revise the district's at-will employment policy to include all personnel except those positions required to be under contract by law and those positions designated as key personnel.

The at-will policy should be expanded to include all categories of personnel whose positions do not require contracts under Chapter 21 of the TEC or when necessary to hire and retain key personnel in strategic positions. Positions designated as key personnel should include the superintendent and might also include the chief financial officer and the administrator of Curriculum and Instruction or any assistant superintendent positions the district might create.

All new hires in positions that do not require a contract under the new policy should be employed at-will. As contracts expire for positions that would become at-will positions under the new policy, they should not be renewed, but the district should notify these employees that their positions may continue as non-contract, at-will positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board changes the at-will policy to include all categories of personnel not governed by Chapter 21 of the education code or designated as key personnel.	June 2002
2.	The board and the superintendent designate key personnel.	June 2002
3.	The superintendent notifies all affected personnel of the change in	July

	policy.	2002
4.	The district enters into employment contracts with only key personnel and instructional personnel governed by Chapter 21 of the education code.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

D. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community involvement is an important part of any public educational system. An effective school district should be responsive to the needs of its community, which includes students, parents, non-parent residents, taxpayers, businesses, other political subdivisions and special interest groups. If the community is to understand the challenges facing the district and be able to respond to the district's needs and concerns, it must be well informed about issues facing the schools. For this reason, districts need to communicate with the public and gather feedback from the community.

Effective two-way communication enables school districts to win the confidence, support and involvement of their local communities. In addition, school districts need the support of local organizations and businesses to enhance educational programs. A good partnership needs to be in place—one that fosters the district's relationship with the community and supports school activities.

Texas school districts use a variety of methods to generate community involvement. Some school districts have large departments dedicated to this job, while other, smaller districts must rely on a handful of people who perform a variety of community relations duties. The board of trustees can also play an important role in community involvement. Boards that are accessible and sensitive to citizens' concerns are less likely to be perceived as arbitrary and isolated from the community.

An effective school district community relations program can be established through regular communication with newspapers, parents, business and community leaders, students and employees. Community involvement usually includes activities that enable parents, business leaders and others with an interest in public education to have a voice in a school district's activities. Many of these activities can be visible in the community, so the superintendent or a high-ranking administrator usually handles the coordination of these activities.

FINDING

LCISD makes a great effort to involve parents and the community in school activities. At the beginning of the school year, there is a Parent's Day event, where parents have a chance to visit with teachers and booths are set up with start-up school information for the students. The district has a fall and spring Open House/Meet Your Teacher Night, and parents

have an opportunity to visit their children's classrooms. At the high school, there is a Freshman Orientation night each spring where 8th graders and their parents are given information about the upcoming year. At the elementary school, there is a parent teacher organization which meets monthly.

LCISD also has a Health Fair/Safe Haven and a Career Day. For the Health Fair, Lyford students and staff host an annual community event, with approximately 20 health care providers such as the American Cancer Society, Horizon Youth Services, the Red Cross and the Sebastian Health Clinic on hand to conduct free screenings and provide information on health improvement. Health classes make posters on the effects of drugs and alcohol which are on display during the event. For the Save Haven, booths are sponsored by campus departments with games and prizes to provide activities for the children. Career Day brings community or area business leaders into the school to provide information on a wide variety of career possibilities ranging from accounting and engineering to cosmetology and truck driving.

Each year LCISD conducts a Veterans Day Ceremony to recognize and honor veterans within the community. In addition, Lyford is one of only two school districts in the state of Texas designated by the United States Department of Defense as a 50th Anniversary Korean War Commemorative Community. This year the Veterans Day Ceremony included a welcome from the superintendent, a presentation of colors by the Brownsville Hanna High School Army JROTC Color Guard, the raising of the flag by the Lyford Future Farmers of America, and the national anthem was performed by the Lyford Bulldog Band. There was a keynote speaker and veterans were recognized by representatives of the high school student body. All Lyford students were present and at the conclusion of the ceremony, all veterans were invited to a luncheon in their honor held in the school gym.

When the annual Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report comes out, the district determines a theme and puts on a skit to illustrate the theme to the community. One year the presentation resembled the Wheel of Fortune game, where students answered questions that presented key statistics from the AEIS report. Parents were given a copy of the AEIS report as well.

Exhibit 1-9 displays the results of the TSPR parent survey concerning community involvement.

Exhibit 1-9 Parent Survey Responses

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district regularly communicates with parents.	14.6%	45.5%	21.8%	10.9%	7.3%
District facilities are open for community use.	9.1%	47.3%	23.6%	12.7%	7.3%
Schools have plenty of volunteers to help students and school programs.	12.7%	21.8%	23.6%	27.3%	14.6%

Source: TSPR survey of LCISD parents, November 2001.

The perception of the district in the community is favorable. As shown in **Exhibit 1-9**, 60 percent of LCISD parents surveyed feel that the district communicates regularly with parents, with only 18 percent disagreeing.

COMMENDATION

LCISD involves the community in school activities.

FINDING

LCISD solicits donations for scholarships and improvements from the nearby communities. Various organizations contribute money to help pay for students attending college. The Neighbors in Need of Assistance (NINOS), a federally funded nonprofit organization, provides a \$1,000 college scholarship for graduates who passed through their Head Start program when they were younger. Other organizations that contribute to student scholarships include the Lions Club, Wal-Mart, Texas State Bank, Texas Farm Bureau, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

In another example, a graduate of Lyford who is now a successful businessman provides three scholarships annually and has donated more than \$17,000 to help students with college costs. In addition, two years ago he began donating \$30,000 a year for 10 years to help fund school improvements. His donations have helped build the infrastructure for computers and pay for bleachers in the gym, band equipment and science lab equipment in the high school.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has secured funding for scholarships and school improvements through community donations.

FINDING

The community has become divided as a result of efforts to build a new elementary school. Although there is community support for the school, disagreement over where to build the new elementary has damaged the district's relationship with the community. Many residents in Sebastian wanted the school to be built there, while others felt it made more sense to build it in Lyford near the middle school and high school.

The board studied options to build the new elementary in Lyford, in Sebastian or between the two communities. All three options are candidates for Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) through TEA, where schools can apply for funding to help pay for the costs of building new facilities. In a school board meeting on November 12, 2001, the board presented these three options with their costs to the public and listened to community input on the matter.

On November 26, 2001, the board decided on the Lyford location and voted to hold a \$5.5 million bond election to build the new school in Lyford. To promote the bond election, a citizen's committee, "Let's Put Children First," held meetings at the Martin Cavazos Literacy Center and in Lyford to provide information about the bond election.

On February 2, 2002, the voters passed the bond issue to build the new elementary school in Lyford. The community now needs to come together to support its decision, and the district should look at ways to help in this effort.

Recommendation 7:

Rebuild the relationship between the Lyford and Sebastian communities.

The board should continue to hold public meetings in Lyford and Sebastian to further discuss and answer questions from the community on the bond issue, the application for IFA funding and the building of the new elementary school. Additionally, the location of board meetings should alternate between Lyford and Sebastian in the immediate future to bring the communities together. Finally, the district should place board meeting schedules, locations and information about the new school to be built on its Web site to further inform the community.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and board determine a schedule for alternating board meeting sites between Sebastian and Lyford.	April 2002
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2.	The superintendent and board determine dates for more public meetings in Lyford and Sebastian to discuss the building of the new elementary school.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent with board approval provides monthly information to the Technology coordinator to put on the district's Web site.	May 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD does not routinely solicit donations from businesses in larger cities in the greater Rio Grande Valley area. Residents shop and work in Harlingen and McAllen, so businesses in those cities may be willing to support the schools of people who patronize or work in their stores.

Some small school districts near larger communities tap businesses in those communities to form partnerships. Other districts have created education foundations composed of business leaders, parents and other interested parties to seek donations for the district. Some educational foundations sponsor fund-raising activities such as community carnivals.

Grape Creek Independent School District (GCISD), a district near San Angelo with 1,151 students, formed the Grape Creek Education Foundation in August 1999 and became a recognized 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization with the Internal Revenue Service. The Grape Creek Education Foundation seeks and secures grants, endowments and donations from corporations, businesses and individuals to enhance educational opportunities for GCISD students. Funds can be used to meet physical or professional development needs, extracurricular programs or special project sponsorships.

Additionally, the establishment of a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization has opened up many opportunities for securing grants and donations for which a school district would not otherwise qualify. The Grape Creek Education Foundation has secured thousands of dollars in donations to enhance education in GCISD.

In another example, Elgin ISD (EISD), a district near Austin with 2,840 students, formed collaborative partnerships with businesses, educational institutions, community agencies and civic organizations to expand opportunities for its students. Through a partnership with McDonalds, all fifth grade students from Elgin Elementary School went on a trip to the

Austin Symphony. Upon the request of the principals, other area restaurants provided food and awards for various school activities.

Partnerships with businesses or organizations in greater area cities can help provide more educational opportunities for students.

Recommendation 8:

Establish partnerships with area businesses.

LCISD could begin by asking parents if their employer would be interested in becoming a partner with the district. The district could also request the parent teacher organization (PTO) or similar groups to assist in identifying businesses. LCISD would benefit from business relationships through donations and sponsorships or mentoring programs with employees of these businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent meets with the PTO and other organizations to solicit their assistance.	September 2002
2.	The superintendent writes an article in the LCISD newsletter requesting parent and community assistance.	October 2002
3.	The superintendent and principals contact organizations and pursue business partnerships and determine what the businesses will provide the school.	November 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Santa Rosa	1,151	-4.6%	0.3%	97.8%	1.9%	0.0%	98.1%	94.7%	1.2%
Lyford	1,516	-8.6%	0.3%	95.8%	3.9%	0.1%	96.1%	81.8%	-1.7%
Rio Hondo	2,008	-3.1%	0.0%	95.0%	5.0%	0.0%	95.0%	77.4%	4.7%
Progreso	2,056	10.0%	0.0%	99.7%	0.3%	0.0%	99.7%	92.2%	-4.9%
Raymondville	2,654	-7.1%	0.3%	96.2%	3.3%	0.2%	96.7%	87.3%	7.0%
La Feria	2,772	5.1%	0.2%	88.7%	11.0%	0.1%	89.0%	82.0%	7.0%
Region 1	302,528	7.3%	0.2%	95.6%	3.8%	0.3%	96.2%	82.7%	2.0%
State	4,059,619	6.0%	14.4%	40.6%	42.0%	3.0%	58.0%	49.3%	2.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01 and 1996-97.

*Percent Change is defined as 2000-01 values minus 1996-97 values divided by 1996-97 values.

For 2000-01, LCISD's enrollment was 1,516, a decrease from 1,658 in 1996-97. Santa Rosa is closest in size to LCISD, with a student enrollment of 1,151. Only Progreso and La Feria showed an increase in enrollment. Region 1 student enrollment increased by 7.3 percent and the state by 6 percent during the same period. Students in Region 1 are predominately Hispanic.

As compared to the peer districts, LCISD has the second lowest percent, at 81.8 percent, of economically disadvantaged students. The state identifies economically disadvantaged students as those on free or reduced lunch. Among the peer districts, Rio Hondo has the lowest percent of economically disadvantaged students, but is still 28 percent higher than the state average of 49.3 percent. Between 1996-97 and 2000-01, the percent of economically disadvantaged students in the state increased by about 2 percent. In LCISD, the number of economically disadvantaged students decreased by almost 2 percent between 1996-97 and 2000-01.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-2**, LCISD ranks second in instructional expenditures per student, at \$4,115 per student (all funds), when compared to the peer districts. LCISD spends the lowest percentage of its instructional funds for gifted and talented education, at 0.2 percent. The percentage spent on career and technology is greater than any of the peer districts and the state, while spending for special education is average as compared to the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-2
Actual Instructional Expenditures in LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Total Expenditures	Instruct. Expend Per Student*	Percent Regular	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Educ.	Percent Career & Tech.	Percent Bilingual/ESL	Percent Compensatory
Raymondville	\$33,877,342	\$3,972	42.4%	4.5%	18.0%	3.5%	7.4%	20.0%

La Feria	\$22,793,867	\$3,886	67.4%	0.7%	8.9%	3.5%	1.0%	17.2%
Progreso	\$18,038,316	\$4,025	59.3%	0.3%	7.3%	3.8%	4.1%	21.5%
Rio Hondo	\$16,621,546	\$3,756	58.9%	0.4%	13.0%	3.9%	7.5%	12.8%
Lyford	\$12,816,154	\$4,115	55.6%	0.2%	11.1%	6.5%	2.1%	20.0%
Santa Rosa	\$10,156,454	\$4,159	41.9%	0.5%	11.3%	3.0%	10.9%	26.3%
State	\$31,639,852,010	\$3,638	61.5%	1.7%	15.2%	4.0%	3.7%	11.7%

Source: TEA fall 2000 PEIMS submission.

Includes instruction and instructional leadership expenditures. (Obj.11).

The percentage of students enrolled in the district's bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL), gifted and talented, special education and career and technology programs is shown in **Exhibit 2-3**. The percent (15.2) of LCISD students enrolled in a bilingual or ESL program is slightly above the state average, but lower than Region 1 and less than a third of the percentage reported by Progreso. At 10.9 percent, LCISD is tied for third in the percent of students receiving special education services as compared to the peer districts and is below the state average of 11.9. Although LCISD reported the highest percent of expenditures for career and technology education, it ranked third compared to its peers in the percentage of students enrolled in career and technology education programs.

Exhibit 2-3
Student Enrollment by Program
2000-01

District	Percent Bilingual/ESL	Percent Career & Technology	Percent Gifted & Talented	Percent Special Education
La Feria	12.0%	17.6%	9.3%	8.9%
Lyford	15.2%	22.2%	8.3%	10.9%
Progreso	49.9%	26.4%	5.1%	7.4%
Raymondville	8.7%	15.4%	3.7%	11.1%
Rio Hondo	12.3%	19.1%	9.0%	13.0%
Santa Rosa	21.9%	22.4%	4.3%	10.9%
Region 1	35.4%	18.3%	8.8%	10.3%
State	12.6%	18.9%	8.4%	11.9%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-4 shows the percent of professional staff in various categories. LCISD is similar to Rio Hondo with the lowest percent of staff listed as teachers, as compared with other peer districts. LCISD is in the mid-range in terms of staff allocation in the various categories as compared to the peer districts, the region and the state. The exception is in the district's staff allocation for auxiliary services where it ranks first.

**Exhibit 2-4
Professional Staff
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

Professional Staff	Rio Hondo	Lyford	Santa Rosa	Progreso	La Feria	Raymondville	Region 1	State Avg.
Teachers	39.2%	39.3%	41.8%	45.1%	46.7%	47.4%	42.7%	50.8%
Professional Support	6.5%	5.5%	7.2%	7.2%	3.4%	5.6%	7.6%	7.8%
Campus Administration	1.7%	2.4%	1.9%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%	2.1%	2.6%
Central Administration	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%	0.9%	1.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%
Educational Aides	15.8%	16.3%	16.8%	12.9%	22.3%	12.1%	11.9%	10.2%
Auxiliary Staff	35.1%	35.3%	30.9%	31.6%	23.3%	31.4%	35.1%	27.8%
Percent Minority Teachers	67.1%	72.7%	73.6%	84.7%	59.9%	62.2%	80.4%	26.8%

Source: TEA, AEIS 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-5 shows teacher experience and turnover rates. LCISD has the lowest percent of beginning teachers and ranks third in percent of teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience. LCISD has the second highest teacher turnover rate at 17.7 percent. LCISD has the second lowest beginning teacher salary and the second lowest salary for teachers with 6 to 10 years experience. The beginning salary for LCISD is slightly higher than the average for Region 1, but more than \$1,000 lower than Region 1 for teachers with 6 to 10 years experience.

**Exhibit 2-5
Teacher Experience and Turnover Rate
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01**

	Lyford	Santa Rosa	La Feria	Rio Hondo	Raymondville	Progreso	Region 1	State Avg.
Beginning Teachers	2.5%	3.4%	4.6%	6.3%	7.1%	13.0%	8.0%	7.8%

1-5 Years Experience	24.7%	21.8%	19.4%	28.1%	23.0%	35.2%	26.9%	27.4%
6-10 Years Experience	23.8%	27.5%	22.9%	17.0%	19.4%	25.2%	19.8%	18.1%
11-20 Years Experience	24.7%	31.1%	34.3%	23.5%	21.4%	16.6%	26.1%	25.3%
Over 20 Years Experience	24.2%	16.1%	18.8%	25.0%	29.1%	10.0%	19.1%	21.4%
Average Years Experience	13.2	11.5	12.9	12.6	13.1	7.8	11.6	11.9
Average Years Experience with the district	9.2	7.9	7.4	7.9	9.4	4.9	8.8	7.9
Turnover	17.7%	16.5%	15.0%	14.2%	15.6%	21.8%	13.6%	16.0%
Beginning Teacher Salary	\$27,998	\$30,391	\$29,470	\$28,952	\$28,107	\$27,785	\$27,381	\$29,824
Average Teacher Salary 6-10 Years	\$34,560	\$36,798	\$36,862	\$34,983	\$34,307	\$37,888	\$35,732	\$35,304

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

LCISD has a higher percent of teachers with a master's degree than the peers or Region 1, but the percent of teachers with a graduate degree is lower than the state (**Exhibit 2-6**).

Exhibit 2-6
Teacher Degrees
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

Education Level	Progreso	Lyford	Santa Rosa	Rio Hondo	La Feria	Raymondville	Region 1	State Avg.
No Degree	1.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	1.3%
Bachelor	94.1%	82.4%	97.7%	90.1%	89.6%	84.2%	83.2%	74.7%
Master	4.0%	16.8%	2.3%	9.9%	10.4%	15.8%	14.2%	23.4%
Doctorate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Under the state's school accountability system, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) assigns annual ratings to each district and school based upon TAAS, dropout rates and data quality. As of 2000-01, attendance is no longer included as one of the base indicators to determine ratings. In 1999, TEA added

two new rating categories: Unacceptable: Data Quality, a district level rating, and Acceptable: Data Issues, a school level rating. The accountability system includes five ratings for districts: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable and Unacceptable: Data Quality. To receive an Exemplary rating, at least 90 percent of all students and 90 percent of African-American, Hispanic, Anglo and Economically Disadvantaged students must pass the TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests.

To achieve a Recognized rating, 80 percent of all students and each student group must pass the same TAAS reading, writing and mathematics tests. In 2001, to be rated Academically Acceptable, 50 percent of each student group must have passed TAAS. Effective in 2000, scores for students with disabilities and from all grade levels of the Spanish version of the TAAS reading and mathematics were included in the accountability calculations. Although the state accountability system also considers dropout rates, TAAS is the key-determining factor in ratings.

In 1997 only La Feria was rated as Recognized; the remaining districts were all rated as Acceptable. By 2001, Rio Hondo, Santa Rosa and La Feria were rated as Recognized while Raymondville, Progreso and LCISD continued to be rated as Acceptable. LCISD received an Acceptable rating in each of the years 1997 through 2001 (**Exhibit 2-7**).

Exhibit 2-7
Accountability Ratings
LCISD and Peer Districts
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
La Feria	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary	Recognized
Lyford	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progreso	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Raymondville	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Rio Hondo	Acceptable	Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized	Recognized
Santa Rosa	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Recognized

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 through 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-8 shows the accountability ratings by campus. The elementary and the middle school were rated Acceptable, and the high school was rated Recognized.

Exhibit 2-8
Accountability Ratings
LCISD Campuses
2000-01

	2001
Sebastian Elementary	NR: PK - K
Lyford Elementary	Acceptable
Lyford Middle School	Acceptable
Lyford High School	Recognized

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

For instructional programs to succeed, administrators must ensure that resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvements in student performance. This requires systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating personnel and programs, as well as a comprehensive testing program that provides an accurate evaluation of achievement across all content areas in all grades.

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) is a series of tests used to measure student performance. TAAS tests are administered in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10; in reading and mathematics in Spanish in grades 3 and 4; in writing in grades 4, 8 and 10; and in science and social studies in grade 8. Because there are five tests administered in grade 8, this grade level usually has the lowest percentage of students passing all tests taken. End of course examinations are administered in Algebra I, Biology, English II and US History. TAAS performance, the primary factor in determining a district's accountability ratings, depends on effective instruction. The Spanish version of TAAS is given in grades 3-6.

On an incremental basis between 2000 and 2003, the TAAS administration schedule will change, particularly at the high school level. By 2003, TAAS will be administered in grades 9, 10 and 11. Reading and mathematics tests will be added at grade 9. The exit level examination will be moved to grade 11 and will include science, social studies, English language arts and mathematics. A science test will be added to grade 5.

FINDING

Lyford High School has high academic expectations for its students. Every student is placed on the state-recommended plan for high school graduation, and the district takes advantage of federal and state initiatives to assist student learning.

In 2000-01, the school received a Recognized rating from the TEA accountability system (**Exhibit 2-8**). The Lyford High principal attributed the improved rating to teachers and administrators having "high expectations" of students. **Exhibit 2-9** shows that in 2001 LCISD tenth-grade students performed slightly better on the TAAS than the region. In reading and mathematics, the Lyford High passing rate was higher than the state average.

**Exhibit 2-9
TAAS Passing Rates
LCISD, Region 1 and State
1996-97 and 2000-01**

Grade Level*	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies		All Tests Taken	
	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001
Grade 3												
LCISD	66%	75%	56%	82%							52%	72%
Region 1	79%	82%	84%	82%							73%	75%
State	82%	87%	82%	83%							74	78%
Grade 4												
LCISD	64%	73%	52%	85%	67%	89%					41%	67%
Region 1	80%	87%	84%	90%	87%	89%					71%	79%
State	83%	91%	83%	91%	87%	89%					72%	82%
Grade 5												
LCISD	76%	77%	83%	92%							71%	77%
Region 1	81%	87%	87%	95%							76%	86%
State	85%	90%	86%	95%							79%	88%
Grade 6												
LCISD	81%	80%	76%	84%							71%	74%
Region 1	76%	79%	76%	89%							68%	76%
State	85%	86%	82%	91%							77%	83%
Grade 7												
LCISD	72%	75%	76%	82%							66%	72%
Region 1	74%	84%	74%	87%							65%	79%
State	85%	89%	80%	90%							75%	84%

Grade 8%												
LCISD	83%	89%	75%	87%	75%	79%	80%	93%	53%	74%	44%	65%
Region 1	74%	88%	68%	90%	73%	82%	75%	88%	51%	67%	42%	59%
State	84%	92%	76%	92%	81%	86%	85%	92%	67%	77%	57%	69%
Grade 10%												
LCISD	82%	93%	66%	91%	90%	86%					59%	78%
Region 1	78%	87%	66%	89%	82%	86%					58%	77%
State	86%	90%	73%	89%	89%	89%					68%	80%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 and 2000-01.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Fifty-six percent of the district's students graduated under the state's recommended high school plan (**Exhibit 2-10**). This plan requires four years of English and three years of math, including Algebra II. The high school principal said that every incoming student is started on the recommended high school plan and that modifications are made as dictated by student needs. The student handbook only lists the courses required to graduate under the recommended plan.

Exhibit 2-10
Percent of Students completing the Recommended High School Program
LCISD, Peer, Region 1, State
2000-01

District	Percent Taking the Recommended High School Program
Raymondville	59.0%
Lyford	56.0%
Progreso	51.4%
La Feria	47.2%
Santa Rosa	21.5%
Rio Hondo	0.0%

Region 1	55.7%
State	38.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has high academic expectations for all high school students that have helped the high school to achieve a recognized status.

FINDING

As indicated by TAAS scores, district students have stronger math than reading skills. In grades 3 through 7, the percent of students passing the math test was higher than the percent of students passing the reading test. In grades 8 and 10, the percent of students that passed the reading was slightly higher than the percent of students that passed mathematics. **Exhibit 2-11** shows the discrepancy in reading and math scores is highest in grades 4 and 5, and lowest in grades 8 and 10.

Exhibit 2-11
Percent of Students Passing Reading and Mathematics by Grade Level
2000-01

Grade Level	Reading	Mathematics	Percent Point Difference in Passing Rates
Grade 3	75.0%	82.0%	7.0%
Grade 4	73.0%	85.0%	12.0%
Grade 5	77.0%	92.0%	15.0%
Grade 6	80.0%	84.0%	4.0%
Grade 7	75.0%	82.0%	7.0%
Grade 8	89.0%	87.0%	2.0%
Grade 10	93.0%	91.0%	2.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

While Lyford CISD has made less progress in improving its TAAS scores, as compared to its peers and the region, its progress is above the state average (**Exhibit 2-12**).

Exhibit 2-12
Percent of Students Passing TAAS, All Tests Taken (Grades 3-8, & 10)
(1996-97 through 2000-01)

District	1997	1998	1999*	2000**	2001**	Percent Change from 1997 to 2001***	Percent of Students Tested 2001
Santa Rosa	53.1%	60.8%	65.1%	67.4%	78.8%	48.4%	95.8%
Raymondville	60.4%	63.0%	75.4%	78.1%	81.0%	34.1%	96.8%
Rio Hondo	66.7%	68.4%	78.0%	83.7%	85.1%	27.6%	95.4%
Progreso	57.5%	53.0%	62.1%	66.1%	72.8%	26.6%	95.5%
Lyford	60.6%	62.1%	67.3%	66.2%	73.7%	21.6%	97.6%
La Feria	78.5%	78.8%	87.5%	85.9%	84.3%	7.4%	97.5%
Region 1	66.5%	66.5%	73.5%	74.6%	77.9%	27.6%	95.0%
State	73.2%	73.1%	78.1%	79.9%	82.1%	17.1%	96.2%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1997-2001.

**Recalculated from original posting to include special education and grade 3 and 4 Spanish TAAS.*

***Recalculated from original posting to include special education and grade 3-6 Spanish TAAS.*

****Percent Change is defined as 2001 minus 1997 divided by 1997.*

Exhibit 2-13 shows that significant gain in the percentage of students passing reading occurred in grades 3, 4 and 10, but very little gain was made at fifth grade, and at sixth grade performance declined by one percent point.

Exhibit 2-13
Percent of Students Passing Reading, by Grade Level
1996-97 and 2000-01

Grade Level	Reading 1996-97	Reading 2000-01	Percent Difference
Grade 3	66.0%	75.0%	11.0%
Grade 4	64.0%	73.0%	9.0%
Grade 5	76.0%	77.0%	1.0%
Grade 6	81.0%	80.0%	-1.0%
Grade 7	72.0%	75.0%	3.0%
Grade 8	83.0%	89.0%	6.0%
Grade 10	82.0%	93.0%	11.0%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 1996-97 and 2000-01.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Exhibit 2-14 shows that compared to the state and the peer districts, LCISD's average reading TLI growth gain was lower than four districts, Region 1 and the state. For mathematics, the average TLI growth was higher than Region 1, the state and three of the peer districts. TLI is a measure of the progress made by students who failed the TAAS the previous year. The score is published in the annual AEIS reports.

Exhibit 2-14
Progress of Prior Year TAAS Failers
Average TLI Growth 2000-01

District	TLI for Past Failure	
	Reading TLI Gain	Math TLI Gain
Santa Rosa	12.03	11.31
Raymondville	11.25	11.90
La Feria	11.19	10.2
Rio Hondo	11.09	13.09
Lyford	9.63	11.89

Progreso	7.84	8.37
Region 1	10.19	10.74
State	10.89	10.97

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

LCISD has implemented several programs to improve LCISD students' reading skills, including Success for All, Reading is Fundamental, Even Start, the Tutorial Assistance Grant and extended year programs. It is also aligning curricula and has started a full day pre-kindergarten program to enhance reading instruction.

Although LCISD complies with state and federal evaluation data reporting requirements, it lacks the resources to conduct ongoing, in-depth evaluation of its programs. Ongoing evaluation of the grant-funded programs designed to improve students reading skills would help ensure the most optimal impact for students.

Recommendation 9:

Improve students' reading skills by strengthening the district's reading improvement programs.

The district should strengthen its reading programs by contracting for ongoing, in-depth evaluation. In-depth program evaluations would help the district understand the most effective elements of the programs and make modifications as needed.

By sharing an evaluation consultant with three or four neighboring districts, each district benefits and no one district would be required to hire a full-time evaluator. If neighboring districts are not interested in this approach, the district would be required to contract with an individual for part-time services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Curriculum and Instruction administrator to select a group of teachers for participation on a committee to establish program evaluation needs for the district's reading program.	March 2002
2.	The committee reviews evaluation methods and agenda used in other school districts, requests assistance from Region 1 and develops an agenda for an ongoing reading program evaluation.	Summer 2002

3.	The superintendent approaches neighboring districts to discuss sharing an evaluation contractor with three or four districts.	March 2002
4.	The superintendents select an evaluation contractor to conduct program research and evaluation services.	July 2002
5.	Evaluation specialist evaluates district overall reading improvement plan and makes recommendations for strengthening programs.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

At an hourly rate of \$50, approximately 200 hours of evaluation work could be obtained annually for \$10,000. If multiple districts share one evaluator, the district's costs would be the same, however the number of available hours would most likely be increased.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Improve students' reading skills by strengthening the district's reading improvement programs.	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)

FINDING

In 2000-01, LCISD ranked last in the percent of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs as compared to peers. LCISD had only one pre-K teacher who taught two half-day classes per day. This year the district has three pre-K teachers and has expanded the program from half day to full day. This year, the district is serving 55 pre-K students, nine more than were enrolled in 2000-01. The district's goal in expanding the program from half to full day was to address areas of weakness identified in an evaluation. The evaluation found that students were struggling with speech sounds, vocabulary, observation and prediction. **Exhibit 2-15** shows the 2000-2001 enrollment by grade level for LCISD, the peer districts, Region 1 and the state.

Exhibit 2-15
Enrollment by Grade Level
LCISD, Peer Districts, Region 1 and State
2000-01

Grade Level	Progreso	Rio Hondo	La Feria	Santa Rosa	Raymondville	Lyford	Region 1	State
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Early Childhood Education	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Pre-Kindergarten	12.3%	5.0%	4.8%	3.9%	3.4%	3.0%	5.7%	3.3%
Kindergarten	6.6%	7.5%	7.2%	7.0%	7.5%	6.9%	7.7%	7.2%
Grade 1	8.1%	7.1%	8.5%	8.8%	8.0%	7.4%	8.3%	7.9%
Grade 2	7.6%	7.0%	8.0%	8.8%	8.4%	7.7%	8.1%	7.8%
Grade 3	7.9%	7.3%	7.4%	7.2%	8.1%	7.2%	7.9%	7.8%
Grade 4	7.0%	7.4%	8.1%	7.6%	8.0%	7.4%	7.7%	7.7%
Grade 5	6.8%	8.2%	7.9%	6.7%	7.3%	6.9%	7.3%	7.7%
Grade 6	6.2%	7.4%	7.4%	9.1%	6.3%	7.6%	7.3%	7.6%
Grade 7	6.9%	7.4%	7.6%	6.7%	7.1%	7.7%	7.2%	7.7%
Grade 8	5.8%	6.5%	7.1%	6.9%	6.3%	7.5%	6.9%	7.5%
Grade 9	8.7%	9.3%	8.3%	8.4%	9.5%	10.9%	8.9%	8.9%
Grade 10	6.3%	7.3%	6.0%	6.2%	7.4%	5.8%	6.3%	7.1%
Grade 11	4.8%	5.4%	6.1%	5.9%	6.2%	7.5%	5.5%	6.1%
Grade 12	5.0%	7.0%	5.6%	6.6%	6.5%	6.5%	4.8%	5.4%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Pre-kindergarten and early childhood education programs are designed to prepare young children for success in school. In 2000-01, the district implemented the Even Start Family Literacy Program, an early childhood education program that promotes literacy by working with entire families. The district also supports the Mother Goose on Wheels Literacy Mobile and the Parenting Education Program (PEP) in its efforts to promote early education services. The Mother Goose on Wheels Literacy Mobile provides bilingual services to children and families including books in English and Spanish and adult English as a Second Language lessons. The PEP program targets teenage parents and their children.

Recommendation 10:

Increase the district's enrollment in pre-kindergarten.

Through promoting existing early education programs and working with local service agencies, the district can continue to expand its pre-

kindergarten program. The district can use Even Start and the Mother Goose on Wheels Literacy Mobile, which primarily serve low-income families as a vehicle for recruiting students into the pre-kindergarten program.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction to work with her staff in developing a plan to increase pre-kindergarten enrollment.	May 2002
2.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction coordinates efforts with the Even Start facilitator to advertise the pre-kindergarten program to Even Start participants.	June 2002, Ongoing
3.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction advertises the program through all social service agencies in the region.	July 2002, Ongoing
4.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction evaluates the impact of the increased enrollment plan to determine if more pre-kindergarten students enroll in the district's program.	September- October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished using existing resources.

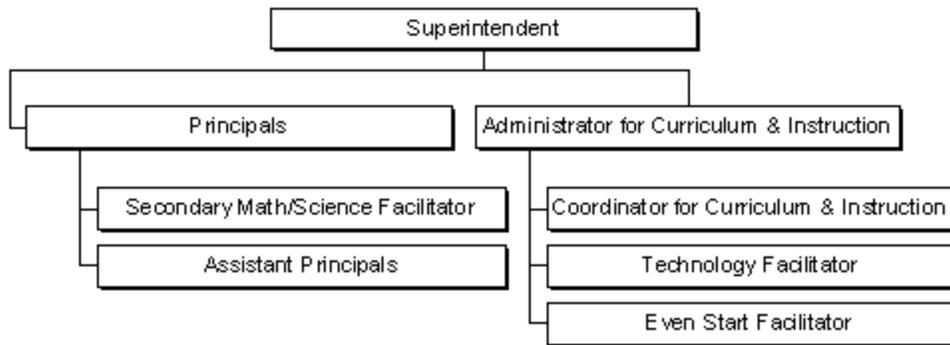
Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

B. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

In the broadest sense, instructional resources are the materials available to ensure successful learning, including the curriculum, instructional materials, fiscal resources and leadership. **Exhibit 2-16** presents the district's organization chart for the office of Curriculum and Instruction.

Exhibit 2-16
Office of Curriculum and Instruction
2000-01
Instructional Leadership



Source: LCISD, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction.

FINDING

LCISD aggressively pursues and implements programs to enhance its instructional program. Following is a list of these programs:

Math/Science Cooperative. Sponsored through Region 1, 18 school districts are members of the Title II Math/Science Cooperative. The cooperative was formed to provide financial assistance to school districts to ensure that teachers, staff and administrators have access to intensive and sustained high-quality professional development. Training and professional development is aligned with state standards for student performance standards in the core academic subjects with a primary focus on mathematics and science.

Improving Teaching and Learning. With this three-year, \$200,000 grant the district has implemented the *Success for All* reading program. *Success for All* is a comprehensive reform model for elementary schools, especially Title I school-wide projects. Title I is a federal program targeting students who are performing below academic standards. The funds are distributed to schools via states based on the number of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in school. Begun in 1987 in Baltimore, *Success for All* is now in more than 1,800 schools in 49 states. In Texas, more than 120 schools have implemented the program.

Success for All. This program is designed to improve reading success by applying a combination of innovative instructional approaches pre-kindergarten through fifth or sixth grades. It includes one-to-one tutoring for primary-grade children who are struggling in reading, and family support programs. Lyford Elementary designates a daily, 90-minute, uninterrupted block period for reading. During this period, the entire elementary school becomes a reading lab. Additional staff participate to ensure that enough one-on-one support is provided to all students. The *Success for All* Foundation provides models for school organization and professional development intended to ensure high-quality implementation of all program elements. The non-profit foundation was spun off from Johns Hopkins University in 1998.

Optional Extended Year Program. The purpose of the Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP) is to provide students with "additional instructional time" to master the state's student performance standards. OEYP serves students who are identified as unlikely to be promoted to the next grade level because they have not demonstrated proficiency in a course or grade level. [Texas Education Code Section 29.082(a).]

Ninth-Grade Success Initiative. The initiative targets ninth grade students with a goal of decreasing ninth grade drop-out rates, increasing the numbers of students promoted to the tenth grade and increasing academic achievement. TEA's Division of Curriculum and Professional Development administers this initiative.

The Texas Rural Systemic Initiative (TRSI). TRSI is a systemic reform project that works with participating school districts in eligible Texas counties to improve the mathematics and science performance of all students. TRSI is a partnership developed by the Texas A&M University System and led by West Texas A&M University. Partners include K-12 school districts, universities, education service centers and TEA. The program is funded through a grant from the National Science Foundation.

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). A federally funded program, GEAR UP ensures all participating students are academically prepared to succeed in postsecondary education.

Even Start. A family literacy program, Even Start aims to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving educational opportunities for low-income families through integrating early childhood education, parenting education and adult education into a unified family-centered program.

Mother Goose on Wheels. The mobile unit provides children's books in both English and Spanish and ESL classes for parents.

In addition to these programs, the office of Curriculum and Instruction manages several other programs (all of the district's special programs) and several other grants, including the Tutorial Assistance Grant (TAG). These initiatives have resulted in improved academic performance at some grade levels as reflected in the district's TAAS and other performance measures.

COMMENDATION

Lyford participates in numerous academic-improvement programs in its efforts to provide a high quality education program to the district's students, with many programs targeting students who are performing below grade level.

FINDING

LCISD makes effective use of services provided by Region 1, area universities and state and federal grants. LCISD participates in several educational programs offered through Region 1. For example, it participates in the Bilingual/ESL and the Gifted and Talented Consortiums, through which it is able to provide teachers with staff development that the district would not be able to offer on its own.

The district contracts with a grant writer that assists the district in applying for and preparing proposals to obtain additional educational funds. **Exhibit 2-17** presents a partial list of agreements or contracts between LCISD and other entities.

**Exhibit 2-17
Area Agreements and Grants**

Agreement/Contract	Entity
Middle School Consortium	Region 1
Mathematics and Science Shared Services Agreement	Region 1
GEAR UP	Region 1
TIE Grant	Region 1
Principals Assessment and Development Center	Region 1
Safe and Drug Free School Cooperative	Region 1
High School Consortium	Region 1
TEKStar Network	Region 1
Gifted and Talented Cooperative	Region 1
AEIS IT 2001	Region 1
Comprehensive Bilingual/ESL Consortium	Region 1
Instructional Resources and Media Cooperative	Region 1
The Texas Rural Systemic Initiative	The Texas Rural Systemic Initiative
E-Rate Consortium	Region 1

Source: LCISD, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2001.

LCISD has also applied and received several other grants, including the Drug-Free Schools, the Tutorial Assistance grant, special migrant education grants and SWAT DAWGS (Students Working Actively

Together Developing Assets with Goals for Success). The district also received a three-year COPS in Schools grant from the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

COMMENDATION

Lyford aggressively seeks funding opportunities with local, state and federal entities and is engaged in several agreements to expand services for Lyford students.

FINDING

LCISD has created vertical alignment teams to help prepare the district for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the state-mandated assessment that will replace the TAAS. It has organized Vertical Alignment Teams (VATS) composed of expert teachers at each grade level to revise the K-12 curriculum guides. Teams have been created in mathematics, science, social studies and language arts. The teams are amending curriculum guides offered through Region 1 to meet the district's specific needs and to ensure that they meet Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives. TEKS are a set of educational objectives for each grade level developed by TEA to guide teachers in curriculum development. **Exhibit 2-18** lists the VAT objectives.

Exhibit 2-18 Role of Curriculum Expert Teams

- Delineate what a graduate of the high school should know and be able to do after completion of the pre-kindergarten through the twelfth grade educational process.
- Assign content as well as competencies to particular grade levels to eliminate gaps and redundancies.
- Design curriculum of skill building from one grade to the next.
- Ensure that curriculum spirals so that content and skills are more complex as a student progresses through the grades.

Source: LCISD, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2001.

The teams meet once a month to discuss and identify group tasks and objectives. Principals and assistant principals note, "...Teachers are involved in all planning that occurs, and there is a sense of pro-activeness from the superintendent down. Vertical Alignment Teams involve everyone and there is coordination of efforts for improvement..."

COMMENDATION

The district is preparing for the more rigorous TAKS by aligning and updating curriculum guides and ensuring that the guides address TEKS objectives at each grade.

FINDING

While the district has many excellent instructional programs in place, LCISD's office of Curriculum and Instruction lacks the administrative staff to effectively monitor these programs. The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for most of the programs in addition to other administrative duties. A half-time coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction helps by overseeing some of these programs. A Technology facilitator and the Even Start facilitator are also under her supervision. (Exhibit 2-16). Exhibit 2-19 shows the distribution of duties.

**Exhibit 2-19
Job Duties and Responsibilities**

<p>Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction: Migrant Program, Title I program, Bilingual Program, Gifted and Talented Program, At-Risk Program, Full-day Pre-Kindergarten Program, Accelerated Reading Evaluation, Tutorial Assistance Grant, District Improvement Plan, In-service coordination, PDAS Training, District Testing Coordinator (TAAS, RPTE, Alternative Assessment, End-of Course), Drug-Free Schools, Eisenhower Math Science Cooperative, Support Team Leader, Parental Involvement/Even Start Contact, Rural Systemic Initiative, Career and Technology, District-wide PAC, Class Size Reduction, TEKS Implementation, Curriculum Coordination for Vertical Alignment, Coordinate Early releases, Facilitators for Principals, District Compliance, and other duties as assigned.</p>
--

<p>Coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction: Special Education Program, Success for All Reading Program, Optional Extended Year, Reading is Fundamental, District Reading Facilitator, Foster Grandparents Program, Substitute Training for the District, New Teacher Orientation, Mother Goose on Wheels and Martin Cavazos Literacy Center.</p>
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<p>Technology Facilitator: Assists district in implementing district technology plan.</p>
--

<p>Even Start Facilitator: Implements Even Start Program.</p>
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Source: LCISD, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2001.

The Curriculum and Instruction administrator ensures that program staff adhere to program guidelines, but due to workload, she is unable to closely monitor the implementation of each one of the special programs. She relies on Region 1 and other resources, including principals, to ensure that the programs are implemented correctly and in compliance with state and federal regulations. The bilingual/ESL program that serves 14.8 percent of the student population is one of the programs placed under her direction; however, the school principals oversee the program's daily administration. The broad distribution of responsibilities for administering major programs makes it difficult to identify and address areas of weakness. For example, the bilingual/ESL program lacked program brochures or descriptions.

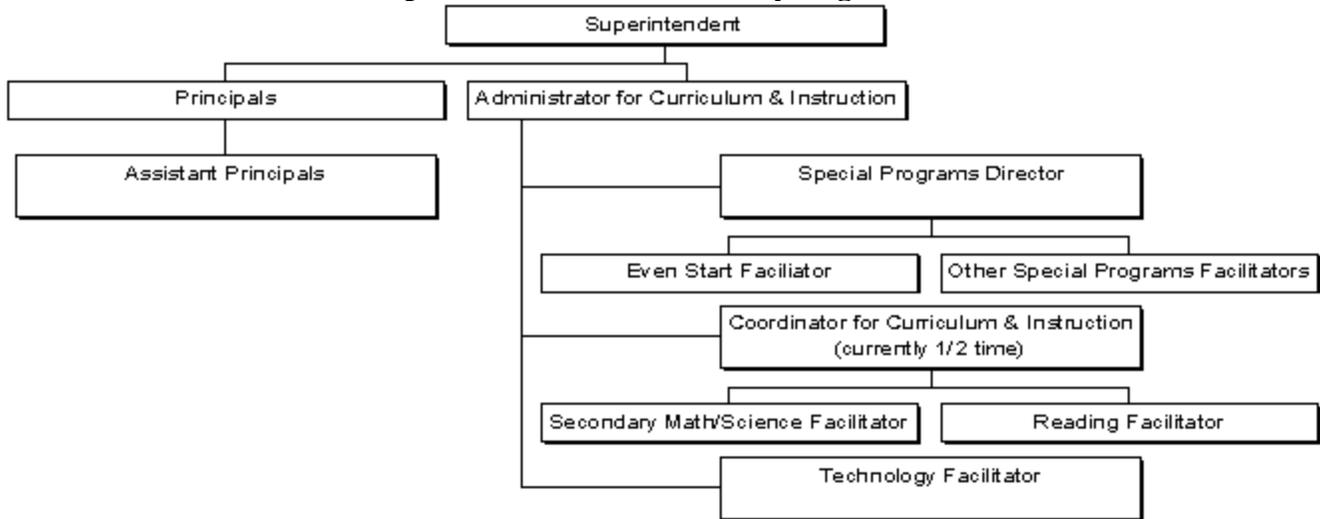
While the district has many instructional programs that target special populations and "at-risk" students, it lacks a central administrator whose primary job would be to coordinate the programs. The administrator and coordinator are responsible for overseeing these programs along with other administrative duties.

Recommendation 11:

Reorganize the district's office of Curriculum and Instruction and hire a director to manage the special programs.

The reorganization of the division and the hiring of the director will lessen the administrator's current workload. She will then be able to focus on strengthening the program. **Exhibit 2-20** shows the proposed organizational structure.

**Exhibit 2-20
Proposed Instructional Delivery Organization**



Source: Academic Information Management, Inc.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction to hire a director of special programs.	March 2002
2.	The administrator of Curriculum and Instruction hires a director of special programs.	May 2002
3.	The director of special programs begins work.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation would have an annual cost of \$50,505. The cost of hiring one director of special programs is based on an annual salary of \$45,000 plus benefits (\$45,000 x 8.11 percent in benefits + \$1,855 in health insurance = \$50,505).

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Reorganize the district's office of Curriculum and Instruction and hire a director to manage the special programs.	(\$50,505)	(\$50,505)	(\$50,505)	(\$50,505)	(\$50,505)

FINDING

While LCISD made significant progress regarding instructional technology, the district has not integrated instructional technology into the classroom. In a technology needs assessment, the district found it is using outdated equipment and software and that it lacks instructional curriculum. The needs assessment states, "staff and students need the proper hardware, training, and staff to move forward with technology integration into curriculum." Findings from this assessment are summarized in the Technology Plan.

The needs assessment also indicated that additional computers are needed for students and teachers. The plan specifies that an aggressive plan will be put in place to purchase equipment to meet the state's recommendation of one computer per educator and one computer for every three students.

Teachers also need technology training. The Technology Plan states, "Although teachers want to use the computer as a teaching tool, the need for more training on how to use them as part of the curriculum is evident, and steps will be taken to provide higher levels of proficiency." According to the district's Technology Plan: 2001-2004, the district will spend \$20,000 in 2001-02, \$25,000 in 2002-02 and \$30,000 in 2003-04 for educator preparation and development to integrate technology into teaching.

The district has a Technology facilitator whose primary responsibility is to assist district staff with hardware and networking issues. He also provides training in the use of software to staff, teachers and paraprofessionals.

Many school districts in Texas have successfully integrated instructional technology into the classroom. Smithville (SISD), for instance, established definite standards and deadlines for teacher proficiency in technology and for the integration of technology into the curriculum. The standards are organized into three domains: Basic Technology Operation, Personal/Professional Use of Technology Tools and Social, Ethical and Human Issues. The district provided ample staff development opportunities, including a full day of technology training and several additional training sessions at the Region 13 Educational Service Center. Workshop topics included: Introductory Course in Technology, Integrating Technology into Your Classroom and Advanced Technology Workshops. In addition, SISD offered technology competency labs in the summer of 2000 for any employees. Teachers were expected to demonstrate proficiencies in the technology standards by December 2000.

SISD also adopted curriculum standards during 1998-99 that included technology applications curriculum standards for grades K-12. Teachers integrated technology into their regular lesson plans and used the computer labs to conduct instructional projects with their students.

SISD central office curriculum staff and school principals monitored the integration of technology into the curriculum. School principals reviewed the staff technology skills forms to ensure that teachers were either competent or obtaining training to demonstrate competency in the basic teacher technology requirements.

Elgin ISD designed the Teacher Technologist Program to effectively integrate technology into the curriculum and to provide a direct link between each school and the technology department.

Recommendation 12:

Integrate technology into curriculum and instruction.

In addition to the steps that the district has already identified in the Technology Plan, it should actively engage Region 1 staff in assisting with curriculum and technology integration. On a rotating basis, groups of teachers and the Technology facilitator should review software and make recommendations to the curriculum committee. A group of district staff should also visit other school districts that have been successful in integrating curriculum and technology.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the high school principal establish curriculum software review teams.	March 2002
2.	Members of the technology committee identify successful technology integration programs across the state.	April 2002
3.	Selected members of the technology committee make visits to school districts with successful curriculum and technology integration programs.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

TSPR recommends that the district budget for a one-time cost of \$3,000 for staff travel to various school districts to observe successful programs.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Integrate technology into curriculum and instruction.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. SPECIAL PROGRAMS (Part 1)

Special education, gifted and talented education, bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) and compensatory education are provided in Texas schools to serve students with special needs. In addition, career and technology programs are offered to allow students to gain skills necessary to enter high-skill, high-wage jobs or to continue with post-secondary education once they graduate from high school. This section reviews the following education programs:

- Bilingual/ESL
- Special Education
- Gifted and Talented
- Accelerated Instruction (Compensatory Education)
- Dropout Prevention and Alternative Education
- School to Career Education

Bilingual/ESL Education

The goal of bilingual education is to enable limited English proficient students to become proficient in the comprehension, speaking, reading and composition of the English language through the development of literacy and academic skills in the primary language and in English.

Texas Education Code Chapter 29 requires all school districts with an enrollment of 20 limited English proficient (LEP) students in the same grade level to offer a bilingual/ESL or an alternative language program. The law specifies that bilingual education must be provided in pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades and that bilingual education, instruction in ESL or other transitional language instruction approved by TEA is provided in post-elementary grades through grade nine. For student grades nine through 12, only instruction in ESL is required. An LEP student is defined as one whose primary language is other than English and whose English language proficiency limits the student's participation in an English-language academic environment.

LCISD's office of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for the bilingual education/ESL program. In a document provided by the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, it states that "Lyford CISD offers dual language instruction in the bilingual education program for LEP students in pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades; ESL is offered in grades 6-12." **Exhibit 2-21** shows that in 2000-01, 231 students

were enrolled in the bilingual/ESL program, representing approximately 15 percent of the students in LCISD. According to the AEIS reports, 8.9 teachers (measured in full-time equivalents) were employed. Staff received training through the Region 1 Bilingual Staff Development Cooperative.

FINDING

Compared to the state, Region 1 and four of the peer districts, LCISD's bilingual education program is under-funded (**Exhibit 2-21**). In 2000-01, the district's spent \$60,029 on the program, or about one percent of its total instructional expenditures. The district ranks fifth in the percent of total expenditures allocated to the program. Only La Feria allocated a smaller percent, 0.8 percent to the program. The district also ranks fourth and is lower than the state and Region 1 in the total amount spent per student (\$260) for bilingual instruction. The average amount spent in Region 1 is \$505 and in the state is \$1,159.

Exhibit 2-21
Number and Percent of Students Receiving Bilingual/ESL Services
and Teachers
Budgeted Expenditures
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Bilingual/ESL Student Enrollment		Bilingual/ESL Teachers		Expenditures for Bilingual Education		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Expenditure	Percent of Total Instructional Expenditures	Amount per student
Rio Hondo	246	12.3%	13.8	9.8%	\$819,121	11.2%	\$3,330
Santa Rosa	252	21.9%	13.4	15.3%	\$665,537	15.1%	\$2,641
Raymondville	230	8.7%	18.6	9.5%	\$666,609	7.1%	\$2,898
Lyford	231	15.2%	8.9	7.9%	\$60,029	1.1%	\$260
La Feria	334	12.0%	20.3	10.6%	\$80,664	0.8%	\$242
Progreso	1,026	49.9%	46.9	31.1%	\$226,257	3.2%	\$221
Region 1	107,073	35.4%	4,250.8	21.5%	\$54,022,901	5.4%	\$505
State	509,885	12.6%	20,515.7	7.5%	\$590,748,041	4.3%	\$1,159

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Budget information obtained from the budget director indicates that in 1999-2000, the district received \$132,871 from Title VII Bilingual Education funds. District staff said they had submitted a proposal for refunding but that the proposal was rejected because it had formatting errors. The district plans to reapply for Title VII funds through Region 1 for the upcoming year.

Title VII projects are funded by the U.S. Office of Education under Title VII ESEA. In Region 1, several schools received Title VII funds. One project, the Comprehensive Title VII project, is currently being implemented in Roma ISD, Hidalgo ISD and Weslaco ISD. Emphasis is placed on training teachers to use ESL methodologies and Spanish instruction in all subject areas to teach LEP and Non-LEP students. The project's goal is to enhance the English and Spanish language proficiency of students by providing training, technical assistance and follow-up services to teachers, teacher aides and parents.

Region 1 also is involved in the State Title VII Project. The U.S. Office of Education funds the state project through Title VII ESEA funds. The focus of this project is to provide technical assistance in program implementation and staff development to Region 1 area schools involved with Title VII projects. Monthly meetings are held to share pertinent information with bilingual education directors from across the region. Networking opportunities allow campus and district personnel to spotlight successful practices they employ to enhance the educational performances of limited-English proficient students. Workshops on rules and regulations, as well as pedagogy and assessment are provided for teachers and administrators.

Recommendation 13:

Secure federal funds to enhance the delivery of bilingual/English as a Second Language programs.

Lyford ISD should work with Region 1 to ensure that the proposal is submitted on time and that it follows all procedures for submission. Title VII ESEA funds are administered through the Texas Education Agency and do not require a federal requirement for matching funds.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the administrator and coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction to work with Region 1 in preparing a proposal to obtain Title VII ESEA funds.	March 2002
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2.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction establishes a district-level bilingual education advisory committee composed of bilingual/ESL teachers. The committee supports and provides input for the grant proposal.	April 2002
3.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the bilingual education advisory team seek assistance from Region 1 staff to develop a quality proposal.	June 2002
4.	The advisory committee identifies successful Title VII ESEA programs in Region 1 and prepares a proposal for funding.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished using existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD limited English proficiency students are progressing to an advanced reading level at a slower rate than students in the state, Region 1 or the peer districts. The Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) measures annual growth in the English reading proficiency of second language learners and is used, along with TAAS information, to provide a comprehensive assessment system for LEP students. The AEIS Report Glossary states, "The RPTE is constructed with items from each of three levels of proficiency: Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced. LEP students in Grades 3-12 are required to take the RPTE until they achieve advanced proficiency. Once students achieve a rating of Advanced they are required to take the TAAS in subsequent years." **Exhibit 2-22** shows the percentage of students who moved from a level of Beginning on the 2000 RPTE to each of the three levels on the 2001 test. In LCISD, 10.7 percent of students that were at a Beginning or Intermediate level in 2000 progressed to the advanced level. This is the lowest percent of improvement as compared to the state, the peer districts and Region 1.

Exhibit 2-22
Reading Proficiency Test in English
2000-01

District	RPTE progress from Beginning		
	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Raymondville	33.3%	25.0%	41.7%
La Feria	36.0%	40.0%	24.0%

Progreso	45.5%	38.6%	15.8%
Rio Hondo	51.2%	34.1%	14.6%
Santa Rosa	53.1%	34.4%	12.5%
Lyford	46.4%	42.9%	10.7%
Region 1	54.7%	32.3%	13.0%
State	44.8%	36.1%	19.1%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

The 2001-02 district improvement plan states that the district will implement a special programs evaluation plan using the TEA District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) monitoring instruments. At the time of the TSPR site visit, district staff were in the process of collecting data and documentation for this process.

LCISD's 2000-01 Bilingual/ESL evaluation report identified program weaknesses at the high, middle and elementary schools. Problems identified included a lack of opportunity for bilingual teachers to meet and plan together and a lack of community participation in the program.

District staff said the district plans to better serve LEP students in elementary school through implementing a *Two-way Bilingual Program* with the help of Region 1. The goal of this program is to produce truly bilingual students by teaching the core content areas in both languages to all students. The program has been successfully implemented in the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, a district southwest of Lyford. The district plans to implement this program beginning with pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade in Fall 2002 and to gradually expand to second, third, fourth and fifth grades.

Several sources are available to educators to improve reading skills for LEP students. The Handbook for Implementation of Bilingual and English as a Second Language Programs is a comprehensive guide available through TEA and Region 19. The Texas Center for Bilingual Education offers information regarding successful implementation of programs.

Exhibit 2-23 lists several Internet sites and articles for developing reading literacy in bilingual students.

Exhibit 2-23
Reading Practices for Limited English Proficient Students

Article/Site	Web Site
An Introduction to Whole Language Reading Instruction	http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/ieo/bibs/whole.html
Phonics versus Whole Language (Education Week)	http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/phonics.htm
Effective Interventions to Improve Students' Reading Skills (Curry)	http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/cise/ose/information/interventions.html
English Language Development: Approaches and Strategies that Work with LEP Students (NCBE)	http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/classics/focus/12eld.htm
Integrating Language and Content Instruction: Strategies and Techniques (NCBE)	http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/pigs/pig7.htm
Effectively Teaching Children to Read	http://www.interlog.com/~klima/ed/readit.html
Descrubiendo La Lectura/Discovering Reading (ED)	http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ModStrat/pt3e.html
The Literacy Club: A Cross-Age Tutoring/Paired Reading Project (NCBE)	http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/pigs/pig13.htm
Using Children's Literature to Promote the Language Development of Minority Students (JEILMS)	http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/miscpubs/jeilms/vol14/coonrod.htm

Source: <http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/pathways/reading/practices.htm>.

Recommendation 14:

Review the district's bilingual/English as a Second Language evaluation findings and develop a plan to address program weaknesses.

This plan should specifically address how the district will improve reading skills for LEP students and be included in the district and campus improvement plans. It should incorporate the findings and recommendations in the 2000-01 LCISD bilingual/ESL self-evaluation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction to review the bilingual/ESL self-evaluation and implement recommendations.	April 2002
2.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction obtains assistance from Region 1 staff and visits neighboring successful bilingual programs identified by Region 1 staff and by the Texas Center for Bilingual Education.	May 2002
3.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction includes in the 2002-03 district and campus improvement plans, goals, strategies and timelines for improving bilingual/ESL instruction.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished using existing resources.

Special Education

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires districts to provide appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of the handicap. Education is to be provided in the least restrictive environment and students with disabilities are to be included in state and district assessment programs. This law, which is designed to protect children and parents in the educational decision-making process, requires districts to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child. The IEP should include the input of regular education teachers and be clearly aligned with those of children in general classrooms.

LCISD is a member of the WIL-CAM Pupil Services Cooperative (Cooperative). The Cooperative is one of 137 shared service arrangements in the state designed to assist member districts in serving and providing educational services to all students with disabilities, ages birth through 21. The Cooperative includes six school districts: Lasara, Raymondville, Rio Hondo, San Perlita, Santa Rosa and Lyford. The management board of the Cooperative is composed of the superintendents from each member school.

Raymondville ISD serves as the fiscal agent for the Cooperative. As fiscal agent, Raymondville is responsible for making all applications necessary to qualify and receive funds for the Cooperative and for preparing all budgets on behalf of the Cooperative.

The Cooperative provides a wide range of services that include initial student assessment, equipment, special units, staff training, software and legal updates. In addition, the Cooperative contracts with a psychiatrist, psychologists, counselors, physical and occupational therapists.

While the Cooperative provides these services for LCISD, district staff hire their own teachers and ensure that the program is appropriately implemented. Implementing pullout or inclusion programs and providing adequate instruction is a local school responsibility and decision.

Exhibit 2-24 shows LCISD, Region 1, the state and peer district special education program enrollment information in 2000-01 as reported in AEIS. Overall, the number and percent of LCISD students receiving special education services and the number of special education teachers reported in the AEIS reports is similar to Region 1 and slightly lower than the state.

Exhibit 2-24
Special Education Student Enrollment
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Special Education Students		Special Education Teachers* (FTEs)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
La Feria	248	8.9%	17.5	9.1%
Lyford	166	10.9%	9.1	8.0%
Progreso	152	7.4%	9.7	6.4%
Raymondville	295	11.1%	17.0	8.7%

Rio Hondo	262	13.0%	16.3	11.6%
Santa Rosa	125	10.9%	6.0	6.9%
Region 1	31,086	10.3%	1,638.1	8.3%
State	483,422	11.9%	27,298.0	9.9%

*Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.
Expressed in full-time equivalents.*

Exhibit 2-25 presents the number of students enrolled in special education by type of disability. The majority of the 90 students have a learning disability. Seventeen students have speech impairments and six have emotional disturbances.

Exhibit 2-25
LCISD Students Enrolled in Special Education
Number of Students by Disability
October 2001

Type of Disability and Number of Students	
Orthopedic Impairment	**
Other Health Impairment	10
Hearing Impairment	**
Visual Impairment	**
Deaf/Blind	**
Mental Retardation	13
Emotionally disturbed	6
Learning Disabled	90
Speech Impairment	17
Medically Fragile	**
Autism	**
Developmentally Delayed	**
Traumatic Brain Injury	**
Total	160

Source: WIL-CAM Pupil Services Cooperative, Raymondville, TX. 2001.
 **Indicates number is less than five.

The 2000-01 AEIS report, the most current report as of the date of this publication, shows that LCISD spends \$3,803 per special education student. This amount is higher than four of its peer districts and the state and region averages per student (**Exhibit 2-26**).

Exhibit 2-26
LCISD Budgeted Expenditures for Special Education
LCISD vs. Peer Districts
2000-01

District	Number of Students Enrolled	Budgeted Special Education Expenditures	Percent of Budgeted Expenditure	Per Student Expenditure
Rio Hondo	262	\$1,138,524	15.5%	\$4,346
Lyford	166	\$631,216	11.1%	\$3,803
Raymondville	295	\$1,030,552	11.0%	\$3,493
Progreso	152	\$488,726	6.8%	\$3,215
La Feria	248	\$746,031	7.5%	\$3,008
Santa Rosa	125	\$385,720	8.8%	\$3,086
Region 1	31,086	\$104,906,894	10.4%	\$3,375
State	483,422	\$1,739,689,310	12.6%	\$3,599

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.
 Raymondville ISD is fiscal agent for the WIL-CAM Pupil Services Cooperative.

Exhibit 2-27 contains definitions of the primary instructional arrangements proved by TEA.

Exhibit 2-27
Instructional Arrangement Definitions
1999-2000

Description of Basic Programs

- *Mainstream* - To ensure the least restrictive environment appropriate for each student, district personnel first consider providing services in regular education with supplementary aids. Students with disabilities who spend all of their classroom hours in a regular classroom are called "mainstreamed."
- *Resource* - These students have a combination of regular classes and resource classes. In a resource class, some students are pulled out from the regular classroom for specific instruction or tutoring, while other students spend most or all of the instructional day in the resource classroom.
- *Vocational Adjustment class (VAC)* - This setting provides educational and vocational services to eligible secondary students. Students are instructed in job readiness skills.
- *Self-Contained classes* - If a student's disability is so severe that satisfactory education cannot take place in a regular classroom, the student will be served in a separate "self-contained" classroom.
- *Behavior Management Units* - (BIP) Special education students who are disruptive in the regular classroom are sent to the BIP, a separate classroom that serves as an in-school alternative placement classroom.
- *Adaptive Physical Education* - These classes provide specialized physical education curriculum for students who are unable to benefit from the regular physical education program.
- *Homebound* - This program provides at-home services for students at all grade levels that cannot attend school because of illness, injury or expulsion.

Source: TEA Division of Special Education.

FINDING

LCISD participates in the WIL-CAM Pupil Services Cooperative to provide service to students needing special education services. The most valuable services mentioned by staff include the availability of expert diagnosticians, therapists and psychologists, training materials and literature related to various special education topics, and periodic updates to current state and federal regulations and laws. The Cooperative also provides special education units that meet the needs of all LCISD students. The district works closely with Region 1 to obtain staff development for special education teachers.

Community feedback indicated that the special education program in LCISD is respected. In a TSPR survey, 80 percent of administrators and support staff agreed or strongly agreed that the district has an effective special education program. Only 4 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The Cooperative provides a technology based education system, INVEST Learning, for every member district. The Cooperative purchased both the hardware and the software for each of the member districts. The program was installed on a server so additional computer stations can be added in the future.

COMMENDATION

LCISD provides high-quality services to the district's special education population and saves money by participating in the WIL-CAM Pupil Services Cooperative.

FINDING

WIL-CAM staff and Lyford teachers developed and implemented a pre-referral criteria checklist that has resulted in decreased numbers of students being referred for special education.

The pre-referral system for special education is designed to help ensure that all reasonable alternatives are tried before a student is referred for special education services. The high school principal said that this system was established because the district was referring a large number of students for special education services. The services provided to students during the pre-referral process now are tracked. The tracking system is used to ensure that educational efforts and strategies are provided and/or considered for the student prior to referral to special education. These efforts also are documented for future reference.

To serve the multiple needs of all students with disabilities and to comply with IDEA's requirements (derived from Public Law 101-15, the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), an effective special education program should implement pre-referral intervention practices in regular education. When a student experiences an academic problem in the regular education program, an intervention can and should occur to solve the problems. If steps taken to solve the problem by the regular education teacher do not produce results, the problem should be referred to special education staff. If, after providing pre-referral services, students still need to be referred for special education services, the teachers must meet with the campus administrator.

COMMENDATION

LCISD's pre-referral system for students has decreased the number of students being referred for special education services.

Gifted and Talented

Texas state law requires all school districts to identify and provide services for gifted and talented students. Section 29.122 of the Texas Education Code states that school districts "shall adopt a process for identifying and serving gifted and talented students in the district and shall establish a program for those students in each grade level." In 1990, the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*. This plan is a guide for meeting the law's requirements. In 1996, the SBOE updated the plan to incorporate Texas Education Code Section 29.123 requirements. The updated plan forms the basis for program accountability for state-mandated services for gifted and talented students.

Exhibit 2- 28 shows enrollment figures and expenditures for the gifted and talented program in LCISD and its peer districts. LCISD ranks fifth among its peer districts in the expenditure amount per student (\$156). This amount is significantly lower than the state and Region 1 average expenditure per gifted and talented student.

Exhibit 2-28
Number and Percent of Gifted/Talented Students and Teachers
Budgeted Expenditures
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

District	G/T Student Enrollment		G/T Teachers*		Expenditures for G/T	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Expenditure	Per Student
Raymondville	97	3.7%	8.9	4.6%	\$601,398	\$6,200
La Feria	258	9.3%	14.5	7.5%	\$58,062	\$225
Santa Rosa	50	4.3%	0	0%	\$32,349	\$647
Rio Hondo	180	9.0%	10.8	7.7%	\$36,104	\$201
Lyford	126	8.3%	1.3	1.2%	\$19,594	\$156
Progreso	105	5.1%	3.5	2.3%	\$3,300	\$31
Region 1	26,583	8.8%	828	4.2%	\$17,391,337	\$654
State	342,840	8.4%	6,099	2.2%	\$245,961,232	\$717

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

*Expressed in Full Time Equivalents.

LCISD begins screening students for GT services in pre-kindergarten and offers a GT curricula in kindergarten through twelfth grades. At the elementary level there are two GT trained teachers per grade level. In kindergarten through third grade, students identified as GT are placed with one of the GT trained teachers. Students in the fourth and fifth grades work on special projects and meet as a group with one of the GT teachers as needed to complete their work. Middle school gifted students are served through GT/honors courses in English, Math Science and Social Studies. The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction said that teachers hold higher expectations of GT students and modify honors curricula to challenge these students. High school students are served through Pre-AP (Advanced Placement) and AP classes in English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Advanced students also are able to obtain dual high school/college credit courses through the College Connections Program offered through Texas State Technical College and through the Long Distance Learning program offered through the University of Texas Pan-American.

The district is a member of the gifted and talented cooperative offered through Region 1. Through this cooperative arrangement, the Region provides training and assistance to district staff.

FINDING

The district does not have updated curriculum guides for the gifted and talented program. The teachers compile teaching strategies and materials from the Internet and other sources.

Gifted students at the high school level are served through AP courses. The percent of students completing advanced courses is low. Only 11.3 percent of Lyford students completed advanced courses, compared with more than 19 percent in Region 1 and 20 percent statewide. Two peer districts, Raymondville and Progresso had more than 40 percent of students completing advanced courses. **Exhibit 2-29** also shows that while the percent of LCISD students taking the SAT/ACT test is similar to the state, the percent of these students that score above the criteria is lower than the state, Region 1 and one peer district.

Exhibit 2-29
Percent of Students Completing Advanced Courses
LCISD, Peer Districts and the State
2000-01

District	Complete Advanced Course	Rec High School Program	Take ACT/SAT	Percent Above Criteria ACT/SAT
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Rio Hondo	9.6%	0.0%	69.1%	10.4%
Lyford	11.3%	56.0%	63.0%	6.3%
Santa Rosa	18.6%	21.5%	54.2%	3.1%
La Feria	19.3%	47.2%	47.0%	4.8%
Raymondville	44.7%	59.0%	52.4%	4.5%
Progreso	47.0%	51.4%	42.4%	0.0%
Region 1	19.7%	55.7%	51.9%	10.8%
State	20.1%	38.6%	62.2%	27.3%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

The Gifted and Talented program is one of the many programs under the direction of the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction. She relies on school principals and services from Region 1 to assist with program implementation, development and staff training.

The Texas Association for Gifted and Talented Students (TAGT) (www.txgifted.org) offers a variety of publications and training materials to help schools districts improve and implement gifted and talented programs. The association also provides several staff development opportunities for teachers and coordinators.

Other pilot projects in the state are combining technology and educational delivery for gifted and talented students. As part of the Comptroller's e-Texas initiative, four school districts, Paris, Plainview, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo and Donna are participating in a pilot Internet program designed to take advantage of the technology offered in the 21st century that can open many learning opportunities for Texas' students. The project is coordinated by the Comptroller's office with the help of The University of Texas' High School Distance Learning Center, the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, IBM and Cisco Systems. IBM is providing laptop computers, a server and special software to each participating school district. Cisco Systems will provide technical support to access the Internet. Both companies have been successful nationally and internationally with education-related projects. This initial pilot project specifically targets gifted and talented students.

Region 1 and 3 participating school districts: Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District, La Feria Independent School District and La Villa Independent School District have been charged with establishing and operating a model Gifted and Talented/Bilingual Program for students. Through a restructuring process teachers, counselors, administrators and

parents will collaborate to review, evaluate and use traditional and non-traditional assessment and identification processes among potentially gifted and talented students. The three participating school districts will work with nationally recognized researchers and educators to develop and restructure the gifted education curricula and accompanying materials.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

C. SPECIAL PROGRAMS (Part 2)

Recommendation 15:

Fully implement the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*.

Full implementation of the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* will result in a cohesive program. This recommendation can be accomplished by following the objectives as activities set forth in the district improvement plan.

In addition, the district should actively pursue a relationship with neighboring districts to create an Advanced Academics Cooperative. Through this cooperative, districts could share teachers, curriculum, distance learning courses and other resources. A summer exchange program would help gifted and talented teachers. Because the development of a cooperative arrangement is more long-term, the bulk of the implementation strategies and fiscal estimates are based on an internal development.

The district should use the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (<www.txgifted.org> and Internet sources for program development and funding. See <www.millville.cache.k12.ut.us/tag/gifted2.htm>, the Gifted Resource Page at <www.eskimo.com>, and the National Association for Gifted Children at <www.nagc.org>.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the gifted and talented committee determines the extent to which each school in the district is implementing the recommendations in the <i>Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students</i> (State Plan.)	June 2002
2.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the gifted and talented committee develop a three-to-five year plan for achieving exemplary status as outlined in the State Plan and secures staff and board approval.	Ongoing
3.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the gifted and talented committee develop measures to ensure that the district follows the State Plan and principals incorporate these measures into the campus improvement plans.	August 2002
4.	The superintendent takes the lead in approaching neighboring districts to create the means to share teaching staff, services and expertise.	Ongoing
5.	The gifted and talented committee contacts other school districts with exemplary, cost-effective, gifted and talented programs and other Regions that have Advanced Academic Cooperatives for gathering best practices.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

For this recommendation, \$1,200 is set aside to cover travel expenses and registration fees for one state conference per year.

Recommendation	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Fully implement the <i>Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students</i> .	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)	(\$1,200)

Accelerated Instruction

In addition to the regular classroom instruction program, Section 42.15 of the Texas Education Code requires that schools provide accelerated or compensatory educational opportunities for students identified as "at-risk" of failure to complete school. The purpose of accelerated or compensatory education is increase the graduation rate and the academic performance of at-risk students.

To serve at-risk students, schools must identify all of the students that fit the at-risk criteria. Schools can develop individual criteria, or can use the criteria provided by the state. The following are the identification criteria listed in TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* for identifying at-risk students.

Grades 7 through 12

- Was not advanced from one grade level to the next for two or more school years;
- Has mathematics or reading skills that are two or more years below grade level;
- Did not maintain an average equivalent to 70 in two or more courses;
- Is not maintaining an average equivalent to 70 in two or more courses;
- Is not expected to graduate within four years of the date the student begins ninth grade;
- Did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument (TAAS); or
- Is pregnant or a parent.

Pre-kindergarten through Grade 6

- Did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or an assessment instrument at the beginning of the school year;
- Did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument (TAAS);
- Is a student of limited English proficiency;
- Is sexually, physically or psychologically abused; or
- Engages in conduct described by Section 51.03, Texas Family Code.

In addition, several federal government funds are available and distributed based on the poverty level in the geographic area in which the school district is located. Schedule 5B of the Federal Title I, Part A application requires districts to rank their schools based on the percent of students in the free- and reduced-lunch program. Title I, Part A funding is for helping disadvantaged children at risk of school failure; Title I, Part C is for education of migrant students. Though funds are distributed based on the number of economically disadvantaged students, the students served are selected based on educational need, not economic state. Title II, Part B, Dwight D. Eisenhower funds is for professional development;

Title IV is for safe and drug-free schools; Title VII provides bilingual and English as Second Language instruction for limited English proficient students, and Title VI is for innovative education programs strategies. These funds were first authorized in 1965 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was last reauthorized in October 1994. The amended law allows a school to be designated as a Title I, Part A, school-wide program if 50 percent or more of students at the school or in the attendance zone are low income. In LCISD, all schools are designated Title I, Part A school-wide programs. In school-wide programs, funds can be used throughout the school to assist the entire educational program as long as the needs of the target students are met.

In Texas, state-funded compensatory programs began in 1975 with the passage of House Bill 1126. In 1997, Section 42.152 of the Texas Education Code includes reporting and auditing systems covering the appropriate use of compensatory education allotment funds. Senate Bill 1873 requires state compensatory funds, like federal Title I funds, to be supplemental in nature. **Exhibit 2-30** shows the amount of money LCISD receives in compensatory funds.

**Exhibit 2-30
LCISD Federal and State Program Funds
2000-01**

Fund	2000-01
Title I, Regular	\$606,877
Title I, Migrant	\$95,545
Title IV	\$10,505
State Compensatory	\$696,083

Source: LCISD Budget Office, 2001.

FINDING

LCISD implements a variety of educational support programs targeted for students at-risk of school failure. As a district-wide Title I school, LCISD follows the eight components of an effective Title I, Part A school wide program listed in **Exhibit 2-31**.

**Exhibit 2-31
Required Components of a School-Wide Program
Title I, Part A Program**

Program

- | |
|--|
| 1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school that is based on information on the performance of children in relation to the state content and student performance standards. |
|--|

2. School wide reform strategies that:
 - a. Provide opportunities for all children to meet the state's proficient and advanced levels of student performance.
 - b. Are based on effective means of improving children's achievement.
 - c. Use effective instructional strategies that:
 - Increase the amount and quality of learning time, such as extended school year, before- and after-school, and summer school programs.
 - Help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum.
 - Meet the educational needs of historically underserved populations.
 - d. Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of children of target populations of any program that is included in the school- wide program, and address how the school will determine if these needs are met. These programs may include counseling and mentoring services, college and career preparation, such as college and career guidance, services to prepare students for school-to-work transition, and the incorporation of gender equitable methods and practices.
 - e. Are consistent with, and are designed to implement, the state and local improvement plans, if any, approved under Title III of Goals 2000.
3. Instruction by highly qualified professional staff.
4. Professional development for teachers and aides, and where appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, principals, and other staff to enable all children in the school-wide program to meet the state's student performance standards [in accordance with P.L. 103-382, sections 1114(a)(5) and 1119].
5. Strategies to increase parental involvement, such as family literacy services.
6. Strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start and Even Start, to local elementary school programs.
7. Steps to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of assessments.
8. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering any of the state's standards during the school year will be provided with effective, timely additional assistance. The assistance must include:
 - a. Measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assistance.
 - b. To the extent the school determines it to be feasible using Part A funds, periodic training for teachers in how to identify difficulties and to provide assistance to individual students.

Source: TEA, Student Support. <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.support/>. 2001.

Exhibit 2-32 lists several programs that are available for students in LCISD.

Exhibit 2-32
LCISD Sample of Compensatory Education Programs
2000-01

Program
Even Start

Success for All Reading Program
Optional Extended Year
GEAR UP
Martin Cavazos Literacy Center
Ninth Grade Initiative
Drug-Free Schools
Rural Systemic Initiative
Tutorial Assistance Grant Program
Full Day Kindergarten
Parent Education and Pregnancy
Migrant Education Program

Source: LCISD Budget Office. Budget Director. Preliminary Budget 2001-02.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has implemented a comprehensive accelerated/compensatory education program to meet the needs of its students.

FINDING

Sebastian/Lyford's Elementary campus improvement plan effectively addresses cost and personnel attributed to the compensatory and accelerated instructional program. Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 19 TAC Chapter 109, Subchapter (b), requires districts to follow specific guidelines on reporting procedures and allocation of compensatory education funds. The rules state that:

"Each district shall ensure that supplemental direct costs and personnel attributed to compensatory education and accelerated instruction are identified in district and/or campus improvement plans at the summary level for financial units or schools. Each district shall maintain documentation that supports the attribution of supplemental costs and personnel to compensatory education. Districts must also maintain sufficient documentation supporting the appropriate identification of students in at-risk situations, under criteria established in TEC Section 29.091."

Sebastian/Lyford Elementary improvement plan identifies areas of need and measurable objectives. Each section links action plans to a district goal and a campus long-range goal. Each goal provides information regarding objectives, strategies, persons responsible, timeline, resources and evaluation action plans.

COMMENDATION

LCISD Sebastian/Lyford campus improvement plan is an effective resource for improved student performance.

FINDING

The middle school receives almost twice the allocation of state compensatory education (SCE) funds as compared to Lyford Elementary School. The state allocates these funds to school districts based on the number of students that qualify for free or reduced meals. These funds are for reducing the dropout rate and increasing the academic performance of students identified as "at risk" of dropping out of school. At the elementary level, poor performance on assessments can be used to identify "at-risk" students. In 2001, LCISD had a 75 percent passing rate in TAAS reading scores at third grade. While this is a significant increase from the 62 percent passing rate in the previous year, it is still below desired standards. The state also considers limited English proficient students at risk of dropping out of school. Lyford elementary has 24 percent identified as LEP while the middle school has 13 percent. In addition to the state criteria for identifying "at risk" students, the district may develop local criteria for allocating state compensatory funds. This criteria must be approved by the board and is not to exceed 10 percent of the total state allocation.

Exhibit 2-33 shows that in 2000-01, Lyford Middle School received \$232,627 compensatory funds and enrolled 287 economically disadvantaged students. Lyford Elementary received approximately one-half of this amount, \$121,242, but enrolled almost twice as many economically disadvantaged students, 464. As a result, Lyford Middle School received \$811 compensatory dollars per economically disadvantaged student and Lyford Elementary received \$261.

**Exhibit 2-33
LCISD Campuses, Economically Disadvantaged Students and Compensatory Funding
2000-01**

School	Number of Economically disadvantaged students	Percent of Economically Disadvantaged students	Number of Teachers by Compensatory Program	Compensatory Funding	Compensatory Funding per Student	Percent of total Instructional Expenditures	Total instructional Expenditure per student
Sebastian	133	87.5%	0	\$82,801	\$623	18.8%	\$3,015
Elementary	464	83.9%	0	\$121,242	\$261	6.2%	\$3,657
Middle school	287	83.2%	0	\$232,627	\$811	17.3%	\$4,034
High School	356	76.4%	2	\$113,047	\$318	5.7%	\$4,371
District	1,240	81.8%	1.8	\$549,717	\$443	9.6%	\$3,903

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

The number of economically disadvantaged students is determined by averaging the best six months enrollment in the national school lunch program or free or reduced-price lunch for the preceding school year. In LCISD, 81.8 percent of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged. In

2000-01, LCISD received \$549,717 in compensatory funds. The amount of compensatory funds received at each school reported in the 2000-01 AEIS reports is shown in **Exhibit 2-33**, as well.

Based on Texas Education Agency's compensatory guidelines, school districts are allowed to concentrate compensatory funds on one or on a small number of schools that serve at-risk students or that support specific programs. Districts are also required to evaluate program effectiveness, to include level of improved student academic performance and make adjustments as appropriate. Plans for how SCE funds will be allocated and their use evaluated should be included in the District (DIP) or Campus Improvement Plans (CIP). While LCISD complies with evaluation-related data requests required by the Texas Education Agency, it does not comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness the various educational programs funded by state compensatory and federal funds, nor does it include a description of how SCE funds will be allocated and evaluated in the DIP or middle and high school CIPs.

Student performance measures in LCISD, particularly performance on TAAS, indicate that, overall, LCISD middle and high school students perform better than do elementary level students. TAAS scores also indicate that the district's mathematics scores are better than the reading scores.

Recommendation 16:

Locally evaluate the programs funded through state compensatory and federal Title I education and redirect additional funds to the elementary level for reading improvement.

The evaluations should examine whether current funding allocations are appropriate to improve student performance in the areas of greatest need as indicated in academic performance assessments. The evaluations should guide allocation of compensatory funds across all district campuses.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction evaluate all of the district's Title I and state compensatory funded programs to determine the effectiveness of each program.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent, the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction use the data collected to determine the most effective allocation of funds to ensure adequate funding in areas of greatest need.	July 2002
3.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction continue to monitor and evaluate program effectiveness.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Dropout Prevention and Alternative Education Programs

Ensuring that all students graduate from high school should be a primary goal of all schools. Accurately monitoring students who leave school is critical to districts achieving this goal. TEA requires districts to

report information on students who leave school. That information is used to determine a district's dropout rate. Districts must use the guidelines in the TEA Leaver Codes and Definitions to report information on students who withdraw from school. School districts must also develop a comprehensive dropout prevention plan that addresses how schools will work to prevent students from dropping out of school. **Exhibit 2-34** shows dropout and attendance rates, both annual and longitudinal (four-year rate). LCISD has an overall annual dropout rate that exceeds the state average. It is lower, however, than the average for Region 1, Progreso and Raymondville but is much higher than the rate for the remaining peer districts. The longitudinal rate is lower than all peers except Rio Hondo.

Exhibit 2-34
Annual Dropout and Attendance Rate
LCISD and Peer Districts
1999-2000

	Rio Hondo	Santa Rosa	La Feria	Lyford	Progreso	Raymondville	Region 1	State Avg.
Annual Dropout Rate	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%	1.5%	3.0%	3.8%	1.7%	1.3%
Longitudinal (Four year) Dropout Rate	4.3%	9.7%	7.0%	5.0%	12.1%	17.3%	8.5%	7.2%
Attendance Rate	96.2%	95.9%	96.1%	95.4%	96.1%	95.3%	95.9%	95.6%

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01. Dropout and attendance rates are from the 1999-2000 school year.

FINDING

LCISD has several programs designed to keep students engaged in school. These programs promote higher education, target pregnant teens and provide extra support to the ninth grade class in an effort to prevent students from dropping out of school.

GEAR UP is a federally-funded program that provides five years of services to a cohort of students. The program is currently in its second year, and the student cohort is in the eighth grade. Lyford participates in this program through a partnership with Region 1. This program supports students obtaining a higher education through counseling services, tutoring and college information. The GEAR UP staff plans programs designed to get students excited about school and about their futures.

The district implements the Pregnancy, Education and Parenting Program (PEP). This program offers individual and group counseling for pregnant students and helps students develop an individualized educational and career plan. The program aims to keep pregnant students enrolled in school.

Through the Ninth-Grade Success Initiative, extra support is provided to the in-coming ninth grade students to help ensure that these students stay engaged in school life. The program focuses on student achievement and lowering dropout rates at the ninth grade, a year identified in research as one in which the largest numbers of students leave school. Counselors and mentors visit in-coming ninth grade students while they are in the eighth grade. Each student is assigned mentor teachers to help with the

ninth-grade transition. Each high school teacher is assigned a group of approximately 10-15 students that they follow from ninth to twelfth grades. These teachers mentor their students, and serve as a contact between the students and other district personnel, including the counselor and the students' teachers. These mentors also help resolve school/family problems, as appropriate.

Through this initiative the district has succeeded in promoting 90 percent of its ninth grade class - surpassing its goal of 82 percent. It did this primarily through tutoring, and offering students a second chance to pass Algebra and English, both required to be promoted to the tenth grade. Many of the ninth-grade repeaters were promoted from a freshman to a junior classification because they had earned enough credits during their second year as freshman to be promoted to this level.

The LCISD police department also assists school district personnel in truancy-related issues. Officers visit students' homes to ensure that all students are attending school.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has implemented dropout prevention measures by targeting extra support services for students at risk of dropping out of school.

School to Career Education

All students, whether they continue their education after high school or not, eventually enter the workforce. The *State Plan for Career and Technology Education 2000-2002*, required under Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.182, was developed as a guide to assist school districts in their efforts to offer effective career and technology education programs that prepare students for further education and eventual employment. The plan is based on the premise that a rigorous academic foundation contributes to success in school and in life, that all students should be provided equal opportunities to succeed, and that career and technology education should complement and enhance academic preparation by enabling students to apply academic principles to a variety of community and career situations.

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) chapter 74 subchapter A requires school districts to offer career technology education courses selected from three of eight career and technology areas: agricultural science and technology, business, health science technology, home economics, technology/industrial technology, marketing, trade, and industrial and career orientation.

Exhibit 2-35 presents the number and percent of students enrolled in career and technology courses in LCISD, its peer districts, Region 1 and the state. The 22.2 percent of students enrolled in career and technology courses is similar to Santa Rosa ISD and Rio Hondo and is higher than Region 1 and the state average. LCISD's budgeted expenditure at \$1,007 per student is higher than the state and Region 1. Compared to the peer districts, LCISD ranks second in expenditures per student.

Exhibit 2-35
Number and Percent of Career and Technology Students and Teachers
Budgeted Expenditures
LCISD and Peer Districts
2000-01

	Career and Technology Student Enrollment		CATE Teachers*		Expenditures for CATE	
District	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Expenditure	Per Student
Raymondville	409	15.4%	9.7	4.9%	\$467,601	\$1,143
Lyford	337	22.2%	8.0	7.1%	\$339,250	\$1,007
Rio Hondo	384	19.1%	4.5	3.2%	\$383,799	\$999
La Feria	487	17.6%	7.4	3.9%	\$413,897	\$850
Progreso	542	26.4%	11.3	7.5%	\$393,326	\$726
Santa Rosa	258	22.4%	5.2	6.0%	\$135,495	\$525
Region 1	55,464	18.3%	874.0	4.4%	\$45,330,978	\$817
State	768,200	18.9%	11,811.0	4.3%	\$566,681,113	\$738

Source: TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

*Expressed in Full Time Equivalents.

Exhibit 2-36 is LCISD's 2001-2002 course guide. It includes course listings for Agricultural Science and Technology, Family and Consumer services, Office Education and Technology Preparation courses.

Exhibit 2-36
Lyford School to Career Program Offerings by Career Pathways
2000-2001

Agribusiness	Livestock Zoo Keeper
Course Offerings Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology Applied Agricultural Science and Technology Plant and Animal Production Personal Skill Development Animal Science Entrepreneurship in Ag\Food Technology	Course Offerings Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology Animal Science Introduction to Agricultural Mechanics Personal Skill Development Animal Production Agribusiness Marketing/Range Management
Veterinarian	Educator
Course Offerings Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology Animal Science Personal Skill Development	Course Offerings Keyboarding Personal Family Development Preparation for Parenting/Child Development Advanced Journalism

Wildlife Recreation Management Agribusiness Management and Marketing Animal Production Personal and Family Development	
Music	Business and Management
Course Offerings Band I, II, III, and IV	Course Offerings Keyboarding Record keeping Business Computer Information System II Accounting
Automotive Technology	Digital Imaging
Course Offerings Introduction to Transportation Small Engine Repair Auto Tech I or College Connection - Auto Tech I.	Course Offerings Personal Skills Development Business Computer Information Systems I College Connections Advertisement Design I, II
Health Occupations	Child Development/Care Services
Course Offerings Keyboarding Introduction Health Science/Medical Terminology Health Science/Medical Technology I, II, and III	Course Offerings Personal and Family Development Individual and Family Life/Consumer and Family Economics Preparation for Parenting/Child Development Nutrition and Food Science and Technology
Drafting and Design	Protective Services
Course Offerings Personal Skills Development Business Computer Information Systems I College Connections Drafting and Design I, II	Course Offerings Introduction to Criminal Justice Personal and Family Development Crime in America Basic County Corrections Officer

Source: Lyford CISD Pre-Registration Booklet, 2000-01.

FINDING

LCISD has made a strong commitment to provide a high quality career and technology program. While the school has some basic courses and programs already in place, it is actively pursuing articulation agreements, distance learning opportunities and dual-enrollment opportunities with Region 1 area colleges and technical schools. The district is part of the College Connection Program offered through the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and a dual credit program with Valley Baptist Hospital in Harlingen. Through this program, juniors and seniors who meet the criteria can concurrently accumulate both high school and college credits. To be eligible, students must have a minimum average of 80 in all

courses taught at grade level. **Exhibit 2-37** shows the courses and programs that are available through TSTC.

Exhibit 2-37
Texas State Technical College
Available Programs
2000-01

Advertising Design	Accounting II
Heating Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration	Electronics I
Automobile Collision Repair and Refinishing I	Machine Shop
Automotive Technician	Administrative Procedures I
Business Computer Information System II	Plant Maintenance I
Computer Programming I	Welding I
Engineering Computer Aided Drafting I and II	Aircraft Mechanic I
Building Trades I	Principles of Technology I
Energy & Environmental Technology	

Source: LCISD Pre-Registration Booklet, 2001-02.

LCISD offers The High School to University Program by Distance Learning. This program offers courses in U.S. History, English, college-level Algebra and Political Science. In addition, LCISD students can participate in the Teach for Texas Conditional Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to encourage students to become certified teachers and to be eligible to participate in the Texas Grant Award Program.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has made a commitment to develop, enhance and expand the career and technology program by offering a variety of courses, training and employment opportunities for LCISD students.

FINDING

While LCISD is taking the right steps to prepare students in many career areas that will enable students to gain entry-level employment in high-skill, high-wage jobs or continue their education, LCISD still lacks a comprehensive career and technology education program that pays particular attention to preparing students for 21st century employment. While the courses and course sequences offered at the high school in Agricultural Science and Family and Consumer Services are comprehensive and students interested in pursuing a degree in these areas can obtain a good foundation by taking these courses, only

a limited number of options exist for student interested in technology education. Courses involving Internet applications, like web design and web commerce, telecommunications and multimedia are not available in the program. Several students noted that there is limited access to computers and to the Internet. Another student said, "We need more computer classes...I'm interested in digital imaging and the school does not allow us to have that option."

The Technology Education Essential Knowledge and Skills adopted in 1997 is a guideline to assist communities in planning, developing and implementing Technology Education programs. It provides a framework that describes what students should know and be able to do in six technology content areas and recommends a coherent sequence of courses for middle and high school programs. TEA defined these six areas as: Bio-related Technology, Computer Technology, Construction Technology, Energy Power, Manufacturing Technology, and Transportation Technology. Sample trades include Electric Engineering Technician, Electrician, Computer System Analyst, Computer Programmer and Computer Assisted Design.

Santa Gertrudis ISD offers a four-year career/technology program that begins with basic computer application and graphic skills instruction and culminates with actual experience in business management and entrepreneurship. Students are organized into a company that builds and sells computers. The high school students produce, market, sale and service computers. Profits earned are placed in a scholarship fund for the student participants.

Recommendation 17:

Offer a school to career program that mirrors the current job market needs.

LCISD has opportunities to strengthen a program that provides an enormous benefit to students. The district may replicate best practices used in central Texas by Austin Community College and the local public school districts in its service area. Austin Community College has publications and additional information sources available on the website for the School Relations Office at <www.austin.cc.tx.us/highschl/>.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction directs the teacher in charge of the career and technology program to review all CATE course offerings and identifies areas that should be strengthened.	October 2002
2.	The teacher in charge of the career and technology program studies other career and technology programs in Texas schools that provide courses and career opportunities in the areas of need.	January 2003
3.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the teacher in charge of the career and technology program develop a plan for involving area businesses and universities.	February 2003
4.	The teacher in charge of the career and technology program recommends modifications to course offerings and develops a plan to include new courses.	March 2003
5.	The teacher in charge of the career and technology program and the budget director determine	April 2003

	the impact of recommendations on district resources.	
6.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction presents recommendation to superintendent and to school board for review and approval.	May 2003
7.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the teacher in charge of the career and technology program implement the plan.	August 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

D. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Providing a safe school requires a comprehensive program that includes prevention, early detection appropriate intervention and consequences for both internal and external threats to a safe and secure school. According to a TSPR report, *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School*, issued by the Comptroller's office in January 2000, criminal activity in schools is escalating.

In reviews of more than 30 school districts, TSPR has found that school districts are struggling to enforce state laws and that discipline is not evenly dispersed across or within districts. *Keeping Texas Children Safe in School* is a TSPR report designed to guide schools in developing effective safety and security programs. According to the report, an effective program of safety and security begins with an understanding of three key elements:

- Prevention, which is the foundation laid to deter crime and violence (such as published codes of conduct with clearly delineated expectations and punitive measures for violations);
- Intervention, which is stepping in before a situation goes to far (such as reminding students of the consequences of misbehavior); and
- Enforcement, which is what occurs in the aftermath (such moving a student to an alternative education program).

Exhibit 2-38 demonstrates TSPR's 10-step solution for a comprehensive and successful school safety program:

Exhibit 2-38 **TSPR 10 Steps to School Safety**

Key Elements	Steps	Processes and Practices
Prevention	Know your goals and objectives: where your district is going and what you want to accomplish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify roles and responsibilities. • Prepare a comprehensive plan.

	Establish clear expectations for students, parents, teachers and administrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the student code of conduct in compliance with the law, and make it clear. • Apply the code of conduct consistently. • Make sure everyone knows the rules.
	Address warning signs before they turn into trouble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what to look for; share information. • Take action.
Intervention	Look for trouble before it finds you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that detection takes many forms. • Restrict outsiders' access to students. • Establish an effective truancy program.
	Recognize trouble when you see it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know who is in your neighborhood. • Give students ways to deal with bad situations. • Identify students and families who need help.
	Have individuals in the right place at the right time to intervene.	
	Have a plan of action appropriate for the occasion, and practice it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans should be specific. • Rehearse the plan.
Enforcement	Leave no room for double standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the student code of conduct to set the standard. • Apply the code of conduct consistently.

	Ensure that discipline management extends inside and outside the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teachers and staff with appropriate training in discipline-management techniques. • Give teachers support when students persistently misbehave.
	Alternative programs are not just a matter of compliance with the law; they are many children's last chance at success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn what works and try to reproduce it. • Know the alternatives.

Source: TSPR: Keeping Texas Children Safe in School, January 2000.

The Texas Education Agency, in a 1994 policy research report, noted that as initiatives have been developed to deal with increasing safety issues, several themes have emerged, including:

- The importance of forming partnerships among schools, law enforcement, and social service agencies to deal with the problems and sharing information;
- The need for accurate record keeping and reporting of misbehavior at school, particularly of a criminal nature;
- The need to establish alternative education programs for students who are not successful in regular school environments;
- The need to recognize schools with effective safety and violence prevention programs; and
- The need for staff development to help educators manage critical situations in their schools.

Many of these initiatives are now underway. Schools are recognizing the importance of working more closely with community agencies. TEA and the Comptroller's office now collect and report more data on behavior and violence incidents on Texas campuses. Alternative programs were authorized with the 1995 revision of the Texas Education Code. The Comptroller's office now lists best practices of all types in its A+ Ideas for Managing Schools (AIMS) database, and school administrators have added safety and security training to their staff development agendas.

FINDING

In 2000, the district developed a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan Emergency Handbook. The police chief said that the previous plan was outdated, not comprehensive and not distributed to all district staff.

The police chief reviewed several district plans and visited with officers in other school districts. Through the developmental process, the police interviewed all district administrators and met with the various teams of teachers and principals and obtained their input. In addition, the district received a grant (\$3,500) to develop the handbook. The funds were used primarily for security equipment, like alarms and radios. Most custodians, bus drivers and maintenance technicians have a radio that can communicate with the police department.

School staff is pleased with the emergency handbook. One administrator said. "The crisis manual is good...we have fire and tornado drills and are about to have lock-down drill. There is a crisis committee with members from each school."

COMMENDATION

LCISD developed a useful, updated and comprehensive Crisis Management Plan Emergency Handbook to ensure that the school is as ready as it can be for any unforeseen emergency, crisis or security breach.

FINDING

In light of violent school incidents across the country over the last decade, LCISD has taken proactive steps to ensure the safety of the district's students and employees. LCISD has its own police department. In 2000, the district applied for and received a three-year grant from the Office of Community Policing Services (COPS) in School funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. The award start date was December 1999 and ends November 2002. The chief of police said the dates of the grant will be amended to read June 2000 to June 2003 to reflect the actual implementation date.

The department employs five peace officers: four officers and one police chief. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Office Standard and Education commissions the officers. The department has one police patrol vehicle. LCISD police officers work an average of 40 hours per week. Staff development is provided through several sources, including Sam Houston State University and the Lower Rio Grande Police Academy. Police officers also attend additional staff development provided by Region 1 or the school district. LCISD police officers are vested with all rights, privileges, obligations and duties of peace officers in the State of Texas. Officers have jurisdiction throughout the Lyford school district.

Overall, the police department is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of the school district. The overview of operations states, "The

Lyford CISD Police Department is a law enforcement agency dedicated to the safety needs of the students and staff. The department's mission is to provide a safe and productive environment for learning and working at the Lyford School District." Assignments are determined by school activities including class hours, school sponsored events (football games, basketball games, etc.) and at other times as needed. The district's police department has alleviated the district's need to hire outside security for extracurricular events. Following is a partial list of police officer duties.

- Patrol schools at all hours. During peak or high traffic time, before and after school, for instance, a greater number of officers patrol the school grounds.
- Patrol all school-sponsored events, like football games, back to school nights, etc. Using the district Master Schedule, the police chief coordinates with all school sponsored activities to ensure that all activities are covered.
- Routinely inspect alarms, doors and lighting.
- Assist principals with truancy officers for the district.

Exhibit 2-39 provides a summary list of the LCISD police department's activities for 2000-01.

**Exhibit 2-39
List of Activities
LCISD Police Department
2000-01**

	Activities
Calls for Service	Responded to 298 calls for service
Citations	Issued 88 citations, ranging from traffic infractions to violations of school policy
Arrests/Cases Filed	Nine cases were referred to the Juvenile Probation Office for prosecutions and two were filed with the District Attorney in Willacy County.
Presentations	Throughout the school year police officers presented and/or sponsored awareness programs regarding safety, drug and alcohol abuse and good conduct. Presentations were held at all LCISD schools.
Programs	Sponsored the Explorer Scout post. Program teaches good citizenship, leadership skills and career development.

Source: LCISD Police Department. Summary Report. 2000-2001 School Year.

For 2001-02, the police department plans to increase the number of education and prevention programs throughout the school district. The department will provide crime prevention programs to all grade levels and to LCISD staff. Additional education programs in crime prevention and substance abuse awareness also will be implemented.

LCISD staff and community members, overall, had positive comments regarding the presence of the police department. One community member said, "...Police are visible and are deterrents (to crime)." One administrator noted, "...we like the police force and want to keep it...Police on campus discourages problems and discipline in schools has improved...Reduced concern of outsiders being around the school. Police are visible around school and staff of five is right. Police provide security for after-school activities and are comforting to have at alternative education sight..." One parent noted, "Because Lyford now has a police department on-site, I feel more comfortable with our students and staff safety since they can respond much quicker." Another parent said, "Thanks to our own police department... I feel safe that my child attends school at Lyford."

COMMENDATION

LCISD has taken proactive safety and security measures by establishing an effective district police department.

FINDING

LCISD's disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) lacks organization and instructional rigor. The program is housed in a classroom in a separate facility within the campus grounds and is considered an in-school DAEP. One certified teacher supervises the program. Attendance of students placed in the DAEP is tracked back to the sending campus, the junior high or the high school. In 2000-01, there were 41 placements to the DAEP facility.

Students sit in individual cubicles and complete work that they receive from the regular classroom teacher. Each of the four core content areas (language arts, math, science and social studies) makes a teacher available at least once a week to help these students with their class assignments. These teachers visit the DAEP center to help students after the school day ends. The director of the program said that a special education teacher is assigned to the facility to help students, as needed. The DAEP teacher said that students who are far behind their peers in the regular classroom can

choose to work from course modules instead of from class assignments. These modules allow students to work at their own pace and facilitate completion of some classes that might otherwise have been failed.

The program does not provide any teacher-directed instruction, but the director of the program is available at all times to assist students.

Two computers are available at the center, but only one is available to students. The other sits on the teacher's desk. The DAEP teacher said that they do not have access to any computer-based curriculum. Some school districts use the PLATO Learning Systems. PLATO educational software is flexible and modular, which allows teachers to select and sequence instruction to match the objectives defined by lesson plans, standardized tests and individual learner needs. PLATO educational software assesses individual student skill levels and helps place them into individualized learning paths.

The DAEP operates from 1:00 to 8:00 p.m. Students must provide their own transportation and must bring their own lunch and dinner. On the day of the TSPR site visit to the center, approximately half of the students were absent. Because the DAEP is not considered a separate, off-campus facility, attendance is not counted for the individual center. Attendance for the center is reported back to the sending school. District staff indicated that it is difficult for some parents, especially parents who work during the day in other cities like Harlingen or Raymondville, to bring their students to school at 1:00 p.m.

Visits to other DAEP facilities in Texas indicate that, while the DAEP is a facility where students are placed as a punishment, staff must ensure that the academic needs of students continue to be met and should make every effort to ensure that students stay academically and socially engaged in school life. An instructional arrangement where students are required to sit in a cubicle for an extended period of time is not an effective way to engage students. This is particularly true of middle school teenagers. While the center does not provide any classes in physical education, the teacher said that sometimes he takes the students out of building for a short walk.

Although the district does have a student code of conduct, the DAEP program does not have any written descriptions or procedures. The district's student code of conduct presents updated legal information that is obtained from the Texas Association of School Boards. The code does not specifically address LCISD's DAEP program. The district improvement plan does not mention the DAEP program. There are no goals or objectives established for this program specifically.

Recommendation 18:

Implement a comprehensive and academically rigorous disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

The district should develop a plan to continue to provide a strong academic program to students in this discipline placement. Students are more likely to succeed in the regular classroom if they have not fallen behind academically. The district should explore a cooperative arrangement with neighboring districts to develop a comprehensive DAEP program if they cannot do it on their own.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction and the high school counselor to review the DAEP program.	September 2002
2.	The administrator for Curriculum and Instruction forms a DAEP advisory committee.	October 2002
3.	The DAEP advisory committee surveys neighboring school districts to see if any alternative education cooperative opportunities exist in Willacy County for LCISD students.	November 2002
4.	The DAEP advisory committee identifies DAEP program needs and makes recommendations for improved instructional delivery.	January 2003
5.	The superintendent presents findings to school board and seeks approval.	February 2003
6.	The superintendent implements the plan.	August 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD does not carry police professional liability insurance for its district police department. In June 2000, the district established a police department authorized under the Education Code §37.081. Funding for the police department was obtained through the U.S. Department of Justice "COPS In School Award" grant. The "approved budget" submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice for the grant includes \$2,000 per officer per year for liability insurance for five officers.

The board policy CKE (Local) specifically limits the jurisdiction of the district police officers to "all territory within the boundaries of the district and all property, real and personal, outside the boundaries of the district that is owned, leased, rented or otherwise under the district's control". The superintendent and district chief of police have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Willacy County Sheriff's Office that states "The Sheriff's Office and the School District Police agree to aid each other as requested and as each is capable. It is understood that the Sheriff's Office and the School District Police have concurrent jurisdiction with regard to law enforcement duties within Willacy County."

This agreement appears to expand the district's liability exposure to the entire county of Willacy. The district has liability exposures directly related to police operations. The district is relying on the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) General Liability coverage for its sole coverage for these exposures. The policy limits are \$1 million and covers all school district employees.

Recommendation 19:

Review law enforcement activities to determine if the district has sufficient liability insurance.

The district should review with legal counsel the law enforcement activities of the district police department and all memorandums of understanding with other entities to identify potential liability exposure and related costs.

Once the district's exposure to risk has been identified, the district should contact the TASB Risk Management Fund to determine if the current coverage is adequate.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent, business manager and police chief review current and possible future police activities identified in the district police manual, board policies and Memorandum of Understanding with Willacy County Sheriff's Office.	March 2002
2.	The superintendent and business manager review identified activities with legal counsel to determine potential liability exposure and costs that can result from these exposures.	April 2002
3.	The business manager contacts TASB to determine if present coverage and liability limits are adequate and obtains a quote for additional amounts of coverage, if needed.	May 2002

4.	The business manager and superintendent develop a recommendation to address the increased liability exposure created by police activities and submits it to the board.	June 2002
5.	The board reviews the recommendation and determines the course of action the district should take.	July 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews Lyford Consolidated Independent School District's (LCISD) financial management in the following sections:

- A. Financial Organization and Management
- B. Budgeting
- C. Tax Collection
- D. Risk Management
- E. Employee Benefits
- F. Cash Management
- G. Fixed Assets
- H. Purchasing

School districts that practice sound financial management will maximize local, state and federal revenues and allocate resources in an effective and efficient manner. Financial management includes budgeting accurately, reporting financial information, instituting sufficient internal controls, processing accounts payable and payroll in a timely manner, preparing for and working with external auditors and collecting district taxes.

Good financial management will ensure that a school district's educational and support programs receive adequate and equitable funding. District officials must work with district personnel, the board and the community during the budget process. This process requires the district to establish priorities for resources, to ensure internal controls are in place and to provide financial information in a useful format and in a timely manner. It also includes establishing an adequate fund balance to protect the district from unforeseen circumstances, such as a natural disaster or economic slowdown.

Within this overall financial framework, asset and risk management determines which risk-financing alternatives would provide the most protection for the district's assets at the lowest possible cost. To do this, a district must implement effective loss control programs and demonstrate that the district is a worthwhile risk. A district's fixed asset program ensures that fixed assets such as computers, VCRs and furniture are accounted for and safeguarded against theft and obsolescence. The goal of cash management is to place district funds in investments with good interest potential, while safeguarding the district's cash.

The district must also assure that goods and services are acquired at the best price, at the right time and in the right quantity to support the needs of the district and its personnel, while complying with local, state and federal

purchasing regulations. A district should cooperatively purchase goods with other entities when it is mutually beneficial to all parties.

BACKGROUND

School districts must maintain effective financial management systems in an environment regulated by state and federal laws. The Texas Education Code (TEC) spells out the specific requirements that school districts must comply with and authorizes the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish standards for all school districts. TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (FASRG) outlines accounting and reporting requirements for Texas school districts. Legally adopted policies, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) guidelines also affect school districts' financial management activities.

In LCISD, actual general fund revenues increased from \$10.6 million to \$11.1 million between 1997-98 and 1999-2000. This increase was primarily the result of a 5 percent increase in state revenues. Budgeted revenues for 2000-01 increased over the prior year's actual revenues by nearly 5 percent and budgeted revenues for 2001-02 are projected to increase by an additional 9 percent from 2000-01 for nearly \$12.8 million. **Exhibit 3-1** shows LCISD's actual general fund revenues for 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and the budgeted revenues for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

Exhibit 3-1
LCISD Actual and Budgeted General Fund Revenues
1997-98 through 2001-02

Funding Category	Actual 1997-98	Actual 1998-99	Actual 1999-2000	Budgeted 2000-01	Budgeted 2001-02	Percent Increase/ (Decrease) 1997-98 to 2001-02
Federal	\$2,093,393	\$2,238,496	\$2,220,451	\$2,247,333	\$2,269,174	8.4%
State	\$7,836,554	\$7,654,946	\$8,231,307	\$8,707,239	\$9,756,986	24.5%
Local	\$643,426	\$653,675	\$682,689	\$706,983	\$740,550	15.0%
Total	\$10,573,373	\$10,547,117	\$11,134,447	\$11,661,555	\$12,766,710	20.7%

Source: TEA, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 1997-98 through 1999-2000; LCISD Final Consolidated Amended Budget, 2000-01 and LCISD Approved Budget, 2001-02.

From 1997-98 to 1999-2000, LCISD's general fund expenditures per enrolled student increased from \$5,927 to \$7,090, a 20 percent increase. This compares favorably with LCISD's peer districts, which had increases ranging from 10 to 29 percent. **Exhibit 3-2** compares LCISD's per enrolled student general fund expenditures with those of its peer districts from 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-2
Actual General Fund Expenditures
Per Student for LCISD and Peer Districts
1997-98 through 1999-2000

District	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Increase/ (Decrease) 1997-98 to 1999-2000
Lyford	\$5,927	\$6,066	\$7,090	20%
Rio Hondo	\$6,166	\$6,234	\$6,782	10%
La Feria	\$4,767	\$5,011	\$6,155	29%
Raymondville	\$5,360	\$5,825	\$6,731	26%
Progreso	\$5,697	\$5,300	\$6,577	15%
Santa Rosa	\$6,552	\$6,681	\$7,863	20%

Source: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

TEA has set a rule of thumb for computing the optimum General Fund balance. The rule calls for the optimum unreserved, undesignated fund balance to equal the amount needed to cover deficits in the General Fund for the fall of the following fiscal year plus estimated average monthly cash disbursements of the General Fund for the nine months following the fiscal year. **Exhibit 3-3** shows that LCISD's fund balance has remained near optimum levels for the last three years.

Exhibit 3-3
LCISD General Fund Optimum Fund Balance Calculation
For Fiscal Years Ended August 31
1997-98 through 1999-2000

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Total General Fund Balance 8/31	\$2,792,180	\$3,501,795	\$3,226,070
Total Reserved Fund Balance	\$0	\$10,247	\$10,247

Total Designated Fund Balance	\$1,929,595	\$2,617,740	\$2,088,915
Estimated amount needed to cover fall cash flow deficits in the General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0
Estimate of one month's average cash disbursements during the regular school session	\$863,175	\$882,056	\$1,126,948
Optimum Fund Balance and Cash Flow	\$2,792,770	\$3,510,043	\$3,226,146
Excess/ (Deficit) Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance	(\$590)	(\$8,248)	(\$76)

Source: LCISD's Audited Financial Statements Exhibit C-3, 1997-98 through 1999-2000.

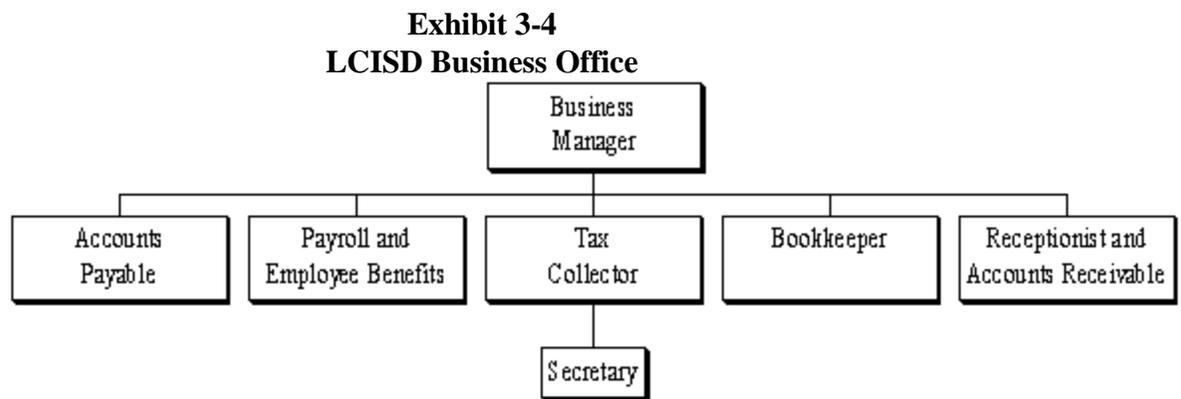
Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

LCISD's business office is responsible for financial reporting, accounting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, investing, risk management, employee benefits and fixed assets management. It is staffed with a full-time business manager, bookkeeper, accounts payable and employee benefits clerk, receptionist/accounts receivable clerk, payroll clerk, tax collector and tax office secretary.

Exhibit 3-4 shows the business office's organizational structure.



Source: LCISD Business Office.

FINDING

LCISD's activity funds are effectively accounted for within the business office. The funds are accumulated from various school-approved fund-raising activities, as well as from student dues or fees, commissions and investment interest. These funds are used to promote the general welfare of the school and the educational development and morale of all students. All funds collected by school district personnel from students are considered activity funds and must be handled through the activity fund accounts.

In LCISD, the Business Office receives and disburses all activity account funds. The activity fund sponsors are required to submit the collected funds to the central office receptionist/activity fund clerk, where the funds are counted while the sponsor is present. Next, a receipt is issued to the sponsor. Funds are maintained in a safe in the business office until a deposit is prepared. The receipts are entered into the district's activity fund

software. A monthly reconciliation report is prepared for each sponsor, containing a history of all receipts and expenditures to ensure the sponsor is aware of account activity.

The two common methods of activity fund accounting include centralized accounting, in which funds are controlled and disbursed through the school district's Accounting Department, or decentralized accounting, in which funds are accounted for and controlled at the various schools. Although common, decentralized systems give the central office less oversight of the funds, often in cash, which presents additional internal control problems. Centralized systems provide a comprehensive system for controlling funds.

There are many advantages to centralized activity fund accounting, including:

- better internal controls, assuming the school district has good internal controls, as all receipts and disbursements flow through one central accounting system;
- easier access to the activity fund data for internal and external audits;
- consistency in the manner in which repetitive matters are handled, such as issuing receipts for funds received from the activity fund sponsor;
- more consistency in applying district policies and procedures; and
- fewer requirements necessary for performing a funds audit. Participation of school principal or finance clerk is not necessary if the school principal or finance clerk are replaced.

COMMENDATION

LCISD's centralized activity fund accounting process provides internal controls that include receipts for all funds collected, automated accounting and monthly reports to sponsors.

FINDING

The business office job descriptions do not adequately describe the duties actually performed by business office personnel. The job description of the business manager does not reflect any of the risk management responsibilities currently performed by the business manager. The job description states that the supervisor's responsibility is to "Supervise and evaluate the performance of risk manager, purchasing manager, bookkeeper, accounts payable clerk and payroll clerk." Currently, the district staff does not include a risk manager or purchasing manager.

The payroll clerk job description identifies the following duties:

- prepare all payrolls including semimonthly, monthly and special payrolls;
- prepare payroll checks for all employees and distribute to campuses and departments;
- balance payroll earnings and deductions; make related transfers of funds and deposits;
- receive and audit timesheets for all district employees;
- prepare and submit payroll reports and forms including those required by the Internal Revenue Service, Texas Workforce Commission, Teacher Retirement System, Federal Insurance Contributors' Act, Medicare, and Texas Workers' Compensation Commission (TWCC);
- prepare and post all payroll changes including payroll deductions, salary changes, terminations and new employee information;
- maintain physical and computerized files including payroll records, absent-from-duty reports and service records;
- communicate with Human Resource Department, campus secretaries and employees to ensure accuracy of information reported; resolve payroll problems and inquiries;
- respond to requests from financial institutions regarding employment verification; and
- maintain confidentiality.

The payroll clerk performs the following additional duties:

- complete all workers' compensation reports; submit TWCC forms to the workers' compensation claims administrator and provide injured employees with medical authorization;
- process cafeteria plan election and revocation forms and monitor Section 125 compliance of revocation forms;
- provide notice to third-party administrator for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) events to ensure district compliance. These programs extend employee benefits to ex-employees for an established period;
- process tax shelter annuity agreements and collect maximum exclusion allowance forms and hold-harmless agreements from companies; and
- serve as liaison to employee benefit companies for employees.

The receptionist job description lists the following duties:

- receive and direct incoming calls, take reliable messages and route to the appropriate staff;

- greet and direct visitors to central administration office;
- assist public, staff and students as needed;
- maintain visitor log and issue visitors' passes;
- prepare mailing and labels using personal computer and typewriter;
- maintain computerized files using personal computer, including reports, employee roster and mailing lists;
- sort, distribute or deliver mail, messages and other documents;
- assist with preparation of material for mailing, including preparing labels and stuffing envelopes;
- provide clerical assistance as needed; and
- maintain confidentiality.

In addition, the receptionist duties also include:

- act as district cashier, receiving money, issuing receipts, preparing deposits and making bank deposits;
- enter all transactions into the centralized student activity fund accounting software;
- assist campus personnel by answering student activity fund-related questions; and
- provide sponsors with monthly student activity fund history and account balances.

By not aligning job descriptions to fit the tasks that employees are actually doing, it is difficult for the district to hold those employees accountable for their job. It also makes it difficult for employees to determine the priority of certain jobs. In addition, the business office cannot manage the workload of the employees because some staff members are performing duties that are not in their job descriptions, while others are only performing what is listed in their job description. This can result in duplication of effort and overlapping duties.

Recommendation 20:

Rewrite business office job descriptions to adequately describe the duties and responsibilities of the various positions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager conducts an evaluation of each business office position to determine the duties assigned to the position.	June 2002
2.	The business manager determines if current duties should be reassigned.	July 2002
3.	The business manager prepares new job descriptions.	July 2002

4.	The business manager gets approval for the recommendations of reassignments from the superintendent.	August 2002
5.	The business manager reviews job descriptions with employees.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

B. BUDGETING

Budgeting is the process of allocating resources to the prioritized needs of a school district. In school districts, the budget provides an important tool for the control, use and evaluation of a school district's resources. With the assistance of the accounting system, administrators are able to execute and control the activities within the budget and evaluate performance based upon comparisons between budgeted and actual operations.

The link between planning and budget preparation in school districts gives budgets a unique role in these organizations. Budgets are often considered the ultimate policy document since they are the financial plan a school district uses to achieve its goals and objectives.

A good budget should reflect:

- goods and services the district will produce;
- a school district's priorities;
- relative influence of various participants and interest groups in the budget development process; and
- the way a school district has acquired and used its resources.

The budget becomes a document reflecting school district administrators' accountability for fiduciary responsibility to citizens.

School district budgets should:

- be balanced so that current revenues are sufficient to pay for current services;
- be prepared in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local legal mandates and requirements; and
- provide a basis for the evaluation of a government's service efforts, costs and accomplishments.

FINDING

LCISD does not have a formal budget calendar. A formal budget calendar is an important planning tool that details specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines for all committee, central and campus-level staff. At a glance, it provides all of the necessary steps required to develop and adopt the budget within the time established by law. Although a formal budget

calendar is modified each year, a general guide can be developed to be used year to year to ensure that the process is on schedule.

The district's *Policies and Procedures Manual* contains a budget calendar, but it is general in nature and lists four major budget phases and no actual dates for when budget tasks should be accomplished.

The district's budget process represents the collective views of the board, school administrators, and campus leadership. It includes spending priorities determined by the administration, campus leadership and campus committees for meeting the board's goals and objectives. Without a formal budget calendar, it is difficult to set budget priorities that have a positive impact on students and the overall quality of instruction.

TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* provides a sample of a formal budget calendar. **Exhibit 3-5** is a modified version of a TEA sample.

**Exhibit 3-5
Budget Calendar Sample**

Target Date	Activity/Process	Responsibility
February 2002	Budget process approved.	Superintendent
February 2002	Projected enrollments and developed revenue estimates.	Business manager
March 2002	Budget process outlined to principals and staff.	Business manager
March 2002	Beginning of campus, departments and special program budget preparation	Principals, staff, campus improvement committee and other budget managers
April 2002	Completed budgets sent to the business office.	Budget managers
May 2002	Budgets compiled by the business office and non-allocated requests sent to the superintendent for review.	Business manager
May 2002	Complete prioritization of non-allocated requests.	Business manager
May 2002	Complete superintendent's review of preliminary district budget, personnel requirements. facility requirements	Superintendent

	and projected revenue.	
June 2002	Hold budget workshop.	Superintendent, business manager and school board
August 2002	Hold budget workshop.	Superintendent, business manager and school board
August 2002	Prepare newspaper notice of public hearing (notice must be published 10 days prior to public hearing).	Business manager
August 2002	Official public budget hearing.	Superintendent, business manager and school board
August 2002	Budget adopted.	Superintendent and school board

Source: TEA, Financial Accountability System Resource Guide.

Without a formal budget calendar, important dates may be forgotten; important tasks could be overlooked or performed out of sequence, slowing the entire process.

Recommendation 21:

Develop a thorough, formal budget calendar.

The district should develop a formal budget calendar based on the TEA model.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent and business manager develop a budget calendar and brief principals and staff.	April 2002
2.	The budget calendar is presented to the board for input and approval.	May 2002
3.	Principals and other budget managers are briefed on the calendar.	May 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

C. TAX COLLECTION

Texas public schools receive a majority of their revenue from local property taxes, the state's Foundation School Program (FSP) and the federal government.

The Texas Constitution authorizes local governments, including school districts, to levy property taxes. Public schools can levy taxes for maintenance and operations (M&O), and interest and sinking (I&S). M&O tax receipts are used to fund the general operating costs while I&S taxes are used to pay principal and interest payments on bonded indebtedness.

Exhibit 3-6 provides a comparison of LCISD's annual tax rate to peer districts for 1997-98 through 2000-01. For 2000-01, LCISD's M&O tax rate of \$1.50 was the highest tax rate of its peer districts and the district had no I&S because it has no outstanding bonded indebtedness. The average 2000-01 peer group tax rates are \$1.407 for M&O and 10.5 cents for I&S, which is a combined average tax rate of \$1.512.

Exhibit 3-6
Comparison of Total Tax Rates
1997-98 through 2000-01

District	1997-98		1998-99			1999-2000		2000-01
	M&O	I&S	M&O	I&S	M&O	I&S	M&O	I&S
La Feria	\$0.623	\$0.753	\$0.646	\$0.807	\$0.9227	\$0.531	\$1.387	\$0.099
Lyford	1.410	0	1.460	0	1.4800	0	1.500	0
Progreso	0.980	0.450	1.000	0.530	1.0500	0.500	1.475	0.105
Raymondville	1.320	0	1.320	0	1.3400	0.150	1.360	0.130
Rio Hondo	1.144	0.236	1.205	0.265	1.5000	0	1.322	0.157
Santa Rosa	1.406	0	1.325	0.082	1.3820	0.078	1.40	0.140
Average	1.147	0.240	1.159	0.281	1.2790	0.218	1.407	0.105

Source: TEA Financial Data Mart, District Profile Report, 1997-98 through 1999-2000 and TEA, AEIS, 2000-01.

Exhibit 3-7 compares the property value, total tax rates and projected property tax revenues for each year since 1997-98. The property values have been increasing annually, with a slight drop in value in 2000-01, while the tax rate has been steadily increasing.

Exhibit 3-7
LCISD Comptroller Certified Property Values and Projected
Property Tax Revenues
1997-98 through 2000-01

Year	Comptroller Certified Property Value	Total Tax Rate	Projected Property Tax Revenues
1997-98	\$112,593,373	\$1.410	\$1,587,567
1998-99	\$120,250,522	\$1.460	\$1,755,658
1999-2000	\$125,059,485	\$1.480	\$1,850,880
2000-01	\$117,853,360	\$1.500	\$1,767,800

Source: TEA Financial Data Mart, District Profile Report and TEA, AEIS, 1997-98 through 2000-01.

FINDING

LCISD lacks an aggressive tax collection board policy and as a result, the district does not receive enough of its property taxes from area taxpayers. In addition, the district maintains its own tax office, at a significant cost to the taxpayers of a small district. LCISD has the lowest collection rate of its peer districts. **Exhibit 3-8** is a comparison of taxes collected.

Exhibit 3-8
Percent of Tax Collections for Peer Districts
1999-2000

District	Tax Levy	Total Collections	Percent of Levy Collected
La Feria	\$1,893,488	\$1,776,622	93.8%
Lyford	\$1,743,629	\$1,613,449	92.5%
Progreso	\$709,113	\$735,746	103.8%
Raymondville	\$4,557,920	\$4,347,023	95.4%

Rio Hondo	\$1,359,989	\$1,303,196	95.8%
Santa Rosa	\$517,266	\$504,590	97.5%
Peer District Average Percentage of Levy Collected			97.3%

Source: TEA, Summary of Finance, 1999-2000.

LCISD employs a full-time tax collector and tax office secretary to collect the district's taxes for primarily three to four months of the year. The 2001-02 budgeted salaries for the tax office are \$51,485 including the salary of \$34,825 for the tax collector and \$16,660 for the tax office secretary. The district contracts with T.Y. Pickett & Company to provide tax collection software for the district to prepare the data, while the company prints the tax statements. The annual cost of the service is \$5,000 for software maintenance and use, and between 6 cents and 20 cents per line for processing and printing the tax statements, for a total annual average cost of about \$7,000 for the district's 6,312 tax accounts. LCISD spends \$2,146 a year to mail the tax statements.

The district's tax collection process begins when the county appraisal districts forward the notice of approved certified values to the Willacy County tax assessor/collector for consolidation into LCISD's tax roll. In August, the district publishes its notice of budget and proposed tax rate. The district adopts its budget before August 31. The district tax rate is approved after adopting the budget. This information is then forwarded electronically to T.Y. Pickett & Company. Once the district sets its official tax rate, the information is sent to T. Y. Pickett & Company, which prints the tax statements and forwards them to the district for mailing. The tax office collects the tax payments, provides receipts and deposits the proceeds into the district's depository bank.

As of December 2001, the district had 8,784 delinquent taxpayer accounts, with nearly \$1.5 million owed to the district and delinquencies owed dating back to 1981. Of the amount owed, 73 percent is one to five years delinquent; 16 percent is six to 10 years delinquent and 11 percent is 11 to 21 years delinquent. If taxes are not submitted in a timely manner, LCISD refers the delinquent taxes to its delinquent tax attorney who attempts to collect the past-due taxes. Since 1998, only five pieces of property have been sold to pay for delinquencies owed.

District schools suffer when taxes are not collected.

United ISD maintains a high property tax collection rate. The United ISD board adopted a local school policy that stated the district would publish in the newspaper the names of anyone who owes \$1,000 or more in

accumulated taxes. The ad is published each October. The list eliminates any homestead residents over 65 years old or any accounts that are in bankruptcy. The district sues anyone who owes \$500 or more and/or has three years of delinquent taxes whichever comes first. The district makes a diligent effort to notify those whose names will appear on the list before the list is published. The district was able to reduce its delinquent taxes the first year the district policy was implemented and reduced the number of names published from 1,700 the first year to 600 the following year. The policy allowed the district to clear up titles and receive information that is more current. The public's reaction has largely been positive.

The Willacy County tax assessor/collector charges 2 percent of the total tax levy to collect taxes on behalf of other entities.

Recommendation 22:

Eliminate the district's tax office and contract for the district's tax collection with the Willacy County tax assessor/collector.

The board should develop an aggressive tax collection policy, including a goal of increasing the tax collection rate by 2 percent each year and communicate this goal to the contracted collectors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager submits recommendation to eliminate the tax office and contract tax collection to a tax collection entity to superintendent.	April 2002
2.	The superintendent reviews recommendation and submits it to the board for review and approval.	May 2002
3.	The board approves recommendation and the superintendent notifies tax office personnel of the intention to eliminate their positions and close the tax office.	August 2002
4.	The district contracts with a tax collection entity to collect taxes.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The Willacy County tax assessor/collector's office will charge 2 percent of the total tax levied or \$35,356 (2 percent x \$1,767,800, which is the 2000-01 projected property tax revenues).

Eliminating the two tax office positions would save \$59,370 (\$51,485 salary + \$7,885 benefits). This includes the tax collector's salary plus

benefits of \$39,504 ($\$34,825 \times 8.11 \text{ percent} = \$2,824 + \$1,855$) and the tax office secretary's salary plus benefits of \$19,866 ($\$16,660 \times 8.11 \text{ percent} = \$1,351 + \$1,855$).

Without an internal tax office, the district would no longer need the services of T. Y. Pickett & Company and could avoid the annual expense of approximately \$7,000 for use of the company's software and tax statement preparation. In addition, LCISD would save \$2,146 in mailing expenses. The total savings from the elimination of the tax office would be \$68,516 (\$59,370 salaries and benefits + \$7,000 external contract + \$2,146 mailing costs).

Consequently, each year the district will save \$33,160 based on savings from closing the tax office of \$68,516 less the 2 percent charge for collections of \$35,356.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-7**, the 2000-01 property tax revenues were projected at \$1,767,800. Assuming property values remain fairly constant for the next five years, and LCISD increases its collection rate to 94 percent in 2002-03 and 96 percent the next year, the district would gain an additional \$26,517 [$(\$1,767,800 \times 94 \text{ percent} = \$1,661,732) - (\$1,767,800 \times \text{current } 92.5 \text{ percent} = \$1,635,215)$] in 2002-03 and \$61,873 [$(\$1,767,800 \times 96 \text{ percent} = \$1,697,088) - (\$1,767,800 \times \text{current } 92.5 \text{ percent} = \$1,635,215)$] in 2003-04 and 2004-05. At that point, when tax collections rise, the amount of delinquent taxes available for collection will automatically decline, so the revenue stream will level.

The total 2002-03 savings would be \$59,677 (\$33,160 from closing the tax office and contracting with Willacy County + \$26,517 in increased tax revenues), while the 2003-04 and 2004-05 savings would be \$95,033 (\$33,160 from closing the tax office and contracting with Willacy County + \$61,873 in increased tax revenues). In 2005-06 and 2006-07, the savings will be \$33,160 from closing the tax office and contracting with Willacy County.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Eliminate the district's tax office and contract for the district's tax collection with the Willacy County tax assessor/collector.	\$59,677	\$95,033	\$95,033	\$33,160	\$33,160

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

D. RISK MANAGEMENT

School districts and their employees face many risks and uncertainties that can lead to financial and personnel losses. An effective risk management program can limit a district's exposure to loss. The objectives of a school risk management program should include conserving district resources so more money can be available for education, protecting school district's assets and improving the quality of decision-making.

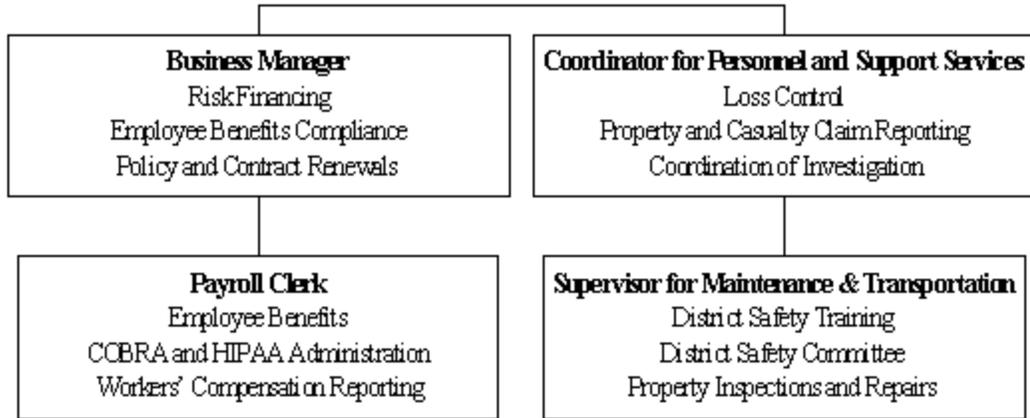
A risk management program includes both a decision-making and management process. The decision-making process involves the following steps:

- identify risk exposures to property, liability, finances and personnel within the district;
- analyze the risk exposures;
- select and apply the proper risk management technique, loss control and/or risk financing; and
- monitor and make adjustments as needed.

The LCISD risk management program responsibilities are shared between the business manager and the coordinator for Personnel and Support Services. The business manager is responsible for risk financing and for purchasing insurance, and the coordinator for Personnel and Support Services oversees the district's loss control program. The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation reports directly to the coordinator for Personnel and Support Services and is responsible for the district safety program.

Exhibit 3-9 provides an overview of these responsibilities.

**Exhibit 3-9
LCISD Risk Management Responsibilities**



*Source: LCISD Business and Personnel Offices.
Note: COBRA and HIPAA.*

The district participates in the Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) Risk Management Fund through interlocal agreements for property, liability, workers' compensation and unemployment compensation coverage.

School districts must provide unemployment compensation benefits to former employees who qualify for benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. LCISD participates in the TASB Risk Management Fund Unemployment Compensation program through an interlocal agreement to finance these benefits. This risk pool program provides a maximum contribution based on an approved rate for the fiscal period. **Exhibit 3-10** provides LCISD's annual contributions and claims for 1998-99 through 2001-02.

**Exhibit 3-10
LCISD Unemployment Compensation Contributions
1998-99 through 2001-02**

Year	Payroll	Rate	Contribution	Claim Number
1998-99	\$6,894,982.46	0.002219	\$15,299.96	22
1999-2000	\$6,969,370.67	0.002298	\$16,015.61	16
2000-01	\$6,752,228.22	0.002463	\$16,630.73	23
2001-02	\$7,802,928.94	0.002208	\$17,228.86	N/A*

Source: TASB Risk Management Fund Contribution and Coverage Summary Documents.

*2001-02 claim number to be determined at the end of the year.

The property and casualty coverage include protection for losses to buildings and contents, vehicles and personal injury, in addition to other general and professional liability exposures.

Exhibit 3-11 provides detail of the current property and casualty policies.

Exhibit 3-11
LCISD Property and Casualty Insurance/Coverage

Insurance/ Coverage Policy	Policy Period	Coverage Limits	Deductible	Premium	Company
Property	1/1/01 - 1/1/02	\$24,589,509	\$1,000 per occurrence	\$42,786	TASB
-Property - Wind, Hurricane and Hail	Included in Property	Included under property	\$30,000 per occurrence	Included in Property	TASB
General Liability	1/1/01 - 1/1/02	\$1 million per occurrence	\$1,000	\$1,289	TASB
Public Facilities Corporation General Liability	5/24/01 - 5/24/02	\$1 million per occurrence, \$2 million aggregate	\$250	\$214	TASB
Public Facilities Corporation General Liability - Umbrella	5/24/01 - 5/24/02	\$4 million per occurrence and aggregate	\$1,000,000	\$261	TASB
School Professional Legal Liability	1/1/01 - 1/1/02	\$1 million per occurrence/annual aggregate	\$5,000	\$4,771	TASB
Fleet	1/1/01 -	\$100,000/person and	\$250	\$9,608	TASB

Liability	1/1/02	\$300,000/occurrence \$100,000/occurrence for property limit			
Fleet Physical Damage	1/1/01 - 1/1/02	Actual cash value	\$250	Included in fleet	TASB
Physical damage - all other vehicles Specified Perils, Collision	1/1/01 - 1/1/02	Actual Cash Value	\$250 \$250	\$577 \$860	TASB
Underground Storage Tanks	12/23/00- 12/23/01	\$1 million per occurrence and aggregate limit	\$10,000 per occurrence	\$440	TASB
Bond - Tax Assessor	12/1/00 - 12/1/01	\$100,000	\$0	\$500	Western Surety
Public Employee Dishonesty Form	2/9/95 - 2/9/02	\$100,000	\$0	\$531	Western Surety
Notary Public Errors and Omissions Policy	5/10/01 - 5/10/02	\$10,000 per insured	\$0	\$ 44.25	Western Surety Co.
Student Insurance Blanket Athletic and University Scholastic League	8/01/01 - 8/01/02	\$5 million	\$25,000	\$15,815	TIG Insurance Company

Source: LCISD's Business Office.

In addition, the district participates in the South Texas Health Cooperative risk pool through an interlocal agreement for medical and dental coverage.

FINDING

LCISD reduced its workers' compensation insurance expense by instituting a strong safety and loss prevention program. School districts are required by law to extend workers' compensation benefits to employees. A district can provide these benefits through self-funding, purchase an insurance policy or enter into an interlocal agreement with other political subdivisions providing self-insurance. LCISD has chosen to participate in the TASB Risk Management Fund's Workers Compensation Program through an interlocal agreement for a fully funded program. The district contributions for coverage under this program are based on experience-adjusted rates multiplied by the district's annual payroll. **Exhibit 3-12** lists contributions from 1998-99 through 2001-02.

Exhibit 3-12
LCISD Workers' Compensation Annual Contributions
1998-99 through 2001-02

Plan Year	Contributions
1998-99	\$185,757
1999-2000	\$194,288
2000-01	\$194,928
2001-02	\$147,940*

Source: TASB Workers' Compensation Payroll Audits 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01; TASB Contribution and Coverage Summary Documents and TASB Underwriting Department, 2001-02.

**Note: Based on estimated payroll.*

In April 2001, the district received a letter from TASB offering an early renewal credit of \$8,215 for LCISD's exemplary performance and positive contributions to the TASB Workers' Compensation program. Credits are often provided to districts whose claims are at a certain level relative to the premiums paid, while the amount of the credit depends on the size of the district. This credit is not reflected in the estimated contribution for 2001-02 shown in **Exhibit 3-12**. **Exhibit 3-13** provides LCISD's claim experience with the TASB Workers' Compensation program.

Exhibit 3-13
LCISD Workers' Compensation Claims History
1990 - 2001

Fund Year	Number of Claims	Paid to Date Losses	Case Base Incurred Losses*	Experience Modification Factor**
1990	37	\$7,162	\$7,162	1.02
1991	42	\$176,101	\$176,101	0.91
1992	46	\$57,313	\$57,313	1.00
1993	61	\$72,199	\$72,199	1.02
1994	50	\$114,001	\$114,001	1.27
1995	66	\$162,891	\$162,891	1.40
1996	65	\$125,783	\$125,783	1.40
1997	25	\$32,410	\$32,410	1.48
1998	48	\$39,195	\$39,195	1.67
1999	41	\$33,394	\$36,096	1.46
2000	47	\$32,224	\$61,383	1.17
2001	5	\$0	\$2,500	0.96

Source: TASB Risk Management Fund Workers' Compensation Program Member History Report as of October 31, 2001.

**Case Base Incurred Losses are the estimated values as of the prior month end for claims occurring in the indicated fund year.*

***Experience Modification Factor is the average of the first three years of the loss experience (actual losses divided by contributions) for the last four-year period.*

The district uses online reporting for all workers' compensation claims. Employees report accidents directly to the payroll clerk who collects pertinent information and submits the TWCC report to the claims office through the Internet. This has made the process more efficient. The injured employee receives a form letter authorizing medical treatment and prescriptions at the time the accident is reported. For serious accidents, the coordinator of Personnel and Support Services coordinates an accident investigation. The TASB claims office is able to manage the claim and is in contact with the employee and physician to coordinate medical treatment and return to work more quickly with the online system. As a

result, loss reports are accurate and up to date, which contributes to a more responsive safety program.

In 1997, the coordinator for Personnel and Support Services and the supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation implemented an aggressive safety program. The TASB Risk Management Fund offers extensive loss control services to participants. These include on-site visits by a loss control consultant, training, review of loss reports with district staff to identify high-risk areas, a loss control manual and safety handout kits with topics for monthly safety meetings. The supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation has incorporated the loss control manual and safety kit into the district's safety program. The safety program has been well documented through training logs and inspection forms. The program includes safety training for high-risk employees. Employees sign training logs after completing a training session. New employees are trained to use personal protective equipment when it is issued. The training is documented on a training form stating the type of equipment issued, type of training and the employee's signature. In 1999, the district implemented a district safety committee that includes the following members:

- the supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation;
- the assistant custodian supervisor;
- a transportation representative;
- a yard crew representative;
- a custodian;
- an administrator; and
- the police chief.

The safety committee meets each month to review loss reports and safety issues. Based on these loss reports and safety issues, the committee determines the safety topics for the following months. The committee does routine safety inspections of district facilities and playgrounds, documents findings and makes recommendations for the correction of unsafe practices or situations. By implementing a strong safety program, the district has reduced its workers' compensation losses and its workers' compensation contribution to the TASB Risk Management Fund.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has reduced its workers' compensation costs by implementing a strong safety and loss prevention program.

FINDING

The district does not carry boiler and machinery insurance coverage, commonly known as equipment breakdown coverage. The district's

property coverage excludes certain losses related to mechanical breakdowns, heating and cooling equipment, plumbing, air conditioning, steam pipes, steam boilers and steam engines. In addition, losses caused by artificially generated electrical currents are excluded under the current property coverage.

A boiler and machinery policy, or equipment breakdown policy, provides coverage for direct property damage from accidents to specifically defined objects and any resulting damage to other property. Boilers, air conditioning units, compressors, steam cookers and electric water heaters are covered by these policies. A boiler and machinery or equipment breakdown policy usually fills coverage gaps created by property coverage exclusions.

The Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) provides information to school districts regarding the benefits of a boiler and machinery policy in its *Insurance Decisions for Texas Schools*.

Recommendation 23:

Purchase equipment breakdown coverage.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager and supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation review exposure to equipment breakdown and potential property damage.	March 2002
2.	The business manager contacts the current property carrier for quotes on equipment breakdown coverage.	April 2002
3.	The business manager evaluates the cost of self-insuring equipment breakdown exposures or purchasing coverage to finance potential losses.	May 2002
4.	The business manager develops a recommendation for either the purchase of equipment breakdown coverage or to continue to self-insure equipment breakdown and related property losses.	June 2002
5.	The superintendent approves recommendation and submits to the board for approval.	July 2002
6.	The board approves recommendation.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The district's property coverage is with the TASB Risk Management Fund. TASB bases the equipment breakdown coverage contribution on the appraised property value. Based on the district's current property values, the estimated annual premium for equipment breakdown coverage would be \$1,500. In the event of a breakdown, the coverage should save the district considerably more than the cost of coverage.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Purchase equipment breakdown coverage.	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

E. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Section 22.004 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires school districts to make medical coverage available to employees either through a risk pool, where a group of entities share their insurance risks; an insurance carrier; or a health maintenance organization. The TEC also requires that the district make available to its employees group health coverage that is comparable to the basic health coverage provided to state employees under the Texas Employees Uniform Group Insurance Benefits Act (HealthSelect). LCISD provides health insurance benefits through an interlocal cooperation agreement with La Feria ISD and Rio Hondo ISD, the South Texas Health Cooperative risk pool. The pool has purchased excess stop loss insurance, which contains defined limits per individual claim and total claims. LCISD has limited annual claims paid to \$100,000 for any individual participant and limited its aggregate limit to \$2,781,519.

The business manager told the review team that in April 2001, the district received a significant increase in renewal rates from its previous carrier, Prudential Healthcare. At that time, the district solicited proposals for employee health and dental insurance plans. The district's evaluation of the proposals led to the adoption of the South Texas Health Cooperative for the 2001-02 plan year, effective September 1, 2001. The district offers three options to employees for medical coverage. The first two are preferred provider organizations and the third is a medical plan comparable to the state plan as required by the TEC. Option IV, a hospital indemnity plan provided at no cost to the employee, covers employees who elect not to purchase medical coverage. **Exhibit 3-14** summarizes the health coverage options available to LCISD employees.

Exhibit 3-14
LCISD Employee Health Coverage Options
2001-02

Benefits	Option I		Option II		Option III (State Plan)	Option IV Alternate
	In Network	Out of Network	In Network	Out of Network	*UCR Applies	HIP Plan

Deductible Three per Family	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$750	\$500	\$250 per day in hospital benefit 30-day maximum per admission No other benefits
Coinsurance	50%	50%	70%	50%	80%	
Office co-pay	\$35 Co-pay \$100 maximum per visit	Deductible and coinsurance apply	\$25 co-pay \$250 maximum per visit	Deductible and coinsurance apply	Deductible and coinsurance apply	
Out-of-pocket Expense	\$5,000	Unlimited	\$5,000	Unlimited	\$1,500	
Prescription drugs	\$5 Generic \$15 birth control Brand name - deductible and coinsurance apply	Deductible and coinsurance apply	\$5 generic \$15 birth control Brand name - deductible and coinsurance apply	Deductible and coinsurance apply	\$5 generic \$20 brand name when generic is available \$35 brand name when no generic is available	None
Plan Maximum	\$50,000 annually		\$1 million lifetime		\$1 million lifetime	\$7,500 per admission
Network	Southwest Preferred		Southwest Preferred		N/A	None

Source: 2001-02 South Texas Health Co-Op Benefit Schedule and LCISD Business Office.

**UCR - Usual, Customary and Reasonable - Any amount charged by physician or hospital over UCR is the insured's responsibility.*

In 2001-02, LCISD will contribute \$135 per full-time employee each month for employee-only medical coverage. This monthly contribution increased from \$122 per employee in 2000-01.

Exhibit 3-15 details the monthly premiums and employee costs for medical coverage.

Exhibit 3-15
LCISD Medical Coverage Premiums
2001-02

	Option I		Option II		Option III		Option IV
	Premium	Employee Share	Premium	Employee Share	Premium	Employee Share	
Employee only	\$135	\$0	\$185	\$50	\$399	\$264	\$0
Employee and spouse	\$224	\$89	\$371	\$236	\$649	\$514	N/A
Employee and children	\$199	\$64	\$316	\$181	\$609	\$474	N/A
Employee and family	\$349	\$214	\$538	\$403	\$949	\$814	N/A

Source: LCISD Business Office.

Dental coverage for employees is not required by the TEC, but is offered by LCISD as an optional benefit. When the district issued a request for proposals for medical coverage in April 2001, it included a request for dental benefits. The dental benefits are offered through the Texas Health Cooperative. **Exhibit 3-16** shows the benefits offered.

Exhibit 3-16
LCISD Dental Benefits
2001-02

Benefit Description	Benefit Coverage
Type A - Preventative Care Preventative and diagnostic oral exams, emergency treatment, prophylaxis (teeth cleaning) and fluoride treatment	80%
Type B - Basic Restorative Care Basic restorative and corrective services, basic fillings, anesthesia, oral surgery and denture adjustments, periodontics and endodontics	80%
Type C - Major Restorative Care Major restorative and	50%

corrective inlays, onlays, crowns, posts, bridges and dentures installation and repair	
Type D - Orthodontia Services Comprehensive full banded treatment and fixed or cemented appliances for tooth guidance. Correction of malocclusion of jaws or other teeth irregularities by mechanical means. Note: Orthodontic care and services are included only for dependent children under age 19 at the time of treatment.	50% Deductible Waived
Annual Deductible A \$50 deductible annually per covered individual \$150 maximum per family	\$50
Maximum Benefit Maximum benefit per calendar year for Type A, B and C	\$1,000
Maximum Benefit Maximum benefit per calendar year for Type D - Orthodontia Services Lifetime maximum benefits for Type D - Orthodontia Services	\$500 \$1,000

Source: LCISD Business Office.

By changing dental plans in 2001-02 through the competitive bidding process, LCISD reduced the employee premium for comparable coverage under the voluntary dental program. **Exhibit 3-17** provides the premium cost for the dental plan for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

**Exhibit 3-17
LCISD Dental Premiums**

	2000-01	2001-02
Employee only	\$20.25	\$14.25
Employee and spouse	N/A	\$29.50
Employee and one dependent	\$35.25	N/A
Employee and children	N/A	\$26.50
Employee and family	\$56.75	\$39.75

Source: LCISD Business Office.

FINDING

LCISD has not ensured a smooth transition from their current health insurance carrier to the statewide health insurance plan. The 2001 Texas Legislature established a statewide health plan for school district

employees. School districts with 500 or fewer employees, including LCISD, will be required to participate in the new state plan beginning in 2002-03; larger school districts will participate in later years. LCISD needs assistance in this area.

All full-time employees and those part-time employees who are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) are automatically covered by the basic state plan. Receiving higher levels of coverage will require additional district and employee contributions. To assist with these costs, the state will send each district \$75 per month per covered employee and will give each employee an additional \$83 a month to pay for additional employee coverage, dependent coverage, compensation or any combination of them. Part-time employees who are not TRS members may participate if they or the district pay the full cost. The district has not decided how this funding will be used. Like other districts, LCISD is waiting for additional information from TRS regarding the new health care plan.

Districts are required to make a minimum contribution of \$150 per employee per month. LCISD is paying \$135 per month per employee now. For districts that are not paying \$150 per month per employee, such as LCISD, the state will help pay the local district's share for six years. The state will discontinue this aid at the end of the six-year period. Districts reaching the Maintenance and Operations tax cap of \$1.50, such as LCISD, will also be held harmless for any tax effort over \$1.50 required to reach the \$150 per month per employee.

All of the details have not been thoroughly defined and are subject to contract negotiations with health insurance providers, actuarial estimates, and rules and guidelines set by TRS.

Based on the number of employees in LCISD, the district will be required to participate in the statewide school employee health plan beginning in fall 2002.

Recommendation 24:

Develop a transition plan for the statewide school health insurance coverage.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent appoints a committee including the business manager, coordinator of Personnel and Support Services and representatives of employee groups to develop a plan for the transition to the statewide health insurance program.	May 2002
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2.	The committee contacts TRS and requests guidelines for employee enrollment in the state health insurance program.	May 2002
3.	The committee works with the Texas Health Cooperative to develop a plan for the transition of medical plan participants to the state insurance plan.	June 2002
4.	The committee develops an information packet describing the health insurance benefits available through the state health insurance plan and the district's transition plan.	July 2002
5.	The committee develops a schedule of enrollment meetings for all employees to provide information on the state plan and assist with enrollment forms required by TRS.	July 2002
6.	The committee representatives conduct information and enrollment meetings for all employees.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD cannot verify compliance with certain Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements. Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code allows employers to provide the option of purchasing some fringe benefits before taxes are calculated, saving both the employer and employees on taxes. These plans are called Section 125 or cafeteria plans. LCISD offers a premium-only cafeteria plan that includes the option of electing to pay health, dental, cancer and life insurance premiums. Under a premium-only plan, employees are allowed to take a voluntary reduction in wages equaling the amount they otherwise would pay for their portion of the premiums, eliminating federal income, social security and other taxes on their contributions. The IRS sets certain requirements for employers to offer a Section 125 or cafeteria plan. The district is required to adopt and maintain a document that includes the following:

- a description of each benefit available under the plan and the period of coverage;
- a description of the eligibility rules for participants;
- procedures for holding elections under the plan, including when elections may be made and revoked, with elections referring to a period when the employees make decisions about enrollment for example;
- the manner in which employer contributions may be made, such as by salary reduction agreement between the employer and employee, by non-elective employer contributions or by both;

- A statement regarding the maximum amount of employer contributions available to any participant;
- A statement of the maximum amount or percentage of compensation contributed by employees or the method of computing the amounts;
- The method of compliance with nondiscrimination regulations; and
- the plan year.

In addition, the IRS requires summary plan descriptions for employees, salary reduction agreements and Form 5500 reports filed annually. On Form 5500, entities must report, for example, the number of employees in the Section 125 Cafeteria fringe benefit plan and the total cost of the plan for those employees.

LCISD contracts with a third-party administrator (TPA), Consecro, for administration of the Section 125 Plan. If a district outsources its cafeteria plan administration through a TPA, the following is recommended:

- the district verifies the TPA is licensed to do business in Texas;
- the district verifies the TPA has a good track record and history of cafeteria plan administration;
- a contract is developed stating what the district wants accomplished and the TPA or representative accepts the responsibility for its administration; specifically the contract should exclude any hold harmless agreement regarding the TPA's failure to administer the plan in accordance with the IRS Section 125 rules;
- the district ensures the representative enrolling employees in the cafeteria plan is not a marketer, meaning insurance and annuity products, for example, are not offered for sale by the representative;
- the TPA is responsible for calculating salary reduction contributions and guaranteeing they are correct; and
- the TPA protects the district employees' rights.

The district's TPA conducts the annual open enrollment for the employees in August. A Consecro representative meets with employees on campuses during conference periods and after school, identifying employees through a campus roster. During the meeting with the employee, the Consecro representative markets benefits that include disability insurance, life insurance and annuities.

LCISD did not have a current Section 125 Plan Document or copies of IRS 5500 forms filed with the IRS from previous years. Because LCISD had neither of these, the review team requested from the TPA, and Consecro provided the district with *Adoption Agreement - A Cafeteria (IRS*

Section 125) Plan, which was signed by the business manager on August 19, 1992. This document included blanks to be completed by the district. The form stated benefits under the Cafeteria Plan included medical, disability, accident, and/or term life plans, child and dependent care reimbursement plans, and health expense reimbursement plans, yet only medical and life insurance premiums are offered under the cafeteria plan. In addition, upon request from the district, Consecos also provided copies of 1997, 1998 and 2000 IRS Form 5500 forms; however, the 1999 form could not be found.

No summary plan document was provided to employees. The district had a schedule of services and fees faxed from Consecos, but district staff stated that they do not pay administrative fees to Consecos. Consecos administers the plan in exchange for the opportunity to market their products to district employees. The election form is a standard Consecos form that lists benefits not offered by the LCISD Business Office.

The LCISD Employee Handbook listed benefit options under the cafeteria plan description that is not included in the actual plan. The payroll clerk is responsible for establishing the employee elections on the payroll system and for monitoring compliance for revocation of elections during the plan year. The district could not show when the school board adopted the cafeteria plan, with the exception of the medical and dental coverage.

Failure to comply with IRS Code Section 125 requirements can result in penalties to the district. Employees can also be taxed as though they elected to receive the available taxable benefit whether they did or not.

Recommendation 25:

Ensure compliance with IRS rules for cafeteria plans.

The district should confirm previous IRS Form 5500 filings. If filings were not made, the district may need to consult legal counsel. A cafeteria plan document in compliance with the IRS Code Section 125 and a summary plan document for employees with a corresponding election agreement can be developed with legal assistance. The business manager can determine the feasibility of administering the premium-only cafeteria plan within the district and request proposals for all benefits, other than medical and dental, offered under the cafeteria plan. Board approval for the cafeteria plan document and benefit options is required.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager determines if IRS 5500 forms have been filed for previous plan years. If the forms have not been filed, the	April 2002
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	superintendent contacts legal counsel to determine what options are available filing IRS 5500 forms for past years.	
2.	The business manager files the IRS Form 5500 for the plan year ending September 30, 2001.	April 2002
3.	The superintendent appoints a committee including the business manager, payroll clerk, coordinator of personnel and support services, and a representative from each employee group to review the cafeteria plan and develop a plan to correct the problems.	May 2002
4.	The business manager issues a request for proposals for cafeteria plan administration and benefit options.	May 2002
5.	The committee evaluates proposals for cafeteria plan administration and benefit options.	June 2002
6.	The business manager determines the feasibility of conducting the cafeteria plan administration in-house and presents the findings to the committee.	June 2002
7.	The committee develops a recommendation for the cafeteria plan administration with written procedures for compliance with IRS Code Section 125 and submits the benefit options to be offered under the cafeteria plan to the superintendent for approval.	June 2002
8.	The superintendent approves and submits to the board for approval.	June 2002
9.	The board approves recommendation for cafeteria plan administration and benefit options to be offered.	June 2002
10.	The superintendent and business manager work with legal counsel and plan administrator, if recommended, to develop a cafeteria plan document, summary plan document and election forms in compliance with IRS Code Section 125.	July 2002
11.	The superintendent submits the cafeteria plan document to the board for approval.	July 2002
12.	The board approves the cafeteria plan and supporting documents.	July 2002
13.	The committee develops a schedule with vendors for the open enrollment period for the available benefit options and a benefit information sheet with supporting benefit brochures.	July 2002
14.	The committee updates the cafeteria plan description for the LCISD Employee Handbook.	July 2002
15.	The committee develops a schedule for the annual open enrollment period for the cafeteria plan.	July 2002

16.	The business manager begins the annual open enrollment for the cafeteria plan.	August 2002
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FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

F. CASH MANAGEMENT

Cash and investments are often the largest assets on a school district's balance sheet. Developing an effective cash management program can provide a district with additional revenues to fund essential programs and operations.

The district's depository bank is Texas State Bank. The depository contract was bid in 2001 and the district received two bids. Texas State Bank was selected because there was no charge for bank fees and no requirement for compensating balances. The bank offers additional services such as certificates of deposit, statements, wire transfers, input tapes and monthly account maintenance with no additional fees.

LCISD maintains five interest-earning checking accounts. In accordance with the district's depository contact, all accounts earn interest at a competitive rate tied to U.S. treasury bills. The account balances are monitored by the district and Texas State Bank, which provides a pledge security listing to the district on a monthly basis to ensure that sufficient securities are pledged as collateral and are reconciled in a timely manner. **Exhibit 3-18** summarizes checking account balances on September 30, 2001.

Exhibit 3-18
Checking Account Balances
September 30, 2001

Account Title	Amount
Local Maintenance	\$1,171,206
Computer Clearing	\$44,297
Activity Account	\$42,550
Payroll Account	\$509,421
Escrow Account	\$6,967
Total	\$1,774,441

Source: LCISD September 2001 Bank Statement analysis.

FINDING

LCISD lacks cash management procedures to ensure that its existing board-approved policies are enforced. For example, the LCISD business manager performs investment officer duties, but the board has not designated the business manager as an authorized investment officer. The Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA) and the LCISD Policy CDA (Legal) requires that "the board shall designate one or more officers or employees as investment officer(s) to be responsible for the investing of its funds."

In addition, PFIA and CDA (Legal) also requires the following related to investment training:

- within 12 months after taking office or assuming duties, the treasurer or chief financial officer and the investment officer of the district shall attend at least one training session from an independent source approved by the board;
- the investment officer attends initial training containing at least 10 hours of instruction relating to the officer's responsibilities under the Public Funds Investment Act; and
- the investment officer attends an investment training session no less than once in a two-year period and receives no less than 10 hours of instruction relating to investment responsibilities under the Public Funds Investment Act.

Although the district has employed the business manager for more than 12 months and serving as the investment officer, the business manager had attended only five of the required 10 hours of investment officer training. In response to the TSPR requests for information, in February 2002, the business manager attended another five hours of investment training, bringing the total to the required 10 hours.

Without procedures in place, if staffing changes in a district's Business Office, the district cannot ensure continuity of compliance with board policies and PFIA, which provides assurance to taxpayers that funds are appropriately managed and invested.

Recommendation 26:

Develop cash management procedures to ensure compliance with board-approved policies and the Public Funds Investment Act.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager develops cash management procedures regarding compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act.	June 2002
2.	The business manager submits the procedures to the	July 2002

	superintendent for review and approval.	
3.	The business manager requests and the board approves the business manager as the district investment officer.	August 2002
4.	The business manager maintains proper documentation to ensure continued compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Although LCISD uses investments allowed by the Public Funds Investment Act, the district's investment portfolio is not diversified. More than 90 percent of the district's investment portfolio consists of certificates of deposit with low interest rates. The district maintains its investments in two investment pool funds and in certificates of deposits issued by Texas State Bank. **Exhibit 3-19** summarizes investments as of September 30, 2001.

**Exhibit 3-19
Investment Portfolio
September 30, 2001**

Investment	Maturity	Interest Rates	Amount	Percentage of Total Investments by Type of Investment
Lone Star Liquidity Plus Fund	N/A	3.68%	\$119,274	N/A
Lone Star Liquidity Corporate Fund	N/A	3.69%	\$163,995	N/A
Subtotal: Investment Pool Funds	N/A	N/A	\$283,269	9.7%
Texas State Bank CD	1/06/02	3.36%	\$1,607,844	N/A
Texas State Bank CD	1/15/01	3.64%	\$1,038,559	N/A
Subtotal: CD Funds	N/A	N/A	\$2,646,403	90.3%
Total			\$2,929,672	100%

Source: Lyford CISD General Fund 2000-01 Investment Report dated September 30, 2001.

The business manager told the review team that investment practices were not a priority. The business manager says he is considering searching for other higher yielding investments during 2002-03.

By not maintaining a diversified investment portfolio, LCISD is not maximizing its potential interest earnings.

The Comptroller's publication, *Banks to Bonds: A Practical Path to Sound School District Investing*, states that while certificates of deposit have little default risk, they offer no secondary market or opportunity to sell the investments should the district need the money before maturity. The district would have to pay a penalty if it cashed in a CD before it matured. Investors should only purchase CDs if they plan to hold them until maturity.

Recommendation 27:

Diversify the investment portfolio by purchasing higher-yielding investments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager researches investments that offer additional liquidity with a yield greater than that of Treasury Bills.	April 2002
2.	The business manager briefs the superintendent on his research and makes investment recommendations.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent and business manager present their recommendations to the board for review and approval.	June 2002
4.	The business manager purchases the approved investments.	July 2002 - Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

As shown in **Exhibit 3-19**, by investing in higher-yielding investments, the district could annually earn a conservative 50 basis pointson their \$2,646,403 currently invested in certificates of deposit or \$13,232 per year (\$2,646,403 x .005). One basis point is equal to half of 1 percent, or .005 percent.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Diversify the investment portfolio by purchasing higher-yielding investments.	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$13,232	\$13,232

FINDING

LCISD's tax collector monitors and reconciles the district's escrow bank account without the oversight of the business manager. The escrow account was established to deposit partial tax payments from taxpayers until the total tax bill can be paid. As of September 30, 2001, the escrow account had a balance of \$6,967.

The district's external auditor, Buffo & Berkman, Certified Public Accountants, issued their findings related to the escrow account in a December 10, 1999 memorandum of advisory comments, which stated, "We noted several discrepancies in the partial tax payment escrow account that occurred prior to December 1, 1997. The tax collector reconciled the partial tax payment escrow account subsidiary ledger monthly beginning December 1997. We recommend that the business manager review the reconciliation monthly." The district has not corrected this situation.

The district also allows its tax collector to collect district funds for the escrow account, deposit them and reconcile the bank statement. Having the same employee responsible for each step creates the potential for the mishandling of district funds.

A strong system of internal control to prevent this type of risk enables a district to ensure that resources are properly handled, properly used, and that those resources are available for management and the board's designation.

The independent auditor must ensure that the internal control process offers:

- reliable financial reporting;
- effective and efficient operations; and
- compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Separating duties to ensure that no one person controls all aspects of a financial process is an important internal control system. The person who collects funds or enters receipts and disbursements into the district's ledgers should not perform bank reconciliation. Another employee should have that responsibility.

Recommendation 28:

Shift all activities related to managing the district's escrow bank account to the business office.

The business office should receive all data related to the escrow bank account. The receipt of the escrow bank statement and the corresponding reconciliation of the escrow account should be handled by the staff in the business office, with supervisory oversight by the business manager. The tax collector should manage no information related to this account.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager meets with the tax collector to arrange the transfer of the escrow account bank reconciliation.	May 2002
2.	The tax collector explains the partial payment subsidiary ledger entries to the business manager and bookkeeper.	June 2002
3.	The bookkeeper reconciles the escrow account subsidiary ledger to the bank statement. The business manager reviews the reconciliation.	June 2002
4.	The business office assumes responsibility for the escrow account reconciliation.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD manually reconciles five bank statements each month because the district's accounting system prints checks with check numbers that do not correspond to the number on the check. LCISD uses Regional Education Service Center I (Region 1) software for its accounting system. This results in a time-consuming, manual reconciliation process where the bookkeeper must write the bank's check number and the district's computer generated number to complete a list of outstanding checks.

Many districts use automated systems for reconciling their bank statements. LCISD's depository bank offers a free CD-ROM statement available at no cost to the district.

Recommendation 29:

Automate the bank account reconciliation process.

Automating the process will eliminate time-consuming manual checks and match outstanding or cancelled checks and with checks issued.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The business manager contacts Region 1 and requests assistance in updating the check numbering system.	April 2002
2.	The business manager and bookkeeper meet with depository bank representatives to establish procedures and a timeline for automating the reconciliation process.	May 2002
3.	The automated bank account reconciliation process begins.	July 2002 and Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

G. FIXED ASSETS

TEA defines fixed assets as items a district has purchased or had donated to it that are tangible in nature, have a useful life longer than one year, are worth \$5,000 or more and may be reasonably identified and controlled through a physical inventory system. The TEA's *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* requires assets that cost \$5,000 or more to be capitalized. Items that cost less than \$5,000 are recorded as an operating expense of the appropriate fund under TEA guidelines. These guidelines also allow school districts to establish lower thresholds for control and accountability for equipment that costs less than \$5,000. For example, computer and audiovisual equipment that costs less than \$5,000 does not have to be capitalized. However, some districts maintain lists of such assets for control and accountability purposes.

As of September 1, 2001, TEA requires districts to implement Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 34, which requires districts begin reporting the value of capital assets as they depreciate. GASB 34 requires that the cost of fixed assets, such as property and equipment, be recognized through depreciation over the life of the asset. Only a few exceptions will be allowed, such as land, permanent infrastructure, assets acquired long ago and assets with a short life or low value. This means districts must track and depreciate many typical fixed assets.

The Comptroller's *Top 10 Ways to Improve Public Schools* report provides districts with a description of fixed assets, reasons to keep accurate accounting records, and explains why all valuable items should be maintained on a control log and inventoried annually. Fixed assets include all properties, vehicles, equipment and building contents. Districts should track and reconcile additions and deletions to property in the inventory. Additional reasons districts need to track fixed assets include:

- properly kept fixed asset records furnish taxpayers with information about district investments and contrast them with expenditures;
- fixed asset records provide the basis for adequate insurance coverage;
- systematic physical inventories of fixed assets allow the district to survey the physical condition of its assets and assess the need for repair, maintenance or replacement;

- periodic inventories establish a system of accountability for custody of individual items;
- for budgeting, reliable information about fixed assets can help determine future requirements; and
- periodic inventories identify lost or stolen items so that insurance claims can be filed, additional controls can be instituted and accounting records can be adjusted to reflect the losses.

Many districts say items worth more than \$5,000 should be capitalized as fixed assets and made subject to external audit, but it is helpful if all valuable items are maintained on a control log and inventoried annually.

This means:

- tagging all valued assets when they are received using a bar code system;
- using accounting codes to track capitalized fixed assets as well as expensed assets;
- inventorying all assets on an annual basis;
- using the annual inventory results to set insurance rates; and
- identifying decreases in inventory and tightening controls when necessary.

FINDING

In January 2001, LCISD contracted with RCI Technologies, Inc. to provide a comprehensive fixed asset management program. The contractor will count and bar code all fixed assets with a value of more than \$500 and install a software system to track fixed assets. The business office and media center are responsible for managing the program and maintaining the inventory system. LCISD procedures address:

- a definition of fixed assets;
- GASB 34 compliance;
- the receipt and identification of assets;
- asset transfer requirements;
- annual inventory requirements;
- the disposal of obsolete assets.

COMMENDATION

LCISD's fixed asset procedures identify assets to be depreciated under GASB 34 and control other valuable items.

Chapter 3

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

H. PURCHASING

The goal of purchasing is to obtain the best goods available for educational needs at the best prices within the requirements set forth by purchasing laws. The TEC describes state purchasing regulations designed to provide the best value to school districts through a competitive bidding process. When a district purchases items valued at \$25,000 or more in aggregate (or multiple like items with a cumulative value of more than \$25,000 in a 12-month period), it must follow one of nine methods for purchasing (**Exhibit 3-20**).

Exhibit 3-20
Competitive Procurement Methods

Purchasing Method	Method Description
Competitive bidding	Requires that bids be evaluated and awarded based solely upon bid specifications, terms and conditions contained in the request for bids, bid prices offered by suppliers and pertinent factors affecting contract performance. Forbids negotiation of prices after a proposal opens.
Competitive sealed proposals	Requires the same terms and conditions as competitive bidding, but allows changes in the nature of a proposal and prices after the proposal opens.
Request for proposals	Generates competitive, sealed proposals and involves several key elements, including newspaper advertisements, notices to proposers, standard terms and conditions, a scope-of-work statement, an acknowledgment form or response sheet, a felony conviction notice and a contract clause.
Catalog purchase	Provides an alternative to other procurement methods for the acquisition of computer equipment, software and services.
Interlocal contract	Provides a mechanism for agreements with other local governments, the state or a state agency to perform governmental duties and services.
Design/build contract	Outlines a method of project delivery in which the school district contracts with a single entity for both the design and construction of a project. (The "single entity" is usually a team of firms including a general contractor, architect and sometimes

	an engineer. One firm rarely performs both the design and the construction.)
Job order contracts	Provide for the use of a particular type of contract for jobs (manual labor work) for minor repairs and alterations.
Construction management contracts	Outline the use of a contract to construct, rehabilitate, alter or repair facilities using a professional construction manager.
Reverse Auction Procedure	Outlines a bidding process that involves the submission of bids by multiple suppliers that are unknown to each other in a manner that allows the suppliers to bid against each other.

Source: TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide.

In 1999, a Texas Attorney General's Opinion JC-37 was issued stating that school district procurement through an inter-local agreement or a cooperative purchasing arrangement satisfies competitive bidding requirements. Under an interlocal agreement, a district can contract or agree with another local government, including a nonprofit corporation created and operated to provide one or more governmental services, to purchase goods and any services reasonably required for the installation, operation or maintenance of the goods. LCISD uses interlocal agreements for some purchasing contracts.

TEC also sets requirements for providing notice of bidding opportunities and giving prospective bidders a sufficient amount of time to respond. Districts must advertise contracts valued at \$25,000 or more once a week, for at least two weeks, in any newspaper published in the county which the school district's central administration office is located.

Contracts for personal property of at least \$10,000, but less than \$25,000, for a 12-month period must also be advertised in two successive issues of a newspaper. The advertisements must specify the categories of property to be purchased and solicit bids from vendors interested in supplying the goods or services. Before making a purchase, the district must obtain written or telephone price quotations from at least three vendors on an approved list of vendors for that item. The district must purchase the items or services from the lowest responsible bidder. To determine the lowest responsible bidder, the district may consider

- purchase price;
- the reputation of the vendor and of the vendor's goods and services;
- the quality of the vendor's goods or services;
- the extent to which the goods or services meet the district's needs;

- the vendor's past relationship with the district;
- the impact on the ability of the district to comply with laws relating to historically underutilized businesses;
- the total long-term cost to the district to acquire the goods or services; and
- any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposal.

Insurance contracts for the purchase of personal property are considered contracts and must be made in accordance with the Education Code 44.031 and 44.033. In 1996, the Texas Attorney General's Office issued Attorney General Opinion DM-418, which stated that a district may execute an insurance contract for a period longer than 12 months. If the district executes a multi-year insurance contract, it does not need to advertise for insurance vendors until the 12-month period during which the district will be executing the new insurance contract.

Exceptions to the competitive bidding requirements include contracts for professional services rendered including architect fees, attorney fees and fees for fiscal agents. The TEC also allows a district to purchase items that are available from only one source ("sole-source" purchases) if certain criteria are met, including:

- an item for which competition is precluded because of the existence of a patent, copyright, secret process or monopoly;
- a film, manuscript or book;
- a utility service including electricity, gas or water; and
- a replacement part or component if it is not available from more than one vendor.

To properly use the sole-source arrangement, a school district is responsible for obtaining and retaining documentation from the vendor that clearly states the reasons the purchase must be made on a sole-source basis. The sole-source exception does not apply to mainframe data processing equipment and peripheral attachments with a single-item purchase price of more than \$15,000.

LCISD's business manager is responsible for all district purchasing. The district has developed written policies and procedures for purchasing, including guidelines for the bidding process and for purchasing goods and services. The business manager oversees all bid purchasing and the bidding process. The district complies with TEC purchasing regulations through requests for proposals, interlocal agreements and by participating in purchasing cooperatives.

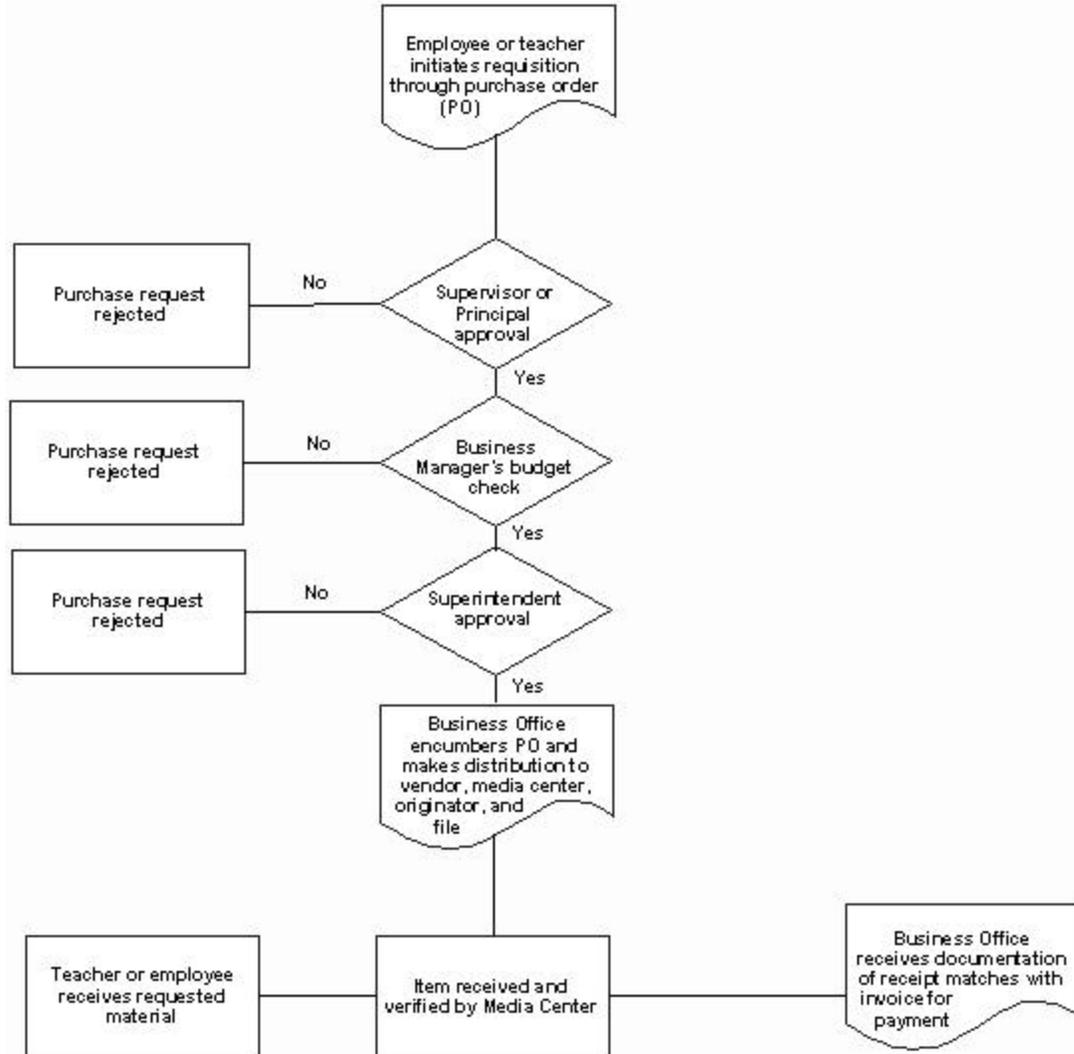
According to the *LCISD Policies and Procedures Manual*, competitive bid procedures must be followed for all items expected to exceed \$25,000 in cost and the business manager determines when it is in the best interest of the district to invite competition. Bids should be taken for major food purchases and teaching supplies that are ordered in bulk. Purchasing cooperatives should be used to the maximum practical extent in the interest of resource preservation. The competitive quote procedures should be used for athletic equipment, computers, band instruments and other purchases that do not meet the \$25,000 limit, but represent a significant investment of district resources.

Competitive quote procedures require solicitation of at least three suppliers, one of whom was the successful supplier on the previous purchase, unless that supplier is excluded for cause. Quotes may be secured either by written solicitation or by telephone, but in either case, the quotes received should be documented and retained in the file for future reference. The award should be made to the bidder with the most advantageous offer.

Board policy CH (Legal) authorizes the district to participate in cooperative purchasing programs with other local governments or cooperative organizations, which satisfies laws requiring the district to seek competitive bids. The district participates in four purchasing cooperatives, including Region 1 and Region 4 Purchasing Cooperatives, South Texas Health Cooperative, Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative and the Texas Local Government Purchasing Cooperative.

Board policy CH (Local) delegates to the superintendent or designee the authority to determine the method of purchasing and to make budgeted purchases in accordance with board policy. However, any purchase that costs or aggregates to a cost of \$10,000 or more requires board approval. The policy states that the superintendent or designee shall make all purchase commitments on a properly drawn and issued purchase order, in accordance with administrative procedures. **Exhibit 3-21** illustrates the purchase order process.

**Exhibit 3-21
LCISD Purchase Order Process**



Source: LCISD Business Office and Media Center.

The business manager reviews each purchase order to assure the request is within the budget and then sends the purchase order to the superintendent for approval. Once approved, the business office will distribute copies of the purchase order to the vendor, the LCISD media center, and the originator of the purchase order, the business office and to a file for processed orders.

The LCISD media center serves as a centralized receiving center for purchased goods and maintains a storage area for teaching supplies. Many supplies are purchased in bulk and received by the media center clerk, who checks in the materials and sends a copy of the receipt to the accounts payable clerk in the business office for payment. Principals or other

campus officials can order supplies directly from the media center. Supplies ordered directly by principals are sent to that campus, while supplies ordered by the media center are placed in storage in the media center, which are available upon request to principals. Upon requisition, the supplies are delivered via the district's mail delivery system, Pony Express. Upon receipt of the order, the individual receiving the supplies is responsible for counting the items received and signing for them. A copy is returned to the media center and the school is charged for the purchase at the end of the month.

The media center coordinator also receives all district freight at the media center. Freight is logged in the register with the date received, sender, purchase order number and person receiving the items. The freight is then sorted and sent to the proper person by school employees. This process occurs daily. Some supplies and equipment such as food purchases, transportation supplies and janitorial supplies are delivered to their respective departments, not the media center.

TEA is responsible for selecting and purchasing most of the textbooks used in Texas school districts. Each year, TEA provides districts with a list of recommended textbooks, buys textbooks from publishers and lends them to districts. A district's established textbook adoption committee then selects the textbooks the district will order, following TEA guidelines. The decision to order is made at the local level and TEA does not monitor the use of the textbooks.

The number of books allowed per subject and grade level is based upon student enrollment information submitted to TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Annual orders for instructional materials are based on the maximum number of students enrolled in the district during the previous school year and/or registered to attend district schools during the next school year.

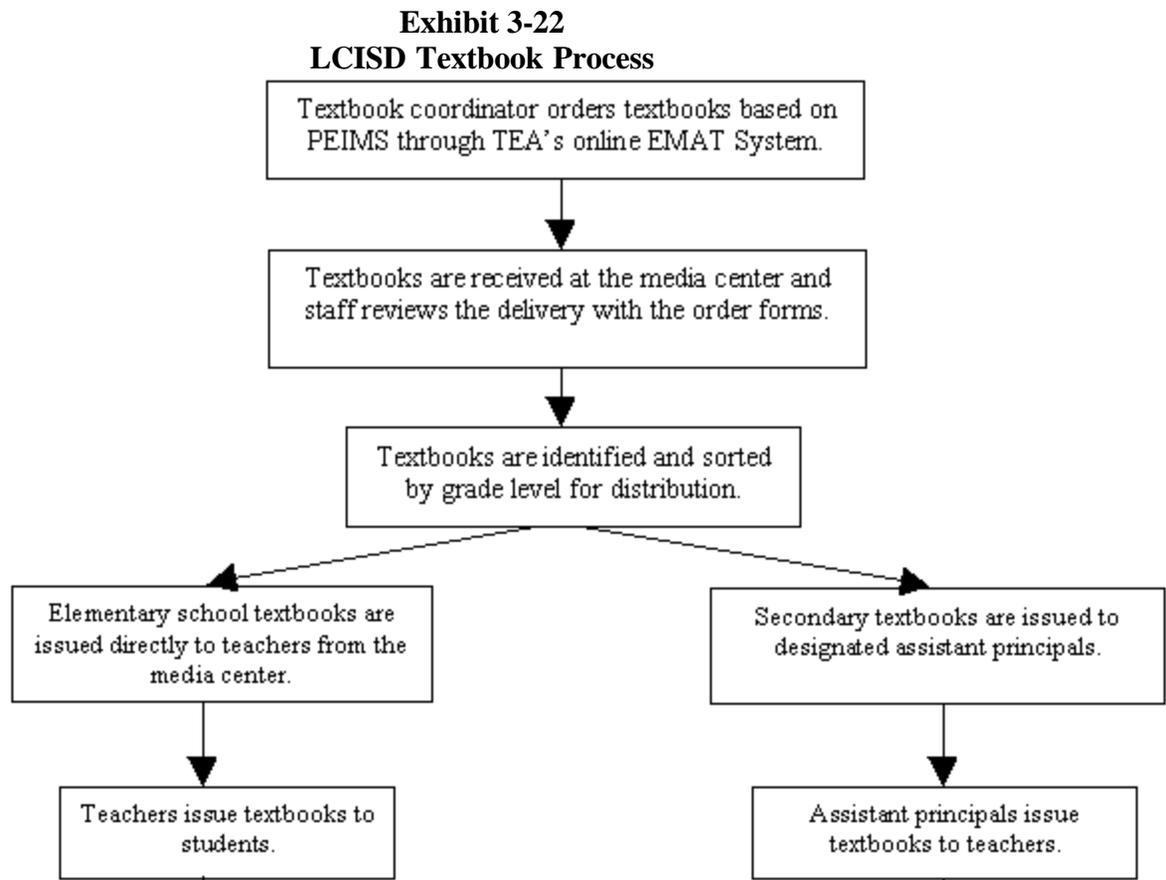
Annual textbook orders are due by April 1. Supplemental orders are submitted after the annual order and throughout the year. Districts are given the opportunity to report exceptions to the PEIMS data if the district officials report the data are incorrect. Each district is responsible for returning these borrowed textbooks to TEA. If textbooks are lost during the school year, the district either recovers its cost from the student, the student's parent or guardian or the district compensates the state for the loss. The district's textbook coordinator handles all these duties.

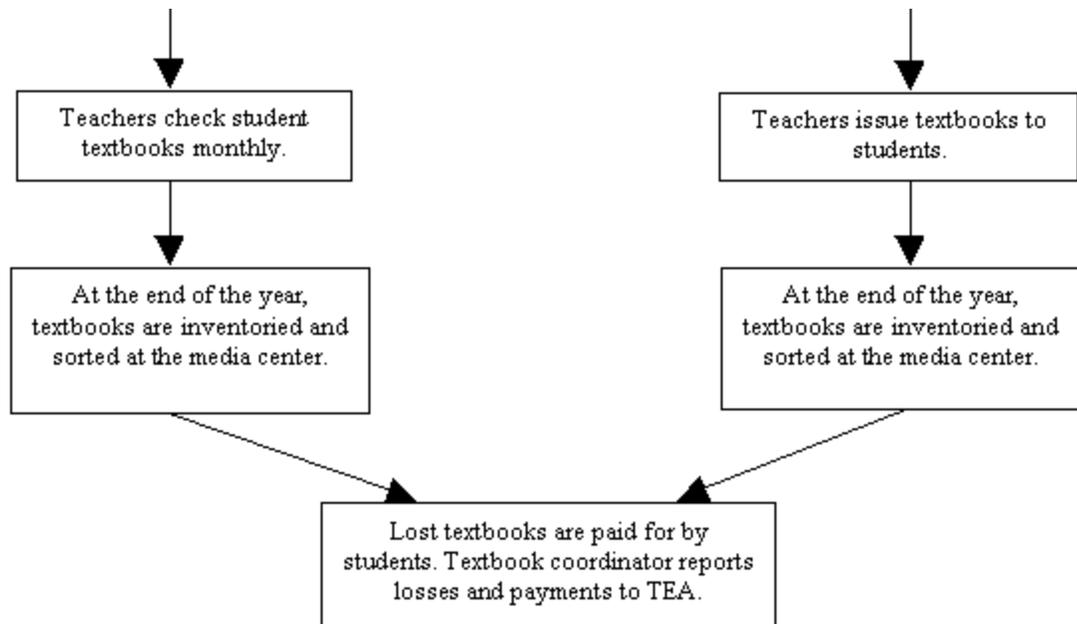
FINDING

LCISD has a sound textbook management process. The district's coordinator for Personnel and Support Services is the textbook coordinator

and is responsible for ordering and distributing textbooks. The textbook coordinator submits an order for textbooks for the upcoming school year by April 1. This order is based on the PEIMS information on the district's enrollment and is placed using TEA's Educational Materials (EMAT) online textbook requisition system. The district can order up to 110 percent of its maximum pupil enrollment for the grade or subject for which it is ordering textbooks.

Exhibit 3-22 illustrates the textbook distribution process.





Source: LCISD Personnel Office, coordinator of Personnel and Support Services.

Textbooks are delivered to the media center where the books are unpacked and inventoried. Elementary textbooks remain at the media center and are distributed directly to the elementary teachers by the textbook coordinator. At the secondary schools, an assistant principal is designated as a textbook custodian for each school. Textbooks are distributed to the assistant principals at each school and are stored at the schools. The assistant principals are responsible for distributing the textbooks to the teachers, who distribute textbooks to the students. At the end of the year, the assistant principals collect, inventory and reconcile the textbooks at the secondary schools and the textbook coordinator collects, inventories and reconciles the elementary school textbooks. Since the district must be accountable for the number of textbooks issued by the state, it cannot receive replacements for lost textbooks until TEA receives payment for the lost textbook. When the textbook coordinator receives payment for a lost textbook, he notifies TEA online through EMAT. TEA places the payment in a pending column and removes the textbook from the "on-hand inventory." This allows the district to order the replacement textbook. The district processes the payment to TEA through a purchase order.

The textbook coordinator and administrators told TSPR that every student had a textbook to take home. At the middle school, the classrooms contained class sets of textbooks in each room because the students do not have lockers to store their belongings or textbooks. The elementary school

has initiated a practice of checking student textbooks on a monthly basis and stated this practice has reduced the number of lost textbooks during the year. Since textbook orders can be placed online through the EMAT system, the turnaround time for replacements has been reduced.

COMMENDATION

LCISD uses automation and proper planning to ensure that each student has a textbook.

FINDING

There is no central location for district contracts. In addition, the district does not train central office and campus administrators to manage contracts effectively. The business office is involved with contract management through bids and purchase orders, but each school and department is responsible for managing its own contracts. The district did not have a list of all current district contracts. A review of some of the contracts raised some concerns. The district did not have original copies of many documents; signatures of some of the contractors were missing from the district's copy; contracts did not include provisions for monitoring vendor performance and quality of service; the district's liability was not addressed; and costs were not identified. The district could not verify that legal counsel had reviewed some contracts. The business manager told the review team that LCISD does not send all contracts to the legal counsel because of the cost.

LCISD has some procedures for contracts for professional services, but has no other district-level contract management procedures other than those included in the contracts themselves.

It is difficult for LCISD to ensure contracts are carried out properly if it does not maintain or monitor contracts. It would not be difficult for a contractor to take advantage of the district if it does not have a copy of a contract it signed.

When entering into a contract, districts often:

- employ legal counsel to draft or review the final contract prior to signing it;
- identify how the district's liability is addressed in the contract;
- review the terms and conditions of the contract;
- identify who has the authority to enter into the contract on behalf of the district;
- attach all supporting documents to the contract, especially those referenced in the contract;

- retain an original contract with signatures of all district parties;
- describe the specific services to be performed;
- identify when and how the contractor will report to the district;
- identify a clause for changing the contract;
- describe the cost to the district and any changes that may occur;
- describe how the district may terminate the contract;
- identify how the vendor's performance will be reviewed and documented; and
- describe remedies for a contractor's failure to perform services.

Recommendation 30:

Centralize contract management in the business office and develop a contract management plan, procedures and a training program.

Developing a contract management plan and supporting guidelines would reduce the district's exposure to liability, help monitor contract performance and track contract expiration dates, and ensure contracts are completed and enforced.

Filing and maintaining contracts within the business office will allow the district to manage and monitor contracts effectively and efficiently. Developing contract procedures will provide district staff with guidelines for entering into contracts, including a list of who is authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the district and specific areas to address when reviewing a contract.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent requests all original district contracts be submitted to the business office, where they are to be filed in a central location.	April 2002
2.	The business manager develops a filing system for the maintenance of all district contracts.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent and business manager develop procedures for centralizing contract management - including contract review, authorization and monitoring.	June 2002
4.	The superintendent submits the contract management plan and procedures to the board for approval.	July 2002
5.	The board approves the contract management plan and procedures.	July 2002
6.	The superintendent and business manager trains school and central office administrators to use the contract management plan.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS

This chapter reviews the Lyford Consolidated Independent School District's (LCISD) operations in the following sections:

- A. Facilities Management
- B. Computers and Technology
- C. Transportation
- D. Food Services

To create an environment where children can learn, facilities must be adequately planned and managed to accommodate student enrollment and appropriately maintained to ensure student and employee safety. Technology must be available and kept current to enhance student learning. Transportation must be safe and promptly take students to and from school and extracurricular activities. Food must be nutritious, appealing and available to all children.

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS

A. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

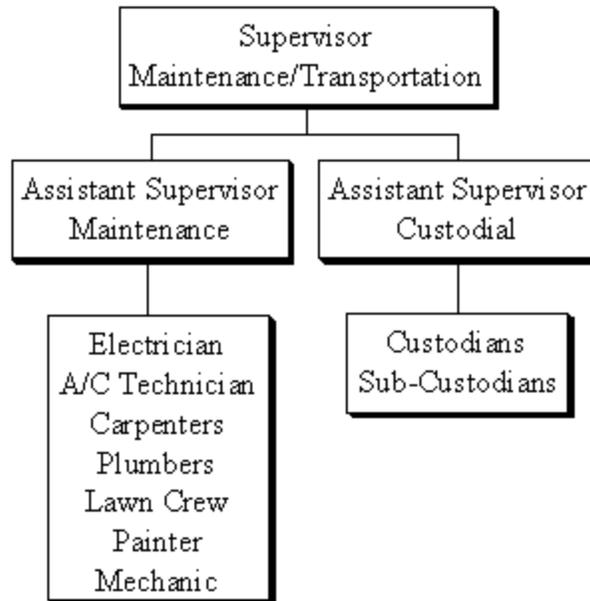
The mission of an effective facilities management program is to plan for, provide and operate facilities that meet the needs of students at the lowest possible cost. A comprehensive facilities planning department, including maintenance, custodial services, groundskeeping and energy management, should effectively coordinate all physical resources in the district. The objective should be to provide a safe and clean environment for students and to integrate facilities planning with other aspects of school planning. Moreover, facilities personnel should be involved in design and construction of new buildings and be knowledgeable about operations and maintenance requirements. Finally, facilities departments should operate under clearly defined policies and procedures that can be adapted to changes in the district's resources and needs.

Efficient and effective maintenance operations in a school district require adequate information to plan and manage daily maintenance, a good work-order system that helps maintenance workers respond quickly to repair requests and a preventive maintenance system that ensures that maintenance workers regularly service equipment to minimize equipment down-time. A mechanism to monitor maintenance service levels and obtain periodic feedback also is necessary.

BACKGROUND

The superintendent manages LCISD's facilities planning and construction functions. He manages all external contracts with architects, engineers and contractors and works with the board and the District Educational Improvement Council (DEIC) to determine what facilities are needed. The facilities maintenance functions are under the responsibility of the coordinator of Personnel and Support Services. The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor oversees facilities maintenance and reports directly to the coordinator of Personnel and Support Services. **Exhibit 4-1** presents an organization chart of facilities maintenance.

**Exhibit 4-1
LCISD Facilities Maintenance Department Organization**



Source: LCISD Superintendent's Office, November 2001.

Exhibit 4-2 presents LCISD maintenance expenditures from 1996-97 to 2000-01. Expenditures increased by \$285,000, or by 28 percent during this period.

**Exhibit 4-2
LCISD Maintenance Expenditures
1996-97 through 2000-01**

Expenditure Type	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01 (Budgeted)
Salaries and Benefits	\$522,283	\$545,004	\$572,450	\$633,424	\$705,351
Contracted Services	\$323,476	\$299,992	\$320,629	\$407,060	\$400,115
Supplies	\$111,886	\$105,830	\$113,114	\$149,784	\$117,300
Other Operating	\$47,363	\$43,067	\$41,409	\$52,478	\$56,207
Capital Equipment	\$6,611	\$22,970	\$14,352	\$38,968	\$17,427
Total	\$1,011,619	\$1,016,863	\$1,061,954	\$1,281,714	\$1,296,400

Source: Texas Education Agency (TEA), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

In 1999-2000 the district opened a 42,000 square foot middle school, replacing a 12,000 square foot facility. The old middle school is not incurring any maintenance or operating costs.

FINDING

LCISD conducted several innovative projects to improve the management and use of its facilities. The construction of the middle school began three years ago, prior to the new superintendent's arrival. Initially, the school was to occupy grades 7 and 8. Superintendent Ramon believed that a middle school, grades 6-8, would better serve the academic needs of the school district. The slab had already been poured for the new facility, but a wing was added to accommodate the additional grade.

A member of the community, a former LCISD student, agreed to donate \$30,000 a year for ten years, which funded the computer infrastructure for the new school, as well as gym bleachers and band equipment. To date, the district has received \$60,000. The district realized additional savings by using maintenance staff to install the computer wiring.

The middle school kitchen needed to be reconfigured to meet the needs of a larger population. The district used available fund balances in food services to pay for additional equipment to provide a full service kitchen at the middle school.

After the middle school construction was complete, the locker configuration created a "bullpen" area where student conflicts often occurred. The configuration kept school employees from being able to see and prevent these conflicts. The district reconfigured the lockers by changing their location and height. The district placed the top row of lockers on the floor to improve the view of the locker area. This change improved security over the area, and student conflicts declined.

Each of these innovative ideas contributed to a more efficient and effective use of the middle school.

COMMENDATION

LCISD used donations, available fund balances and creative ideas to maximize the use of its new middle school.

FINDING

The district lacks a long-range facilities master plan. The superintendent and board evaluate facility options for the district, but no methodology is being applied to determine short and long-range facility needs.

Exhibit 4-3 presents an inventory of the district's facilities. The district has no portable buildings.

**Exhibit 4-3
LCISD Facilities Inventory**

Building	Gross Square Footage	Year Built
Activity Center	8,181	1990

Administration Building	1,892	1928
Old J.H. Classroom/Storage	11,854	1924
Travis Elementary Main Bldg.	12,982	1958
Travis Elementary South Addition	5,136	1978
Travis Elementary North Addition	3,131	1972
Cafeteria	8,615	1950
First Grade Classrooms #1	1,820	1976
First Grade Addition #1	1,820	1976
First Grade Addition #2	1,820	1976
Media Center	6,240	1975
H.S. Main Bldg.	43,290	1982
Auditorium	6,888	1958
Vocational Shops	8,540	1980
Agriculture Building	5,944	1962
Special Education Annex	4,800	1974
Transportation Building	3,050	1975
Bus Barn	9,105	1975
Maintenance Building	4,000	1985
Lincoln Lee Elementary Main	11,642	1928
L.L. Elementary Reading Clinic	5,040	1971
Gymnasium	15,248	1956
Field House	4,000	1975
Middle School Main	41,540	1999
High School Annex	41,398	1999
High School New Gym	17,670	1999
Sebastian Elementary Main	13,077	1951
Elementary Annex	7,088	1927
Storage	2,646	1962
Total	308,457	

Source: Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Property Appraisal Packet, September 1, 2000.

The district operates 29 separate facilities for 1,500 students. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students attend a small school facility in Sebastian, and students in grades one through five attend the elementary school in Lyford.

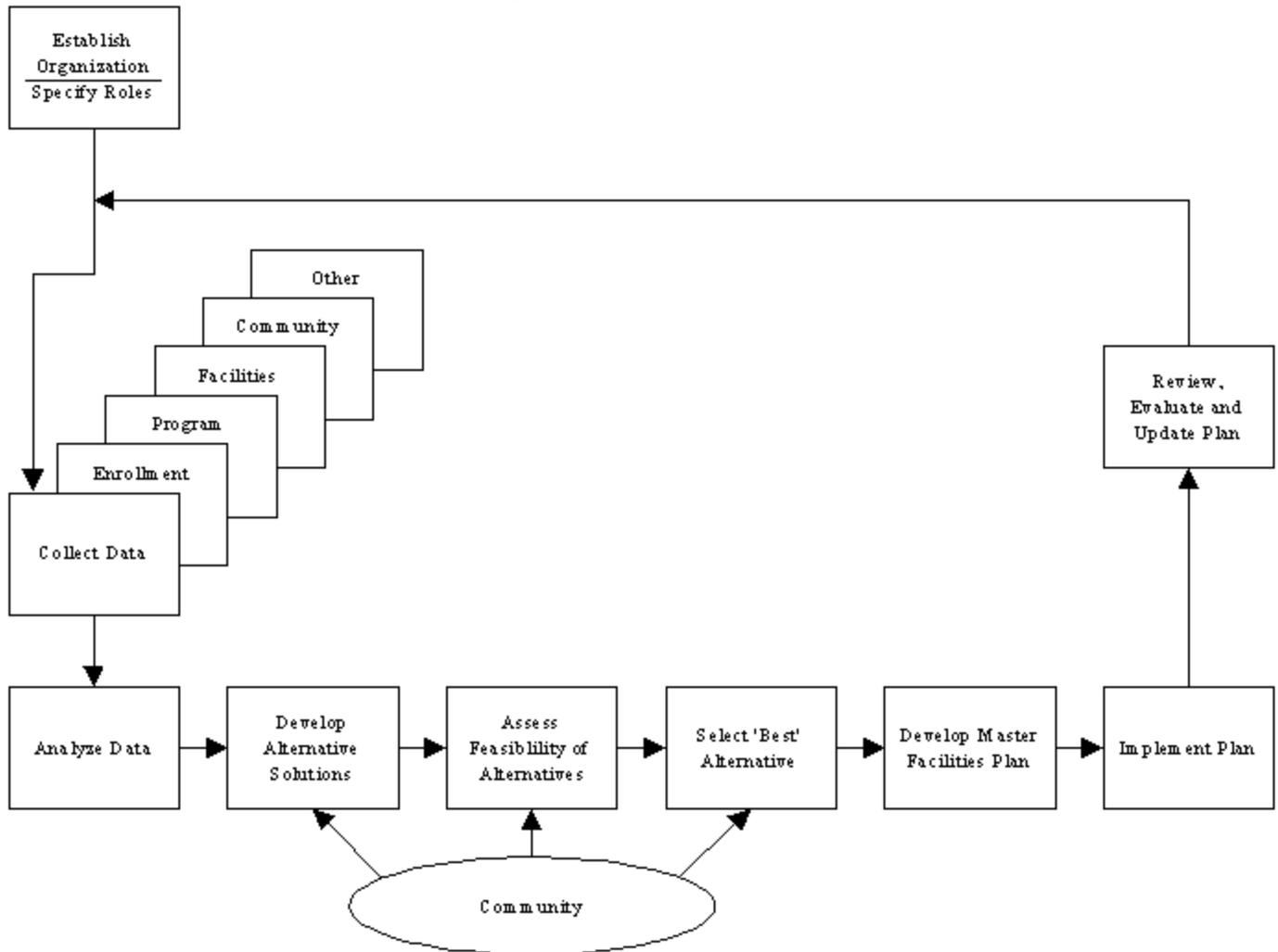
Elementary classes in Lyford are held in five different buildings, only three of which are contiguous. The elementary school cafeteria, the reading clinic and the gymnasium are in different facilities as well. This layout is not conducive to learning because it hampers communication among teachers in coordinating educational programs.

The district does not have enrollment projections, and enrollment has declined by 99 students over the past four years. Having some reasonable method of estimating student enrollment for at least five years in the future would enable the district to project and plan for its facilities needs.

The lack of long range planning is impairing the district's ability to meet facility needs. Since the new middle school was constructed three years ago, no existing facilities have been sold or demolished. The district did pass a bond issue in February 2002 to build a new elementary in Lyford.

Exhibit 4-4 shows the facilities planning process recommended by the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International (CEFPI).

Exhibit 4-4
Facilities Planning Process Recommended by CEFPI



Source: Council of Educational Facility Planners International, Guide for Planning Educational Facilities, 1991.

School districts with effective planning processes, such as the one described in **Exhibit 4-4**, identify and meet district facility needs. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) uses a facility planning process that includes most of the components listed above. The resulting long-term facility plan successfully addressed the following for each school site:

- General building needs
- Administrative facility needs
- Common area facility needs
- Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing needs
- Site issues
- Minor repairs
- Major modernization/renovation.

Waco ISD contracted with a firm of architects and engineers to assess the long-range facility needs of the district. The study provided a strategic focus on facility needs and is used as the foundation for a community task force. This plan served as the basis for two successful bond elections - a \$15 million bond election in 1998 and a \$39.5 million bond election in 2000.

Recommendation 31:

Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan.

The district should form a long-range facilities planning committee consisting of teachers, administrators, maintenance and operations personnel, parents, members of the business community, members of the community at large and students. This committee should be involved in the development of a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan and should review and monitor the plan annually.

As part of the development of the long-range facilities master plan, the district should work with a consultant to review the condition of existing facilities, develop enrollment projections ten years into the future, establish criteria for educational and facilities standards and review the necessary requirements for the building of the new elementary school.

The facilities master plan also should attempt to provide educational parity across the district for components such as access to technology, ceiling height, lighting levels, square feet per student, student-to-teacher ratio, access to water and restrooms, as well as other issues the district identifies as important to deliver education to students. In addition, the master plan should address how specific educational programs that the district may adopt or changes in educational delivery systems will affect facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The board creates a facilities planning committee and solicits volunteers to serve on the committee.	June 2002
2.	The board appoints committee members, establishes committee goals and sets a timetable.	July 2002
3.	The superintendent solicits bids for a facilities planning study and recommends a vendor to the committee and board for approval.	August 2002
4.	The facilities planning committee reviews the facilities planning study results and incorporates results into a long-term facilities master plan.	January 2003
5.	The facilities planning committee updates the master plan annually.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact assumes that a facilities consultant will be hired to develop the master plan under the direction of the district committee. Based on the costs of similar studies at small school districts, the consultant fees are estimated at \$15,000.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
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Develop a comprehensive long-range facilities master plan.	(\$15,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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FINDING

The district's maintenance work order system is manual and not that efficient. The manual system is well organized, with work orders maintained by school and by maintenance employee. All requests are obtained by phone, and the Maintenance and Transportation supervisor or his secretary completes a manual work order form for each request. The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor has a computer, but it is not linked to the district's wide area network (WAN). Information on the work order forms is not entered onto the computer or aggregated on a report. The manual system records transactions but is not providing the benefits of a management system. This approach requires more effort to be dedicated to talking on the phone and preparing work orders than would be necessary with an automated system.

The LCISD Technology facilitator developed a Web-based work order system for technology requests during the summer of 2001. Users of the technology work order system are pleased with that system, so the maintenance system should be easy to implement, using the technology request system as a model. The district has received a cost estimate of \$8,400 to connect the Maintenance and Transportation facility and the Athletic facility to the WAN, and plans are under way to connect these facilities in 2001-02.

Recommendation 32:

Modify the technology work request system to serve as a maintenance work order system.

The creation of such a system should increase the efficiency of maintenance department staff.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor reviews the technology work request system with the Technology facilitator and identifies needed changes.	May 2002
2.	The superintendent authorizes the purchase of equipment needed to connect the Maintenance and Transportation facility to the district's WAN.	June 2002
3.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor, the coordinator of Personnel and Support Services and the superintendent identify management reports needed from a maintenance work order system.	June 2002
4.	The Technology facilitator modifies the system based on the requirements and conducts testing.	July 2002
5.	The Technology facilitator and Maintenance and Transportation supervisor train district staff to use the new system.	July 2002
6.	The Technology facilitator implements the system and monitors user satisfaction.	August

FISCAL IMPACT

Since connecting the Maintenance and Transportation Facility and the Athletic Facility to the WAN is already budgeted for during 2001-02, the remainder of this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district provides custodial staffing at levels that are significantly higher than industry standards. The industry standard for custodial staffing is 20,000 square feet per custodian, but the number and physical layout of the buildings at LCISD will prevent the district from achieving this level of productivity.

Exhibit 4-5 compares the custodial staffing levels for LCISD against the industry standard of 20,000 square feet per custodian. With 29 buildings and the elementary being housed in five separate facilities, it is impossible to achieve this level of productivity. However, a level of 17,000 square feet is a reasonable target for the district, particularly since the middle school and high school are relatively new facilities.

Exhibit 4-5
Analysis of Custodial Staffing Levels
2000-01

Measure	Amount
Gross square feet maintained	296,603
Number of FTE custodians	26
Gross square feet per custodian	11,408
Modified Industry Standard	17,000
FTE's prescribed by modified standard	18
Overstaffing	8
Average custodian salary and benefits	\$15,991
Annual expenditures for surplus custodians	\$127,928

Sources: Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Property Appraisal Packet, September 1, 2000; LCISD custodial staffing schedule, November 2001.

Based on these comparisons between the custodial assignments in the district and industry standards for custodial staffing, the district has eight more custodians than needed.

Tyler ISD developed a formal custodian training and operations program that has contributed to better service with fewer custodians. Tyler's program addresses the following areas:

- efficient cleaning methods;
- kitchen cleaning and sanitation;
- restroom cleaning;
- proper use of cleaning supplies and equipment;
- time management;
- hazardous materials;
- district policy review;
- indoor environmental quality;
- safety and health;
- blood borne pathogen precautions;
- repetitive stress injury prevention;
- harassment and discrimination; and
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

The development of formal cleaning standards and training programs were instrumental in achieving productivity objectives. LCISD could expect to achieve similar results.

Recommendation 33:

Apply a modified industry standard of at least 17,000 square feet per custodian and provide custodians additional training.

Reducing staffing levels to a modified industry standard with additional training and instituting a hiring freeze will produce a more efficient operation of custodial services at LCISD. When the new elementary school is built, the district should be able to return to productivity levels of 20,000 square feet per custodian. Also, the superintendent should consider reassigning the additional custodians to other available positions in the district where they could perform the work.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor recalculates the staffing levels at each school using the modified industry standard formula and institutes a hiring freeze.	May 2002
2.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor contacts Tyler ISD for help in developing a training program to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of custodial services.	June 2002
3.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor develops a custodial training program and staffing plan for LCISD and submits them to the superintendent.	July 2002
4.	The superintendent presents the training program, staffing formula and proposed staffing levels to the board for approval.	August 2002

5.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor implements the training program.	September 2002
6.	The Maintenance and Transportation supervisor implements the new staffing levels for the 2003-04 school year.	August 2003

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is an annual savings of \$127,928, based on eliminating eight custodial positions at \$12,624 average salary plus benefits of \$3,367 (11.98 percent benefit rate x \$12,624 plus \$1,855 for health insurance). First year estimates are reduced by one-half based on the hiring freeze and attrition.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Apply a modified industry standard of at least 17,000 square feet per custodian and provide custodians additional training.	\$63,964	\$127,928	\$127,928	\$127,928	\$127,928

FINDING

LCISD has no energy management program or strategy. **Exhibit 4-6** shows LCISD's utility expenditures per square foot for 1996-97 through 1999-2000. Utilities cost per square foot is calculated using LCISD's operations space of 296,603 square feet in 1999-2000 and 207,849 square feet in prior years.

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) recommended energy cost for an efficient facility is \$1.00 or less per square foot. **Exhibit 4-6** illustrates that LCISD's utilities expenditures in 1999-2000 were 34 percent more than the recommended level.

**Exhibit 4-6
LCISD Utilities Cost per Square Foot
1997-98 through 1999-2000**

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Utilities Expenditures	\$273,376	\$296,552	\$397,444
Gross square feet of operated space	207,849	207,849	296,603
Utilities cost per square foot	\$1.32	\$1.43	\$1.34

Sources: TEA, PEIMS, 1997-98 through 1999-2000; TASB Property Appraisal Packet, September 1, 2000.

Many of the district's buildings use window air conditioning units, which are much more expensive to operate. In recent years, the district installed central air conditioning systems in the main office and field house. The district also has replaced some of the window units with wall units. These are more energy

efficient than the window units, but far less efficient than central systems. The small size of many of the buildings preclude consideration of central air systems. The district paid for all air conditioner replacement projects out of the district's general fund.

SECO administers a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs that can significantly reduce energy consumption in school districts. For example, the Energy Management Partnership Program has identified more than \$10 million in energy savings for school districts in Texas. The Lone Star program has a reputation as the nation's largest and longest-running energy efficient, government-operated loan program. The program has helped public entities save more than \$94 million through energy efficiency and has recommended additional measures that could save more than \$500 million by 2020.

SECO has engineering firms under contract that will, at no cost to the district, conduct a preliminary audit of a district's buildings and identify maintenance and operations procedures, projects for retrofits and financing options. These audits often find low-cost or no-cost projects that districts can undertake immediately to save energy.

Many districts know how much energy per square foot each building is using and how much it costs per square foot. Some districts understand that this data enables them to compare their usage and cost with local and state data to help them identify areas of high-energy consumption. If one elementary school costs 54 cents a square foot to operate and another of comparable size costs 94 cents, district officials should know it. An energy audit can help districts find out why the disparity exists and how to reduce costs.

Energy retrofits upgrade facilities and equipment and generally pay for themselves within eight to ten years through energy savings and reduced maintenance costs. These retrofits might include heating and air conditioning systems that may be inefficient and at the end of their useful lives. Incandescent lighting requires replacement with high-efficiency fluorescent lighting systems. Mechanical or computerized energy management controls may yield excellent paybacks.

Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPC) assist federal agencies to implement energy savings programs without issuing a bond or tying up district funds. ESPCs are authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 1992 and allow districts to recover their investments with energy service companies through guaranteed savings. The energy service company is paid directly from those cost savings, enabling districts to fund needed projects. With an ESPC, energy savings pay for capital improvements.

Some districts need energy retrofits and lack either the needed manpower or the expertise to oversee these projects. By funding these projects through an ESPC, the handling of the projects is in a turnkey fashion and the district may use one contractor for the entire project.

Recommendation 34:

Contact SECO to develop an energy management strategy.

The district should participate in the Lone Star program operated by SECO. The district should work with SECO to determine if any cost-effective measures would help the district reduce its energy costs. This program provides a risk-free option to school districts for improving energy efficiency.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent contacts SECO to conduct an energy management audit.	August 2002
2.	SECO conducts the audit, makes its recommendations and estimates energy savings.	Fall 2002
3.	The superintendent requests approval from the board to issue debt to finance the energy conservation measures recommended.	January 2003
4.	The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation tracks and reports energy use and cost statistics based on square feet and reports it to the superintendent.	Spring 2003 and Monthly

FISCAL IMPACT

To implement this recommendation, the district will need to invest in the energy conservation measures as recommended by SECO, and utility cost savings will help pay for these investments. The district should realize a net savings within eight to ten years.

FINDING

SECO has a school-based program called Watt Watchers or Watt Team. The program teaches students ways to save energy and provides them with the tools to teach others. SECO provides free materials, training and site support to students in grades 1 through 12. Students gain self-esteem, learn about energy resources and take an active role in teaching others the importance of energy efficiency-all while having fun participating in the program.

This program not only saves money at schools, but students learn how to develop a habit of saving energy in their homes as well. The Watt Watchers program also involves starting an Energy Patrol at individual schools. The Energy Patrol consists of teachers, students, parents and community volunteers who work together to implement energy conservation practices, such as:

- planting trees around the building to provide shade and improve the environment;
- checking door and window weather stripping for cracks;
- checking outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioning filters;
- developing maintenance schedules for monitoring energy conservation; and
- turning off fluorescent bulbs in soda machines.

SECO's Texas Energy Education Development (TEED) project also offers a program designed specifically for high school students. Students conduct school-year long energy projects that promote

energy conservation awareness. The projects can range from designing posters containing energy-saving reminders to weatherizing low-income homes in the community.

Recommendation 35:

Involve schools in energy conservation.

LCISD should implement SECO's "Watt Watchers" program. SECO provides program support for Watt Watchers by phone at 1-800-531-5441, extension 3-1931, e-mail, fax or on the Comptroller's Web site at: <http://www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us>.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	LCISD's principals contact SECO for assistance developing and implementing a Watt Watchers program.	September 2002
2.	LCISD's principals and student volunteers implement the Watt Watchers program.	September 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS

B. COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

The responsibilities of technology services operations in Texas public school districts vary. Some offices support administrative workers only, while others like LCISD's, are responsible for supporting both administrative and instructional technology. To achieve its technology-related goals, a school district must have an organizational structure that encourages using and supporting new technologies. A well managed technology department is guided by a clearly defined mission plan, which is based on appropriate goals and organization, clearly assigned responsibilities, well defined procedures for developing new applications and maintaining older applications and a customer service orientation to meet and anticipate user needs.

The LCISD Technology Department provides technical support for the district's instructional programs as well as for the district's administration. The department has two staff members, a Technology facilitator and one assistant technician. The Technology facilitator heads the department and reports to the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction. The Technology facilitator is responsible for all major functions such as infrastructure, technical support, instructional technology and technology training. The assistant technician reports to the Technology facilitator and is responsible for technical support, network and hardware maintenance.

The district has a technology committee consisting of the superintendent, the administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, the Technology facilitator, the assistant technician, teachers from each of the schools and two students.

FINDING

LCISD has effectively used available grant funds to build a solid technology infrastructure over the past four years. According to the district's 2001-04 Technology Plan, technology in 1997 was almost non-existent, and few computers were available in the district. Today, the district has more than 450 computers, 98 percent of which are networked.

Two primary funding sources supported the development of the technology infrastructure - E-Rate and the Telecommunication Infrastructure Fund (TIF). The federal E-Rate discount provides 20 to 90 percent of the cost of purchasing telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections. The level of discount is based upon the

percentage of students eligible for participation in the federal free and reduced-price school lunch program. To be eligible to participate in the E-Rate program, schools must have an approved technology plan. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the official approving agency for public schools in Texas.

TIF grants help schools develop ways to integrate the Internet into the school curriculum and instruction. To receive this grant, schools are required to submit an approved technology plan, create a technology task force, provide 10 percent in matching funds, purchase items from the TIF-suggested configuration list, participate in the TIF tech training program and build a homepage on the Internet.

Exhibit 4-7 presents E-Rate and TIF funding for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

**Exhibit 4-7
E-Rate and TIF Funding for Technology
2000-01 and 2001-02**

Type of Funding	2000-01	2001-02
E-Rate - Telecom	\$35,640	\$38,919
E-Rate - Internet	\$7,149	\$9,468
E-Rate - Internal Connections	\$618,991	\$243,850
TIF	\$200,000	applied for
Total	\$861,780	\$292,237

Source: LCISD funding summary, November 2001.

LCISD has obtained more than \$1.1 million in recent years for technology funding.

COMMENDATION

LCISD sought and obtained grants to support a strong technology infrastructure.

FINDING

LCISD has a web-based technology work order system that has streamlined operations and improved management's effectiveness. The Technology facilitator developed this system during 2001, and it is linked to the district Web site. Previously, all technical support and help desk requests were submitted through phone calls to the technology staff. This required technology staff to spend an inordinate amount of time on the

phone, as opposed to diagnosing or fixing problems. The new automated system reduces phone requests, allows many problems to be resolved via email and reduces the need for second visits to solve problems since the problems are completely detailed in the request. Request forms also can be submitted at the campuses. Current plans are in place to integrate the computer equipment inventory with the work request system.

The system has a user-friendly data entry screen for users requesting assistance. Users enter their email address, select from a drop-down menu of the type of problem, enter their name and location and provide details of the problem. Technology staff reviews the requests and are able to respond to many with an email reply. The system tracks the date entered, the date closed and the type of problem for management reporting purposes. The system's users at the schools speak very favorably of it and believe it has improved responsiveness.

COMMENDATION

LCISD uses Web-based software to track and respond to technology assistance requests efficiently.

FINDING

The district has an excellent technology plan that supports planning and accountability. The plan provides a historical perspective on LCISD technology, presents the district's vision and mission statements and provides information on district demographics. The plan also includes:

- a statement of existing conditions;
- minimum hardware standards;
- a needs assessment based on a survey of needs;
- a discussion of problem areas;
- technology goals that are related to instruction, community involvement and other functions;
- general recommendations;
- supporting resources;
- budget for current and future costs; and,
- an evaluation component for the Technology Plan.

The district finalized the plan in early 2001, and it provides an excellent roadmap for the district. It also serves as a model for other districts.

COMMENDATION

LCISD's technology plan is an effective planning and management tool.

FINDING

The district has an effective clean sweep program to annually inventory computers and verify their use. The Technology facilitator maintains a detailed inventory of computer equipment. This inventory tracks selected information for each piece of computer equipment, including campus number, room number, equipment type, manufacturer, model, serial number, barcode number and replacement cost. The inventory is maintained on a spreadsheet allowing sorts by any of the above categories.

Each summer, the Technology facilitator and the assistant technician conduct a clean sweep of all computers on the inventory. During this process, they verify the information on the inventory and remove any unauthorized software programs and data from the computers. Any problems or exceptions are reported to the superintendent.

This program is effective in verifying asset records and is also effective in ensuring appropriate use. The first time the clean sweep program was implemented, many unauthorized programs were identified and removed. The next year, very few exceptions were noted.

COMMENDATION

LCISD uses an effective clean sweep program to verify the existence and use of district computer equipment.

FINDING

LCISD does not have a disaster recovery plan or backup procedures in place. These items are not mentioned in the district's 2001-04 Technology Plan, but the Technology facilitator acknowledged they are serious issues.

The lack of a plan exposes the district to an unacceptable risk in the event of a catastrophe. If the district had a fire, tornado or other catastrophic event, which destroyed the hardware, there is no alternate location from which to operate its computer systems until the hardware is replaced.

There are no tape back-up systems or procedures for any of the district's nine servers. Individuals responsible for each of the servers around the district are to maintain back-ups. The staff, however, do not perform back-ups routinely. The only systems that are backed up regularly are the business and personnel information systems that are maintained and backed up by Region 1. Most other data are stored on individual hard drives. The risk of losing data due to server crashes exposes the district to significant risks.

Exhibit 4-8 lists some of the key elements of an effective disaster recovery plan that the National Center for Education Statistics has identified.

**Exhibit 4-8
Key Elements of a Disaster Recovery Plan**

Step	Details
Build the disaster recovery team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a disaster recovery team that includes key policy makers, building management, end-users, key outside contractors and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the district. • Develop an estimate of the minimum space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inventory of all MIS technology assets, including data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. • Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organizations to share each other's equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the district to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. • Make plans to procure hardware, software and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations resume as soon as possible. • Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. • Locate support resources that are necessary, such as equipment repair, trucking and cleaning companies. • Arrange with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name.

within the plan.	<p>and job title so that everyone knows exactly what is necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define actions in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. • Define actions at the onset of an undesirable event to limit damage, loss and compromised data integrity. • Identify actions necessary to restore critical functions. • Define actions to re-establish normal operations.
Test the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the plan frequently and completely. • Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Consider other significant issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make a plan unnecessarily complicated. • Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that other authorized personnel are prepared to implement it if needed. • Update the plan regularly.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Safeguarding Your Technology." (Modified by Texas School Performance Review).

Many school districts enter into a reciprocal agreement with a neighboring district or area business to use its equipment until the district's hardware is replaced. TEA's Region 1 does not offer this service, but does allow school districts to use its facilities in case of a disaster.

Most districts also employ tape back-up procedures for the servers on the network. These procedures protect the district's data from loss in the event the servers crash or become inoperable for other reasons.

Recommendation 36:

Develop and test a disaster recovery plan and create written back-up procedures.

All administrative staff and teachers need to be provided network folders on a server so that their data files can be backed up centrally under a new procedure. A centralized back-up capability combined with a disaster recovery plan will provide the district adequate protection over its data and software. Additionally, the district should contact neighboring districts

to explore possibilities of entering into a reciprocal agreement to use computer equipment in case of an emergency.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINES

1.	The Technology facilitator develops a disaster recovery plan with assistance from Region 1 and attempts to find a neighboring district to secure a reciprocal agreement.	July 2002
2.	The Technology facilitator purchases one tape back-up device and software to back up all servers from a central site.	August 2002
3.	The superintendent and board approve the disaster recovery plan and any reciprocal agreement reached with another district.	September 2002
4.	The Technology facilitator conducts back-ups daily and stores back-up tapes in a fireproof vault or cabinet.	September 2002
5.	The Technology facilitator tests the disaster recovery plan, documents recovery procedures and implements the agreement.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

One tape back-up device costs about \$300. The cost of the software needed to execute the back-ups from a central site is estimated at \$1,295, based on vendor quotes.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Develop and test a disaster recovery plan and create written back-up procedures.	(\$1,595)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS

C. TRANSPORTATION

The Texas Education Code authorizes, but does not require, Texas school districts to provide transportation for students in the general population between home and school, from school to career and technology training locations and for extracurricular activities. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), however, does require a school district to provide transportation for students with disabilities if the district also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to receive special education services.

In 2000-01, the LCISD Transportation Department transported an average of 602 students a day between school and home on regular program routes, 26 students a day on special program routes and 14 students a day on career and technology (CATE) routes. LCISD owns, operates and maintains a fleet of 11 regular school buses and two special program school buses for this purpose.

In 2000-01, LCISD operated a total of 120,214 route miles of regular program transportation and 50,206 route miles of special program transportation. While the district's 2000-01 operations costs are not yet available, in 1999-2000 the district's operations costs were \$344,264 for regular program transportation and \$26,239 for special program transportation.

Texas school districts are eligible for reimbursement from the state for transporting regular program, special program and CATE program students. The Texas Legislature sets funding rules, and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers the program. State funding for regular program transportation is limited to reimbursements for the cost of transporting students living two or more miles from the school they attend. The state does not reimburse districts for transporting students living within two miles of the school they attend unless they face hazardous walking conditions on the way to school, such as the need to cross a four-lane roadway without a traffic signal or crossing guard.

The state will reimburse districts for transporting students on hazardous routes within two miles of school; however, the reimbursement for transporting students on hazardous routes may not exceed 10 percent of the total annual reimbursement for transporting students who live two miles or more from the school. A school district must use local funds to

pay for transportation costs the state reimbursement does not cover. LCISD is not currently being reimbursed for hazardous routes, which have been designated by the board.

For the regular program, the state reimburses districts for qualifying transportation expenses based on linear density, which is the ratio of the average number of regular program students transported daily on standard routes to the number of route miles traveled daily for those standard routes. TEA uses this ratio to assign each school district to one of seven linear density groups. Each group is eligible to receive a maximum per mile allotment.

Exhibit 4-9 shows the linear density groups and the related allotment per mile.

**Exhibit 4-9
Linear Density Groups**

Linear Density Group	Allotment Per Mile
2.40 and above	\$1.43
1.65 to 2.40	\$1.25
1.15 to 1.65	\$1.11
0.90 to 1.15	\$0.97
0.65 to 0.90	\$0.88
0.40 to 0.65	\$0.79
Up to 0.40	\$0.68

Source: TEA, Handbook on School Transportation Allotments, revised May 2001.

In 2000-01, LCISD was in the third lowest linear density group, which entitled the district to a reimbursement of \$0.88 each route mile for regular program miles. This category was a drop in linear density and reimbursement amount from 1999-2000. The district's actual operations cost in 1999-2000 (total annual costs minus debt service and capital outlay) was \$1.90 each odometer mile.

Exhibit 4-10 shows the linear densities for LCISD and a peer group of Texas school districts.

Exhibit 4-10
LCISD and Peer ISD Linear Density
2000-01

District	Standard Regular Riders*	Standard Regular Miles	Linear Density	Allotment Per Mile
Progreso	162,360	31,025	5.23	\$1.43
La Feria	155,700	83,394	1.87	\$1.25
Rio Hondo	179,280	137,597	1.30	\$1.11
Raymondville	46,440	52,633	0.88	\$0.97
Santa Rosa	46,080	30,894	1.49	\$0.88
Peer Average	117,972	67,109	1.76	\$1.25
Lyford	91,620	112,661	0.81	\$0.88

Source: TEA, School Transportation Route Services Reports, 2000-01.
**Annual riders calculated by multiplying average daily riders by 180 school days.*

Reimbursement for special program transportation is not based on linear density. The per mile allotment rate for special program is set by the Texas Legislature. All transportation for special program students, except certain field trips, is eligible for state reimbursement at \$1.08 each route mile. In 1999-2000, LCISD's actual cost for special program transportation (total annual costs minus debt service and capital outlay) was \$0.82 per odometer mile. Based on TEA's methodology for reimbursement, which includes capital outlay and debt service, LCISD was reimbursed \$0.94 in 1999-2000.

The reimbursement per mile for the CATE program is based on the cost for regular program miles for the previous fiscal year as reported by the district in the TEA School Transportation Operation Report. In 1999-2000, LCISD received an allotment of \$2.35 for each CATE route mile.

The TEA School Transportation Operations Reports for 1995-96 through 1999-2000 (2000-01 report has not been released at the time of this report) gives a five-year history of the transportation costs and mileage. These reports are intended to track all costs and mileage related to transportation, including services not funded by the state. **Exhibit 4-11** compares LCISD transportation operations costs from 1996-97 through 1999-2000.

Exhibit 4-11
LCISD Regular and Special Program Transportation Operation
Costs
1995-96 Through 1999-2000

Item	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	Percent Change 1995-96 to 1999-2000
Total Operating Costs*						
Regular program	\$245,902	\$262,084	\$274,448	\$322,184	\$344,264	40.0%
Special program	\$20,999	\$19,671	\$34,224	\$26,876	\$26,239	25.0%
Total	\$266,901	\$281,755	\$308,672	\$349,060	\$370,503	38.8%
Annual Miles						
Regular program	170,318	179,989	166,883	152,636	163,207	(4.2%)
Special program	27,951	31,917	25,248	24,072	32,075	14.8%
Total Miles	198,269	211,906	192,131	176,708	195,282	(1.5%)

Sources: TEA, School Transportation Operations Reports, 1995-2000.

**Operations cost excludes capital outlay and debt service. Mileage does not include non-school organization mileage.*

As **Exhibit 4-11** indicates, LCISD's total transportation operating costs increased by 38.8 percent, while total miles decreased 1.5 percent between the 1995-96 and 1999-2000 school years. For the regular program, costs increased by 40 percent and miles decreased by 4.2 percent, while special program costs increased by 25 percent and miles increased by 14.8 percent. While the increase in special program cost is consistent with the increase in miles, regular route cost has increased as total miles decreased. The district also experienced a 13 percent increase in payroll from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 and a 30-percent increase in parts and fuel costs from 1998-99 to 1999-2000.

In 1999-2000, the state allocated a total of \$166,630 in transportation funding to LCISD. The state reimbursed 42 percent of the total annual operations cost for regular routes and 100 percent for special program routes, excluding debt service and capital outlay.

Exhibit 4-12 provides a comparison of total annual operations cost and the state allotment for regular and special transportation in 1999-2000 for LCISD and the transportation peer districts.

Exhibit 4-12
LCISD and Transportation Peer ISD State Allotment
1999-2000

District	Regular Program			Special Program		
	Regular Operations Cost*	State Allotment	Percent State	Special Operations Cost*	State Allotment	Percent State
Progreso	\$178,249	\$1.43	31.2%	\$17,826	\$1.08	81.8%
La Feria	\$208,208	\$1.25	60.1%	\$36,298	\$1.08	87.2%
Rio Hondo	\$259,610	\$1.11	72.7%	\$44,867	\$0.71	72.4%
Santa Rosa	\$117,777	\$1.25	51.8%	\$50,477	\$1.08	37.9%
Raymondville	\$255,373	\$0.97	22.2%	\$80,610	\$1.08	96.6%
Peer Average	\$203,843	\$1.20	49.1%	\$46,016	\$1.01	78.0%
Lyford	\$344,264	\$0.97	34.1%	\$26,239	\$.94	100.0%

Source: TEA School Transportation Operation Report and School Transportation Route Services Reports 1999-2000.

**Operations cost excludes capital outlay and debt service. Mileage does not include non-school organization mileage.*

LCISD's special program routes cannot be reimbursed for a greater amount than the cost of operating those routes. LCISD's special program routes are reimbursed at \$94 per mile. This is \$.14 less than the per mile allotment set by the legislature.

Exhibit 4-13 summarizes LCISD transportation operations cost for 1999-2000 by object of expenditure as defined by TEA in the instructions for the annual School Transportation Route Services Report.

Exhibit 4-13
LCISD Budgeted Transportation Costs by Type of Expenditure
1999-2000

Object	Total Budgeted Expenditure
Salaries and benefits	\$258,988
Purchased and contracted services	\$5,224
Supplies and materials	\$95,404
Other operating expenses	\$10,887
Total Operating Expenditures	\$370,503
Debt Service	\$0
Capital outlay	\$76,299
Total Expenditures	\$446,802

Source: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report, 1999-2000.

LCISD's transportation cost per mile for regular routes is the highest among its peers, while the cost per student for special program routes are the lowest, as reflected in **Exhibit 4-14**.

Exhibit 4-14
Peer District Comparison of Transportation Operating Costs
1999-2000

District	Operating Expenditures (Regular)*	Operating Expenditures (Special)*	Cost Per Mile (Regular)	Cost Per Mile (Special)
Progreso	\$178,249	\$17,826	\$2.10	\$1.44
La Feria	\$208,208	\$36,298	\$1.62	\$1.93
Rio Hondo	\$259,610	\$44,867	\$1.35	\$1.55
Santa Rosa	\$117,777	\$50,477	\$1.62	\$2.62
Raymondville	\$255,373	\$80,610	\$1.73	\$1.10
Lyford	\$344,264	\$26,239	\$2.11	\$0.82

*Sources: TEA, School Transportation Operation Report, 1999-2000.
Operations cost excludes capital outlay and debt service. Mileage does not include non-school organization mileage.

LCISD has the highest operations cost for regular route in comparison to the selected peer districts; however, LCISD has the second highest reimbursable miles and the lowest (including Raymondville) linear density.

FINDING

LCISD has developed a plan to retire older buses annually. School buses typically have useful lives of between 10 and 15 years, with well maintained buses lasting longer. Some districts develop mileage targets for regular and special education buses as a tool to assign buses, so that mileage can be accumulated evenly among buses. Other districts rotate buses, using mileage targets to identify which route combinations most evenly accrue mileage.

LCISD ensures that buses are used proportionally, alternating older buses with high miles to shorter routes and using newer buses with fewer miles to operate extracurricular routes. After older buses are replaced, they become spare buses. These spare buses replace older spare buses, which are sold at auction.

The new buses purchased have gasoline engines rather than diesel. The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation stated gasoline engine buses are less expensive to purchase and less expensive to maintain.

COMMENDATION

LCISD has adopted a plan to replace its buses every 11 to 15 years.

FINDING

LCISD is maximizing its ridership on each bus. Total capacity for all routes averaged 85 percent in 2000-01. LCISD covers a large rural area, which prevents LCISD from reaching maximum capacity on all buses and in turn, lowers its linear density. **Exhibit 4-15** shows all of LCISD's bus routes and the number of students transported each day compared to bus capacity.

Exhibit 4-15
LCISD Bus Capacity versus Ridership
2000-01

Bus Number	Maximum Number of Students Transported	Capacity of Bus	Percent of Capacity
1	61	71	86%
2	38	71	54%
3	61	71	86%
4	59	71	83%
5	58	71	82%
6	70	71	99%
8	69	71	97%
9	61	71	86%
10	18	35	51%
11	1	7	14%
12	67	71	94%
13	66	71	93 %
14	68	71	96%

Source: LCISD Transportation Department.

COMMENDATION

LCISD maintains a high occupancy rate on its bus routes.

FINDING

LCISD does not receive the maximum reimbursement rate for special program routes. TEA does not reimburse school districts at the full allotment amount if a district's cost per mile is less than the maximum allotment amount. Based on special program operation costs for 1999-2000, LCISD was reimbursed for 100 percent of their transportation costs or \$0.94 per route mile. That is \$0.14 less than the per mile allotment rate for special program routes which was set by the Texas Legislature at \$1.08 per route mile. At the same time, the cost per route mile for regular education routes was \$2.11 per mile. Since transporting special needs students is normally more labor intensive and requires students to be picked up at their homes, the costs for special program routes is often significantly higher than regular program routes. The fact that LCISD's costs are reversed with more being spent on regular program routes, calls the numbers into question.

TEA's *Instructions for Completing School Transportation Operation Report* states operation costs shall reflect those direct and indirect expenditures actually incurred for providing student transportation during the fiscal year. This would include administrative and support services.

TEA states that to separate special program costs from regular program costs for student transportation, it may be necessary to estimate or prorate costs based on a reasonable percentage determined from the total time worked, miles traveled, or the number of motor vehicles or routes operated. For 1999-2000 the total state's proportion was 75 percent expended for regular program routes and 25 percent for special program routes. LCISD 1999-2000 proportion was 93 percent of operation costs expended on regular routes and 7 percent expended for special program routes. Based on 1999-2000 data, LCISD potentially could have received another \$0.14 per mile for the 32,075 special program miles reported if the proportion between regular program routes and special program routes were more in line with the state.

Recommendation 37:

Review the proportion of operations costs for regular and special program routes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation reviews the operating costs associated with special program routes.	April 2002
2.	The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation identifies costs not currently captured or disproportionately allocated to regular program routes.	May 2002
3.	The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation reports actual operating costs for both special program and regular program routes to TEA.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

There were 32,075 miles logged during 1999-2000, which would have resulted in \$4,491 in additional reimbursed dollars based on an additional \$.14 per mile. If LCISD can resolve this issue by July 1st, the TEA reporting date, savings could be realized in 2002-03.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Review the proportion of	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$4,491	\$4,491

operations costs for regular and special program routes.					
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FINDING

LCISD has no clear statement of objectives and performance indicators to monitor transportation employee and departmental performance and to measure progress toward achieving goals.

Many public transit systems and private fleet managers use performance measures to determine the level of training employees need; decide promotions and incentive rewards; enhance preventive maintenance programs, reduce repeat failures, road calls, and unscheduled maintenance; improve employee and customer satisfaction and reduce costs.

The district has sufficient information to develop some performance indicators for Transportation Services. **Exhibit 4-16** suggests possible performance measures that are accepted as industry standards. These indicators measure the most important aspects of service.

**Exhibit 4-16
Examples of Performance Measures**

Performance Indicator
Safety Accidents per 100,000 miles Student referrals per 1,000 students bused
Cost-Efficiency Operations cost per mile - Regular Operations cost per mile - Special
Cost-Effectiveness Operation cost per route - Regular Operation cost per route - Special Operation cost per rider - Regular Operation cost per rider - Special
Service Effectiveness Route riders per mile - Regular Route riders per mile - Special Route riders per route - Regular Route riders per route - Special
Service Quality

On-time performance Complaints per 100,000 miles

Maintenance Performance Miles between road calls or breakdowns Percent PMs completed on time

Source: TSPR.

As a district gains experience using performance measures, indicators can be adjusted to meet the target goals.

Recommendation 38:

Develop key indicators to measure and monitor performance of regular and special education transportation.

Each year, the supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation should examine these indicators and use the results to evaluate management practices and employee performance. All personnel in Maintenance and Transportation should be informed about the standards and measures, the targets to be achieved, and progress toward the targets. Achievements in improved performance should be rewarded with appropriate incentives for employees or teams. A performance-based management program should allow the department to demonstrate and quantify its successes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation develops key indicators to assess the department's performance and establishes benchmarks.	April 2002
2.	The supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation reviews the performance indicators and benchmarks with the superintendent.	May 2002
3.	The performance indicators and benchmarks are publicized to the Maintenance and Transportation staff.	May 2002
4.	The supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation monitors the performance indicators and disseminates the results to Maintenance and Transportation personnel.	June 2002
5.	The supervisor for Maintenance and Transportation annually adjusts performance targets to reflect experience.	Ongoing

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD transports children living less than two miles from school. While the board has designated these routes as hazardous, LCISD has not requested state reimbursement for these routes. The state does not reimburse districts for students living within the two-mile radius of the school unless hazardous walking conditions exist between the student's home and the school. For example, if a student must cross a major highway without a crossing signal, the circumstances would qualify as a hazardous condition, and the cost of transporting that student would be reimbursed by the state. A school district must use local funds to cover actual costs incurred that are more than the reimbursable state allotment.

In 1999-2000, LCISD did not request reimbursement from the state for its hazardous route mileage. TEA states the total annual allotment for transporting hazardous-area students shall not exceed 10 percent of the total annual allotment for transporting students who live two miles or more from school. LCISD was reimbursed \$117,351 for regular routes in 1999-2000.

Only a small number of students living near the school would be able to walk from home to school and back. Other students that live further away but within the two mile distance would have major highways, railroads and crossings that would make walking an extreme hazard.

Recommendation 39:

Request state reimbursement for routes designated as hazardous.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation calculates the number of route miles drive in the designate hazardous routes.	March 2002
2.	The supervisor of Maintenance and Transportation begins submitting request for reimbursement to TEA.	April 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

LCISD was reimbursed \$117,351 for regular routes in 1999-2000. LCISD has three buses transporting children on hazardous routes, which were approved by the board. These three buses drove 2,160 hazardous route miles. Based on 1999-2000 linear density and a reimbursement rate of \$0.97, LCISD could have been reimbursed \$2,095.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Request state reimbursement for routes designated as hazardous.	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$2,095	\$2,095

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS

D. FOOD SERVICES

Public schools should provide students with appealing and nutritional breakfasts and lunches as economically as possible. Nutritional food choices are critical to the success of a school district's nutrition program because research has linked good dietary habits to higher academic performance.

Nutrition services is a field undergoing constant change due to evolving federal, state and local regulatory processes; advances in technology; demographic changes; societal and community expectations; new food product availability; participation in federal food commodities programs; competition from vending machines and other food venues on school premises; open or closed lunch periods in high schools and the changing needs and tastes of students.

The Texas School Food Service Association (TSFSA) has identified 10 standards of excellence for evaluating TSFSA programs. TSFSA states that effective programs should:

- Identify and meet current and future needs through organization, planning, direction and control;
- Maintain financial accountability through established procedures;
- Meet the nutritional needs of students and promote the development of sound nutritional practices;
- Ensure that procurement practices meet established standards;
- Provide appetizing, nutritious meals through effective, efficient systems management;
- Maintain a safe and sanitary environment;
- Encourage student participation in food service programs;
- Provide an environment that enhances employee productivity, growth, development and morale;
- Promote a positive image to the public; and
- Measure success in fulfilling regulatory requirements.

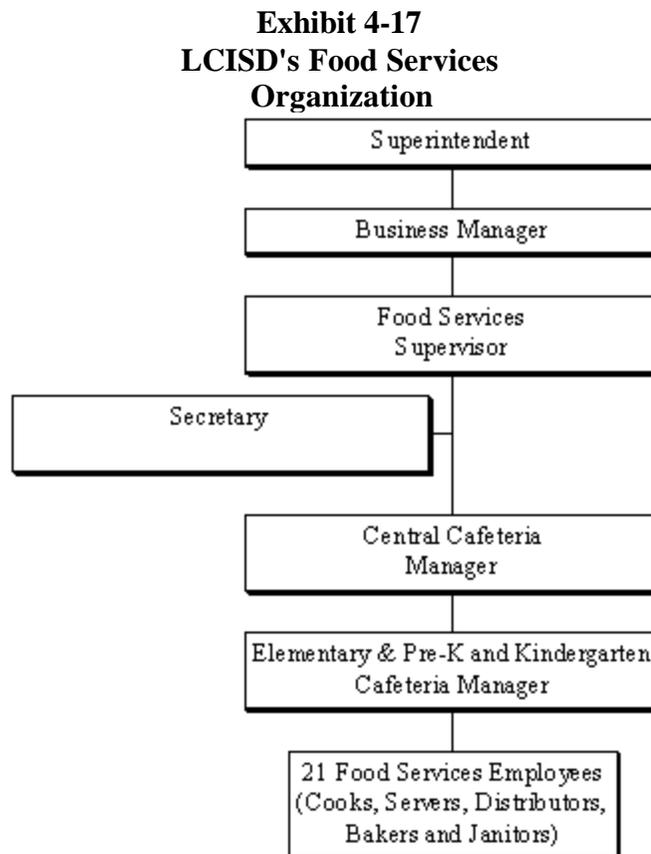
LCISD's Food Services Department plays an integral part in the education of the children of LCISD. Without nutritional food, the students in LCISD would suffer not only academically but also physically. In addition, the staff understand that they must be supportive and accommodating to the educational process in LCISD.

LCISD has three cafeterias. The central cafeteria is located in the middle and high school complex. In addition to serving the children in the middle school and high school, the central cafeteria prepares all of the food served in the district and is responsible for distributing the food to the other cafeterias.

The elementary cafeteria is located at the elementary school and serves food to first through fifth grade children. The Pre-K and Kindergarten cafeteria is located at the Pre-K and Kindergarten center in Sebastian and serves the Pre-K and Kindergarten children.

The business operations of the Food Services Department is managed by the Food Services supervisor with the assistance of one secretarial worker. Under the supervision of the Food Services supervisor, there are two cafeteria managers, one for the central cafeteria and one for the elementary and Pre-K and Kindergarten cafeterias, who manage the day-to-day operations of the district's food services. Under the direction of the cafeteria managers, 21 food services employees prepare, distribute and serve the food and clean the cafeterias.

Exhibit 4-17 shows the organizational structure of LCISD's Food Services Department.



Source: LCISD business office, November 2001.

The Food Services supervisor is responsible for planning all of the menus, placing food orders, collecting meal payments from the staff, tracking and reporting meal participation to TEA, managing the department's business operations, scheduling staff to ensure proper coverage and ensuring all staff are appropriately trained and prepared for their jobs. The central (middle school and high school) cafeteria manager oversees the daily preparation of all meals served in the district. She ensures that sufficient breakfasts and lunches are distributed to the elementary and Pre-K and Kindergarten cafeterias and that the proper meal services are provided in the central cafeteria. The elementary and Pre-K and Kindergarten cafeteria manager ensures appropriate meal service at both the elementary and Pre-K and Kindergarten cafeterias. In addition, the Food Service supervisor and the two cafeteria managers work together to make sure the inventory is correct and surpluses are used appropriately.

The central cafeteria serves breakfast from 7:20 a.m. through 7:55 a.m. and, at the same time, the Food Services Department serves breakfast in the elementary classrooms. Lunches are served beginning at 10:50 a.m. for pre-kindergarten children and end with the middle school students at 12:30 p.m. The cafeterias serve a variety of breakfast and lunch items and alternate items such as frozen pizza, chicken fried steak and cheeseburgers with items prepared from scratch such as fajitas, barbecue chicken and chili.

LCISD participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, and because more than 81 percent of LCISD's children are economically disadvantaged, all students are entitled to eat lunch and breakfast free. LCISD charges staff \$1.00 for breakfast and \$2.25 for lunch and charges visitors \$1.25 for breakfast and \$2.50 for lunch.

Exhibit 4-18 shows the total 2000-01 food services budgets, the 2000-01 student enrollment and the per-student expenditures for food services in LCISD and its peer districts. LCISD spends a comparable amount on each student for food services as its peer districts.

Exhibit 4-18
LCISD's Food Services
Budget, Enrollment and Per Student Expenditures for 2001-02

Districts	2001 Budget	2001 Enrollment	Per Student Amount
La Feria	\$1,059,840	2,784	\$381
Lyford	\$718,433	1,516	\$474

Progreso	\$1,018,635	2,061	\$494
Raymondville	\$1,222,500	2,673	\$457
Rio Hondo	\$978,700	2,014	\$486
Santa Rosa	\$479,232	1,153	\$416

Source: TEA, PEIMS 2001-02.

The LCISD Food Services Department has operated profitably in each of the last four years as shown in **Exhibit 4-19**.

Exhibit 4-19
LCISD Child Nutrition Revenues and Expenditures
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual	1998-99 Actual	1999-2000 Actual	2000-01 Actual
Revenues	\$624,081	\$647,387	\$643,992	\$707,138	\$899,480
Expenditures	\$651,919	\$638,824	\$643,976	\$693,876	\$760,543
Net Profit (Loss)	(\$27,838)	\$8,563	\$16	\$13,262	\$138,937

Source: LCISD Revenue and Expenditure Summary Reports, 1996-97 through 2000-01 and LCISD Annual Budget, 2001-02.

While the LCISD Food Services Department has accrued a \$132,940 fund balance over the last five years, the district has experienced a decline in student enrollment of 142 students, or an 8.6 percent decline of the Food Services sales base during the same time period. LCISD student enrollments for the last five years are shown in **Exhibit 4-20**.

Exhibit 4-20
LCISD Student Enrollments
1996-97 through 2000-01

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	% Change
Enrollment	1,658	1,615	1,582	1,523	1,516	(8.6)

Source: TEA, Student Enrollment Reports, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

FINDING

From 1998-99 to 2000-01, the LCISD Food Services Department increased student participation in the meal program at breakfast from 60.39 percent to 91.66 percent. Although student enrollment has declined, the department has operated at a profit for the last four years because of the increased meal participation at breakfast, beginning in the 1998-99 school year, and the continued high meal participation in lunch program.

Exhibit 4-21 shows LCISD's average daily participation rate for breakfast and lunch for 1999 through 2001. The participation rate is the average number of daily student meals served expressed as a percentage of average daily attendance.

Exhibit 4-21
Average Daily Participation Rates
for LCISD Cafeteria Operations
1998-99 through 2000-01

1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
Breakfast	Lunch	Breakfast	Lunch	Breakfast	Lunch
60.39%	90.95%	71.57%	90.50%	91.66%	92.76%

Source: TEA, Child Nutrition Programs, 1998-99 through 2000-01.

LCISD participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast program and meets the Provision II requirements enabling all students to receive free breakfast and free lunches. One of the LCISD Food Services Department's performance measures is to increase meal participation at both lunch and breakfast. With this in mind, the LCISD food services staff looked at the district's meal participation rates for both breakfast and lunch over the last three years and identified a need to increase meal participation at breakfast. The staff determined that by providing breakfast in the classrooms of the elementary schools and by providing breakfast during the zero hour, the 55-minute period held in the high school and middle school before the official start of the school day, meal participation at breakfast could be increased.

The Food Services Department delivers and serves breakfast to the elementary children in their classrooms. They are responsible for serving a nutritious meal as well as cleaning up within 45 minutes, so school can begin at its designated time. For those students who participate in extracurricular activities (athletics, band, UIL clubs, tutorial sessions, etc.) that are held during the zero hour, the Food Services Department transports the breakfast to designated locations. This operational change instituted in August of 2000 has greatly increased the district's meal participation rates.

COMMENDATION

LCISD Food Services Department increased its meal participation during breakfast by serving breakfast in the elementary classrooms and during the zero hour period at the middle school and high school cafeteria.

FINDING

The Food Services Department purchases and acquires student prizes from vendors and raffles them off to students to help encourage student participation in the meal program at lunch. The Food Services Department budgets \$250 annually to purchase prizes, and it frequently receives promotional items from vendors to raffle off to students to help increase participation. The prizes are distributed to each campus and raffled to students by attaching a winning number or color to the bottom of one lunch tray. The cafeteria servers or cashiers then announce the winning tray and the student claims their prize. The prizes include stuffed teddy bears, miniature toy skateboards, pencils and erasers. According to the Food Services supervisor, these prizes, along with preparing good tasting and nutritious food, have helped increase lunch participation.

COMMENDATION

The Food Services Department has maintained high meal participation at lunch for the last three years by periodically raffling prizes to students who participate in the meal program.

FINDING

LCISD Food Services employees are cross-trained so they can easily fulfill the responsibilities of any of the positions that are in the Food Services Department. The Food Services supervisor and central cafeteria manager are responsible for the staff development of the Food Services employees. They ensure that each employee attends all mandatory training offered through summer workshops by the Regional Educational Service Center I (Region 1), and they hold monthly meetings in which one position is highlighted and all employees are trained on its individual responsibilities and operating procedures.

In addition to the highlighted position training in the monthly meetings, each employee is trained on mandatory topics like food handling and safety. Each topic is thoroughly covered, handouts are given and a question and answer period is offered at the end of the training session. To help the employees gain hands-on experience in the different positions within the department, the Food Services supervisor and central cafeteria

manager schedule time at the beginning of the school year in which employees switch positions for a day with other food services workers. According to the Food Services supervisor and central cafeteria manager, this training has instilled a real teamwork attitude, and it has enabled the department to reduce its costs for substitute help. There are numerous trained employees who can fill in on short notice for a sick or absent co-worker.

COMMENDATION

The LCISD Food Services Department has an effective staff development plan in place, which cross-trains employees in numerous positions.

FINDING

LCISD's record keeping for cafeteria receipts and National School Lunch and Breakfast program is performed manually. This manual system depends on the diligence and hard work of the Food Services supervisor and the central cafeteria manager. While the manual system has been very good, it is labor-intensive and it is more difficult to detect data errors than in an automated system.

School food service operations of all sizes are automating their operations. In fact, LCISD currently reports its meal participation rates to TEA electronically after each meal has been manually accounted. By using the district's current computer to track performance measures and installing a point-of-sale (POS) computer system with terminals located in serving lines where students can enter a student identification number into a keypad, the Food Services Department could ensure accuracy and efficiency.

Water Valley ISD has recently implemented a POS system. This system:

- Accepts convenient pre-payment options;
- Maintains confidentiality for students who receive free and reduced-price meals;
- Provides a clear audit trail;
- Reduces processing time to less than two seconds to sell a meal;
- Reduces labor hours with automated reports; and
- Reduces possibility for multiple counting.

The software automates sales, meal and eligibility counts and state claim form preparation. It processes cafeteria sales quickly, tracks all meals and items sold and generates a variety of reports. It is a Windows-based software, and it can meet the district's needs for a reasonable cost.

Recommendation 40:

Implement a point of sale system to increase efficiency in the cafeterias.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent submits a request to purchase a point of sale system for each cafeteria to the board for approval.	July 2002
2.	The board reviews and approves the funding to purchase the system.	July 2002
3.	The district purchases the system and the hardware required to support the system.	August 2002
4.	The Technology facilitator assists with the installation and set up of the new system and trains food service staff on its use.	September 2002
5.	The food services staff learns the new system and begins to use it.	October 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

The total unit price for a POS system is \$2,400. Each unit includes software, a processor, a monitor, a printer, a video camera and a numeric keypad. Each of the three district cafeterias would need to implement at least one POS system to ensure thorough and error-free tabulation of children participating in the meal programs, so the cost of implementing this recommendation would be \$7,200 districtwide.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Implement a POS system in LCISD's cafeterias to increase the efficiency of the cafeteria operations by eliminating excessive manual paperwork.	(\$7,200)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The Food Services Department does not have a contingency plan for electrical outages or other catastrophes that would prohibit the central cafeteria from performing its production service to other campuses. A contingency plan clearly delineates how operations will be adjusted when standard operations cannot be maintained. According to the Food Services supervisor, the district has not experienced delays in food service resulting

from electrical outages or other catastrophes and should an outage occur, an agreement has been reached with the electric company to address the school district's problems first.

Recommendation 41:

Develop a contingency plan for disruptions in service at the central cafeteria due to power outages or other catastrophes.

While power outages rarely occur, school districts must be prepared in every area of their operations to fulfill their responsibilities to the children in their care. By developing a contingency plan detailing how operations will be maintained should there ever be a power outage, the Food Services Department can ensure its anticipated level of service.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent directs the Food Services supervisor to identify operating procedures for times in which power outages occur.	April 2002
2.	The Food Services supervisor drafts a policies and procedures, which clearly define the operating procedures for times when power outages occur.	May 2002
3.	The superintendent directs the Food Services supervisor to consult with the LCISD Police Chief, so the policies and procedures can be included in the Crisis Management Plan.	June 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

LCISD's Food Services Department must transport prepared food from the central cafeteria to the other district cafeterias and to other designated locations in the district as needed. When transporting prepared food from one location to another, it is imperative that the food is kept at a constant temperature to ensure its quality and safety.

LCISD uses a number of "cook and hold" units that are in serious disrepair or are non-functional to transport its food from location to location. Many districts with a central cafeteria use "food warmer" units rather than "cook and hold" units because the cafeteria is not actually cooking the food, but instead keeping the food temperature constant. The quality of the food and the safety of the children and district staff depend on food being kept at appropriate temperatures so bacteria cannot grow. According to the central

cafeteria manager, the district would need 12 new units to convert to the food warmer approach.

Recommendation 42:

Purchase new food warmers to maintain food quality and temperature.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE

1.	The superintendent submits a request to purchase new food warmers for the Food Services Department to the board for approval.	June 2002
2.	The board reviews and approves the funding to purchase the food warmers.	July 2002
3.	The district purchases the food warmers and begins using them in their operations.	August 2002

FISCAL IMPACT

According to vendor catalogs, the least costly food warmer that will fit the district's needs costs \$2,851. To purchase 12 units will cost the district \$34,212.

Recommendation	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Purchase new food warmers to maintain food quality and temperature.	(\$34,212)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Appendix A

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

Part 1

As part of the review process, the review team held a public forum and focus groups to obtain input. During the public forum, parents, teachers, administrators and community members participated by writing personal comments about the major topics of the review. Elementary and secondary teachers, principals and assistant principals also participated in small focus groups that discussed the topics under review.

The comments below convey community perception of Lyford Consolidated Independent School District and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team. The following contains comments received by focus area.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Current administration and board definitely has a student's needs as a major concern.(1 checkmark)
- The superintendent does an efficient job of coordinating community-based projects with LCISD and vice versa.
- Board and superintendent working as a team dedicated to improvement for all students.
- Superintendent has not divided the community. (1 checkmark)
- All constituents have a voice.
- School board gives students everything they need. SBDM is working for the campus.(3 checkmarks)
- Superintendent doesn't give our children 100 percent of his education time since he has two full-time jobs (city mayor). You cannot perform 100 percent excellence when you are being distracted by another full-time job. As a school taxpayer, his time should be dedicated to my child. (2 checkmarks)
- Student focus is of priority to our superintendent and board of trustees. (4 checkmarks)
- Superintendent has created division in Lyford. (1 checkmark)
- Superintendent has divided Lyford and Sebastian. (2 checkmarks)
- Not so, the people did this themselves!
- It is not in the best interest of children and taxpayers to have an elected official head LEA.(1 checkmark)
- As a taxpayer the school should have a superintendent that can devote 100 percent of his time to the education of the students. He cannot perform two full-time jobs. Therefore, he should decide which is more important. And I for one know that my child

deserves 100 percent of his involvement to the district and the students. Being mayor is another story.

- I am also a taxpayer. I know that Mr. Ramon, the superintendent, gives 100 percent to the students and the district.
- I am in complete agreement with the top statement. What about the school board? They have two jobs! The current superintendent is doing an excellent job. He is 100 percent better than the previous one. Night and day.
- The superintendent is doing a good job. Excellent. (1 checkmark)
- Superintendent and all administrators doing a terrific job.
- Superintendent is doing a great job. The elementary principal is doing an excellent job. She may work us to death, but she is always thinking of ways to improve our students.
- Superintendent is very knowledgeable in several if not all areas of administration. Procedures and policies are consistent with state and federal mandates.
- I find the presence of openness on matters dealing with the major issues. The local newspaper tends to provide good coverage of most issues. I see open debate and discussion of major matters. Management by staff, as I have observed, is positive and cooperative. I have observed decisions made by staff to be quick and appropriate.
- Strategic planning lacks commitment and foresight. The bond issue for the new elementary school did not pass last year and will be up for reassessment again this year. If the public had more knowledge of the issues not the politics, we would not be revisiting this issue now.(1 checkmark)
- I agree.
- Many high marks for superintendent.
- Board doesn't seem to be able to generate wider involvement and participation.
- Agree with comments above about strategic planning.
- Would like to see a building program in place; I believe our board of trustees seriously wants to improve our status with facilities. (1 checkmark)
- I completely agree.
- Superintendent should be given 1-year contracts so that taxpayers do not need money to buy him out.
- Should have more community members on the site-based management and announcements of meetings should be publicized.
- Superintendent chose to be an educator, therefore, should give all his attention/dedication to the education of all the LCISD students. Our students are lacking this kind of attention due to his other full-time job. (2 checkmarks)
- Politics are not allowed on school grounds. Either he wants to run the city or be a leader as an educator for all LCISD students.

- Site-based input into budget needs. Board needs to weigh factors and let community know of issues. Sebastian community feels like they are not being told everything.
- Superintendent empowers people, allowing principals and teachers to develop programs-has problem-solving approach and just wants to be kept involved. Board stays out of day-to-day (things) - support from the top down.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- The high school performs at excellent standards (recognized almost exemplary). (1 checkmark)
- "We can't do it"; "we do not have the funds."
- Too arbitrary.
- Why must we only expect minimum standards?
- Teaching is a priority.
- We have high expectations on our own children as parents; therefore, the delivery of instruction is a motivation to the teachers.
- Stop teaching to take a test (TAAS), must teach student to think!!!! (1 checkmark)
- We need some creativity (arts) in the 1st through 3rd grades.
- The after school program is working very well at the middle school.
- Performance bar is low in all aspects of local district - from academics to sports. Mediocrity is readily acceptable as okay! (2 checkmarks)
- Not true, sports! Education #1.
- I have seen great strides in my children's (K, 2nd) academic skills. The (staff and teachers) early grades have the great task of having to lay the foundation for all that is to come at the higher levels and I feel that they are succeeding. (3 checkmarks)
- District recognizes need for improvement. Programmatic changes need to be made to ensure success for all. (1 checkmark)
- LCISD believes in educating all students!
- Curriculum performance and programs good. (1 checkmark)
- Curriculum programs have improved. Students have more to choose from.
- Good curriculum. Excellent reading program.
- Lack of effort on striving for higher TAAS (TAKS) scores.
- Need more labs to accommodate programs to achieve master of TAAS scores.
- TAAS tutors should be available during school time for students.
- I would like to see more services for the blind and visually impaired (VI). The WIL-CAM only has 1 VI teacher and children are not served enough. WIL-CAM needs more VI teachers to accommodate VI students.

- There should be more programs for parents at school to deal with the blind and visually impaired children.
- TAAS is given great emphasis in this district; expectations are high for all students, no matter the educational learning level.
- Special Ed Services in general are not fully understood by parents who have children with special needs.
- I think Lyford does well in all areas-need more work in Gifted and Talented (GT) area and serving those students.
- I have seen a major effort to improve the scores and educate the kids. I rate the effort and results as excellent.
- Given that Lyford is a small school, as a former student back in the district, I see great strides have been made in all areas, especially in the curriculum.
- Elementary principal is spread out between two campuses and also spread out at Lyford Elementary because of distance between the buildings. Teachers need more time during the day to take care of tasks-too many demands on time that takes away from classroom instruction time with students. Too much paperwork. Intercom does not work.
- Class sizes have improved the last few years; ratios have been lower except in Spanish. English as a Second Language (ESL) at middle school is considered an elective. There are enough textbooks. Science and History have aides for mainstreamed special education students. Math classes in high school have calculators for every student.
- District is moving forward-definite improvement in recent years. Vertical alignment between elementary, middle, and high schools. Teachers are involved in all planning that occurs and there is a sense of pro-activeness from superintendent down. Vertical Articulation Team involved everyone and there is coordination of efforts for improvements.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- School district is doing as much as possible to have community involvement. (3 checkmarks)
- Where and when?
- I have called 5th grade principal several times. I haven't been called back. It's been 2 weeks.
- Same parents are called to participate.
- Community needs to do what is best for the children! Community involvement to focus on our children and what is cost effective based on data facts.
- Do away with rubber stamp committees. Must get people that can make recommendation, not only agree with what is presented. (3 checkmarks)

- Superintendent has created fragmentation and division in communities of Lyford, Sebastian, and Santa Monica. (2 checkmarks)
- Not true. (1 checkmark)
- Superintendent is a "politician" as mayor of Lyford. (3 checkmarks)
- Parents talk and talk but where are they when it comes time to give back to the school and community? It's a 50/50 proposition, folks! (1 checkmark)
- We try very hard to get the community involved. For most, it's the school and church. We are not that big of a community. Internal communication sometimes is not evident.
- Parents are not informed of school meetings.
- This is not true.
- I constantly am volunteering for the various events at school, fundraisers, games, and various other functions. I have seen a greater response by staff for more activities, for the school is now the center of the local community.
- As both a rural and "municipality" community, parental involvement can be difficult, but I believe we are no different than most schools with this problem. The school does what it can with the very limited resources it has. (1 checkmark)
- Train parents in special education so special-ed student gets a good education, get them involved in special-ed.
- Parents would be more involved if school personnel would let the parents know of what's going on in school.
- We need more parental involvement from Lyford. (2 checkmarks)
- Students bring home information. It's these parents who probably don't know where or what their kids are doing!
- Parents of the general education program need parenting skills. They take up a lot of administrator's time with petty misinformation and their (parents) lack of knowledge of how to manage their children.
- Parent meetings are being conducted by grade level to accommodate all parents. Specific information provided.
- Need to get more parents to participate.
- School and church is the main thing in community. Student council is working with Lions Club to collect food for the poor. Have Career Fair and Veteran's Day ceremonies. Students do a skit on school report card (AEIS) to get parents to come.
- District tries to be accommodating to the community. Communication seems to be a key to getting parents to come in for events. District has held open house for parents outside the stadium at football games, set up high school pre-registration for 8th grade parents at night, and held AEIS report program where each campus puts on a skit for parents. Have mentoring program for the high

school through a grant, and local businesses put up college scholarships for students.

PERSONNEL

- Teaching standards must be maintained. What practices are in place to evaluate productivity of staff?
- Teachers should be paid at a higher rate since we expect so much from them. As a parent, I feel that certain evaluations should be public knowledge.
- Lack of new ideas and innovation at all levels. (1 checkmark)
- All personnel needs are taken care of. Qualified people fill these openings. (2 checkmarks)
- Technology is not fully understood and not integrated with staff development or TQM. (3 checkmarks)
- We need more aides; they can't do everything.
- Why are our elementary teachers always out?
- Too many folks from same community teaching - never have left local community to "grow." Money talks. Why? (2 checkmarks)
- Staff developments are great but we need to practice what we learn.
- Need to hire qualified instructor, especially athletic, compensate at district (size) average.
- Train teachers to work with special-ed students (full inclusion).
- Our staff is helping to improve the educational needs of all our students.
- Staff development has greatly improved teacher's performance. (1 checkmark)
- District is in need of elementary facilities BAD! Community fails to see the children's needs! (1 checkmark)
- Teachers are out because we need to keep up with latest - we must keep learning!
- Have teachers do their in-service during August and then have ALL Texas students start school the Tuesday after Labor Day. (We won't have to check with others to see when school is starting - everyone is different.) (5 checkmarks)
- District recognizes need for continual staff development as the state standards change. Schools need to get better to help students get better. (1 checkmark)
- I believe the personnel management aspect of my school district is more than adequate. Personnel are hired based on experience, not the so-called "compadre" system.
- Staff development is great. We are always being sent to learn new ways to teach. Our administrators care about our kids!
- I have observed an effort by staff and management to obtain the best possible people to work here. Any good management team

starts with skilled personnel that are self-starters. With excellent personnel, in turn results in excellent performance. As always, there is turnover, but the effort to recruit good staff is adequate in the face of having a poor tax base.

- The district does a good job of keeping abreast of current staff development - not all staff takes advantage of it, but for the most part, it is made available to all.
- Some teachers and administrators need to be evaluated. Staff development seems good.
- Staff development in this district is very well structured and input is allowed from all professional staff - great organizational structure here. (1 checkmark)
- I agree.
- LCISD is inconsistent on hiring practices.
- Do not hire adequate qualified personnel. It's more like "compadre" qualification than skills.
- Personnel administrator is not certified to be the Personnel Director. Has no certificate to qualify him/her as a Personnel Director. Was assigned to the position. Notice of vacancy was never advertised.
- Does not have the necessary experience needed to be an administrator.
- Administration is extremely competitive and capable of running the school. They are all, to my level of awareness, totally involved in the school and community, and know the population and their needs.
- In-service training takes teachers away from the classroom too much. Could combine some of the training, maybe some on weekend or during the summer. Vacancies posted on Internet and in local paper.
- A little above average regarding beginning teacher salary. Teacher turnover is not an issue-district makes you feel wanted. Turnover rate at principal has been high. District tries to provide staff development. Current principal has interest in staff development, so it has improved.
- Good staff development.

FACILITIES USE

- Proper air circulation in student activity center is lacking. No covered walkway from old gym to that center. Below standard cafeteria facility for the elementary students. (4 checkmarks)
- School is making change as needed. New elementary school is needed but voting has not taken place in favor of district. (4 checkmarks)

- The boys and girls restroom needs to be improved, a monitor on the door would be very grateful. We need new building!!
- The school district is trying to provide better restroom facilities at Travis, but we have not been able to come together and focus on our childrens' needs. (2 checkmarks)
- Mediocrity at best! There is plenty of data available, other best practices, yet the administration lacks the understanding on what is "quality"; No planning and certainly a lack of focus and will. (2 checkmarks)
- It is ridiculous to have to transport Pre-K students 5 miles apart from the rest of the elementary and then walk several blocks between the 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc. (2 checkmarks)
- School district is making steady improvements on its facilities. The communities of LCISD need to come together to expedite the cause.
- Lyford is in need of a new elementary and due to some community members voted against a bond, now our children at Travis elementary go to restrooms that are outside - hot during hot months and cold and rainy during the cold days that we have had. Think of our children in making future decision on bond elections. Ask for data to support what is cost effective. (8 checkmarks)
- We need a new elementary built in Lyford.
- Statement number one is so true; the greed of a few is hurting our children. Those community members are only looking out for themselves.
- Facilities are a problem. Pre-K and Kindergarten are in a town 5 miles away, which causes a problem for the educators. And still the Bond Election was denied. The community was not thinking about the students. They were thinking of themselves.
- Need to build one building for Pre-K thru 5.
- School all levels, need to be centralized in one location. This is a very feasible way to run a school district. (3 checkmarks)
- I have observed an effort to provide adequate facilities in the face of a poor tax base. We have seen a number of new buildings come in to replace obsolete building. I wish we could get a new football stadium if possible.
- Lyford really needs a new elementary school to house all grades PreK-5. Our children are all over the place.
- Facilities planning need wider involvement and commitment to secure bond issue. Too many areas were not defined in previous bond issue.
- Lyford CISD needs an elementary school where all students are under one roof. Cost effectiveness may have to be considered based upon transportation. This community has been plagued with bitterness and resentment. Facility planning is the biggest gripe among these individuals. As it is the, the Board and Superintendent

have come up with the building projects to meet the needs of our students, but the voters have not acted. I give high praise to the Superintendent and Board, as well as Administrators, Teachers and Staff, for continuing to try to do what is best for our students, including revisiting the bond issue to try to get voter approval for a new elementary school for Pre-K through 5th. Maintenance to some of the building is poor. Custodians should spend more time doing what they are paid for and should stop complaining that it's too much work.

- Maintenance department tries but is not that responsive. Many problems with older elementary buildings.
- Maintenance department responds quickly to requests. Facilities are kept safe and cleaned up when problems occur. New middle school is nice. Elementary is spread out and needs repair.
- Maintenance department gets you the things you need. Department has built furniture, put in gym floor, and installed Internet cabling. Maintenance director does periodic walk-throughs of buildings and provides monthly training to the principals.

Appendix A

PUBLIC FORUM AND FOCUS GROUP

COMMENTS

Part 2

ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- School district provides acceptable coverage in all areas. (3 checkmarks)
- High School need to in force the dress code. (1 checkmark)
- Health insurance is a mess! Help!!! (2 checkmarks)
- Administration lacks understanding on how to leverage their resources through external funding opportunities. (2 checkmarks)
- Lack of financial management experience at administration level. (2 checkmarks)
- Health insurance needs improvement.
- Administration does not lack understanding on funding, it is the avarice of members of Sebastian that is hurting our kids, our future, and their future. (2 checkmarks)
- Administration explores opportunities for facilities that do not burden taxpayers. (2 checkmarks)
- In the face of a poor tax base, I have seen an effort to provide great care for the funds provided by the taxpayers and other outside sources. I have noticed great care is made to provide funds management. I have seen great care in the issuance of bonds as well.
- Health insurance for employees is expensive. It's impossible to have the family insured. I don't know if it is because it is a small district, but we need help!
- I urge the district to do everything possible, whether it is the next school year to upgrade insurance coverage.
- Significant efforts have been made to disseminate information about CHIPS.
- Although the District provides adequate health coverage, I believe the problem with the high rates is beyond the Superintendent and Board's power. The Governor and State Legislators need to address this very real problem immediately by looking to the insurance companies for changes!
- I believe the school administration is doing the best job to improve the education of our kids. However, there is a group of people located in Sebastian that are thinking of themselves instead of helping our kids. This is not true, Sebastian is never taken into consideration on planning things and you have to remember that we are (Sebastian) part of LCISD, as matter of fact, a big part.

- Health insurance has three levels of coverage-you cannot afford to cover your family.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Teachers are provided with enough money to provide an excellent education to their students. (I Don't Think So!)
- Where is the money for special ed. Takes Need! (1 checkmark)
- Need to provide for Special Ed Student. Need to understand how to teach this student.
- Need to support Athletic program by providing adequate equipment to enhance pride, and self-respect, teamwork. This is a good training ground toward adulthood. Education 1st. (1 checkmark)
- Need to provide more technology. (1 checkmark)
- Needs more community input, utilize community to prioritize needs.
- Athletics! Education First! One in a million makes it to the pros, thousands go to college. (2 checkmarks)
- I have known and worked with many of the employees of the Lyford CISD, and feel that all are very capable at their jobs. The business manager, I am sure, is dedicated to his job as chief financial director and is doing his job in a very professional manner. I say the same for the superintendent, the personnel manager, and many others.
- I believe the school is spending the taxpayers' dollar wisely.
- Great care is provided for funds management in the face of a poor tax base. I have seen courtesy during my paying taxes. Even back taxes. Due to the poor tax base, great debate goes into the budget and tax rates every year. I have noted a lean budget in the past and present.
- Agree with the above-mentioned statement. (2 checkmarks)
- Significant efforts have been made to seek grants - Even Start, etc.
- Our poor tax base can only go so far and the school realizes this. I know the District is actively seeking grants to supplement the school's budget. We have excellent grant writers who have secured outstanding grants for our children. Kudos to the District for a job-well done!
- Our school leaders are great with the financial management of the district; they study data and analyze to make cost effective-decisions. Let's provide the necessary needs for our children to acquire a better education. (2 checkmarks)

PURCHASING

- All classes have textbooks for every student. (1 checkmark)

- Some students have not had textbooks; they've had to share.
- Need to provide books for all students. (2 checkmarks)
- It is a shame that we have old textbooks when fund balance is where it is. (1 checkmark)
- Students need to be able to take books home to study every day (middle school).
- There are no lockers in the Junior High; students have to carry their books and other items in their backpacks, which are very heavy.
- Only way to support issue above is raising taxes. Don't these people understand that boxes and items are purchased with tax dollars?
- I have seen great care in the purchasing process. The law is followed. I have constantly seen ads in the newspaper.
- Where are the books? Last year's freshman English class did not have enough books and students are made responsible to get notes, but parents can play a large role at home with studies.
- Of what I know in this area, I have not heard any complaints.
- Students are not given the necessary supplies to exercise or meet their school assignments due to lack of materials available at school.
- If teachers ask for a specific assignment supplies should be furnished. Not all parents have access for the necessary supplies being requested.
- The school district has made good decisions when purchasing items for the school.
- Purchasing a bus a year at a time is a definite plus for our students.
- Generally, teachers get things they want but need better planning and information regarding how much teachers can spend. Students have books but some teacher manuals are missing.
- Teachers do purchase orders that go to principal and then the main office. Need three days-no logjam at Business Office.
- There is an inventory of capital assets.

FOOD SERVICE

- Food for students does not seem to be adequate for some students. Quality is acceptable.
- Ask our students!!!
- Change breakfast meals.
- This is the only good meal some children get; we need to work on it.
- My kids do not like school food.
- Needs improvement. (2 checkmarks)
- Very clean in all areas, some of the best personnel work in cafeteria. (2 checkmarks)

- Surveys have been provided for input from students.
- I have eaten at the cafeteria very few times. I loved the Salad Bar; all the food was fresh and really good. My kids all eat at the Cafeteria and have not received any complaints.
- The food program that allows our children to eat free is not used to its fullest potential. Many children will take a tray and leave it untouched especially in the elementary and Jr. High. Would it be possible to offer the option of entrees that are eaten by students more often?
- Feel that food supplied is nutritious. Would especially commend efforts that have been made during the summer to cooperate in providing nutritious foods.
- I agree with statement above, especially the summer lunch program.
- I have eaten only in the cafeteria during the holidays and that was one time too much.
- Food is not fully cooked.
- Not enough time to eat breakfast or lunch and digest in a timely manner.
- Food Service is good. (1 checkmark)
- 30 minutes should be enough time to eat.
- Food is well prepared and balanced.
- Food Service has provided good food and good service.
- Staff is courteous and responds to special needs. Have breakfast in the classrooms at elementary.
- Staff is friendly and cooperative. Food is okay and reasonably priced. Teachers have to wait in line. Surveys have been sent out to students. Alternate letting classes go five minutes early in middle school.
- Department is service-oriented. Takes student surveys and listens to the kids. Has breakfast in the classroom for elementary children and has snack program for after school. Department is accommodating for club meetings and field trips.

COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

- The high school has great opportunities for our children by providing them with opportunities for earning college credits, computer classes to update their technology skills. (2 checkmarks)
- Big strides have been made in the area of technology - we still need improvements though.
- Parents have been forced to purchase computers at home due to the excessive demand of Internet assignments. Not enough computers during class time for all students to finish.

- Computers are very expensive but in order for my child to do his homework I needed to buy one since the school does not provide enough time for the student to do his homework at school.
- Reading the comments above I have to disagree. The school does the best it can with the amount of money available. Those people are probably driving current model vehicles.
- I feel that Lyford tries to stay up-to-date with technology - for a small district, we are doing well. (1 checkmark)
- I agree with the above-mentioned statement. (2 checkmarks)
- I have seen a large number of computers being available to the kids. This is very important in our present time, but much more so in the future. (2 checkmarks)
- I hope to see a compute laptop type available for all the kids to take home on the weekends to use with Internet access.
- We do have better access to computers and the Internet, would it be feasible to have access in the late evening when parents can join their children especially when projects could benefit from the Internet. Maybe have evening access to the library at High School instead of traveling to Harlingen or even Sebastian when we live in Lyford. (2 checkmarks)
- I agree with these all statements and technology being what it is - ever-changing - it is crucial to our children's education and future. The school does a good job here!
- Technology is becoming more available for students and staff. All classrooms are at a minimal level (at the least).
- Parents are forced to purchase home computers in excessive mandatory Internet homework not enough computers in school to do classroom work.
- Our computer system is not in proper use fix it. (1 checkmark)
- No computer teacher in Elementary, our children are behind. (1 checkmark)
- Computers need to be fixed in a more timely manner. (1 checkmark)
- Students need to be careful also, agree.
- LCISD's technology is moving in the right direction (positive direction) but very slowly. (2 checkmarks)
- The district gets an F in this area. (1 checkmark)
- Something is always not working. (1 checkmark)
- No technology plan that integrates all aspects of learning. Students are being left behind.
- For a district this size, technology availability is very high. Long distance learning, internet access, etc. (1 checkmark)
- Computers cost money, don't these people understand. The school has a budget and most work within it. The current administration is doing a good job with what they have to work with. (1 checkmark)

- Look back a few years ago. I feel we have greatly come a long way. PK & K have technology in their classrooms.
- Have two in classrooms but sometimes lacking the software programs.
- Have computers in the classroom but need more student stations- have computer labs. Technology staff is overwhelmed. TIE grant at the middle school got nine computers-headed in the right direction. Some computers freeze up.
- Moving in the right direction and improving each year. There is a five-year plan-retrofitting buildings through TIF and TIE grants. Shares a teacher for classes in Distance Learning. Waterford program is excellent.

TRANSPORTATION

- I feel LCISD does whatever necessary in terms of its transportation department. (3 checkmarks)
- I have seen the buses traveling down our roads. They are careful and slow. I have also been behind buses dropping kids off. Much care is taken for the safety of the kids. (2 checkmarks)
- I agree with statement above, and would like to see more of the heavily traveled roads paved, especially the road between the school south to 491, which most buses travel twice a day. (3 checkmarks)
- Transportation is always willing to accommodate to meet our children's needs. They drive safely and I have observed that many times at railroad crossings.
- Transportation is the biggest problem LCISD has. No communication between parents and supervisors. Call school with concerns and never get calls returned. Always advertising for bus drivers. Something is wrong if we cannot keep bus drivers. Bus driver do not have an opportunity to have health insurance because of their part-time employment. Supervisor does not have adequate training to supervise dept. Depends on Personnel Director for comments. Is unjustly compensated. Routes are never on time. Children are not transported on a timely manner and cause students to arrive late to class. In the last 5 years, trans. has not maintained adequate bus routes and staff. Supervisor/Director does not arrive on school grounds until 8:00 a.m., how can he/she supervise the department?
- Supervision is a must on the buses.
- Reevaluation of routes - also some buses arrive with children prior to campus personnel.
- Buses are provided in a timely manner. (1 checkmark)
- Change routes to pick those students that live the long distance first and dropped off last. (3 checkmarks)

- To picked up first and dropped off last.
- Too many children from Sebastian are bussed back and forth certainly not equitable or fair for those families (45 percent of district).
- Transportation efficiency is maximized with current resources.
- Buses have some monitors and video cameras. Some places children have to stand on the side of the highway.
- Need more discipline on buses-students sometimes are unruly. Need monitors.
- Cameras are on most buses (others have dummy ones). Department has a committee with director and some bus drivers on it that meets with principals to resolve issues and referrals.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- LCISD has campus police that I feel do an adequate job.
- Parents must be involved before situations become threatening to others. (1 checkmark)
- Need to work with Texas Highway Department for safety at pickup areas.
- Discipline at the high school is taken care of in a proactive effort. Police are helpful.
- We are lacking in safety cause when our kids are let out there is not proper supervision.
- Pick up your child on time!
- Thanks to the Police Department.
- Need more monitoring for Drugs in school district must especially check inside restrooms. Drugs are consumed in restrooms.
- Maybe parents should take care of this in the home.
- School police was a definite plus! (1 checkmark)
- I am not sure that the police know their role or the community knows the role of police.
- More prevention approach vs. enforcement approach.
- They are school police.
- Lyford CISD is very strong on Safety and Security.
- Lyford CISD has a very well organized safety and security system. I'm please how well they take of the disciplinary areas (problems).
- I have seen security personnel in the area constantly patrolling on foot and in the car. I have noted only a few incidents of police in action, but it was to slow traffic flowing by the school.
- Security is not consistent during the extra-curricular activities. Safety is needed but not in demand. Very small community violence is not seen much. Administrators can handle discipline without district spending money on Security officials. Busses are not escorted to and from out-of-town games.

- Safety and Security is not provided during football or band practice. School security should end when all students are done with their extra-curricular.
- Because Lyford now has a police department on-site, I feel more comfortable with our students and staff's safety since they (police department) can respond much quicker. (1 checkmark)
- Thanks to our own police department within our district, I feel safe that my child attends school at Lyford CISD. Thank you.
- I am very happy Lyford School has a police department. I came to school back in the early '80's, drugs and alcohol was very easy to bring on campus.
- Police officers are not around that much at the elementary school. During lunch and at recess police presence would be nice. Police did come and talk to children about emergencies (fire drills, bomb scares). A potential problem is that middle and high school students walk along streets (in school area). Delivery trucks go inside gated area (where students have to cross the street).
- Like police force and want to keep it-not sure how district will pay for it (after grant runs out). Police on campus discourages problems, and discipline in schools has improved. Reduced concern of outsiders being around the school. Police are visible around school and staff of five is right. Police provide security for after-school activities and are comforting to have at alternative education sight. There are intercoms in classrooms at middle school but no monitoring of hallways or doors by cameras.
- Crisis manual is good. Have fire and tornado drills and about to have lock-down drill. There is a crisis committee with members from each school. Police are visible and are deterrents. Police officers are used for extra-curricular activities.

Appendix B

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS=55

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer				
	43.6%	47.3%	9.1%				
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
	5.5%	1.8%		83.6%	0.0%	1.8%	7.3%
3. How long have you lived Lyford ISD?	0-5 years			6-10 years	11 or more	No Answer	
	14.6%			5.5%	72.7%	7.2%	
4. What grade level(s) does your child(ren) attend?	Pre-Kindergarten						
	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third			
	3.6%	18.18%	18.18%	7.3%	10.9%		
	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth		
	14.6%	10.6%	10.9%	27.3%	18.2%		
	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth			
	20.0%	18.2%	14.6%	21.8%			

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	10.9%	47.3%	29.1%	7.3%	5.5%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	7.3%	50.9%	21.8%	10.9%	9.1%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	43.6%	32.7%	10.9%	7.3%	5.5%

4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	34.6%	40.0%	12.7%	7.3%	5.5%
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B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	The district provides a high quality of services.	14.6%	58.2%	7.3%	16.4%	3.6%
6.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	5.5%	41.8%	34.6%	12.7%	5.5%
7.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	9.1%	43.6%	27.3%	10.9%	9.1%
8.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	5.5%	45.5%	29.1%	14.6%	5.5%
9.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	25.5%	67.3%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Writing	21.8%	61.8%	7.3%	9.1%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	21.8%	65.5%	5.5%	7.3%	0.0%
	d) Science	20.0%	58.2%	12.7%	9.1%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	21.8%	61.8%	5.5%	10.9%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	18.2%	65.5%	5.5%	10.9%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	18.2%	65.5%	9.1%	7.3%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	18.2%	61.8%	10.9%	5.5%	3.6%
	i) Physical Education	21.8%	63.6%	5.5%	5.5%	3.6%
	j) Business Education	20.0%	49.1%	16.4%	14.6%	0.0%

	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	20.0%	52.7%	20.0%	5.5%	1.8%
	l) Foreign Language	14.6%	49.1%	20.0%	10.9%	5.5%
10.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	20.0%	58.2%	10.9%	9.1%	1.8%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	20.0%	47.3%	14.6%	12.7%	5.5%
	c) Special Education	21.8%	43.6%	27.3%	5.5%	1.8%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	23.6%	45.5%	18.2%	12.7%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	5.5%	27.3%	47.3%	9.1%	10.9%
	f) Student mentoring program	14.6%	49.1%	25.5%	5.5%	5.5%
	g) Advanced placement program	14.6%	50.9%	20.0%	12.7%	1.8%
	h) hLiteracy program	12.7%	49.1%	27.3%	10.9%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	9.1%	36.4%	36.4%	5.5%	12.7%
	j) Summer school programs	16.4%	63.6%	9.1%	5.5%	5.5%
	k) Alternative education programs	12.7%	49.1%	27.3%	5.5%	5.5%
	l) "English as a second language" program	14.6%	54.6%	21.8%	5.5%	3.6%
	m) Career counseling program	14.6%	49.1%	18.2%	10.9%	7.3%
	n) College counseling program	41.8%	27.3%	25.5%	5.5%	0.0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	12.7%	36.4%	23.6%	16.4%	10.9%
	p) Drop out prevention program	12.7%	32.7%	34.6%	7.3%	12.7%

11.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	25.5%	32.7%	16.4%	16.4%	9.1%
12.	Teacher turnover is low.	7.3%	38.2%	47.3%	5.5%	1.8%
13.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	12.7%	43.6%	18.2%	21.8%	3.6%
14.	A substitute teacher rarely teaches my child.	7.3%	32.7%	10.9%	34.6%	14.6%
15.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	12.7%	65.5%	12.7%	9.1%	0.0%
16.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	12.7%	58.2%	14.5%	10.9%	3.6%
17.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	25.5%	50.9%	5.5%	14.6%	3.6%
18.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	12.7%	25.5%	43.6%	16.4%	1.8%
19.	The district provides a high quality education.	12.7%	58.2%	16.4%	9.1%	3.6%
20.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	14.6%	49.1%	20.0%	14.6%	1.8%

C. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	14.6%	45.5%	21.8%	10.9%	7.3%
22.	District facilities are open for community use.	9.1%	47.3%	23.6%	12.7%	7.3%
23.	Schools have plenty of	12.7%	21.8%	23.6%	27.3%	14.6%

	volunteers to help students and school programs.					
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D. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	7.3%	38.2%	29.1%	9.1%	16.4%
25.	Schools are clean.	30.9%	52.7%	10.9%	3.6%	1.8%
26.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	23.6%	50.9%	10.9%	10.9%	3.6%
27.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	18.2%	54.6%	14.6%	9.1%	3.6%
28.	The district uses very few portable buildings.	27.3%	49.1%	10.9%	10.9%	1.8%
29.	Emergency maintenance is handled expeditiously.	20.0%	54.6%	21.8%	3.6%	0.0%

E. Asset and Risk Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	My property tax bill is reasonable for the educational services delivered.	34.6%	34.6%	23.6%	7.3%	0.0%
31.	Board members and administrators do a good job explaining the use of tax dollars.	5.5%	30.9%	29.0%	18.2%	16.4%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	5.5%	36.4%	47.1%	5.5%	5.5%
33.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	7.3%	38.2%	40.0%	3.6%	10.9%
34.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	5.5%	29.1%	47.3%	9.1%	9.1%
35.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	7.3%	25.5%	49.1%	7.3%	10.9%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	12.7%	63.6%	9.1%	7.3%	7.3%
37.	Textbooks are in good shape.	18.2%	47.3%	20.0%	7.3%	7.3%
38.	The school library meets student needs for books and other resources.	20.0%	56.4%	7.3%	7.3%	9.1%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	My child regularly purchases his/her meal from the cafeteria.	14.6%	40.0%	12.7%	20.0%	12.7%

40.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	54.6%	36.4%	5.5%	1.8%	1.8%
41.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	16.4%	41.8%	14.6%	9.1%	18.2%
42.	Food is served warm.	18.2%	50.9%	12.7%	7.3%	10.9%
43.	Students have enough time to eat.	12.7%	38.2%	7.3%	21.8%	20.0%
44.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	14.6%	63.6%	9.1%	5.5%	7.3%
45.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	16.4%	32.7%	27.3%	20.0%	3.6%
46.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	20.0%	63.6%	12.7%	1.8%	1.8%
47.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	27.3%	56.4%	10.9%	1.8%	3.6%
48.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	30.9%	56.4%	9.1%	1.8%	1.8%

I. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	My child regularly rides the bus.	23.6%	16.4%	25.5%	14.6%	20.0%
50.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	18.2%	21.8%	50.9%	3.6%	5.5%
51.	The length of the student's bus ride is reasonable.	14.6%	32.7%	47.3%	3.6%	1.8%
52.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	14.6%	32.7%	47.3%	3.6%	1.8%
53.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	16.4%	20.0%	56.4%	3.6%	3.6%

54.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	18.2%	25.5%	52.7%	3.6%	0.0%
55.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	16.4%	30.9%	50.9%	0.0%	1.8%
56.	Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	21.8%	30.9%	41.8%	3.6%	1.8%
57.	Buses seldom break down.	12.7%	23.6%	52.7%	7.3%	3.6%
58.	Buses are clean.	16.4%	30.9%	47.3%	3.6%	1.8%
59.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	20.0%	38.2%	41.8%	0.0%	0.0%
60.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	16.4%	30.9%	49.1%	1.8%	1.8%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
61.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	21.8%	52.7%	12.7%	9.1%	3.6%
62.	School disturbances are infrequent.	23.6%	56.4%	12.7%	5.5%	1.8%
63.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	25.5%	50.9%	12.7%	7.3%	3.6%
64.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	18.2%	38.2%	20.0%	14.6%	9.1%
65.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	20.0%	49.1%	12.7%	16.4%	1.8%
66.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	34.6%	38.2%	21.8%	5.5%	0.0%

67.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	27.3%	49.1%	14.6%	7.3%	1.8%
68.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	30.9%	45.5%	18.2%	5.5%	0.0%
69.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	25.5%	43.6%	10.9%	7.3%	12.7%
70.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	12.7%	40.0%	30.9%	5.5%	10.9%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
71.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	10.9%	49.1%	27.3%	10.9%	1.8%
72.	Computers are new enough to be useful to teach students.	16.4%	49.1%	21.8%	10.9%	1.8%
73.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	10.9%	50.9%	23.6%	10.9%	3.6%
74.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	9.1%	49.1%	21.8%	14.6%	5.5%
75.	Students have easy access to the internet.	10.9%	43.6%	27.3%	14.6%	3.6%

Appendix B

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of parent survey respondents and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team.

- The education is great and students who really want to learn do learn. But sending children to ISS is not right because they prefer to be there and they know that all the gang will be together.
- The superintendent has been doing a very poor job since taking a second responsibility as the city mayor. School officials do not implement discipline punishment appropriately when referring to school administrator's or teacher's own children, thus making it discriminatory and unfair for other regular students. Something needs to be done to correct this BIG problem.
- The district is small enough so that curriculum is aligned and it is not. This mainly due to the separation of the K-5 campus. Building after building has been built all over Lyford and Sebastian. There is no togetherness and teachers and campuses blame the previous campus for students' low performances. This district is one of the few in the state where the high school staff feels proud to achieve recognized status when it should be Exemplary. Someone needs to get in here now and fix this before it really gets out of control. Things can't wait on a bond election that a few landowners in Sebastian will help defeat. This is embarrassing.
- Overall the District is doing a good job.
- I feel that Lyford CISD is one of the best schools in Willacy County. Both of my children are in some advanced classes and they are progressing very well. I would not have my children in any other school!!
- Lyford CISD is a great school. I wouldn't take my child to any other school.
- I strongly believe our children need better play grounds. Our play grounds are so old and unsafe, they don't maintain them. Our middle school has no play ground equipment nor lockers. We have kids carrying their books to every classroom which I think is very unhealthy for our children. We also need to see more computers in schools, its not very educational for some children to sit and wait for a computer when they are being used. My child's class has 20 children, with only 4 computers in it. Not good! We also need a full time nurse at (Pre-K and Kindergarten) Sebastian Elementary. For three years we have not had a Registered Nurse, they would

have to call one that was stationed 5.1 miles at Lyford CISD. We need to unite Sebastian Elementary with Lyford, so that our schools can be together in one city. There's so much to say. I strongly believe a visit to our campus would be the best survey. You need to see it with your own eyes to believe it. Don't let anyone know, surprise everyone!

- I am proud to be a parent of the Lyford CISD and totally satisfied with Administrators/Faculty and the way things are run. I am also proud that my kids attend LCISD.
- The Principal from Lyford Middle School says that uniforms are mandatory but we don't like it because we cannot afford that uniform and also the kids feel like prisoners and there is a lot of discrimination in Lyford school and there is some discrimination in the cafeteria. Lyford school is not eager to wear regular clothes and students don't want to go to school because of the mandatory uniform. Kids get tired wearing the same colors and the same pants green/white/khaki. Some teachers don't let the kids go to the restroom or drink water because you have 10 minute break and lunch break. Some students are dropping out of school because they say they look like prisoners. Don't know what they do with all the money the government sends.
- My children went to school in Chicago - instruction is ahead here. Reading especially strong.
- High school teenagers don't have enough time to eat. By the time the last few students get their plate, bell will be ringing in a few moments. They need more TIME.
- Let the nurse bring the student home when the student is ill. Because I don't know how to drive a car or have no body to take me to pick my child from school. Tardiness is a best subject to discuss. Some students are not tardy, but if their teacher does not like that student, the student is sent to the office. The office gives the student ISS or Detention hall. The dress code: sandals that are in style like the V style. You cannot zipper up your coat in some Lyford's schools. Lunch should be 45 minutes instead of 30 minutes.
- I think that our children should be served lunch by 11:00 or 11:30. 12:30 is too late for a child to eat lunch. Also I strongly believe that the Migrant Program should help us people that really need their help with school supplies, etc. Every time that I have asked for help they have never called me back. I have 6 children and I am a single parent living on 221.0%0 a month, and believe me I have sleepless nights just thinking about how I will do it to get their uniforms. Thank you.
- The superintendent has too many jobs. His votes were mostly from school Lyford CISD. I think everyone should be able to vote again or have someone look into it. The school has improved over these

years. My children are learning and advancing themselves to a brighter future. Thank you Lyford teachers and staff.

- I think Lyford CISD manages our taxes very conservatively; there seems to be no reckless spending. Administrators and board do their jobs in commendable fashion. I have children who have been successful in college and in life due in part to their excellent foundation received in the Lyford CISD and one child still in school who seems to be getting the best education possible. I would send all my children to Lyford CISD if I had it to do over again even if I could send them to any school - private or public.
- The Lyford High School has helped me a lot with my daughter as far as their education and since we are migrants we are always starting school late; but the school helps them catch up on their work. I feel the school has improved and the students also.
- Teachers are keeping up with the educational requirements of the State. They are also taking courses as required for better and advanced education for the children. It is a very stressful job but thank God for all those teachers that make a difference in educating our children. May God give them patience, wisdom and satisfaction of teaching our children for the day of tomorrow. P.S. I would like for Prayer to return back to our schools.
- I believe my kids are having a good education at Lyford CISD. Up to now they have had a good education and I hope it continues that way. Thank you.
- Comments:
 - They charge too much. (summer school)
 - Only certain students receive career, college and parent counseling. (Substitutes) they are the ones teaching!
 - Not enough nurses vs students.
 - They send newsletters.
 - Taxes are too high compared to Harlingen CISD, I pay more in Lyford than compared to HCISD.
 - No books are not issued out.
 - They don't take books home.
 - They don't have lockers for 6th, 7th and 8th.
 - Staff get frustrated with kids.
 - At center in Sebastian, center director does not allow kids to use computers and they are charged 10 cents per printed sheet of paper.
 - I cannot understand why our property taxes are so unreasonably high. They are hard to pay. How the TEA State can allow the superintendent to run the school and also the city business on school time our school is not the best to allow these types of activities. Our school does not offer course compared to the surrounding schools. One example of community disapproval is the school bond issue that was defeated by residents because they don't approve the way administration is making decisions on

moving/building campuses. Those residents in Sebastian are proud to have a school (kinder and pre K) in their town. Building was assessed and the is the best structured facility but the school leaders want to close it. They are the people running the school and teaching our children to be good outstanding leaders.

- I believe we are cutting too much from our special ed. depts - teachers, aides, physical education, etc. Our school needs to feed our children warm food, not foods that are cold or worse still have ice in it. Foods should be foods that children will eat. Most of our children do not eat all day because they are not accustomed to eating the foods served. Students are expected to perform at high academic levels, but have poor recreational programs and low budgets for extra curriculum activities for all events - academic and athletic! We need more funding if we want well rounded students!

Honorable Carole Keeton Rylander, Thank you for your interest in our children and our school district. Your interest and actions in education are very important to our children and taxpayers.

Sincerely, - Parent (left name out)

- Teachers are very good with the kids on teaching them what they want to learn. But I don't think that they have enough contact with us parents on how the student is really acting in class. They hold things back from actions that they do on campuses. We the parents have the right to know when our children act bad to straighten them up. More communication on conduct with the parents.
- My son was disciplined by the assistant principal and after contacting them with a desire to get involved with my child's education, I was told that a decision had been made and reached and that my opinion was not needed.
- Sorry, I have no comments. (signed)
- I have three children attending school. Everything is great. One of my problems is the athletics dept-there's a lot of favoritism. If you are coach's daughter or son you get more playing time.
- Demand exceeds supply; anyone who wants to teach can teach. there is no competition for creating a better teaching corps. Why is school enrollment declining when community is growing?
Supt. has polarized community by becoming politician or mayor in community. No trust in administration or board bond election did not pass because supt shows favoritism over one community over another. Too many teachers who went to school at Lyford, got degree in Valley and are teaching in District, their perspective is extremely narrow. District has fund balance because of previous supt. entrepreneurial skills. Board members are poorly trained, still have a small rural mindset. It is sickening to see the superintendent as the mayor. He has neither time to be an effective supt or mayor. The board failed miserably in not chastising him not to pursue a

political agenda. TEA is culpable for allowing an elected/politician to do this!

- The Lyford High School has helped me a lot with my daughter education. They have never let me down. Whenever I call them they help me right away, with any concerns about my children in school.
- I do not feel that all children are treated fairly. They have different rules for the selective few. They are lucky that someone has not filed discrimination against the district. Teachers are constantly being sent to training that I know they don't implement in the classroom - sometimes 2 to 3 days leaving the child in the hands of a substitute. When principals go out of state to conferences, I think that they go to experience being in a new town.
- I think there should be a program for dropout students.
- The superintendent is out 3/4th of time. Never on campuses. Does not know what goes on as per conversation I have had with him. Does not visit campuses on regular basis. The School Board could not answer why the superintendent got a raise no justification except to be level with other 3A schools, he has no leadership ability. My child in 5th grade has had a substitute 75 percent of the days for first 6 weeks. This with a teacher first year in district has told the kids that she doesn't want to be here.
- More time to eat at school and more time at breaks.
- As a parent of a middle school child, I would like to see a stronger reading program.
- I feel that for the gifted and talented child there should be a more interesting program so that the child would not be bored. Something more challenging for them. My child finds it very boring. Now, on sports we should have more sports such as boxing or wrestling like other places. On the food department - both my children do not eat every day cause they have to stand in line for such a long time. They also complain about the food not being so good.
- Overall, the district is good. However, a new elementary school needs to be built and some of the older buildings need to be removed. The districts outdoor athletic facilities need to be renovated or rebuilt. The district is headed in the right direction, but these facilities are badly needing it right now.

Appendix C

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS=50

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Response					
	24.0%	68.0%	8.0%					
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	No Response		
	10.0%	0.0%		82.0%	0.0%	8.0%		
3. How long have you been employed by Lyford ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer		
	40.0%	18.0%	16.0%	8.0%	16.0%	2.0%		
4. Are you a(n):								
	a. administrator	14.0%	b. clerical staffer	14.0%	c. support staffer	60.0%	No Answer	12.0%
5. How long have you been employed in this capacity by Lyford ISD?								
	1-5 years	36.0%	6-10 years	18.0%	11-15 years	18.0%		
	16-20 years	6.0%	20+ years	12.0%	No Answer	10.0%		

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	16.0%	48.0%	26.0%	10.0%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	14.0%	44.0%	28.0%	10.0%	4.0%
3.	The superintendent is a respected and effective	48.0%	32.0%	16.0%	2.0%	2.0%

	instructional leader.					
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	40.0%	38.0%	16.0%	4.0%	2.0%
5.	Central administration is efficient.	18.0%	52.0%	18.0%	12.0%	0.0%
6.	Central administration supports the educational process.	26.0%	54.0%	16.0%	4.0%	0.0%
7.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	20.0%	50.0%	22.0%	8.0%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	54.0%	28.0%	10.0%	8.0%	0.0%
9.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	20.0%	56.0%	12.0%	12.0%	0.0%
10.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	14.0%	42.0%	32.0%	12.0%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	18.0%	46.0%	28.0%	6.0%	2.0%
12.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	28.0%	62.0%	6.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	b) Writing	16.0%	72.0%	8.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	c) Mathematics	22.0%	66.0%	8.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	d) Science	18.0%	62.0%	10.0%	8.0%	2.0%

	e) English or Language Arts	14.0%	72.0%	10.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	20.0%	56.0%	12.0%	8.0%	4.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	14.0%	68.0%	12.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	h) Fine Arts	16.0%	60.0%	12.0%	8.0%	4.0%
	i) Physical Education	16.0%	60.0%	14.0%	4.0%	6.0%
	j) Business Education	8.0%	58.0%	26.0%	4.0%	4.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	16.0%	56.0%	20.0%	6.0%	2.0%
	l) Foreign Language:	8.0%	42.0%	38.0%	8.0%	4.0%
13.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	6.0%	56.0%	28.0%	8.0%	2.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	8.0%	62.0%	18.0%	12.0%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	22.0%	60.0%	14.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	20.0%	58.0%	20.0%	2.0%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	2.0%	26.0%	60.0%	10.0%	2.0%
	f) Student mentoring program	6.0%	50.0%	28.0%	16.0%	0.0%
	g) Advanced placement program	14.0%	44.0%	30.0%	12.0%	0.0%
	h) Literacy program	10.0%	54.0%	28.0%	8.0%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	8.0%	52.0%	20.0%	12.0%	8.0%
	j) Summer school programs	16.0%	54.0%	24.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	k) Alternative education programs	14.0%	58.0%	22.0%	2.0%	4.0%
	l) English as a Second	14.0%	62.0%	20.0%	2.0%	2.0%

	Language program					
	m) Career counseling program	14.0%	44.0%	36.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	n) College counseling program	14.0%	44.0%	36.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	12.0%	44.0%	34.0%	4.0%	6.0%
	p) Dropout prevention program	4.0%	42.0%	32.0%	12.0%	10.0%
14.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	28.0%	50.0%	14.0%	6.0%	2.0%
15.	Teacher turnover is low.	2.0%	50.0%	36.0%	6.0%	6.0%
16.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	14.0%	58.0%	18.0%	6.0%	4.0%
17.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	20.0%	64.0%	12.0%	2.0%	2.0%
18.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	10.0%	28.0%	32.0%	24.0%	6.0%
19.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	6.0%	46.0%	30.0%	18.0%	0.0%
20.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	24.0%	40.0%	16.0%	16.0%	4.0%
21.	The student-teacher ratio is reasonable.	18.0%	54.0%	18.0%	4.0%	6.0%
22.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	2.0%	32.0%	54.0%	8.0%	4.0%
23.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	34.0%	42.0%	12.0%	12.0%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	6.0%	36.0%	16.0%	28.0%	14.0%
25.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	22.0%	44.0%	20.0%	12.0%	2.0%
26.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	2.0%	44.0%	28.0%	20.0%	6.0%
27.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	6.0%	46.0%	36.0%	6.0%	6.0%
28.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	2.0%	46.0%	36.0%	8.0%	8.0%
29.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	10.0%	48.0%	30.0%	4.0%	8.0%
30.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	4.0%	14.0%	64.0%	10.0%	8.0%
31.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	6.0%	30.0%	32.0%	22.0%	10.0%
32.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	6.0%	42.0%	30.0%	10.0%	12.0%
33.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	10.0%	54.0%	24.0%	10.0%	2.0%
34.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	2.0%	22.0%	24.0%	20.0%	32.0%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	10.0%	20.0%	22.0%	18.0%	30.0%
36.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	12.0%	48.0%	16.0%	16.0%	8.0%
37.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	8.0%	34.0%	24.0%	24.0%	10.0%
38.	District facilities are open for community use.	12.0%	42.0%	28.0%	14.0%	4.0%

E. Facilities Use And Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	12.0%	34.0%	40.0%	6.0%	8.0%
40.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	14.0%	32.0%	50.0%	2.0%	2.0%
41.	Schools are clean.	36.0%	54.0%	2.0%	6.0%	2.0%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	24.0%	54.0%	10.0%	12.0%	0.0%
43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	18.0%	54.0%	10.0%	14.0%	4.0%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	28.0%	54.0%	14.0%	4.0%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	10.0%	46.0%	40.0%	2.0%	2.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	6.0%	56.0%	32.0%	4.0%	2.0%
47.	The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	4.0%	38.0%	50.0%	2.0%	6.0%
48.	Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	12.0%	26.0%	54.0%	2.0%	6.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	16.0%	42.0%	24.0%	14.0%	4.0%
50.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	16.0%	44.0%	26.0%	10.0%	4.0%
51.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	16.0%	34.0%	36.0%	12.0%	2.0%
52.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	8.0%	50.0%	28.0%	12.0%	2.0%
53.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	16.0%	54.0%	26.0%	4.0%	0.0%
54.	Textbooks are in good	12.0%	58.0%	24.0%	6.0%	0.0%

	shape.					
55.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources for students.	20.0%	54.0%	16.0%	8.0%	2.0%

H. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	16.0%	52.0%	22.0%	6.0%	4.0%
57.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	12.0%	42.0%	22.0%	18.0%	6.0%
58.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	10.0%	48.0%	22.0%	16.0%	4.0%
59.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	30.0%	52.0%	18.0%	0.0%	0.0%
60.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	36.0%	44.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
61.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	20.0%	50.0%	14.0%	10.0%	6.0%
62.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	26.0%	52.0%	12.0%	4.0%	6.0%

I. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Students regularly use computers.	28.0%	52.0%	10.0%	6.0%	4.0%
64.	Students have regular	16.0%	60.0%	16.0%	6.0%	2.0%

	access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.					
65.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	24.0%	54.0%	12.0%	10.0%	0.0%
66.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	24.0%	54.0%	12.0%	10.0%	0.0%
67.	The district meets students' needs in computer fundamentals.	20.0%	46.0%	24.0%	6.0%	4.0%
68.	The district meets students' needs in advanced computer skills.	14.0%	38.0%	28.0%	14.0%	6.0%
69.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	28.0%	50.0%	16.0%	4.0%	2.0%

Appendix C

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of administrative and support staff survey respondents and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team.

- Very good school.
- In my opinion this school district needs to emphasize and acknowledge the high drop out rate. More programs for drop out students or those on the verge of dropping out should be available. Thank you.
- I feel that the clerical staff is not paid appropriately in regards to the workload they carry. A two percent raise does not cover cost of living increases. Also, I don't feel that the Special Education Department and teachers get the support they need.
- I really don't have any questions; everything is in good shape.
- This district is always striving to improve in all areas. I am most thankful and blessed to be working with such a team-oriented district.
- Lyford CISD is a good school to work in. Teachers, parents, and students work well. We could use more training for parents to get involved with their children and helping the teachers with their children's discipline in school. Overall I think Lyford works well with teachers, students and its employees - we could all use more pay.
- In my opinion the educational performance of Lyford CISD would be better if we had the materials, facilities and technology to be able to serve our students.
- In the short time I have been employed at Lyford CISD and as a former student, I feel the district needs some improvement in two areas; one being a more unified working relationship with coworkers and facilities accessible to public without difficulty. Professionalism and business skills need much improvement for some offices, as well as, higher pay for employees such as secretaries who end up doing entire work for department and supervisor does nothing. Over all the district runs smooth, but some administrators are only looking out for their own well-being and concerns that their subordinates have is a last priority. One specific department that needs to be relocated is the personnel office/media center. Their location is not visible and is difficult for

people and vendors to find. Furthermore, since their move, handicap accessibility is not available, which is a must.

Paraprofessionals are very underpaid and foremost should be paid more. They are the teachers backbone, without them teachers would not be well prepared. Please assist our district/community to avoid any pitfalls and to better educate administrators the most effective way to manage and run offices in the most professional way, and to be consistent in their decision-making when it comes to vacancies. A lot of favoritism within the district. Make it a point to meet with office personnel throughout the district, specifically administration. Thanks! Hope to see you soon.

- Overall they're doing a great job!
- It is sad that in this school district, that it is not what you can do for our children but who you are. I would also like to know how a superintendent can give his utmost attention to what is good for our children when he is splitting his time between school and city business. There is no way he can give this school district his 100 percent attention.
- The performance at Lyford CISD is good at times but it would be better if we can keep the teachers in their classroom so the students can get the full education they deserve. We need to cut down on substitutes in the classes. We also need to have nurses that are willing to help students and not show them that they are frustrated and really don't want to be there. We also need to give more credit to the paraprofessionals since they are the ones that do more. The main thing here is keeping teachers in the classrooms and having them go to training more during the summer so they can spend their time more in the classrooms otherwise our students are being cheated in their education. Thank you!!
- There are a few teachers that don't have patience dealing with students.
- My primary concern is that the superintendent is also the town mayor. There has to be a conflict of interest somewhere in the dealings between being a superintendent and mayor of the same town. This little town practices favoritism at it's worst. Performance standards are not standard, or equitable. Relationships are personalized instead of professionalized. Some administrators and teachers that have been here for decades are seriously stagnant and ineffective. All of these areas affect the educational performance of the district.
- The policy of retesting is in my opinion detrimental to college bound students. While it may allow students to master contents it does not prepare them for college. In college students do not get an opportunity to retest for a passing grade. However, after so many years of being able to retest, it is difficult for them to adjust to the real world and it hurts them academically. Even non-college bound

students are in my opinion hurt by this retest policy. It teaches them that it's ok to fail because you can get another chance. They should be encouraged to push themselves and succeed the first time.

- We have a superintendent of schools that is concerned and involved in the educational process of the students in the district! He is willing to listen to employees and community member's suggestions to improve and redirect money and resources when needed.
- I see the administration, teaching and all support areas aggressively striving to improve and enhance the educational process. The LCISD educational team has an active and pressing determination to facilitate student success, advance achievement and prepare students for positive living.
- More than ever Lyford CISD has tried to optimize funding to provide student access and success. As one reviews the latest student data, instructional growth is evident. Although there has been growth, the district is well aware of additional needs in the instructional program. Additional funds are needed in the areas of science, social studies, and computer instruction. New state requirements and the demands of a changing world cause the district to set these priorities. Fine arts and physical education are the effective areas that are often not stressed because of limited funding. The district needs financial help in modernizing its facilities and consequently providing a better setting. From the superintendent to the rest of staff, everyone has one focus: Lyford CISD students.
- In the county I believe we have the best school, Lyford CISD.
- It is my opinion that we have a fair and impartial education process here. I have one child attending here and thus far I have been satisfied with my child's education.
- Teacher Assistants salaries should be raised, they do as much work as the teachers do.
- I believe the majority of our employees have our student's education as top priority. I do know staff cooperation and staff morale has improved tremendously since our recent superintendent came to our district. I believe having a leader that demonstrates how much he truly cares for the district and communities can only have positive impacts for our student's educational performance.
- I have worked for Lyford CISD for about 15 years. It is a great school, and superintendent and the district administrator are always bettering our schools for the better of our children and students in the district.
- Lyford CISD has great teachers, if only they were not taken so often out of their classrooms for meetings and in-services. It seems like we always have a substitute teaching our children. Also, aides

are no longer assisting teachers, they are either running off materials or substituting other classes (not their own level) or just baby-sitting. Too many duties and not enough time in the classrooms.

- I just started working with Lyford CISD, it is a very good environment. I have seen paraprofessionals in elementary school that are very rough and mean to the students. I also had trouble with our insurance. Couldn't we get better insurance for our LCISD employees?

Appendix D

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS=3

1.	Gender (Optional)		Male	Female	No Answer			
			33.3%	66.7%	0.0%			
2.	Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
			0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3.	How long have you been employed by Lyford ISD?			1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
					33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
4.	What grades are taught in your school?			Pre K to 5th	K to 6th	7th to 9th	10th to 12th	
					33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	33.4%

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3.	School board members understand their role as policymakers and stay out of the day-to-day management of the district.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
4.	The superintendent is a respected and effective	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	instructional leader.					
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6.	Central administration is efficient.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
7.	Central administration supports the educational process.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
8.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
13.	The district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subjects.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
14.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
15.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	what to teach and how to teach it.					
16.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Writing	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	d) Science	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	i) Physical Education	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	j) Business Education	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	l) Foreign Language	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
17.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	c) Special Education	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even Start programs	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	e) Dyslexia program	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	f) Student mentoring program	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	g) Advanced placement	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	program					
	h) Literacy program	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	j) Summer school programs	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	k) Alternative education programs	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	l) "English as a second language" program	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	m) Career counseling program	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	n) College counseling program	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	p) Drop out prevention program	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
18.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
19.	Teacher turnover is low.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
20.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
22.	Teachers are counseled about less than satisfactory performance.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
23.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	and art classes.					
24.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
25.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
27.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
28.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
29.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
30.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
31.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
32.	District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
33.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

34.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
35.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
36.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
38.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
39.	District facilities are open for community use.	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	33.4%	0.0%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41.	Schools are clean.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
42.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

43.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
44.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
45.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
46.	Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
47.	Financial resources are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
48.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
49.	Purchasing acquires high quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
50.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
51.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.					
52.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
53.	Textbooks are in good shape.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
54.	The school library meets students needs for books and other resources.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
56.	Food is served warm.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
57.	Students have enough time to eat.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
58.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
59.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
60.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
61.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
62.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

I. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly	Agree	No	Disagree	Strongly
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		Agree		Opinion		Disagree
63.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
64.	The district has a simple method to request buses for special events.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65.	Buses arrive and leave on time.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
66.	Adding or modifying a route for a student is easy to accomplish.	33.3%	33.3%	33.4%	0.0%	0.0%

J. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67.	Students feel safe and secure at school.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
68.	School disturbances are infrequent.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
69.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
70.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
71.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
72.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
73.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
74.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

75.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
76.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

K. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
77.	Students regularly use computers.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
78.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
79.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	33.3%	33.3%	33.4%	0.0%	0.0%
80.	The district meets student needs in computer fundamentals.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
81.	The district meets student needs in advanced computer skills.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
83.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Appendix D

PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE RESPONSES

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of principal and assistant principal survey respondents and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team.

- No comment at this time. Thank you.
- Teamwork is the greatest factor in our success. Central office and fellow principals plan cooperatively to meet the varied requests placed on administration. A strong educational team (staff on campus) ensures ongoing progress in meeting students educational needs. Support from the superintendent and board members is strong.

Appendix E

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS=41

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer				
	19.5%	65.9%	14.6%				
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
	21.9%	0.0%		63.4%	0.0%	2.4%	12.3%
3. How long have you been employed in Lyford ISD?	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years	No Answer	
	34.2%	14.6%	21.9%	4.9%	19.5%	4.9%	
4. What grade(s) do you teach this year?							
Pre-Kindergarten		Kindergarten	First	Second	Third		
4.9%		9.8%	7.3%	17.1%	7.3%		
Fourth		Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth		
4.9%		7.3%	2.4%	2.4%	7.3%		
Ninth		Tenth	Eleventh	Twelfth			
36.6%		36.6%	34.2%	31.7%			

A. District Organization and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school board allows sufficient time for public input at meetings.	9.8%	43.9%	46.3%	0.0%	0.0%
2.	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of others.	14.6%	43.9%	29.3%	12.2%	0.0%
3.	School board members work well with the	17.1%	56.1%	24.4%	2.4%	0.0%

	superintendent.					
4.	The school board has a good image in the community.	14.6%	51.2%	24.5%	7.3%	2.4%
5.	The superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	24.4%	43.9%	17.1%	12.2%	2.4%
6.	The superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	24.4%	31.7%	29.3%	12.2%	2.4%
7.	Central administration is efficient.	7.3%	58.5%	22.0%	9.8%	2.4%
8.	Central administration supports the educational process.	14.6%	63.4%	19.6%	2.4%	0.0%
9.	The morale of central administration staff is good.	12.2%	56.1%	26.8%	4.9%	0.0%

B. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Education is the main priority in our school district.	36.6%	48.8%	7.3%	7.3%	0.0%
11.	Teachers are given an opportunity to suggest programs and materials that they believe are most effective.	26.8%	41.5%	12.2%	17.1%	2.4%
12.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	9.8%	36.6%	26.8%	24.4%	2.4%
13.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	7.3%	29.3%	36.6%	24.4%	2.4%
14.	The district provides curriculum guides for all	17.1%	43.9%	19.5%	14.6%	4.9%

	grades and subjects.					
15.	The curriculum guides are appropriately aligned and coordinated.	9.8%	36.6%	21.8%	22.0%	9.8%
16.	The district's curriculum guides clearly outline what to teach and how to teach it.	7.3%	34.2%	24.4%	24.4%	9.8%
17.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	22.0%	46.3%	19.5%	12.2%	0.0%
	b) Writing	7.3%	46.3%	29.3%	17.1%	0.0%
	c) Mathematics	14.6%	56.1%	19.5%	9.8%	0.0%
	d) Science	4.9%	36.6%	26.8%	31.7%	0.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	7.3%	61.0%	22.0%	9.8%	0.0%
	f) Computer Instruction	4.9%	36.6%	31.7%	24.4%	2.4%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	2.4%	51.2%	26.8%	19.5%	0.0%
	h) Fine Arts	2.4%	19.5%	29.3%	36.6%	12.2%
	i) Physical Education	7.3%	43.9%	26.8%	19.5%	2.4%
	j) Business Education	4.9%	24.4%	61.0%	9.8%	0.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	9.8%	34.2%	46.3%	7.3%	2.4%
	l) Foreign Language	2.4%	34.2%	43.9%	19.5%	0.0%
18.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	7.3%	39.0%	24.4%	24.4%	4.9%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	4.9%	39.0%	24.4%	24.4%	7.3%
	c) Special Education	17.1%	48.8%	17.1%	17.1%	0.0%
	d) Head Start and Even	19.5%	41.5%	34.2%	4.9%	0.0%

	Start programs					
	e) Dyslexia program	2.4%	7.3%	58.5%	14.6%	17.1%
	f) Student mentoring program	4.9%	48.8%	19.5%	24.4%	2.4%
	g) Advanced placement program	4.9%	46.3%	29.3%	17.1%	2.4%
	h) Literacy program	4.9%	31.7%	48.8%	9.8%	4.9%
	i) Programs for students at risk of dropping out of school	4.9%	36.6%	34.2%	19.5%	4.9%
	j) Summer school programs	2.4%	58.5%	24.4%	9.8%	4.9%
	k) Alternative education programs	2.4%	51.2%	36.6%	4.9%	4.9%
	l) "English as a Second Language" program	4.9%	61.0%	22.0%	9.8%	2.4%
	m) Career counseling program	2.4%	24.4%	36.6%	31.7%	4.9%
	n) College counseling program	2.4%	29.3%	36.6%	26.8%	4.9%
	o) Counseling the parents of students	2.4%	17.1%	39.0%	29.3%	12.2%
	p) Drop out prevention program	26.8%	43.9%	26.8%	2.4%	0.0%
19.	Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	17.1%	46.3%	19.5%	9.8%	7.3%
20.	Teacher turnover is low.	48.8%	19.5%	26.8%	4.9%	0.0%
21.	Highly qualified teachers fill job openings.	4.9%	56.1%	17.1%	19.5%	2.4%
22.	Teacher openings are filled quickly.	2.4%	51.2%	19.5%	22.0%	4.9%
23.	Teachers are rewarded for superior performance.	7.3%	22.0%	48.8%	22.0%	0.0%
24.	Teachers are counseled about less-than-	4.9%	39.0%	29.3%	22.0%	4.9%

	satisfactory performance.					
25.	Teachers are knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach.	17.1%	68.3%	12.2%	2.4%	0.0%
26.	All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, science labs and art classes.	9.8%	29.3%	17.1%	31.7%	12.2%
27.	The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	24.4%	48.8%	22.0%	4.9%	0.0%
28.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	36.6%	48.8%	12.2%	2.4%	0.0%

C. Personnel Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29.	District salaries are competitive with similar positions in the job market.	2.4%	31.7%	14.6%	31.7%	19.5%
30.	The district has a good and timely program for orienting new employees.	2.4%	63.4%	24.4%	4.9%	4.9%
31.	Temporary workers are rarely used.	4.9%	36.6%	34.2%	19.5%	4.9%
32.	The district successfully projects future staffing needs.	2.4%	31.7%	46.4%	17.1%	2.4%
33.	The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	2.4%	24.4%	39.0%	22.0%	12.2%
34.	The district operates an effective staff development program.	7.3%	51.2%	19.5%	19.5%	2.4%
35.	District employees receive annual personnel	29.3%	58.5%	12.2%	0.0%	0.0%

	evaluations.					
36.	The district rewards competence and experience and spells out qualifications such as seniority and skill levels needed for promotion.	2.4%	12.2%	22.0%	43.9%	19.5%
37.	Employees who perform below the standard of expectation are counseled appropriately and timely.	7.3%	26.8%	43.9%	22.0%	0.0%
38.	The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	7.3%	36.6%	56.1%	0.0%	0.0%
39.	The district's health insurance package meets my needs.	2.4%	4.9%	19.5%	24.4%	48.8%

D. Community Involvement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40.	The district regularly communicates with parents.	14.6%	48.8%	22.0%	14.6%	0.0%
41.	The local television and radio stations regularly report school news and menus.	4.9%	26.8%	26.8%	39.0%	2.4%
42.	Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	4.9%	9.8%	29.3%	36.6%	19.5%
43.	District facilities are open for community use.	4.9%	39.0%	31.7%	17.1%	7.3%

E. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44.	The district plans	0.0%	39.0%	34.2%	14.6%	12.2%

	facilities far enough in the future to support enrollment growth.					
45.	Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	2.4%	43.9%	22.0%	24.4%	7.3%
46.	The architect and construction managers are selected objectively and impersonally.	7.3%	26.8%	58.5%	4.9%	2.4%
47.	The quality of new construction is excellent.	0.0%	39.0%	31.7%	22.0%	7.3%
48.	Schools are clean.	17.1%	46.3%	17.1%	14.6%	4.9%
49.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	12.2%	51.2%	19.5%	12.2%	4.9%
50.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	12.2%	43.9%	22.0%	19.5%	2.4%
51.	Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	9.8%	61.0%	19.5%	7.3%	2.4%

F. Financial Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52.	Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	4.9%	43.9%	31.7%	12.2%	7.3%
53.	Campus administrators are well-trained in fiscal management techniques.	7.3%	24.4%	46.4%	17.1%	4.9%
54.	Financial reports are allocated fairly and equitably at my school.	2.4%	31.7%	34.2%	24.4%	7.3%

G. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
55.	Purchasing gets me what I need when I need it.	7.3%	34.2%	17.1%	22.0%	19.5%
56.	Purchasing acquires the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	9.8%	39.0%	24.4%	14.6%	12.2%
57.	Purchasing processes are not cumbersome for the requestor.	12.2%	19.5%	36.6%	17.1%	14.6%
58.	Vendors are selected competitively.	9.8%	39.0%	41.5%	7.3%	2.4%
59.	The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	2.4%	36.6%	31.7%	22.0%	7.3%
60.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	22.0%	48.8%	24.4%	4.9%	0.0%
61.	Textbooks are in good shape.	17.1%	48.8%	34.2%	0.0%	0.0%
62.	The school library meets students' needs for books and other resources.	9.8%	34.2%	19.5%	26.8%	9.8%

H. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	7.3%	51.2%	12.2%	17.1%	12.2%
64.	Food is served warm.	9.8%	63.4%	7.3%	12.2%	7.3%
65.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	7.3%	80.5%	12.2%	0.0%	0.0%
66.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10	9.8%	43.9%	17.1%	22.0%	7.3%

	minutes.					
67.	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	9.8%	63.4%	9.8%	9.8%	7.3%
68.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	26.8%	53.7%	12.2%	4.9%	2.4%
69.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	19.5%	65.9%	12.2%	0.0%	2.4%

I. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70.	School disturbances are infrequent.	14.6%	70.7%	9.8%	4.9%	0.0%
71.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	17.1%	63.4%	14.6%	4.9%	0.0%
72.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	2.4%	68.3%	19.5%	4.9%	4.9%
73.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	4.9%	58.5%	22.0%	12.2%	2.4%
74.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	19.5%	58.5%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%
75.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	17.1%	51.2%	26.8%	4.9%	0.0%
76.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	17.1%	46.3%	36.6%	0.0%	0.0%
77.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	7.3%	39.0%	22.0%	17.1%	14.6%
78.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	7.3%	41.5%	26.8%	22.0%	2.4%

J. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
80.	Students regularly use computers.	14.6%	43.9%	19.5%	12.2%	9.8%
81.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	14.6%	43.9%	14.6%	14.6%	12.2%
82.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	9.8%	58.5%	9.8%	19.5%	2.4%
83.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	12.2%	56.1%	17.1%	14.6%	0.0%
84.	The district meets students' needs in classes in computer fundamentals.	7.3%	36.6%	39.0%	9.8%	7.3%
85.	The district meets students' needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	9.8%	24.4%	41.5%	17.1%	7.3%
86.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	14.6%	58.5%	22.0%	4.9%	0.0%

Appendix E

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of teacher survey respondents and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team.

- I know it is not a perfect district; however, overall I believe it is a very good district. The only thing that would make me feel better is better pay. I don't think our school is competitive.
- I enjoy teaching at Lyford High School and feel the principal is the best I've ever worked for.
- My main concern is that we have no library or librarian at our school. It was felt that since we are a very small school, it was not needed. It also seems that we are always jumping on a different bandwagon. Nothing is ever given a chance to work. The school board hardly ever questions the superintendent.
- Our insurance in a word is lacking. Our superintendent sits on the board. The principal tells us what to do and we are not asked. We are not given credit for good work; teaching is not fun anymore.
- Mrs. Rylander, I'm sorry but I cannot respond to your survey because I have not been in the district long enough to have information to help me with the answers.
- It is getting better. At-risk students need more time, parents need more time and parents need to be trained to help at home.
- Lyford is on the right road as far as education goes. Our students are progressing and though we are not where we'd like to be, our students are showing great gains yearly. We will meet our goal together!
- Performance is great! School climate and principal may be improved.
- Dear Carole, the school has the opportunity to advance in education, if we would let the teachers teach. If discipline was handled in the office, the way it should be taken care of, the attitude of elementary kids would change from, "nothing is going to happen to me." The teachers in private talk and talk and talk about the major problems of discipline, but when it comes to the principal, they act like there is no problem. Lyford ISD's 10th grade class was a recognized campus this year. I can sincerely say it was due to the excellent leadership that these students had when they were at Lyford Junior High; discipline and education go hand in hand.

- Too much emphasis is based on block schedule in both high school and middle school. All extra and co-curricular activities are safer because block schedule doesn't allow for extra curricular activities. Some students spend as much as 14 hours a day at school, that is about 70 hours a week at school, this is too much! Get rid of the block schedule.
- The School District is working hard to meet the needs of the students. But if the health insurance continues to get worse and worse, small schools like Lyford School District will not be able to attract and keep above-average teachers. The state needs to help poor school districts in health insurance and pay. The difference between a new teacher in Lyford and Austin is \$2,000 plus and the difference gets larger with experience. Paying \$25,000 plus for a minimum health insurance is even worse. This is bad for the morale of teachers who can't afford health insurance for their own children.

Appendix F

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS=179

1. Gender (Optional)	Male	Female	No Answer				
	58.1%	40.8%	1.1%				
2. Ethnicity (Optional)	Anglo	African American		Hispanic	Asian	Other	No Answer
	1.7%	0.6%		92.8%	1.1%	3.8%	0.0%
3. What is your classification?	Junior	Senior	No Answer				
	45.3%	53.6%	1.1%				

A. Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measurement

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The needs of the college-bound student are being met.	11.2%	45.3%	18.4%	18.4%	6.7%
2.	The needs of the work-bound student are being met.	9.5%	43.6%	27.4%	11.7%	7.8%
3.	The district has effective educational programs for the following:					
	a) Reading	20.7%	52.5%	14.5%	8.9%	3.4%
	b) Writing	26.3%	53.1%	10.5%	6.7%	3.4%
	c) Mathematics	27.9%	58.1%	5.6%	5.0%	3.4%
	d) Science	26.3%	53.6%	7.3%	7.8%	5.0%
	e) English or Language Arts	28.5%	55.9%	10.0%	2.8%	2.8%
	f) Computer Instruction	25.1%	48.0%	15.7%	6.2%	5.0%
	g) Social Studies (history or geography)	26.8%	55.9%	8.9%	3.9%	4.5%

	h) Fine Arts	20.1%	53.6%	15.1%	6.7%	4.5%
	i) Physical Education	26.8%	49.2%	13.9%	6.2%	3.9%
	j) Business Education	21.2%	48.0%	16.8%	8.9%	5.0%
	k) Vocational (Career and Technology) Education	20.7%	46.9%	20.1%	7.3%	5.0%
	l) Foreign Language	20.7%	46.4%	12.8%	10.6%	9.5%
4.	The district has effective special programs for the following:					
	a) Library Service	25.7%	35.2%	18.5%	8.9%	11.7%
	b) Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	28.5%	42.5%	17.2%	6.2%	5.6%
	c) Special Education	30.2%	40.8%	19.5%	3.9%	5.6%
	d) Student mentoring program	26.8%	43.0%	15.1%	7.3%	7.8%
	e) Advanced placement program	30.2%	41.3%	17.9%	5.0%	5.6%
	f) Career counseling program	16.2%	34.1%	22.4%	13.4%	13.9%
	g) College counseling program	18.9%	34.6%	20.8%	13.4%	12.3%
5.	Students have access, when needed, to a school nurse.	27.4%	36.9%	12.8%	13.4%	9.5%
6.	Classrooms are seldom left unattended.	18.4%	29.6%	23.5%	21.2%	7.3%
7.	The district provides a high quality education.	16.8%	37.4%	23.5%	13.9%	8.4%
8.	The district has a high quality of teachers.	16.8%	35.2%	25.6%	12.3%	10.1%

B. Facilities Use and Management

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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9.	Schools are clean.	22.9%	44.7%	12.8%	8.4%	11.2%
10.	Buildings are properly maintained in a timely manner.	24.0%	46.9%	13.4%	10.1%	5.6%
11.	Repairs are made in a timely manner.	12.3%	43.6%	20.1%	15.1%	8.9%
12.	Emergency maintenance is handled in a timely manner.	20.1%	36.9%	25.1%	8.4%	9.5%

C. Purchasing and Warehousing

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.	There are enough textbooks in all my classes.	16.2%	35.2%	13.4%	22.9%	12.3%
14.	Students are issued textbooks in a timely manner.	21.2%	46.9%	15.1%	9.5%	7.3%
15.	Textbooks are in good shape.	10.6%	28.5%	15.7%	26.3%	18.9%
16.	The school library meets students needs for books and other resources.	19.6%	32.4%	13.9%	16.2%	17.9%

D. Food Services

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	The school breakfast program is available to all children.	46.9%	39.1%	5.6%	6.2%	2.2%
18.	The cafeteria's food looks and tastes good.	6.7%	25.1%	21.4%	18.9%	27.9%
19.	Food is served warm.	9.5%	31.8%	20.1%	21.8%	16.8%
20.	Students have enough	3.4%	12.9%	8.2%	16.8%	58.7%

	time to eat.					
21.	Students eat lunch at the appropriate time of day.	24.6%	54.8%	7.8%	4.5%	8.4%
22.	Students wait in food lines no longer than 10 minutes.	8.9%	15.1%	6.2%	26.8%	43.0%
23.	Discipline and order are maintained in the schools cafeteria.	11.7%	35.8%	26.3%	12.3%	13.9%
24.	Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	28.5%	42.5%	13.9%	8.9%	6.2%
25.	Cafeteria facilities are sanitary and neat.	27.9%	49.7%	14.0%	3.4%	5.0%

E. Transportation

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	I regularly ride the bus.	18.4%	23.5%	26.8%	11.7%	19.6%
27.	The bus driver maintains discipline on the bus.	14.5%	22.9%	45.3%	10.6%	6.7%
28.	The length of the bus ride is reasonable.	10.6%	25.1%	49.2%	7.3%	7.8%
29.	The drop-off zone at the school is safe.	15.1%	30.7%	44.7%	4.5%	5.0%
30.	The bus stop near my house is safe.	14.5%	27.9%	51.4%	2.8%	3.4%
31.	The bus stop is within walking distance from our home.	13.9%	26.3%	51.4%	5.0%	3.4%
32.	Buses arrive and depart on time.	10.1%	33.5%	45.7%	6.2%	4.5%
33.	Buses arrive early enough to eat breakfast at school.	17.9%	27.4%	48.6%	2.2%	3.9%
34.	Buses seldom break	10.1%	20.1%	54.7%	7.3%	7.8%

	down.					
35.	Buses are clean.	10.1%	28.5%	47.5%	5.0%	8.9%
36.	Bus drivers allow students to sit down before taking off.	17.3%	26.3%	45.2%	6.2%	5.0%

F. Safety and Security

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37.	I feel safe and secure at school.	28.5%	37.9%	16.8%	6.7%	10.1%
38.	School disturbances are infrequent.	21.8%	39.1%	24.0%	7.3%	7.8%
39.	Gangs are not a problem in this district.	39.1%	32.9%	16.3%	6.7%	5.0%
40.	Drugs are not a problem in this district.	22.4%	29.1%	28.5%	7.8%	12.3%
41.	Vandalism is not a problem in this district.	18.9%	31.8%	28.6%	12.9%	7.8%
42.	Security personnel have a good working relationship with principals and teachers.	21.8%	44.1%	23.5%	3.9%	6.7%
43.	Security personnel are respected and liked by the students they serve.	17.9%	40.8%	20.1%	9.5%	11.7%
44.	A good working arrangement exists between the local law enforcement and the district.	20.1%	37.9%	30.7%	3.9%	7.3%
45.	Students receive fair and equitable discipline for misconduct.	17.3%	34.1%	18.5%	8.9%	21.2%
46.	Safety hazards do not exist on school grounds.	12.3%	27.4%	32.4%	17.3%	10.6%

G. Computers and Technology

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47.	Students have regular access to computer equipment and software in the classroom.	14.5%	38.5%	9.0%	22.9%	15.1%
48.	Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	21.8%	39.7%	14.5%	11.2%	12.8%
49.	Computers are new enough to be useful for student instruction.	19.6%	45.3%	11.7%	11.7%	11.7%
50.	The district offers enough classes in computer fundamentals.	16.2%	37.9%	17.4%	15.6%	12.9%
51.	The district meets student needs in classes in advanced computer skills.	15.6%	37.4%	21.3%	13.4%	12.3%
52.	Teachers and students have easy access to the Internet.	20.1%	35.8%	14.5%	12.3%	17.3%

Appendix F

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

The narrative comments below reflect the perceptions and opinions of student survey respondents and do not reflect the findings or opinion of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts or the review team.

- Teachers and secretaries have a lot of favorites that get away with everything, such as considered people, athletic, and A&B Honor Roll people and people with a lot of money.
- The education is okay. But there needs to be more choices of classes. There needs to be a better library.
- It is a fun and comfortable school to attend and I enjoy being in the company of good people.
- I think the educational performance of Lyford CISD is fine.
- No Comment!
- They always pick the people that have money and are related to them; never get tardy slips when they're tardy like everybody else.
- It's good.
- None. (in margins: Bulldogs SRS 002 Rule at LHS Rocks)
- I love school! Homework rocks!
- Lyford is a terrific school and a nice learning environment but as a small school, we do lose many of the possibilities students in a larger school may have and because of the background of many students. Some suffer a lack of want for education, which shows and reflects upon others in the classroom.
- It is great! Love it! Yeah!
- First of all, I think our school could be better. I think we need a longer lunch period because the lines are long and you don't have enough time to eat your food comfortably. Also, I feel that my education here is a lesser quality to other districts. Also, our science programs here at the school are very poor. A lot of the equipment is old. Also I believe we should have more science classes. The auto mechanics at Lyford, however, is great. A lot of the computers are no good. We need new stuff. Please!
- Some teachers should put more effort and enthusiasm into their work. Favoritism should not be a problem and it frequently exists. More options in electives should be provided. Counselors and students should have more one-on-one time for discussion and preparation for college and classes.
- Lyford has a very strong English Department. Lyford definitely needs to improve on getting kids prepared for colleges other than

PAN-AM or TSTC. Kids needs to strive for a greater goal and if they end up at these schools, fine.

- I feel some of the administration punishes students unfairly and is prejudice and has favorites. The food in only seldom good. The office workers have a lot of attitude and Lyford's school has some teachers that don't know what they're teaching.
- It could be a lot better!
- We need better technology in our classrooms and library. The lunch situation is complicated and not very appetizing. The teachers are very unfair, unexplained and rude. I think you shouldn't only hire on qualifications, but how they will respond with students. Rude, mean teachers don't help High School, they make it worse! The Police Department is completely useless. They need students to help them out. That's a waste of good money.
- Lyford could be a lot better.
- Lyford CISD is a school that picks favorites. It's who you are and how you help the school benefit that makes you liked here. If you participate in school activities or your mother/father works here, you get away with things. This is a prejudice school and we need teachers that know what they are actually teaching. Longer lunch break.
- Cleaner restrooms plus air freshener. More time to eat because every time I eat, I only have five minutes.
- Lunch break is too short and lunch lines are too long. Not enough time to eat. Not enough access to computers and Internet. Not enough books in the library. Science Department is limited to certain material, not able to expand. Never have labs.
- The educational performance at Lyford High School is good. And I ask that you not take these surveys literally as facts because most students just don't care so they checked everything negative. Although I think teachers needs to be carefully selected to teach here, sometimes we just hire people to take their place.
- I like to attend this school. My opinion is that I think it is the best.
- Our cops only look at certain people wrong instead of treating everybody fair.
- This school is excellent and has great teachers.
- Lyford High School should offer other electives like choir, sign language, French, foreign languages. The District should hire more music staff. Dress code should be less strict.
- We need more time for lunch like on Wednesday.
- I think that it is too strict here. I have a friend who accidentally hit someone with a rock and he got 15 days of AFP. That was wrong. And the food needs to be better.
- I think we have a great school, but our cafeteria needs to be improved sanitary wise and good tasting warm food.

- We need mirrors in the guys restrooms and Big Red in the coke machines.
- I think the educational performance is good, however, some of the math and science curriculums don't prepare students as well as they can for college. Sometimes, classes in certain causes are limited, unavailable, or don't follow through with the subject.
- The school shouldn't fine us for personal reasons when we don't come to school, and our lunch period should be longer than 30-35 minutes and they should cook our food correctly.
- Need to have access to more computers to type and research things.
- Our school needs a stronger library program. Some students cannot type out papers, because we are limited in computers. I am very disappointed in our health vocational program. The district needs more resources such as books, computers, and other learning materials to become effective. (We need to update everything.)
- The education that the school has is very well since they never don't know what they are doing.
- I want better food! They serve the good stuff only once in awhile. They need to stop serving the Mexican food and serve the other good stuff like hamburgers, lasagna, turkey noodles and pizza. That is all.
- Lyford is a good school.
- (What-a-burger, hamburgers)
- Teachers here don't understand the possible family issues that can occur in their home. They should investigate instead of taking credits away.
- Teachers have their favorites.
- Lunch period is way too short, 30 minutes is not enough time to wait in line and eat. It's unhealthy to eat so fast.
- Lunch and breaks are too short. We have to wait in line forever for lunch. Please help us!!
- Lunch time and breaks are too short.
- The school is great.
- Ag is good, Spanish has good teachers.
- This is my first year here and so far it's great. Cafeteria needs to speed up service and increase food quickly. Girls bathroom needs to be fixed.
- Bring free tea!!!
- I feel mentoring period is not necessary because we do not do anything in there! We should use that time for our lunch breaks!! We don't have enough time to eat!!
- I feel Lyford CISD is a well-rounded school. Lyford CISD meets all qualifications that students need sometimes.
- We could use more access to computers, not every one is fortunate to own one in their home.

- School is cool! Rock-on school!
- There needs to be more lines for students to eat lunch.
- Lyford is a terrific school and staff are very nice and teaching us a lot about why you need to come to school and learn about education. At LCISD they don't have people to talk to about your career and what you want to do after you finish school and that's good. Everything in this school is okay and staff is nice to the students and everyone else.
- Bearkats Rule!
- The education I have received can be considered a good one. But the one's my classmates have received cannot be considered equal to mine. The classes for regular students are more like a daycare rather than on educational experience. As for the school itself, sometimes it seems they are more worried about getting paid for us being here than for teaching us. As for the AP classes, the school has done very well in handling that area, because of them I feel prepared for college.
- They are reasonable sometimes and sometimes not.
- I think Lyford is dumb because they are very strict on dress code and that doesn't affect our learning abilities. Furthermore, lunch must be longer. I am tired of waiting in line 30 minutes and only have five minutes to eat.
- I think the teachers of Lyford are not very good teachers. They don't take time to actually help a student in need of assistance when they do not get the assignments. They just give it and expect you to automatically know how it is to be done.
- Some rules are completely preposterous! Like shaving, if you hardly see it and buttoning up shirts.
- I strongly feel that teachers try to help us whenever possible. They give us enough time to get to class and instruct the class in a proper manner. By this, I feel students are able to participate and cooperate in class.
- Overall, the educational performance is fair.
- Teachers need to trust more of their students. There has been a lot of absences from the teachers and I don't like it because they leave a lot of work and the substitutes don't explain right. Also, we need more lunch time. I mean we wait in line longer than we have time to eat.
- I think we have a good school but some things can be made better such as more time for breaks and lunch so students have enough time to go to bathrooms, locker and just in case, visit with a teacher about work in the classroom.
- Let me say there is plenty to say but only little time. To begin with, our Pre-cal teacher is at school almost two out of the five days of school. The lunch period is too short, 30 minutes to about 500

students; nowhere near enough time. Athletics should not be in morning, 7:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.

- I enjoy coming to this school, except we are really behind the rest of the world. The technology of LCISD is not updated. The library books are old and not up to date. Faculty and teachers on campus need to listen to what students have to say.
- Our school tends to come up with stupider excuses to discipline students, example: long shorts get you ISS. Maybe you should concentrate more on education.
- I feel that students should be heard more often. Other than that, education performance is okay.
- I would like to have a better photography class.
- I would also like a longer athletic period.
- I feel that more one-on-one should be continued and more classes should be provided for computer classes. We also need a photography class. Our scheduling needs improvement, too. We need to have a schedule where we can participate in more than one activity and not miss out.
- It's good to find out how our campus is doing. We are actually a clean campus. It is good to know what our school is doing.
- The education we are receiving here at LHS is an adequate one. It is enough to get us through life, but it does not meet our interest. For example, we need more computer classes so that we may be able to do more. I am interested in Digital Imaging and the school does not allow us to have that option. It would be great if they could get us something like that.
- Lyford CISD needs to make better use of resources. In addition, needs to listen to the students. Favoritism is also an issue from discipline to college referencing from administration.
- We don't have much time to eat lunch and to top it off, the food should be better.
- Better locks in restrooms; air fresheners; cleaner restrooms; better thermostats.
- I think our school should have more language classes, different languages besides Spanish and English.
- They should change the dress code, they are too strict. Clothes and hairstyles have nothing to do with our work. There are long lunch lines and we don't have enough time to eat.
- I feel that the school is not cool.
- School dress code is dumb; rules are too strict; food is not good. We need more time for lunch. Some teachers and police aren't truthful.
- Math program needs help.
- Dress code is stupid. Police Officers are disrespectful. We take forever waiting in the line for lunch.
- Better food; shorter lines; let beard grow.

- Our school rules! Bulldog Pride All The Way!
- Dress code is not comfortable. Lunch is very appetitiful.
- We need more time for lunch. We need some McDonald's or What-a-burger.
- I think that the students need more attention.
- Lyford school has okay education yet it can be better.
- The foods not hot. Not enough time to eat.
- I don't like doing surveys and we don't have enough time to eat during lunch.
- Not good food during lunch. Not enough time to eat food.
- Boys restrooms need Lysol! Soft toilet paper; more privacy.
- Restrooms need to be cleaned more often.
- We need more time to eat. We only get 30 minutes, 15-20 to wait in line.
- One bus driver is rude.
- It's great! Thank you.
- Not enough lunch time. Classes should be one hour long.
- Not enough privacy. No freedom.
- Not enough lunch time. Classes should be one hour. Not enough privacy.
- They need to serve us better food, it's never warm or hot, its always cold. They need to give us more time on the Internet.
- I believe we should have more time to eat lunch and cops should be removed. Teachers should allow Internet to be used by students at any time a student desires.
- More time to eat.
- More time to eat, serve better food, better beverages.
- It's good.
- I feel the school is good. We can use teachers that teach better science like the IPC Department.
- Bring back tea!